

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

Nov. 4, 2014

Remarks at The Brookings Institution: "Charting the Navy's Future in a Changing Maritime Domain"

O'HANLON:

I'm Michael O'Hanlon with the Defense Center here, the center on 21st Century Security Intelligence, and we're honored today to have Admiral Jonathan Greenert, the 30th chief of naval operations of the United States, the Navy's top leader, and he will be speaking this morning for a few minutes about trends in the Navy and strategic thinking, all of what he is up to around the world, including of course the rebalance to the Asia Pacific and other topics of interest, and after that we'll have a bit of a conversation up here before going to you.

I just wanted to say a couple of words of appreciation and biography about Admiral Greenert. He is a native of Pennsylvania. I believe quarterback country as they say, so maybe we should get you into the mix on saving the Redskins as well as all the other things you are doing around the world, a 1975 graduate of Annapolis. A submariner by profession. Has commanded attack submarines and ballistic missile submarines. Was commander of the U.S. 7th fleet, among various other jobs. Was a major part of the planning in the so-called NH (ph) shop of the Navy as well, prior to his current position as the chief of naval operations. He's been in that position now about three years, which makes him part of a remarkable class of joint chiefs who came into office in that year.

Admiral Greenert is joined by General Odierno and General Dempsey, among others, as now three-year veterans of the joint chiefs, and so I would like to begin the speculation, or at least the recommendation process that I hope he may be considered for yet another four-star job when General Dempsey steps down next year, but I don't mean to do the admiral a disservice by interjecting that too much into today's conversation.

I would just like to say in the three years he's been at the helm of the Navy he has been associated with a number of major initiatives, including of course the so-called rebalance to the Asia-Pacific and much of the thinking around air-sea battle, a topic that I'm sure will also come up today.

So without further ado, please join me in welcoming Admiral Greenert to Brookings.

(APPLAUSE)

GREENERT:

Thanks, Michael.

O'HANLON:

Thank you very much.

GREENERT:

Thank you. You're very kind. In fact, I was in Pennsylvania yesterday. We were talking about -- I visited a high school and it was called Moon Township. And it was enormous, big school. It had the intermediate school there, and we were talking to the high school students about pretty much what we're going to talk about today, and their interest and their in-depth knowledge of world affairs totally stunned me. I was taken back by it. They -- I figured they'd want to talk about local stuff or this or that, or you know, why the Navy and all this business. Boom, they were way out there, and they said, "How do we get information beyond just the headlines? We would like to understand our world today."

We talked a little bit about, of course, our world today is not going to be their world as we have seen that remarkable evolution, and they had a partner online that we were VTC'ing (ph) with in Taiwan, a partner high school, and so we got worldwide very quickly, and so we had a Q&A session. They were very remarkably involved. So it is an amazing world as we get out there, how connected we are.

I'd like to talk briefly about our maritime strategy and why we are redoing that. The Asia-Pacific rebalance as Michael said that we're -- how we're moving on and our relations with, in this case, the Chinese Navy. It's kind of an update on things. We have had the International Seapower Symposium, which is now about six weeks ago and we're continuing the evolution as directed by the president, and in accordance with our rebalance to the Asia-Pacific. But our maritime strategy, I hope and expect that by the end of this calendar year, we'll be publishing this. The commandant -- a relatively new commandant of the Coast Guard, a relative -- a new commandant of the Marine Corps in General Dunford, and I need to give them time to digest what we have put together and make sure that we're in sync, because this is a sea services document, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

The compelling reasons for the revision and it pretty much is a revision, is that obviously the security and fiscal changes since 2007, they have been extraordinary. The Indian Ocean, Asia region, the changes, the anti-access area denial and the need for access, energy, the challenge for energy and the need for energy, anti- terrorism, maritime disputes -- all of these have dramatically evolved since 2007.

We have a new strategy since then, the Defense Strategic Guidance of 2012. A QDR and homeland security where the Coast Guard resides has had a homeland security review. So all of these really compel us and dictate a change to our strategy.

Our principles will be the same. The value of presence to be where it matters, when it matters as a sea service, the three of us. And the value of maritime networks as the leverage and the strength that you get out of maritime networks will come out in that. We'll address the sea services functions of deterrence, power projection, sea control, maritime security and the importance of access.

But you know -- if you could put up the graphic here, the slide, if you wonder the evolving world -- compare this to 2007, and I ask you, there's only a few photos up here you'd say, yes, yes, I remember that, the same situation in 2007. It's different. You know? 2007 the mortgage bubble, way beyond that. We had a surge going on in Iraq. And the evolving war-fighting challenges since then in cyber, electronic warfare, electronic attack, the electromagnetic spectrum, if you will, weapons of mass destruction, and of course, in the case of Syria, chemical weapons that have evolved since then in counterterrorism.

So again, our objective is by the end of the year we'll complete and have this thing published.

So a little bit on the Asia-Pacific rebalance. Some folks say, well, is that thing really going to happen? I mean, you still going to do that? And I say, yes. Despite current events, the long-range interests of your Navy and really of your security posture, the Defense of Defense is in the Asia-Pacific. To review, over 50 percent of the world's shipping tonnage passed through the straits of Malaka (ph), Sundra (ph) and Lumbar (ph). That's just down there in the Indonesia in Southeast Asia. A third of the global crude oil and half of the liquid natural gas moves through the South China Sea.

Five of the top 15 trading -- our trading partners are in the region, Asia-Pacific. Five of our seven treaties, security treaties, are in the region, so, and also to refresh, we have been engaged over 70 years in the Asia-Pacific region and with presence, with significant presence in that area. We will continue with this rebalance. And that rebalance means, to refresh, for us four (ph) properly postured forward forces, and we are on track with destroyers to Japan, forward-deployed Naval force, littoral combat ships to Singapore, a new attack -- excuse me, a submarine to Guam, the Triton, which is our broad area maritime surveillance to deploy that out of the Guam and Okinawa, [Record corrected to reflect Triton in Guam and not Okinawa; we are not positioning Triton in Japan] our P-8-A, our maritime patrol aircraft -- we're now in our third deployment out there. That will continue to evolve.

Most of you saw yesterday the landing on the Nimitz of the F-35- C. The joint-strike fighter so as that is bringing that in, evolves, we will forward deploy that first to the Western Pacific.

So it's forces, it's capabilities, advanced capabilities, in the specific (ph) area of responsibility is the benchmark and retains that.

But it's also understanding and that means you can call it intellectual capacity. You can call it increased engagement with allies, partners and potential partners, such as China and India. The rebalance is not single dimensional. It's not just about China, but it is -- China is certainly one part of it and a very important part of it. China and our country are the world's largest economies and we are frankly intertwined. You know that. The number-two trading partner, The number-three export market, and our number-one import source is China. The mutual prosperity of both of us is in our collective best interest.

Our president's met in Sunny Lands (ph) about 18 months ago and recognized and told us we've got to get the relationship right, and we are continuing on that track. In the Navy, it was about finding out and working out what are the differences and how do we increase cooperation? We acknowledge the growing influence in size of the Chinese Navy. But we agree and we consist that we have a consistent application of the international laws and norms, that we act responsibly

both locally and globally, and that involves queue, which as many of you are familiar with, and our rules of behavior working group which has been in progress, meeting periodically about monthly now. These are folks made up of our defense and their ministry of defense in China and of course our Naval officers and their naval officers working on rules of behavior in a working group. And contribute to the international order and security. In other words, to be a leader. And we talked about that.

We would be -- Admiral Wu Shengli, myself here in Newport, about six weeks ago with his party and my group and we talked about it with the heads of Navy. How do we continue the useful dialogue that we need to make sure we have a governance on the high seas? So both our presidents directed the strengthening of military ties and to build the understanding and as President Obama said, we should institutionalize and regularize our discussions that take place. The Navies are well suited to the task.

We are frequently encountering each other in an international domain, the high seas. We encounter each other's routinely out there on the global commons. And in a vast area we are often called together to cooperate on areas of shared challenge. Humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, typhoons, tsunamis, volcanoes, that ring of fire in the Asia-Pacific region, counter-piracy all around the world. You're familiar with that. And it wasn't that long ago we met to search for that Malaysian Airlines Aircraft, Flight 370.

So a little update on our relationship, how are things coming together? Well, we're working from the top down. That's myself and admiral Wu Shengli, but also from the bottom up, as we have encouraged and setup and our folks to get together and kind of mid-grade officer level and senior officer, but to start from the top I've met with Admiral Wu five times in the last year, and we're working on counterpart visits here in 2015.

We'll put our input into -- I will provide my input to the folks down in the policy and the Office of the Secretary of Defense and I'll talk about little bit more on the junior interactions in just a minute.

But the fact is with this rising Navy in China, we have in my view opportunity. The challenge is to get rid of needless, unfounded, unprofessional cases and this interaction that we are ultimately and inevitably going to have at sea.

I'm talking about unsafe operations. You're familiar with many of them, both at sea and in recently in our sensitive reconnaissance operation intercepts. We've had nothing recent, no unsafe or untoward incidents since August, when we had this last SOR (ph) intercept that we have viewed as unsafe, and we demarched and we talked about that. Admiral Wu and I talked about this at length and where we might go ahead when we met back six weeks ago in Newport.

So there's a concern for both, for myself, Admiral Wu and all the heads of Navy that we go to sea, as we meet at sea, that we have deliberate governance with proper protocols and really decrease the potential for miscalculation. History is full of cases of miscalculation causing nations to -- putting them in a situation that they don't want to be in and leaving them no recourse. We need to clear standards of behavior to make sure we have consistent professional operations in international waters and in international airspace. And again, this was embraced by all the heads of Navy in the International Seapower Symposium not long ago.

We started down this road in a -- I think a pretty robust manner back in April of this year in Shengdao, at the Western Pacific Naval Symposium, when we got together voluntarily, 22 navies embraced the CUES (ph) for professional behavior and clear communications. We exercised CUES (ph) at RIMPAC where had 25 navies there, 42 ships, and we worked on that at RIMPAC, a lot of different nations, a lot of different navies, but this will be a long, deliberate process needing constant attention.

We're bringing new officers in all the time, in some cases for some navies, it's very different to have an engagement, to be open and to be conversing out there at sea. In the July counterpart visit that I had where I went to China at the invitation of Admiral Wu, I visited what's called the State Oceanic Administration. I would call that sort of analogous to our Department of Homeland Security, where we talked -- that's where their Coast Guard, if you will, is located, and we talked about introducing the CUES (ph) option to -- that protocol to the Coast Guard, and it was observed -- it was taken in as something that was viable. Our Coast Guard is very interested in it. We're making that connection now to continue to expand CUES (ph). In Newport we discussed CUES (ph) expansion across the globe, with all of the nations, and it was pretty much embraced by all of the Coast Guards and navies around the world as something that has value, maybe not in its current, precise format, but the concept of a code, a known protocol at sea, was embraced globally.

The conversation doesn't stop. We need to sustain dialogue, and we had our seapower symposium, as I mentioned, over and over again here six weeks ago. These symposia will continue. We have the next larger one in Singapore next May, and we'll continue the discussion on both cyber at sea and the impact there and, of course, how do we continue to expand CUES (ph) and go beyond that?

Bilaterally, Admiral Wu and I agreed to continue on. We kind of synchronized on where we are on the six initiatives that we started actually almost 15 months ago, whenever he was here in the United States. And they are to continue fleets training in and the promotion of CUES (ph). Between the two of us both agree it's a good initiative. To increase port visits and I'll bring next -- again to my boss next year's proposals. Later this month for next year, I'll bring those proposals for port visits.

We agreed to establish regular service chief communications and the means to do that. We agreed to increase our academic exchanges both at our Naval War College and our Naval academies. And those are in progress. And Admiral Wu brought prospective commanding officers up to Newport, where -- went into our prospective commanding officer course, talked to our teachers. Admiral Wu attended and synchronized that. And we did that.

They're coming over here to the United States. We're working through the visas and bringing that up, where some of PCOs will come over and we'll continue that exchange.

We agreed to put together a working group for human resources as he is moving to build his navy of the future and we are building our Navy of the future to go over those challenges. And then lastly, to work on pre-approved exercises.

My Pacific fleet commander is working with his requisite counterpart to find out how do we put modules together so that when we meet at sea and we have that opportunity doing, whether we're

doing a kind of piracy operations down in the South China Sea, working in the East China Sea. How can we do exercises, simple exercises, that have -- that we can get pre-approved? So it's about building confidence and understanding throughout the ranks. to continue on that road.

So let me close now and then we'll get into your questions and questions, and Michael will have a conversation. We're committed to the security of the Asia-Pacific. The alliances are strong. And we will honor our treaties. The engagement is increasing, both bilaterally and multilaterally, and it's really part of that rebalance.

But relationships that I spoke to, both with the People's Republic of China, their Navy and India, which is becoming an increasing opportunity will not be at the expense of our allies. It's not zero-sum. International norms and standards are -- will benefit the region and we need to continue on that way ahead.

So thanks a lot and I look forward to your questions.

(APPLAUSE)

O'HANLON:

Thank you, admiral, for those great remarks and for what you're doing, operationally and planning the future Navy and working with allies and with the Chinese.

I wanted to begin with the Chinese Navy and ask you to give us a little of your assessment, an update as to their quality. I remember Admiral Willard, when he was running Pacific Command a few years ago, made the statement, very pithy statement, that everything we thought the Chinese might do, they're actually doing even faster and better than we once thought, and of course the flip side of everything you discussed terms in of trying to build and engagement is our concern about their and their potential capability. How do you assess their overall capacity and quality at this juncture?

GREENERT:

Well, I'd put it in two categories, maybe. One, the three dimensional, the construction, the technology and all that, I think Admiral Willard has it about right. I don't know that they're continuing that speech that he mentioned before. I would call it apace with what we might consider, both in weapon development architecture, if you will, naval architecture and the building therein. I would say what we find in RIMPAC, they've operated in among themselves, but not internationally, so I think they have a pretty good learning curve to take on. We saw it in RIMPAC. They started out sort of rudimentary exercises. Had some problems, maybe here and there. Not unexpected for somebody entering into a multilateral engagement. But they ramped up reasonably well.

So they have -- we have a -- it's kind of like almost an olympic- grading scheme on some of the exercises we have. How did we do in the gun shoot? How did we do in this and that? Well, some said, well, they were average to high average. And I said, well, okay. I don't know what judges decided that.

But I would say they're coming along well, especially their interest in humanitarian assistance disaster relief. That's -- and to take on the responsible role that a growing navy would take on.

O'HANLON:

Are you overly concerned about the pace of which they're getting better? I mean, the last thing you said, obviously, seems, you know, fairly apple pie, if they're helping more with humanitarian operations and so forth, but of course, I know that our navies have sometimes come into close proximity. There have been some dangerous encounters. They're not entirely comfortable with our presence in the Western Pacific. There's a lot of thinking they want to push us back.

I guess, a two-fold question, are you particularly worried about that? And then secondly, do we need some new rules of the road for how the navies interact? Some of the safety measures and hotline measures the U.S. and Soviets had in the Cold War would be well served by introducing some more of those into the U.S.-China relationship.

GREENERT:

Let me answer your last part first. I think it would be of great interest. We have started a dialogue. It is relatively routine right now. Periodic. Perhaps predictable. I think it follows suit that we have a means to discuss both continue our deliberate processes, but also when we have these untoward incidents, to get on the line and say, we should talk about this as opposed to reading it in the media or diplomatic channels as to what happened. Both maybe, quote, "your side and my side." Two professional mariners saying, especially contrary to things that we agreed on. Say, "What's the story on this?" To me, that's how you find out if you can trust someone else, how much confidence do you have in them? Are you willing to take more risk in them and how much authority do they have through the chain of command and just how tight is it. And it's also a way evaluate. you know, That other Navy or that other entity when it goes.

This is not apple pie, and if I gave you that impression, that would be the wrong impression; it is encouraging but at the same time it warrants vigilance to say, this is an opportunity, and so who are they going to be? They're going to be large. They're technologically advanced. What are the intentions, and how do we manage this growing entity that we're going to share the South China Sea and the East China Sea, because we're going to be there, and they acknowledge that.

O'HANLON:

And this brings me back to the rebalance if I could ask a couple more questions on that. You itemized some of the specific things you're doing, with more destroyer capacity in Japan, the four littoral combat ships going towards Singapore, I think another submarine at Guam, et cetera, a number of specific changes and initiatives. But I wanted to ask also about sort of the big umbrella change, which is this notion that 60 percent of the Navy is supposed to be focused on or based in the Asia-Pacific at least by 2020, and that's a change from the 50 percent norm that we had for much of the Cold War. How are we doing with that?

And my next question is, of course, going to be about the budget sequestration, because even if we're moving towards 60 percent of our Navy in the Asia-Pacific, if budget pressures are pushing your fleet size downward, at some point 60 percent of that the smaller Navy is no greater

than 50 percent of the old, but I'll come to that next. How are we doing it, approaching that 60 percent goal, and what does it really mean? Is that the 60 percent of the fleet that's going to be operating in the Western Pacific, or more generally throughout the Asia-Pacific region, including the Indian Ocean.

GREENERT:

That number of 60 percent represents the percentage of our Navy that is home-ported west. The idea is it's easier to rotationally deploy or to react if you have to, if you're home-ported where you believe your focus of attention should be. We're on track for that. As we build ships, we look toward home-porting them to the West and keeping that, again, that process going, because it's not just numbers; it's also the numbers of the -- with the most capability.

The two destroyers to Japan is a part of that. The littoral combat ships to Singapore, they're not a part of that in that they're not home-ported there. The sailors don't move there. They will go out and operate, call them forward-station, and we'll rotate the crews, but the ships themselves are literally -- it's kind of like where your family and where your home is. In that case it'll be San Diego, still West, but not as far West.

So, yes, as my point would be, we certainly -- we have a target number. We need, you know, 306, you know, our number to -- of ships in order to accomplish the Defense Strategic Guidance, but doing the best that we can with the ships that we have is also important.

So to put it another way, Michael, we could have a lot of ships, but if they're all here home-based in the United States and we're not operating forward then we're not nearly as effective, and if we try to respond and it's three weeks from just about any place in the United States to any hotspot in the world.

So that's a very helpful, clarifying answer on the 60 percent. Now I wanted to ask you about fleet size. I know that today's fleet -- well, I'll let you correct me in a second, but it's in the vicinity of 285 ships. You're aiming for 306, as you just mentioned, but of course that's based on your hopes of where the budget will go, and what's reflected in the administration's long-term budget plan.

But we also know two things that complicate your life. I'm sure there are a lot more than two, but two things. One is, of course, the potential return of sequestration in next year's budget, sequestration-level defense spending, which is lower than the administration wants or has planned on, lower than you have planned on. And yet, at the moment, it would be the law of the land to return to those levels unless Congress is able to act in the meantime.

If we do wind up at a sequestration level of spending and we stay there, can you give us a rough sense of what that does to your plans and how big the Navy would become. So instead of being 306, what's a rough approximate benchmark?

Of course, the other complicating factor is that a lot of times technology, like F-35 aircraft, winds up costing more than we hope, and so you could have additional pressure reducing your numbers of purchases of ships and airplanes because of that.

So can you give us a little sense? You're out about 285, I think. You're hoping for 306. But what could happen, and how much could you fall short if you don't get the funds you need?

O'HANLON:

We're at I think 289 is the number today. You know, I don't want to quibble so much on it, but it is -- there's a point to be made. We're growing, and we're growing because we have had a stable shipbuilding plan now for about five, six, seven years I would say. That has produced ships and ship projects, shipbuilding project that are coming in on time and under budget, because we have a competitive situation and a multi-year procurement situation, so the value of that is starting to show itself. And we'll continue to grow.

Under the current budget that we have today, let's -- I'll start with that. The fiscal year '15, if you extrapolate that out, what we've submitted to the Hill, we would have 308 ships by 2020. And if you go out to 2025, we would grow to 317, so that's a decent scenario. If we went to the Budget Control Act, and there's two parts of this.

O'HANLON:

Right.

GREENERT:

You go to the budget control act and a very -- how do I say this -- predictable manner. So you sort of know what your budget is and you make those plans. And then you can go about it where you get sequestered, where there's just no decision every year. You get to the beginning of that year and then you get sequestered. We have this algorithm which kicks in, and that's fiscal year '13 all over again. That is a bad situation for two reasons. You have a plan for any of it? Because you haven't been told to. And then you suddenly have all of your programs, you know, reduced by 10 percent.

So you scramble for months to reprogram money and get the important moneys where they need to be like the Ohio Replacement. You lose months of work. Months of hiring perhaps if you're trying to get engineers, so it's very disruptive, and that adds up if you do that year after year. That is worse than just going to the -- you know, a long-term Budget Control Act. And it doesn't help with your people who are the most important aspect of it.

But to your point, I'd say -- I worry about the shipbuilding industrial base. I worry about that scenario which would cause us to have to reduce our shipbuilding account. This would take years to manifest itself in numbers depending on how many ships we had to retire to meet the budget requirements. But more importantly, if we lose a builder here and there, and they're some likelihood we lose one or two builders -- and we only have five -- then we lose that competition I mentioned earlier which gets you much more effective and efficient shipbuilding base, and it gets you the situation where if you need to reconstitute your ship account, if you will, you can put money in, but you only have so many builders. You lose your mid-grade vendors, if you will, people that build specialized valves, circuits, and other specialized items, especially in the nuclear arena, and that would be a tough call, and that would be a very tough recovery.

O'HANLON:

By the way, quick follow-up for the general viewer and observer here, those five shipyards, could you just remind us of where they are right now?

GREENERT:

Sure. It'd be Bath (ph) up in the northwest in Maine. Electric Boat in Connecticut. Down in the Newport News area, you have Huntington. And then you have Ingalls (ph) down in Gulfport, Mississippi. And you have NASCO (ph) out on the West Coast in the San Diego arena.

So, those are the big ones. There are other shipbuilders, but those are the big ones that provide, if you will, our capital ships. The littoral combat shipbuilders are up in the northwest, in the Wisconsin area and down in the Gulf, in Mobile, Alabama.

O'HANLON:

I just have two more questions. One is going to be on missile defense then one and air-sea battle. And on missile defense, of course this is an important priority for not only your service, but all the services, and you've got the standard missile as well as the Aegis radar that would provide information and guidance. But of course, we also know that China in particular is modernizing its missiles very fast, and as I look at this from just sort of a military technology point of view, it's always been tough for a defender in the missile age to deal with the potential threat from missiles, whether it's ICBMs and the nuclear threat or whether it's the tactical threat, which is probably of greater concern to the 7th Fleet, for example.

How do you feel about the overall trend in missile defense technology and I guess to put it right to a point, do we really need a breakthrough in directed energy weapon defense before we're ever going to be able to change the balance and really have the defense in a potentially strong position vis-a-vis the offense?

GREENERT:

My view is there are two areas that we are doing some very good exploratory work, some demonstrations, and they are directed energy. I think that is a longer range, effective weapon system that we need to look at. As we speak here, we have directed energy weapon. In fact, if you have it -- Tim, if you would put it up. Out on the PONCE (ph) -- and there it is right there. Out on a ship in the Arabian Gulf, and in just a few days we are going to demonstrate this thing. We already have -- you can see the results up here behind. That's a low-energy weapon, directed energy weapon, and you can see the results with the small boat there, and the drone that is, you know, flaming coming down.

So that's lesser energy. The key is, how do you increase the energy of this and we're kind of power sources require that? I think it's -- you know, we are on a path to do that. How does it perform? Some people say, if it rains, the water will absorb the energy. Let's take a look at this. And so we said, put it out in the most difficult or austere environments. I can't think of one more than the Arabian Gulf late August through the fall, and so that's what we're doing. But I think that's an important weapons system.

The second piece is we've been sort of obsessed with bullet on bullet. We'll shoot down a ballistic missile or cruise missile with another missile, and that's a pricey view. By the way, one of these, that costs you about a dollar. So when you -- once you're on target and you lay something, you lay it 10, 15 seconds, it's about a dollar. A missile costs almost a million dollars for some of our high performing. So you see the payback once you get that thing started.

The other side of it is to spoof it, deceive it and jam it, and rather than just trying to shoot it down. And so, that's what I call electromagnetic maneuver warfare. Know the spectrum. Understand it. Expand your ability to detect both low energy, if you will, seekers and then to -- and, you know, the broad spectrum that we have out there. To move in that spectrum. To be agile in that electromagnetic spectrum. And we need to expand that, and we're working on that hard.

O'HANLON:

And my last question is about air-sea battle, which of course is an innovative and big idea that came out of the think tank world, the think tank known as CSBA I think to a large extent, but also the Navy and the Air Force in particular promoted it on your watch. There's now a concept, an official concept on the Pentagon Web site that people can read about what it means to the military. But I'm -- Jim Steinberg and I wrote a book in which we talked about this concept. We had some concerns, but saw a lot of the military logic behind it.

But I want to express in some reform (ph) what some of the stronger critics have said and ask you to respond and explain to the audience what air-sea battle means to you at this late juncture in late 2014, because it's now been around long enough as an idea that different people have taken it in different directions, not so much within the military, but outside. And some people have argued that what air-sea battle really should mean is long-range strike, where we don't have as many assets forward-deployed in the Asia-Pacific region. We have more in Guam, Hawaii, continental United States, get ready for, you know, a bigger war in which our assets are not so tactically vulnerable.

And also that if we wind up in a war, specifically against China, that some interpretations of air-sea battle would say we ought to preempt some of their launchers fairly early, even on the Chinese homeland, some of their missile launchers, some of their submarine yards, for example.

Obviously, there's some logic to those ideas if you get deeply into a war and you have to really think about going to the limit to win, but the -- some people have said the proposal for an early preemption could be dangerous in a crisis.

So I just wanted to give you a chance to explain in the terms that you see most appropriate, what does air-sea battle mean today in terms of your modernization strategy and war-fighting strategy?

GREENERT:

So let me back out of the war plan for China that you just described if you don't mind and talk about air-sea battle.

(LAUGHTER)

O'HANLON:
That's fair enough.

GREENERT:

It is a concept of thinking about how to get assured access to wherever it is you need to go. And this could involve -- and it really could involve, humanitarian assistance disaster relief. How are going to get into a particular site? How do you get access to deliver comfort when you have things that are going so much against you.

We saw very much in Operation Tomodachi, we had radiation issues, we had contamination. How are we going to go in and measure so that we can then get in and deliver it? And the logic that is behind working together to do that.

So let me leave that for what it may. This can involve operations across the spectrum. A lot of people feel that it is -- think kinetically in that approach. You need to get access. How are you going do this to deliver this kinetic weapon? I would say, there may be an un-kinetic way to do that. Maybe it involves electromagnetic features. Maybe it involves cyber, the undersea, the surface, the airspace. There's a whole host, and the idea is you've got to think across the spectrum of the domains, number one.

Two, it may be -- well, like I said, could be kinetic effect or a non-kinetic. Which is best and will get us the access and get us that the answer? Number three, if you are under the sea, is it only an undersea effect that you deliver, be it a weapon, be it whatever the heck it is, or can you deliver across domain? Is the undersea solution to something on the land better, or is the air solution to an undersea problem the better way?

So it's getting people to think cross domain, kinetic and non- kinetic, across the spectrum of challenges that we have.

Step one is to get our officers, you know, and those coming up to embrace this and stand back and instead of waiting until you're in an operation, say, okay, what do we got and how do we do the best with that? That's great joint operations.

But as we plan our campaigns in that, how are you thinking in the manner that I just described all those features? And then how do you build your programs accordingly? If the best solution is from an aircraft delivered by an Air Force program there, then why am I building that? If in the joint force it is -- we are better served to invest in that and then similarly, I should have that on my aircraft, if it's a good effect. Am I putting that on my aircraft? So it builds an interdependence element of that.

So, if you want to fast forward and say, okay, well, I want to talk about how you take on country X, I would say, well, let's start at the beginning there. Where do we have opposed access? What asymmetric approach may we have here? Kinetic, non-kinetic, you get my point. What's the best way, across domain, to do that, and then work our way forward of that. That is the logic that I think we need to build.

Our most recent discussions with the Air Force and all of the services because we're all -- we have expanded this across all the services. We have our service chief meeting quarterly that we get together to describe, we get reports on how we are doing and it's -- as we build our POMs(ph) and our budgets, are we doing duplicative effort here in this regard? Is there a gap? And is there is a gap, who's best served to take on this gap.

O'HANLON:

Thank you. Very helpful.

Okay, I'm going to take questions now from the audience. We have about 20 minutes.

We'll start with Harlan Omen (ph) in the second row here. Please -- even though I just identified Harlan (ph) -- please identify yourself and wait for the microphone.

Right here. Oh here. The other side.

QUESTION:

Thank you. Admiral, good to see you. Thank you for your comments and especially what you're doing with China. I'd like to broaden the aperture to ask you about your role in the Joint Chiefs and balancing the long term and the short term. Clearly there's a rebalance. The White House likes to call it a strategic pivot. But yesterday, for example, General Phil Breedlove (inaudible) was in town, saying, hey, do we really want to reduce forces more in Europe given what's happened in Ukraine? If you take a look at what's happening in Syria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, there's a tremendous argument that we're going to be engaged there. What sort of advice do you give, or would you give in terms of how you balance these short-term issues, which actually could be quite long term, against the larger pivot, especially we find ourselves more engaged in the Middle East region?

GREENERT:

I think for us, we can -- I use the term often, operate forward, and use the forces that we have forward as effectively as possible.

So if I look at Europe, folks say, well, wait a minute, what are you doing about Europe? Well, we are putting four destroyers in Rota (ph). I mean, we are home porting them. WE call it forward-deployed Naval force. We are building ships today which have great persistence, and we could move them there if you will, and it's about capacity, it's about deck space, if you will. And then bring in the kind of aircraft that you need to -- that resonates with the -- put up the mobile landing platform and the float-forward staging base, and it's taking what we have and make sure -- making sure that we are making best use of it for the problems of today.

As I said in my opening remarks, the focus is still within the Department of Defense and within, you know, the National Command Authority to the Asia Pacific. But, obviously, we have today's problems today to deal with, and I think we have opportunities.

This is now -- goodness, this is two-and-a-half months old. This ship is far along. We're building three of these. You see the deck space over there, and these are the kind of things we can use in and around Europe, your North Africa, the Lavonte (ph), the Somalia, the Yemen, and put these out in and around the world, and leave the big- deck amphib kind of issues to continue along the deliberate path for the high-end warfare piece, so there's messages to be sent to the support, to NATO in there. And I think for us, we're distributing that fine. On the iso operations and people wonder about that, we provide carrier with air-wing and right now talking with General Lloyd Austin, he's fine with that. We've got a lot of capacity on the ships that we have forward today, so 104 ships are out and about the world around the today, Harlan (ph). They have a lot of capability and we continue to trade -- to train, sorry, and to expand that capability so that the east can deliver that.

So I'll close with I'm fairly happy with where we're going and that the focus remains appropriately on the Asia-Pacific balance.

O'HANLON:

Let's go here to the front row, please.

GREENERT:

Admiral, nice to see you again. I'm Missy Wortheim (ph) with Naval Post-Graduate School.

The world has changed. What do you think are the changes that need to take place in the training and education and learning of our sailors and officers? I mean, it's just not about hitting the target. You used two important words to me. One was "understanding" and the other was "relationship." How does that get into our educational programs?

GREENERT:

Well, we mentioned earlier, you know, bringing people from the Chinese Navy over to interface with our folks to see who is this example, who is this department head today, who in seven years will be commanding officer of a frigate and a destroyer in the Chinese Navy accordingly? Who are the pilots and who are our pilots and making sure they meet and understand who the other one is.

Find out, can they trust each other, you know, on an international screen or agenda in that regard, and how different are they? They're not 10 feet tall. They actually have many of the same concerns. That's helpful. It's not kumbaya. We're not going to all have a Coke as they say, you know, and okay, we can just work this all out, but it is understanding, how do they think, what's important to them, what's their psyche? So that's one.

Continue those international programs at our war college and put more of them in our Naval Academy. I spoke earlier, mentioned cyber. We have got to get a baseline. We got to have cyber boot camp, you know, big time. In our Naval Academy, ROTC and then we have cyber warriors. But we are putting tablets and smartphones, and the use of them back into our basic training. You say, I didn't know you took it away. yes, we actually do.

Today, we bring them in and they got, you know, they got their phones and their tablets. We said take all that away, write a letter to your mother. And that's like giving them a chisel and a hammer and saying, (inaudible) okay.

(LAUGHTER)

GREENERT:

And we start that and we say, well, actually we need to give those back, send an e-mail to your mother or text your mother, you know, as the case may be, that by the way, this is how you need to use this. These are the basics of password protection, of understanding virus protection. Don't charge this thing up on a computer on your ship. That's not a good idea. We don't want to share viruses, you know, across that. Cyber hygiene, so you got to get that down.

And then they say, you know, all the almost of what you're doing, it's a combat system. That network is a combat system. It exchanges information and the understanding of information dominance. You know, he or she who has the information upper hand definitely has the upper hand and likely will lead to victory in some way. So there's the cyber education that needs to take place.

And then, lastly, Bill Moran and I -- that's our chief of Naval personnel -- we are working diligently and saying, okay, today, we bring a kid into the Navy. They're all kids to me. And in two years we have them about ready to go be something like an Aegis tech, turbine tech, two years. You can get a master's degree in two years, right, in any program most likely. Certainly most of a college degree if you're (inaudible) starting there. We're not even close to that.

So what is it that we can do to be faster that regard? After those two years, it's about six more years before we send -- at least six years -- before we send them to a major upgrade in the education. That's too long, because their equipment is rapidly changing over and over, you know, the loop that we're talking about. So how do we keep up with that in a manner that is sensible and reasonably -- well, we've got to evolve this. We just don't have -- we're trying to build this airplane as it's flying, to put it another way.

So anyway, those are the things we need to change, and those three I think for sure.

O'HANLON:

Thank you. Let's go over here to the side.

QUESTION:

Admiral, Sidney Freedburg (ph), Breaking Defense. I just came from off Virginia where your folks and a lot of the allies are starting off Bold Alligator. And goes to a lot of the themes you mentioned, but also to some of the challenges you mentioned in the past. I mean, you have a lot of different countries operating there. We have a Danish admiral commanding U.S. ships. Working, I understand, more than past exercises on the crisis response, humanitarian side, as opposed to just serve (ph) the kinetic side.

But also, you know, they had to cludge (ph) an antenna on the side of the LPD to be able to communicate with the allies. Looks like they're stealing cable in a third-world slum -- it's just sort of strung up there.

And meanwhile, the Dutch ship, the flagship of this, you know, task force is built to commercial damage-control standards, even a so-called low threat environment. Somebody may get their hands on a cruise missile nowadays and do very bad things to a ship with a lot of people aboard.

So you know, with that exercise used as an example, how do we deal with these problems of interoperability with the allies, not just technically, but in terms of what they're able to survive in terms of threats?

GREENERT:

Well, if I had that answer as clearly as I would like to have it Sidney (ph), we probably could have skipped Bold Alligator and said, "We'll, we've got the answers."

But I would tell you we're in the bit of discovery -- and I think you're discovering that, and you've outlined a few of the things that come about. What kind of equipment and capabilities do our allies have? We need to understand that, and you don't really get into those details and find those issues until you bring them together. That's kind of one.

Two, We are still coming back -- as the Marines come back to sea, we welcome them back and they have a capability as they move ahead on ground operations and expeditionary operations over the years in Iraq and Afghanistan. We didn't move at the same, equivalent pace and didn't stay as synchronized as we should have.

So the discovery that you described, you know, we are kind of putting an antenna on here that makes us compatible, even with our ground forces, and we'll get that capability, understand it, put it into the programming system and we will build that. You know, we'll install that as a payload for command and control and also for coordination among ourselves.

What do we need for the allies is we build the next -- as I just described let's say -- we'll use your antenna as an example. The antenna, the tracking processes, if you will, and capability and the planning capability, that'd be great for the Navy and Marine Corps, but back to air-sea battle, how do we use that with allies? Is it compatible? Can we make it compatible? Do we get kind of step it up and have maybe two different modes? You know, one would be internal and one would be allied in that regard.

With regard to, how do we I guess I'd say baseline survivability and all those elements, we have to figure that out right now, what kind of ships would we put into a joint force forcible-entry scenario. I quickly, you know, threw up here a flow-forward staging base. That ship is built to commercial standards in many of its elements. We wouldn't put that in as one of the first ships to do forcible entry. We'd use one of our gray hulls (ph). That ship I showed up here is a \$600 million ship. The USS America that we usually brought on is over \$4 billion. So there's a scaling that we need to consider in all of that.

But anyway, I summarize with saying, that's why we do Bold Alligator and those are the lessons learned we will pull out of that and put into our program, meaning out budgeting, in the future, and our concept of operations.

O'HANLON:

Before I go back to the audience, one quick follow-up, because we talked a lot about China and now the allies today. I wanted just to ask for any update on how the Russian Navy is behaving and to what extent are you continuing to see them seek to be provocative in this very difficult 2014 year we've had with them.

GREENERT:

Well, I would say they're very busy in the undersea domain, and I'll leave it with that. They're not as busy on the surface domain. Out at sea many of the ships that we see, surface ships, I recognize as something that I learned -- you know, a few of my commanding days, and that's quite a while ago. They are building new frigates. They are building new destroyers. They're not not out and about so much. They're pretty active up in the air. Their long- range flights and reconnaissance probably more active than they have been in a decade in that regard. So they have operating money, clearly. They are out and about. They are operating professionally as always. They have probed up in the Alaska area, our -- what do I call it our (inaudible) if you will. We responded and they acted professionally in all regards.

So, so far so good in that regard. But I would call them more busy, more operations. Their focus is on the undersea and then the surface and then the air. That's what I have seen.

O'HANLON:

Thank you.

Okay, Let's take two questions here in the fourth row. See, take them together and then let's see if we can respond, and then we'll probably have time for one wrap-up round. So these two right here.

QUESTION:

Admiral James Quinn (ph). I'm a retired Naval officer. How are you doing with tempo of operations and how are you managing that?

O'HANLON:

Thank you. And then if we could add this one.

QUESTION:

Correspondent for the Central News Agency Taiwan. I am just wondering how important or how less important rule (ph) Taiwan plays in the state's rebellion (ph) policy. And also, I know that Taiwan is expecting to get technical support, or (inaudible), from state.

How the (inaudible)? How (ph) the steps (ph) is currently thinking?

GREENERT:

I think tempo, we have Vincent on a deployment now. Her deployment will be close to nine months. That's not sustainable. We have right now the Macon Island is on -- that's an amphibious ready group, and they are kind of -- those are the two big -- kind of -- I guess I'll call them anecdotes. They're fallouts from this sequestration issue, and I'll tell you what I mean in just a minute. She's on a deployment which is well over eight months. When we had. When sequestration hit us -- remember, it was sudden, and when that occurred, we -- because of a sudden loss of operation money and maintenance money, we stopped work on some of the projects in the shipyards. The Vincent, we slowed down dramatically, the Reagan, and the George Herbert Walker Bush. The Bush just got back, and she had a fairly long deployment, between eight and nine months.

When you stopped work like you did then, those that were on deployment stood to watch, that when we finally got squared away and got the money going again, and then we got the shipyards up again, people out of the furloughs, the hiring freeze lifted, overtime restored. We're trying to catch these guys up, get them through the shipyards and out on deployments. They're out there on watch, longer deployments. They finally come home, and now it is their turn to go on deployments. Theirs is longer, while we bring these guys back and get them back in.

So this has taken about two years, and that's the kind of impact that you have that has second and third-order effects. It affects the big decks, the nuclear carriers. It affects the SSBNs and SSNs also. Those are the public shipyards. Those are the federal employees we hire.

When you don't have a predictable budget when you do negotiations for the big-deck amphibs with the private shipyards, they're not going to, if you will, spool up to be ready in time. You don't have the work orders done. You get my point. This is just all slowed down. So we've got another year -- Vincent will be out there about 8 1/2 months -- of this longer deployments. When you get into the P-3, P-8, the submarine deployments, they're fairly notional, 6 1/2 months.

My target is 7 months. I think that is sustainable by all indications with our people, with our maintenance, with our training. What we can provide, which I think is reasonable and sensible, gives us that presence, and the ability to react, to spool up and react as necessary.

But we've got -- we need a stable budget. We need the current budget that we've requested, and we need time to bring the shipyard capacity up to where it needed to be before. So this is -- that's just how long this stuff takes in second or third-order effects.

With regard to Taiwan, we have responsibilities with -- a treaty with them. We will honor those responsibilities. We have a process worked out with our Department of State as to how we interact and you know, the -- both for human capital, if you will, intellectually if you will, and then exercise and what we can provide for assistance. And we're living up to that. We're continuing with that and expect to do.

So fairly deliberately laid out, not really a whole lot of leeway one way or the other in this regard. So unless there's something specific, that's about the best I can tell you right now.

O'HANLON:

Could you just clarify on that point, what is the guiding document? Are you referring to the Taiwan Relations Act? Or what's the specific...

GREENERT:

It's the Taiwan Relations Act. That is our commitment.

O'HANLON:

Okay, let's take two more and see how we're doing on time. That may be it. John Evans (ph) in the fifth row, and then over here on the side, take them together if we could, and then ask the admiral to wrap up.

QUESTION:

Good morning, Admiral. I'm John Evans (ph). I'm the Army fellow here at Brookings. I wanted to ask you to put your Joint Chiefs hat on for a minute and talk a little bit about your level of comfort or discomfort with an army that looks to be going well below 490, maybe 450 as the active force. I know you're predecessor was pretty vocal about what his thoughts were on the smaller strategic land force. If you could just talk to us a little bit about this. Thanks.

O'HANLON:

You can take this last question here, please.

QUESTION:

Hi, I'm Elizabeth Roll. I work with OSD International Armaments (ph) Cooperation, and you talked a lot about cooperation with China and I was hoping you could talk a little bit about the Navy's goal for cooperation and capabilities of our allied and treaty partners in the Asia-Pacific.

GREENERT:

Okay, sure. I share General Odierno's concern with regard to the sizing of the Army, because you know, we are a supporting element of that in the Joint Force. And what I mean by that is, okay, if we are going to resize any of the services, really the centerpiece of the land force, the Army, then what is the construct behind that? And what are we going to agree will be the limitations of our operations out there? And what is our tendency to do that? What has been -- you know, in the past, we have said, well, we are not interested in doing this, that or the other thing. But then as we say, the world gets a vote, and the size of stability operations.

Because a clear indicator, as we move anything from Army armor out to helos out, to all of that, you know, we can -- we are the kind of fill-in behind all of that, and we are seeing all of that right now with operations in Afghanistan and the (inaudible) operations.

And so I think we need to do this in a careful, deliberate manner. We did our own right-sizing of our personnel. It was 1 percent. We had 3 percent. We laid off 3 percent, or sorry -- 1 percent, 3,000 folks. The effect on morale and the trust factor was huge.

So what we can expect collectively of any of our ground forces and any of our services to size the force, yet make sure we maintain that trust and confidence and the covenant that we have with them, I think is important, and it's a joint issue that we all need to understand.

So the size, the readiness, the psyche and the morale of the ground force is a joint issue we all ought to be concerned with as we do this. We've got to do it very carefully.

I think the other -- in the Asia-Pacific allies interaction, I think in the nearer term, the concept of collective self-defense is a clear item that I'm watching, and this is with Japan; where that can take us, if it goes according to the plan set up by the Japanese government, then they can share with us in ballistic missile defense. It's defensive in nature. They have all of the sensors, weapons, command and control that we have. So that would be a big movement afoot.

Next would be countermining, in locations like the straits of Hormuz. Again, very defensive, collective in that regard. Required a little bit more -- coordination would be operating with our carrier strike group and assuming one of those missions of defense of the carrier strike groups, such as anti-air defense, and you know, all of the rules of engagement for that and the caveats associated. So that would be one area. Korea, we will see where we want to go in that regard. That's a matter of what Korea is comfortable with regarding coordinated operations, especially at sea.

Right now it's very tentative as they are feeling their way through, how much they would want to proceed in that regard.

So when it comes to missions I would say ballistic missile defense, there is opportunities there. Countermining, there's opportunities there. We've demonstrated this in a good way. The deterrent effect of coalition operations for countermining about -- actually it's two years ago now where we did the International Countermining Exercise. Pretty standard name. And 20-something countries came and demonstrated their interest and their capability and their commitment to keeping the Strait of Hormuz open. And that deterrent effect in Iran who was threatening, you know, at that point, to mine the Strait of Hormuz, to focus our attention our Countermining, not in Iran, but on countermining, but had a great deterrent effect, and changed really the behavior of the Iranian navy.

O'HANLON:

Well, thank you admiral. I'm afraid we have to leave it there.

GREENERT:

You're welcome.

QUESTION:

Please, everyone, join me in thanking Admiral Greenert.

GREENERT:

Thank you all very much. Thank you, Mike. I appreciate it.

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List of Speakers

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