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The Pacific Theater ...

Where the Rubber Meets the Road

Admiral Thomas Boulton Fargo assumed duties as Commander U.S. Pacific Command, at Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii, on May 2, 2002. He is the twentieth officer to hold the position. As the senior U.S. military commander in the Pacific and Indian Ocean areas, he leads the largest of the unified commands and directs Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force operations across more than 100 million square miles. He is responsible to the President and the Secretary of Defense through the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff and is the U.S. military representative for collective defense arrangements in the Pacific.

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...Two years ago, from the Pacific Fleet vantage point, I talked to you about our strategic plan called PACFLT 2000. I highlighted a number of our goals including “knowledge superiority,” and detailed how you might help us achieve it. And I know that (Admiral) Denny Blair over the past two years, provided an update on several programs to include the Pacific Command’s C2 architecture, exercise requirements, Joint Mission Force and enhanced Allied Interoperability employing COWAN, APAN, and MPAT, among others. Those are all alive and in fact doing very well.

So, I thought rather than cover similar ground, I might be able to best set the stage ...by talking about some of the larger issues of how we see today’s security concerns in the Pacific and the priorities we have set to deal with the fundamental change that is evident in our lives since 9/11.

...I am often asked what worries me? There are a number of concerns and they’re reflected very clearly in the national military strategy. That strategy directs us to assure our allies and friends, deter aggression, dissuade competition, and if necessary, fight and win our nation’s wars. So, first and foremost, we worry about the potential for conflict on the Korean Peninsula. After all, this is where the stakes are very high even though the likelihood of conflict is low. Second, we worry about a miscalculation between strategic rivals (and here I’m talking about China-Taiwan or India-Pakistan). Next, transnational threats like terrorism demand our attention. We’re also concerned about the potential for instability caused by a failing nation-state and the resulting humanitarian crises that could flow from that instability. Finally, and certainly in my case, we have the need to keep U.S. forces trained and ready now and in the future to handle the full spectrum of security concerns.

At Pacific Command, our priorities flow from these concerns. The first two are “sustaining and supporting the global war on terrorism” (and it’s no coincidence that I list this one first), and “improving the readiness and joint warfighting capability of the forces.” The third priority, which deals with our focus on the “quality of service of our men and women in uniform,” has been fundamental to our success. But for now, I will talk about the last two priorities in some detail: “Reinforcing what I call the ‘constants’ in the Pacific Region” (to include bilateral relationships, and the commitment of forward-deployed forces) and, finally, “promoting change and improving our Asia-Pacific defense posture for the future...”

So let me start with constants. I thought it important people understand from the outset of my tour, that the foundation of the U.S. security equation in Asia and the Pacific has been — and will continue to be — our long-standing bilateral alliances. We currently maintain five treaties. They are with Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Republic of the Philippines and Thailand. We have good friends in places like Singapore and Malaysia and we’re developing new relationships with India and other countries. We also recognize that much of what we do will necessarily be multinational in character (such as addressing transnational threats). All of these relationships, whether bilateral or multilateral, support our mutual or shared interests. And it is the forward presence of U.S. forces and their combat capability that underpins this security arrangement.

The center of gravity in Asia-Pacific remains Northeast Asia. This is where the important dynamic of Korea, Japan, China and Russia and the influence of the United States come together. Our alliance with Japan is the most important one in the Pacific and has been fundamental to regional stability and security for almost 60 years. Despite current economic concerns, the United States and Japan together account for almost 40 percent of the world’s economy, comprising a huge percentage, with immense stability and security implications. A strong partner in the region’s security, Japan is home to the U.S. Seventh Fleet, acting as both a gracious host and crucial ally.

In the wake of September 11, the Japanese Diet acted with speed to pass antiterrorism legislation, enabling historic changes in the employment of the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force and facilitating crucial airlift and replenishment operations in the CENTCOM AOR. Japan has a very capable and professional military, and continues to move toward a normal security architecture. From a strategic context, we are not looking to reduce any combat capability forward, but we’re always looking to eliminate any unnecessary footprint. That is where you come in and we’ll talk to it more, shortly. All in all — in my opinion — our relationship with Japan has never been stronger; it is as good as I have seen it.

Korea. I have to say this is where the rubber meets the road or where the stakes are the highest for the entire theater. This relationship has been a keystone for security for 50 years, and it is my strong belief that our continued partnership and presence will transcend any future reconciliation in that subregion.

But there is still plenty here to worry about. North Korea's forward-deployed army is a formidable force and immediate threat, and recent admissions of a nuclear weapons program bear out our long-held concerns. Certainly, as we work through these concerns peacefully, keep in mind that we won't reward unacceptable behavior. Meanwhile, we are ever mindful of the fact that we are guests in South Korea, and are working hard to minimize the adverse impact of our presence on our hosts there. The Land Partnership Program, for example, which was just ratified in the Republic of Korea is just one initiative to further this cause. The Republic of Korea's support for the Global War on Terrorism has been simply outstanding — in the form of medical and sealift support, airlift and replenishment operations, and extensive financial and humanitarian aid. Their actions serve well to reinforce the strength of our alliance.

It is clear to me that China seeks to be the dominant influence in the region — and to pursue this goal diplomatically, economically and militarily. Their economy is growing at a rate of nearly 10 percent per year. Diplomatically, they are reaching out throughout the theater, increasing their influence. Militarily, we've noted a few key developments. We see increased amphibious training in the last few years (with an exercise currently ongoing), the determined development and deployment of short-range ballistic missiles, and an acquisition of third and fourth generation military capabilities (like the KIL0 SSK, Su30's and the Sovremenny). And we have concerns about China's seeming reluctance to abide by norms of international law for international air, sea and space access. On the other hand, we are encouraged by China's announcement of regulations for controlling missile technology exports and by their support for the Global War on Terrorism.

The obvious sticking point in our relationship is China's unwillingness to renounce its use-of-force option against Taiwan. The Taiwan Relations Act and nearby shipping lanes make Taiwan militarily significant to Pacific Command. Any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means — including boycotts or embargoes — is a threat to the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region. At the same time, these two nations have an interesting symbiosis. China is a burgeoning job market for Taiwan, and Taiwan is a capitalist democracy and trading partner 100 miles away. With both countries in the World Trade Organization, the economic relationship may well lead to improved relations and reduced tension. China is not our enemy. We desire a constructive relationship, including military-to-military ties. We will move ahead, providing this relationship features reciprocity, consistency and transparency...

Singapore and Malaysia have been tremendous partners in the Global War on Terrorism. Singapore has long been a strong partner to us in the region, and our relationship with them is only getting stronger. Demonstrations of their support abound. First, they've played a very noteworthy role in the Global War on Terrorism, discovering and interrupting a number of terrorist attacks. Second, they are the first Asian nation to join the Container Security Initiative, which pre-screens some of the six million shipping containers that enter U.S. ports every year. And if you don't think our sea lines of communication are important, consider the recent impact of the West Coast dockworkers' strike to our economy. And they are great supporters of U.S. presence in the region, host-



Feb. 24, 2003, Adm. Thomas B. Fargo (right), Commander U.S. Pacific Command, welcomes Republic of the Philippines Secretary of Defense Angelo Reyes, at the U.S. Pacific Command Headquarters. Reyes met with Fargo to discuss issues of mutual interest including counterterrorism. (Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Clint Beaird.)

ing a modest logistics presence. (As you know, they have a magnificent port at Changi, designed — and willing — to accommodate our most capable aircraft carriers.) Lastly, Singapore recently hosted the Chiefs of Defense Conference and did a marvelous job. It was the first-ever conducted outside of Hawaii.

Meanwhile Malaysia has arrested dozens (at least 62) of terrorists, mostly from the Jemaah Islamiyah, the Al Qaeda surrogate operating in Southeast Asia. Malaysia also provides exchange of military intelligence and approval of overflights for the air bridge to Southwest Asia. Other encouraging Malaysian initiatives include the prospect of a Counterterrorism Training Center in Kuala Lumpur and the recent trilateral agreement between the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia on counterterrorism.

I traveled to Indonesia in August (2002) and consider it a very important place. I don't know if you realize, their democracy is both new and very large — the second largest democracy in the world. They have the world's largest Muslim population inhabiting over 17,000 islands with several thousand miles of coastline. Currently, Indonesia is wrestling with a huge range of issues. Their recent historic Fourth Amendment legislation provided some crucial improvements, including the elimination of the Indonesia National Military (TNI) influence in the legislature by 2004. These efforts make me hopeful that their governmental reform and our growing appreciation of Indonesia's critical role in regional security will build momentum for peaceful Indonesian democratic development. At the same time, their Chief of Defense, General Sutarto's open audit of some of the TNI-owned businesses is also a step in the right direction.

But, we remain concerned about the presence of terrorist forces in Indonesia, most graphically illustrated by the recent bombing

in Bali. Bali has had a profound impact on the region, producing a heightened sense of vulnerability as well as significant economic impact. As a result, Indonesia is taking on the important task of rooting out, investigating and punishing suspected terrorists.

The Republic of the Philippines serves as a great illustration for both bilateral and multilateral cooperation. It's an important front on the Global War on Terrorism due to both its location and population, and because of their vulnerability to Al Qaeda and similar groups' sponsorship of the Philippines' domestic terrorists. Last year, the Republic of the Philippines invited us in to assist them in developing a framework for building their counterterrorism capabilities. We found that comprehensive and realistic training fundamentally improved both planning and execution. As a result, the Abu Sayyaf Group was dramatically reduced, with many of ASG's leadership eliminated or captured. Their operations have been drastically disrupted, and their funds and sponsors have been drying up. The operation served as a great template for successful training and execution, and provided the lesson that military force has to be matched with civil action to address the root causes that give rise to terrorism in the first place.

Having said all this, you have all heard about the recent bombings to include one that killed an American soldier in Zamboanga City. With Abu Sayyaf leadership (Khaddafy Janjalani) calling on all followers to "strike its enemies," we're probably witnessing a significant development that will undoubtedly alter our future plans and operations in the Philippines.

Australia remains one of our oldest allies and a special partner in the Pacific. We've worked hard to eliminate the technology barriers between our forces with the intention of strengthening our combined capabilities. Australia demonstrated their leadership in taking a lead role in East Timor's security. They continue to demonstrate regional leadership and to make significant contributions as a partner in the Global War on Terror. For that matter, they've contributed to every significant military effort in my memory, regarding the security and democratic development of nations in the South Pacific. And like the United States, they have tragically suffered at the hands of terrorists, most recently in Bali. I met with Prime Minister Howard recently and it is clear this despicable act served only to strengthen our combined resolve to counter this threat. In my opinion, our relationship with Australia is as strong, if not stronger, than it has ever been.

We are also encouraged by new, burgeoning relationships. India has been an essential partner in the Global War on Terrorism — most notably in their provision of shipping escorts in the Malacca Strait shortly after 9-11. We are also engaging in bilateral component commander level discussions, and I plan to visit India next month.

Now I have walked you through our region to illustrate the specific, but varying importance and concerns each element presents. Ironically, it is not the "parts" perhaps, as much as the sum of the whole, that most challenges us. That brings me to our fifth priority, "promoting change and improving our Asia-Pacific Defense posture for the future." Our security challenges — and those regional conditions to which we must be especially attuned — dictate the capabilities we need both now and in the future. In his book, "The Lexus and the Olive Tree," Tom Friedman tries to capture the incredible effects of post-Cold War globalization. And I

think we recognize globalization's profound impact on political, economic, social and military change both domestically and internationally. Most of this change is certainly for the good, but there is a downside. The ill effects include the broader impact of crises (across borders) combined with a shorter time to respond. We know too, that the information technology that powers the global economy can also serve as a conduit for destructive agendas. All of this means that our economic interests and our security interests are linked like never before. The instantaneous character of the global economy and the global information network mean that all of us will prosper — or suffer — quickly and collectively. And just as the war on terror is a "global war," so too are our other security interests interrelated. As we think about security transformation — and there's a reason I didn't say "military transformation" — we grapple with a number of issues, as do you. At Pacific Command, we animate, or what I call "operationalize" the strategic guidance we have received in order to meet the security imperatives we face in this theater.

...We're looking at building on our Command and Control arrangements, broader access, sustained forward Force Posture, updating our Plans in a significant manner, dramatically improving our Capabilities, and developing New Operating Patterns and Constructs. At PACOM, our C4I objectives include an information grid that is seamless, secure, and interoperable, that leverages commercial technology advances, and accommodates evolution. As you move forward with your own set of initiatives, I want to ask you to address some of the IT issues and imperatives that follow.

First, I think, is architecture. One of the primary tasks of the Combatant Commanders is to define those capabilities we need to execute our duties while meeting the existing and projected threats to our national security. Currently, there is not a clear blueprint for us to bring together the myriad system solutions into an end-to-end decision making capability. Each system is developed independently requiring the Joint Task Force or Combatant Commander to do much of the integration needed to bring all required information sources together. Addressing this challenge involves multiple stakeholders including system developers, our military and policy makers, all working toward a common set of requirements with a common view of the information infrastructure — not a Navy view, Air Force view, or Army view — it must be a *Joint and Combined* view.

In all fairness to you, we in defense leadership positions, OSD, Joint Staff and Combatant Commanders, need to get together and provide a comprehensive framework that will enable you to provide the solutions that we need to maximize operational effectiveness and combat power. The Global Information Grid, or GIG, is a great start, but it needs more rigor to enable the integration of service-developed solutions into the coherent information infrastructure that we need to support Network Centric Operations. At PACOM, we have developed an information capabilities framework that maps solutions onto the GIG, and are currently in the process of aligning our systems to this framework through the Joint Information Capabilities Enhancement Environment, or "JICEE." We are piloting this effort in the implementation of current and future C4I systems into our new headquarters building. You should come and see it.

Joint Forces Command, through SECDEF's Battle Management

Command and Control initiative, will be pivotal in fleshing out the GIG. We expect this to become the comprehensive system implementation environment that will get new technology into the hands of our warfighters sooner, more effectively, and we hope, more efficiently. That brings me to my next challenge ...

Efficiency. In my opinion, only half of the promise of IT transformation is being met. We have challenged you with providing two broad improvements: much greater Capability and some modicum of Efficiency. Capability and our capacity continue to improve (although our appetite for capacity may never be satisfied), but clearly, efficiency lags. Supporting infrastructure is not being reorganized to my expectations. OM&N costs for IT continue to rise, the amount of space in the new headquarters that is dedicated to servers and supporting IT infrastructure is astonishing, and we are struggling to effectively assess progress on IT initiatives such as NMCI. We have more people than ever working IT issues. It's important, but we need to streamline our IT forces. In effect, we need to do a better job of measuring our progress by determining our information technology return on investment.

Reachback is next. One of my primary transformation concerns is to reduce our forward footprint while maintaining and even increasing forward combat power. A primary method of footprint reduction is the consolidation or elimination of unnecessary forward infrastructure, especially through the use of reachback capabilities. One of my favorite examples is meteorology support. We have METOC — weather stations throughout the world, occupying buildings and land — requiring people who could be put to other uses. METOC information should be widely available via the network — a desktop icon — sensed and analyzed remotely rather than forward in theater.

Reachback is going to be a big part of our future construct. As we develop smaller, more mobile headquarters, information technology must provide us the means for achieving "expertise" forward. Reachback will serve as a critical link between the forward located Joint Task Force Headquarters and the information provider — whether PACOM, JICPAC, or the Air Operations Center at Hickam AFB to name a few. As such, we must continue to pursue initiatives like dynamic bandwidth management. One answer to our growing hunger for increased capacity is to ensure we minimize or eliminate channelized bandwidth — bandwidth which lies idle, fenced off for a specific purpose. I realize security concerns frequently drive this design feature, but it's wasteful and deserves your continued attention as you progress toward a more Network Centric Operational capability.

Assuring our Allies and Friends — not a new topic. I also mentioned that we are updating our plans to accommodate the new security context. One of our primary efforts here is to ensure our allies — our partners in Asia-Pacific security — join us on this transformation journey. Our aim is to improve their capabilities and relevance in future conflicts so that they can assume a greater share of the burden for their own security — not less. This will not happen if the IT improvements we effect do not consider both joint and coalition interoperability concerns. We are making great progress in this arena through both the APAN and our COWAN initiatives. Again, there are significant and multilevel security considerations for this effort, but inclusion of our friends and allies is indeed an IT imperative.



Feb 25., 2003, the USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) prepares to tie up at Kilo Wharf in Apra Harbor during its first port call to Guam. The Carl Vinson Battle Group is conducting routine operations in the Western Pacific as part of America's commitment to our friends and allies in the region. U.S. Navy Photo.

Last, is Information Assurance. Tom Friedman's "dark side" of globalization applies not just in the marketplace, but in the C4I world as well. Protecting information and the infrastructure where it is gathered, delivered and stored is a necessity. This protection must be engineered from the outset, not added as an afterthought. Having said that, the security measures we engineer into our systems must not reduce our information sharing agility, reducing the lethality of our forces when they need it. In fact, we need to improve our information agility without compromising our security. Managing the delicate balance between "protection" and "sharing" shows up on my scope more and more frequently.

I hope this survey of our security issues in the region provides an adequate backdrop for other discussions, including the huge contributions of our component commanders.

There is no question that we all have a big job ahead of us. The Global War on Terrorism is challenging us in new and difficult ways. The enemy's tenacity and disregard for life itself, is reflected today in their persistent and vicious activity. But this war provides us with an insight too.

Warfighters and planners are successfully and dramatically employing the available information technology to thwart terrorism at each turn. The intelligence we gather has identified personnel, logistics bases, transport, and equipment to capture and eliminate enemy combatants, while often protecting innocents. By aggressively working electronic signals, databases, and banking transactions, we have stalled the operations of many terrorist cells and helped to reveal terrorist plots before their execution. Information technology — both its capabilities and its hardware — is fundamentally helping to win this war.

A man named A. Lou Vickery said, "Nothing average ever stood as a monument to progress." The task at hand will require our very best efforts, and I know you are up to the challenge.

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