

Remarks by
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Thank you, Admiral Shuford, for that kind introduction. It is always great to be in Newport, a town with a long history as a laboratory and birthplace of ideas, leaders, and strategies for the United States Navy.

The theme of this year's symposium is a very important and thought-provoking point of departure for this group of scholars and Naval officers.

Today I would like to share with you my thoughts on maritime strategy from a point of view somewhat beyond a strictly maritime perspective. The discussions at maritime strategy symposia such as this one often focus on classic maritime missions. But I think it is important to note that there is a broader spectrum of maritime operations to consider. For that reason, it is worth looking at the Navy and Marine Corps through this lens from both an historical and current perspective.

The Navy and Marine Corps must remain prepared at all times to conduct Naval operations at sea. Such traditional priorities as force projection from the sea, supremacy in the littorals, and protection of vital sea lanes will always be our core missions. Indeed, let us never forget the inspiring words of Douglas MacArthur on importance of never losing focus, as he said:

“And through all this welter of change and development, your mission remains fixed, inviolable. It is to win our wars. Everything else in your professional career is but corollary to this vital dedication.”

But while never forgetting our core naval missions, we should also recognize that America's political leaders have long viewed the Navy and Marine Corps from a larger perspective as well, and we can see a commonality of activities today that have a long historical precedent.

Today the threat from piracy is centered off the Somali coast. In Thomas

Jefferson's day, the depredations from Barbary pirates were the chief threat to our economic interests overseas. Our leaders then, as today, turned to the Navy and Marine Corps to protect our interests.

Today, the U.S. is extensively involved in combating human trafficking. A century and a half ago, ships such as an earlier name-sake of the newly-christened TRUXTON conducted anti-slavery patrols. From the beginning of the Republic, presidents of the United States have used the Navy and Marine Corps extensively.

In the mid-18th century, President Millard Fillmore turned to the Navy when he charged Commodore Matthew Perry with the mission to carry a letter to the Japanese Emperor, thus resulting in the historic opening of Japan in 1854. But it was perhaps President Theodore Roosevelt—himself a former assistant secretary of the Navy—who was the first president to fully appreciate that the Navy was much more than just a navy.

The Navy's traditional mission of fighting other fleets did not preclude roles and missions beyond warfighting at sea. Greatly influenced by Mahan, and drawing on America's history as a maritime power going back to Jefferson's reliance on the Navy and Marine Corps to battle the Barbary pirates, Roosevelt believed that great powers needed great navies to play a leading role on the world stage. To that end, he believed that the Navy was uniquely equipped to serve in what could be termed diplomatic capacities in support of our interests around the world.

There are a number of reasons why the Navy enjoys advantages in the diplomatic arena that have resulted in its prominent role as an effective instrument of our policy of engagement with other nations.

Navies have been naturally inclined to cooperate and communicate with each other throughout history, with the code of the mariner imposing a duty on all the Sailors to help a fellow Sailor in distress, friend or foe. Our history of cooperative ventures with mariners of other nations is combined with a unique international presence that our port visits represent. Together they have resulted in a long track record of successful Naval involvement on the diplomatic front, with many initiatives that continue to bear fruit.

Theodore Roosevelt's idea to send a fleet of 16 U.S. battleships on a world tour, beginning in December 1907, was a dramatic gesture aimed at audiences both at home and abroad. To the world, the message was that the United States had arrived as a

significant world power, outward-looking, and filled with goodwill towards every nation. To the public of this great country, the message was that you have a Navy to be proud of, and that the strength of the U.S. Navy is a primary source of our status as a nation of influence and power.

The impact of the Great White Fleet on both audiences was enormous, with consequences that resonated for years and even decades afterward. As cities in South America, Australia, and elsewhere around the world vied with each other to turn out the biggest crowds and host the most extravagant parties, the tradition of the U.S. Navy playing a leading role in our nation's engagement policy was established.

The cruise also established a precedent for responding quickly to disasters to provide humanitarian assistance. As the Great White Fleet was taking on fuel in Port Said, Egypt during December 1908, the fleet commander received word that a terrible earthquake had struck Messina, Italy. Four of the ships were then immediately dispatched to Messina. The Sailors and Marines who arrived at the scene of devastation then rendered assistance in every possible way to the survivors, making a strong, positive impression on not only the Italian people but on world opinion at large.

At home, the impact of our historic world cruise was equally momentous. President Roosevelt's Great White Fleet had an enduring influence on the attitude on the people of the United States toward their Navy. The impressive display of seapower helped to impress upon the minds of the public an understanding that their country's security and place in the world required a strong Naval capability.

One way we have been able to accomplish our global objectives is through medical diplomacy. For example, American missionaries established a dispensary and then a hospital in Bahrain in 1893.

The American Mission Hospital in Bahrain, which still operates, has treated members of the royal family and countless other citizens of Bahrain from all walks of life for more than a century now. Bahraini officials point to the construction of that hospital as a seminal event in their country's history, and our contributions to the health and welfare of Bahrainis continue to earn us gratitude and goodwill. That hospital not only relieved suffering and healed the sick, but it became a powerful and enduring symbol of warm, friendly U.S.-Bahraini relations, and was certainly a key factor in Bahrain's

decision to host the 5th fleet.

In this century we have witnessed an expansion of this kind of goodwill venture to other nations as well. Recent disasters such as the tsunami that struck Indonesia in December 2004 underscored the Navy and the Marine Corps' potential to conduct medical diplomacy in support of friends, allies, and nations that we would like to turn into friends and allies.

The potential impact in earning goodwill among nations is significant. In Pakistan, a country where Osama bin Laden was viewed favorably by 65 percent of the people, favorable views of the United States approximately doubled after our relief efforts there in the wake of the tsunami and a devastating earthquake. Similar results have been reported in Indonesia as well.

Today, medical diplomacy has become an important tool of the U.S. government, with the hospital ships MERCY and COMFORT routinely embarked on world cruises to areas of the world that are in desperate need of both basic and advanced medical care.

Not only are hospital ships engaged in medical diplomacy, but combatants are as well. As we speak, USS PELELIU is embarked on a four-month humanitarian mission to the Philippines, Vietnam, and a number of Pacific islands, serving areas with the greatest health care needs and showcasing one of the Navy's best diplomatic tools.

The Navy's diplomatic function has also been increasingly engaged in area of counter-piracy. The successes we have achieved over the last few years have come about as a result of navies working together in pursuit of a common interest.

We see a similar story today in the protection of international commerce through the Strait of Hormuz. The multinational task force in the Arabian Gulf is a coordinated effort that not only protects our economic interests, but establishes mutually beneficial relationships with countries that are important to our national security in many areas.

We enjoy advantages that the State Department is not designed to possess, and, indeed, the Department of the U.S. Navy, in many aspects, acts as the operational arm of the diplomatic corps.

Our assets give us the ability to conduct Non-Combat Evacuation Operations, the Lebanon NEO last July being only the most recent example. In fact, sending U.S. Marines to the rescue has a long history, and presidents have sent them to recover our

citizens—such as when Lieutenant Presley O’Bannon and his detachment of seven Marines were dispatched to Tripoli. Sometimes even the threat of putting Marines ashore is enough to bring about the desired result—as was the case in Liberia in 1996, where Marines off the coast stood ready to intervene.

Diplomacy is a valuable tool, yes. But diplomacy backed by a force of Marines five miles offshore, with helos on deck and ready for launch often carries more weight.

All these operations show that we have at our disposal significant resources not otherwise available to the State Department—to include Marine Security Forces at embassies—that provide us with a range of engagement options. This continuum of operations is advantaged by the fact that the Navy’s presence can be non-intrusive, and modulated as conditions require.

The importance of this feature has been underscored in recent years. Having experienced the limitations on access to foreign bases at the beginning of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, we have been reminded once again of the utility of having U.S. Naval assets available. Given the dynamic nature of coalitions, reliance on having access to bases ashore cannot be guaranteed. But with our ships we do not need a permission slip, and we can count on them, regardless of the shifting political winds that sweep the geopolitical landscape.

The Navy and Marine Corps are unique among the services with sustained presence, and minimal footprint—features that are particularly valuable in peacetime conditions. As conditions change, the Navy and Marine Corps can be counted to respond as the situation requires.

But there is another aspect to Navy-based diplomacy as well. With a military force conducting diplomacy, there is an implicit understanding that, when diplomacy fails, other measures can be brought to bear on a situation. In other words, there is both a carrot and a stick. And carrots without a credible stick do not get you very far—especially in dangerous, violent neighborhoods.

The U.S. Navy has historically been a major provider of dissuasion and deterrence forces. One could even argue persuasively, in my view, that the Navy’s strategic deterrence assets—as much as anything else—won the Cold War.

Today the Navy is playing an increasingly critical role in deterrence and

dissuasion. SSBN's, of course, have long been the mainstay of our deterrent force. The survivability of SSBN's in the event of an attack was, and remains, the ultimate deterrent factor.

In recent times, however, there has been a significant adjustment in our deterrent posture, with capital ships, particularly aircraft carriers, providing deterrent and dissuasive value as well, offering the commander in chief a full spectrum of response options. To that end, there has been a shift in assets to the West Coast in response to changing conditions, and recognition that a strategic dispersal of assets needs to be maintained.

Strategic dispersal of our fleet is both a protective measure and a passive deterrence measure, and it is one important factor in both our homeporting decisions and our maintenance of transient piers. The vulnerability of critical assets to an attack—whether nuclear, chemical, biological, or conventional—requires strategic dispersal calculations to enter into the equation.

Given these conditions, the principle of strategic dispersal will be an important consideration in our Force Laydown decisions.

Another critical aspect of our deterrence posture concerns the Navy's growing contributions to missile defense. The nuclear triad—long the cornerstone of our nation's strategic posture—has been redefined, and the Navy's role in it is evolving.

The concept of strategic defense has been transformed into a need to execute both defensive and offensive operations. This change—driven by real world events such as North Korea's drive to achieve nuclear weapons capability—prompts an obvious question: Should the surface component be a part of strategic deterrence?

Our assets are part of a layered defense structure, with AEGIS cruisers providing both sensors and shooters to our missile defense capability. The geographical leverage that Naval forces provide gives us the potential capability to neutralize problems early—specifically, during the all-critical boost and near-boost phases of a missile launch. Only the Navy has the access we need to intercept threats as far away from our shores as possible.

The leverage of sea-based missile defense also gives flexibility in dealing with a dynamic environment from both an adversary and coalition point of view. The location

of where today's threats might emerge and where they may target is characterized by geographical uncertainties. What is more certain is that the number of countries that possess ballistic and cruise missile capability continues to trend upwards, increasing the number of scenarios in which missile defense could be employed. This makes missile defense provided by Navy ships a clear and compelling option.

The recent successful test in the Pacific performed by USS LAKE ERIE demonstrated that we could simultaneously defend the country against a ballistic missile while also defending the ship. With this success, the Navy's potential in this area has clearly moved to a much higher level. It also calls into question the objective of the Navy's missile defense capability—should it be used to protect the United States, its allies, and our interests, or should it be limited to protecting our own forces?

It is clear that we do need to broaden our perspective—the range of potential threats extends far beyond those posed by, for example, a North Korea. National leaders, given that reality, will naturally turn to the Navy to address this challenge.

The success we have enjoyed in developing missile defense is dependent on our knowledge of the airspace, and the complete integration of sensors and shooters. But that integration does not go far enough. To have a complete sea-air-space picture, we also must develop a similar system, integrating sensors and shooters in the maritime domain.

We have already seen the value of the Automatic Identification System in terms of safety, information exchange, and navigation assistance. In many ways, AIS is an extension of what has already been done with airspace, conferring benefits to all participating nations. With Maritime Domain Awareness, we are seeing more and more nations willing to cooperate, sharing information that is in the interest of all who participate in this global tracking system.

We must also recognize, however, that there will be limitations and constraints on AIS when operations that go beyond trade and transport are involved. There is a clear requirement to supplement AIS to provide combat support capability to our maritime forces.

MDA capabilities will greatly enhance our ability to conduct the core Navy and Marine Corps missions of force projection from the sea, supremacy in the littorals, and protection of vital sea lanes. MDA will also enable us to work more effectively with our

international and interagency maritime partners around the globe.

From the beginning, our MDA efforts have included the Coast Guard. And as our MDA capabilities expand and evolve into a truly global capability, our cooperation and coordination with the Coast Guard and international partners will also grow. MDA supports our engagement efforts with foreign nations, complements missile defense, and serves our national security interests in every vital region, thus making MDA a cornerstone of our overall maritime strategy.

I have briefly touched on several bigger-than-the-Navy areas which figure prominently in the overall strategy deliberations of our national security policy leaders. This is not to suggest that any of our more traditional roles will become less important in the decades ahead.

The truth is, commanders-in-chief have always—especially since Theodore Roosevelt—looked upon the Department of the Navy differently.

As a maritime nation with maritime interests, the United States Navy and Marine Corps are destined to figure prominently in our overall military strategy across the entire range of military and diplomatic operations.

I urge all of you include in your discussions of our maritime strategy a discussion of that strategy from a non-maritime, more global strategy perspective as well.

Presidents since the Founding Fathers—who had a visceral understanding of the need for a strong military against capricious tyrants—have turned to the Navy and Marine Corps to meet this country's national security challenges. And there can be no doubt that they will continue to do so in the future. Thank you.