

**Chief of Naval Operations  
Admiral Gary Roughead  
Remarks as delivered at the SNA National Symposium Banquet  
January 13, 2011**

Thanks. It is great to be with all of you here this evening. To walk to the floor and see the terrific capabilities and ideas that are being generated by industry and by our own institutions. It is terrific to be able to talk to real professionals about where the Navy has been over the year, and where we are going.

The last time I spoke to an SNA audience was in San Diego in late August when we were wrapping up our budget; the first stage of it. That is a never ending process. We were wrapping up our program submission, and I used a line from former President Kennedy that championed the risks of a *program of action* over the known costs of *comfortable inaction*. I am here to relay to you that our proactive approach, to find opportunities at hand – in a time of increasing demands on the Fleet and mounting fiscal pressure – is paying off.

You won't be surprised that Surface Warfare is at the heart of these efforts, and I would be remiss if I didn't thank Vice Adm. Curtis, Rear Adm. Thomas, and Rear Adm. Pandolfe for their leadership; for what they have done this past year, for Surface Warfare and for our Navy.

This has been a terrific time to be the Chief of Naval Operations. We have faced considerable challenges. I think for all of you who wear the Navy uniform, or watch the Navy closely, you know that we have been pushing the Fleet very hard. But we have acted. We have re-imagined our future. We have restructured ourselves. We have placed underperforming programs on track. We introduced affordable capacity into shipbuilding and aviation plans. We advanced capabilities to meet the most likely threats. We enhanced readiness and provided improved quality of life for Sailor's, our civilians, and their families.

We made hard decisions on Littoral Combat Ships, the DDG-1000, and CG(X). Those decisions were made with an eye towards relevance, technical risk, and cost. They have yielded great positives.

A fixed price on twenty LCS ships, right before Christmas, is not insignificant. For that I'd like to thank Sean Stackley. Not only for what he has done there, but for what he has done across the board within our acquisition community. Sean, thank you. We restarted DDG-51. We are moving forward on DDG FLT III. The Virginia Class is now at two per year. We are off to a good start for the replacement for the Ohio Class Ballistic Missile submarine. We have addressed Strike Fighter capacity. We have looked into the future of information dominance and unmanned vehicles.

We instituted a Total Ownership Cost approach to our procurement plans. We made priority warfighting investments in Integrated Air and Missile Defense, Anti-Submarine Warfare, Electronic Warfare, and Irregular Warfare.

We corrected course on an optimal manning vision which had unintended consequences for Fleet readiness at a time of sustained, unusually high operational tempo. We significantly reset operations and maintenance funding, improved and reinstated the engineered maintenance cycle and process that we had turned away from in our surface Fleet.

We returned critical manning to sea and regional maintenance centers. We expanded CNO maintenance availabilities to better plan, price and execute much needed maintenance. We expanded our basic training phase to give our crews that ‘white space’ they need to be proficient in the many missions that we ask of them. Under D.C. Curtis’s leadership, quite simply, we got ‘back to basics.’

We acknowledged the stress post 9/11 OPTEMPO would continue to produce on the force. We stabilized end strength and individual augmentee contributions. We better supported Sailor’s and their families with continuums of care and service so they can focus on their mission. Today, we recruit and retain the highest quality Sailors I have ever served with. We have earned national recognition from a host of venues for being a top 50 employer. We have received recognition in that regard that was awarded to no other federal entity other than the United States Navy. We are maintaining our unrelenting emphasis on leader diversity so that the best ideas to keep our Navy great are able to be heard.

And we made our position on the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t tell” clear. Combat effectiveness is what we provide as a Navy. Repeal will neither change who we are, nor what we do. The time is right, the time is now, and we will lead a prompt and thoughtful implementation.

Placing emphasis on our people while maintaining a forward force, holding the line on requirements, and having a strategy helped us seize opportunities, but there is much, much more to do. Now, we must take a realistic view of what is ahead and meet the challenges head-on to ensure a powerful and agile Fleet continues to answer the needs of the nation.

Our Navy provides the nation offshore options for an uncertain future, where we can expect sovereignty concerns to increase American reliance on credible seapower. Yet, for many of our citizens, the benefits of a strong Navy aren’t readily apparent. Although we are a maritime nation, we do suffer nationally from ‘sea blindness.’

This is not a result of the country’s appropriate focus on our current campaigns. The Navy is very active and committed to our fights in Iraq and Afghanistan. In fact, many of our citizens don’t realize that tonight there are fourteen thousand Sailors on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Navy leads seven of the twelve Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan. On any given day, thirty percent of the air support, in support of our troops on the ground in Afghanistan, are flying from our aircraft carriers.

This idea of ‘sea blindness’ is really not new. Adm. Nimitz observed the same on his last day as Chief of Naval Operations in 1948, not three years after our Navy spearheaded an unparalleled campaign in the Pacific Ocean. Regardless of the attention it garners, our control of and unfettered access at sea remain as vital as ever. Post Operation New Dawn – the operation in Iraq – and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan; that environment will see even higher

demands for naval forces. America's interests extend far beyond Iraq and Afghanistan, and so does our Navy. While our primary focus is on the Western Pacific, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Gulf, we remain active in every ocean. We are a formidable conventional deterrent, assuring allies and partners with our global presence and the sixty thousand Sailors and about forty percent of the Fleet that is deployed on any given day.

Looking forward, global trends in economics, demographics, resources, climate change and threat proliferation herald every greater demand, and may yet begin to cure 'sea blindness.' Regardless of any disorder that may result from these trends, productive economic activity at sea must continue for Americans, indeed for all who live on this planet, to enjoy the benefits of global trade.

By taking the long view, we have made smart, strategic choices in the midst of increasingly complex security, political, and economic environments. We have done well heading into this fiscal downturn as a result. We exceeded Defense Department efficiency targets and reinvested in balanced warfighting capability – and capacity. We did this based on our Maritime Strategy, now three years old, but germane in both flush and lean times. Four successive budgets, the Quadrennial Defense Review, and the Quadrennial Defense Review Independent Panel, were consistent with our imperatives.

Our program submission for Fiscal Year '12 funds our most pressing requirements and continues our investment in force structure even in the context of increasing fiscal pressure. We stabilized shipbuilding to deliver ten ships per year to put us on a trajectory to meet the 'floor' of a 313-ship Navy.

With the Information Dominance Directorate, we solidified our departure from a platform-centric approach to realize our future potential in unmanned systems and information dominance in what is sure to be an increasingly challenged information domain. Because of how we set it up, and the budget authority he will have, Vice Adm. Barry McCullough of the Tenth Fleet will have what he needs to fight in cyberspace at the speed with which it demands.

We are departing from unnecessary duplicative capabilities, and we will pursue Joint Interdependence – not most notably with the United States Air Force – to deliver that dominance across all global domains. With the New Directorate of Naval Warfare Integration, we focused on war fighting wholeness, which permitted us to address gaps and move early to preserve the access we have come to expect in our operations.

We heightened awareness of getting the Fleet we have to expected service life as central to a sustainable Fleet, an effort greatly enabled by our sustained emphasis on maintenance funding and renewed focus on how we will employ the force in accordance with national requirements and our regions of strategic importance.

We sustained momentum in important personnel and family readiness programs. We continued our emphasis on support for returning warriors with programs for medical and non-medical care to speed recovery and reintegration. We enhanced foreign language, regional and cultural skills

training, and began a more aggressive approach to the high-fidelity trainers and simulators that will prepare our Sailors for this competitive future.

We accomplished a lot. But the challenges which make this time different for our Navy persist and they will be there for the foreseeable future. As we think about that future, we must factor in some new fundamentals that we cannot wish away, and that we will not be able to address by staying wedded to what we have done in the past.

Cost increases in all of the Navy's main accounts continue to outpace the rate of inflation, resulting in a loss of purchasing power that must inform us as we move forward. Manpower costs - especially manpower costs- should be foremost in our thinking; the cost of pay, healthcare and benefits will increasingly affect our other accounts and will pressurize funding for operations, maintenance, and new construction. Developing systems and concepts without manpower as the primary factor will be a bankrupt approach.

We must wean ourselves off of supplemental funding as we go forward.

The rapid pace of technological change in today's world outpaces how we currently deliver capabilities; we must realize that our current processes won't serve us well going forward, particularly the excessive, inefficient developmental and operational test regimes to which we subject ourselves. We must rethink how we get 'speed to Fleet.'

Because of the world we live in, our focus on Information Dominance must continue to move us beyond platforms as the information age changes how we deliver capabilities of enduring interest to the nation.

Although it appears to be years away, the looming prospect of block end of service life, across several classes of ships that were built in the 1980's when we get into the 2020's, requires action in the very near term to chart a course through that very challenging period.

This is the context in which we will plan and program for a ready, relevant, and dominant Navy. The Maritime Strategy guiding our investments, the multi-mission forces that are available to us, and the finest Sailors that have ever sailed will give us confidence that the future is still ours.

The hockey great Wayne Gretzky once observed: *A good hockey player can skate to the puck. A great player skates to where the puck is going to be.* We need to think more boldly still about where naval warfare is going to be tomorrow if we want to be that great Navy tomorrow.

I'm not alone in observing that the United States faces a test to its global leadership today and for the foreseeable future. Yet no nation is better-equipped to lead in the international system, and no service is better-suited to present the agile and the right power we will need in the emerging security environment. The United States' global presence in defense of free access to the global commons remains invaluable, and cannot be replaced. Our partnerships and alliances will be more vital than ever, and have developed such influence because of American leadership. Our Navy sustains that presence and those partnerships most efficiently and effectively.

Much is made in the media of new technologies rendering fleets obsolete. But the need for us to come from the sea endures, and we will always go to sea in ships.

As a Navy, we must rededicate ourselves to preserving offshore options that simply don't reside anywhere else. The character and the integrity our Sailors display everyday in every ocean must epitomize that dedication, for leadership is most crucial in adversity – and never more of a privilege.

As Surface Warriors, we can be proud of our efforts to seize opportunity in the face of significant challenges, in the greatest traditions of our Navy, and in the best interests of our nation.

Thank you very much.