

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

**Current Strategy Forum
U.S. Naval War College**

17 June 2014

Adm. Greenert: Thank you, Dan. I appreciate it very much. It's really an honor and a privilege to be here.

So what am I doing in blues? Well, I wanted to kind of look like most of the people here, but also I wanted to have kind of a prop, so I wanted to make sure everybody understood that we're here to get business done here; and if you don't mind, as we get to work we've got to roll up our sleeves. If I were wearing whites and I started taking my shirt off, you'd say what is that all about?

I am really excited about this. We have got to get down to the basics, if you will, brass tacks, and I'm talking about strategy. As Jamie said, I'm a submariner, on a nuke, and I have a lot of budget background so I figured we ought to deal with figures somewhere, laid out. What's the definition? And not build in bias. I'm still [inaudible] my strategy, [inaudible]. Neither one is going to work. We have got to sit down and do this. Sometime in the winter, an idea cropped up and [inaudible] who run a strategy discussion group. Many of you were there. So I'd really like to kind of talk about what's your vision or how do you see the next year at the moment, and I'd like to do that. Here's an opportunity to get this out, get the discussion of the strategy out.

Then I reached up and said [inaudible], and I go wait a minute. We [inaudible] things all right. Then the Current Strategy Forum idea came up and I said that's it, I'm hijacking the damn thing if I can, and I asked the Secretary, and he said yeah. We're going to come up and do the forum, we're going to talk about strategy. I want [as many] people, different kinds of folks, and they've got to be, and I'll tell you why in a minute, and then we've got to talk about strategy. And this is just the beginning. It's great to have you here. And everybody's good the first time, but are you going to come in February, the next meeting? Are you coming in February? I guarantee you the hotels are going to be cheaper.

So I'm taken you back to kind of the story, and many of you have heard this so I'm sorry, but bear with me. So, two guys are out hunting. And they've got a hunting dog there, and this dog is pretty amazing. It's scaring up birds in the air. But it's not all that vicious, but it is gregarious, it runs hard, it's loyal, and pretty smart actually, but it's running all over the place and he said it's an amazing dog. What's the name of that dog? And the guy says Commander. Really an amazing dog. So I say, you've got to promote that dog.

So they get together the next year and the big dog -- He says the dog's great. The dog's smarter now, much smarter. It runs around and does things efficiently. Knows a lot of other dogs. Networks very well. He goes that's a good dog-- So I promoted that dog again, it's Captain.

So they get together the next year and he said hey, man are you ready to go some hunting. You go what happened? He goes well, I promoted the dog to admiral and all of a sudden he's sitting on the porch barking at the other dogs.

So there's a lesson here, ladies and gentlemen. If we're going to get strategy done it's going to depend on the admirals to go over and bark at each other. And then say you ought to do it, you ought to do it and you ought to do it. It's these other folks out here in the room, some of whom Jamie stood up that I want to get embedded. And it's also those of you that have shown a great interest about, as I mentioned, the strategy discussion group. We've got the War College Foundation. We've got the Naval Institute here. We've got bloggers, we've got the Navy League here supporting it and Grey Beards galore. We've got work to do. I encourage all of you, I want to thank you all for coming here very much. It's a pleasure to have you here.

First of all, Dan, thank you for allowing us to highjack and for being our host. As you may know, Fred Carter is doing a lousy job so.. We're going to promote him and send him off to the Naval Academy to be our Superintendent. This is going to be a wonderful job for you at.

But Jamie Foggo, he's the guy that kind of master minded this thing. If you like the way this came together you need to go out and get with Michelle Howard. I think she gave him some leeway to sort of put that together. So you've got to get with Jamie if you like what you see and you want to get some changes. This was the place to have it.

I want to acknowledge some folks who have a deep respect for what we're doing here today. Ambassadors Middendorf and Peter. Thank you all for your service through the years, especially in the past Middendorf. So many times here and there you've given back to your Navy in song, in service, and of course your country. Thank you very much for that.

Admiral Hogg is here. Two full generations, and I consider a generation about ten years of leaders. So if you don't like what you see out there, Admiral Hogg, go look in the mirror, okay? Don't look at me. I got through before you came. And I know you'd regret that. But things happen and I want thank you so much. Two generations of leaders through the Director of the Strategic Studies Group, not to mention a fantastic career.

And a man I have deep, deep respect for who is really to me a hero and that's Admiral Guillermo Barrera who is working up here today. The Chief of the Colombian Navy. If you want to read about strategy done right and done proper there's a book, *No Lost Causes* and it's the story of the transformation of the country of Colombia and this man here was a part of that working with his President. *No Lost Causes*, I guarantee you'll like that book. It's a book about strategy.

So we're here as Jamie alluded to and as Ted said, this is the intellectual capital of the Navy. This is also holding steady but this is also where we have intellectual capital, if you will, from the proper noun, neck up here. Our boot camp is kind of the Naval Academy and ROTC for our officers. And we've got kind of a seed school, the Naval Post Graduate School, thinking about strategy and strategic issues.

We may have people of significance here today, scholars, historians, students and practitioners. Where fleet experience meets academic theory, how about that. Any my staff says, that's like iron sharpening iron. If it works well it does, otherwise it's friction, heat and sparks and you don't know what you've got. But done correctly, as you all know, we can do this right.

So this Current Strategy Forum is for thoughts and opinions. Opinions, in my view, are very much welcome. I want you to come up, and we're going to have more of these kinds of sessions and you've got to engage. I prefer that when we do that, I don't mind reading about it. When you read about it, first of all, you've got to have to have the time to read it. You have to give the right one. And I love writing but I also, as we

develop our strategies would love to have you come in here. We've got speakers who are strategists, scholars, and leaders and everyone is a contributor. If you're silent then in my view you consent, and you acquiescence.

We chose the invitation list very carefully. We'll build from this. And remember, this is the first iteration.

So my goal today is to use this strategy forum to initiate a series of discussions. We've got to hang together or we're going to hang separately, as we look out to some very very difficult challenges of the future. It's time to get started. We're going to have to compromise, those of us that have have deep embedded thoughts and we're going to have to coexist. I'm confident academics and historians and the fleet who have to go out and get this thing done.

All aspects and all theories are welcome here at this session, series of sessions, and I'd like to engender with a comfort level though where the Naval War College, academics, the fleet and DC can all coexist. We have to do it.

The eligibility for being part of this, for contributing, you have the active duty or reserve or retired, a civilian, a contractor, or somebody in academia. So you're all here. If I haven't said it enough I'll continue to say it. We really need all of your input.

So I'll start a dialogue, that's my job here and set some foundation. I'll give some remarks, be happy to take questions and answers, and then we've got a great speaker following me.

So let me talk a little bit about the environment we face. And the importance of strategy, and a way ahead I think as we move along.

Challenges. What's it like out there today. The environment that exists. It's pretty amazing isn't it? You know, as CNO, I look back, having worked for a few, one very close, folks as the Vice CNO, and watch things from not only the out in the fleet where I've served, the CNOs gets out and about in the theaters at different periodicity. And in the past if you get to a theater once a year for a really good visit that's pretty good. So you multiply that around the different theaters, and you travel about five times a year. So for what it's worth, I've been to Asia-Pacific three times in the last four months, six times in the last 13 months; been to Europe four times in the

last three months; been in the MidEast two times in six months. My point is, what's that? It's a balance of our budget in Washington, DC and what we've got to do out in the world today. And what I'm telling you is in my view I've got to engage a lot more. I'm spending less time, I have to delegate more to the important issues of budget out there. And I've got to get out there to overseas to talk about partnerships. There's a lot of that because this is a complex and dynamic world. And ladies and gentlemen, make no mistake, everywhere I go on all those trips people look to us to lead and carry this world, the free world through the complexities we have. Symmetric and asymmetric.

We've got competitors that are traditional, and they're in every single domain. As I speak today we've got two pretty big undersea challengers. We're doing fine but we haven't had these challenges in quite some time.

Cyber is like a warm war. You do down to Ft. Meade and you get into certain buildings and every time we're building I'm inspired and I worry about things going wrong. Cyber is going on day in, day out. And we are being challenged. There's a lot of destabilizing forces for both the economy and the peace. It's human originated, but it's also mother nature.

You all know of the climate challenges we have today. I was in the Arctic in March in a a thing called ICEX where we think we've done this for decades. We take two submarines, we go up, we exercise, so we know what we're doing up there in the Arctic. It's run by the Arctic Submarine Lab. A very good thing. Up there about 200 miles north of Dead Horse, Alaska, which is about a third of the way from Canada and west Alaska all the way north in the Arctic Ocean. So it's not the North Pole as some people think. So, what's my point? Really an elaborate, well run, Ice Camp. And I said we've got to do this at least every other year. We have got to go up to figure out what's going on there. We're going to do that. We might need to go annually to figure out what's going on up there because it's an issue.

We obviously have a wide array of issues. State driven, counter-insurgency, transnational, North Korea, Iran, Iraq, the situation in Pakistan, East China Sea, South China Sea, narco terrorism it's still running in the south in the Caribbean and all around there. That's still going on and we're still down there. Tribal issues. Europe is back on the table security wise. It is back on the landscape. We were there last week. We went out to meet the Chiefs of the UK, Chief of the U.S., we sat

down with our respective Chairmen and talked about the different things we've got to do. The message out there to my counterparts was we need you back, back where we were before. That asymmetric capability that the UK partners bring, especially the Royal Navy. We've got to get out there. Queen Elizabeth will have christening ceremony here in the next month. They are building a submarine here that's high end. We need that. We'll talk about that. The Arab Spring is still evolving, you all know about that.

So what does that mean for our Navy? For your Navy in the future? In my view I believe the nation will need a Navy to be present where it matters, when it matters, and I've read that phrase and I've said it over and over and over again, but a few days ago fortunately we had a carrier strike group where it mattered when it mattered and in the matter of a few days, hours or days, we're where we need to be. So we're ready to go. Just like we were ready to go into Syria. Just like we were ready to go in the Red Sea. Just like we were ready to go only a little over a year ago in North Korea. Kim Jong-un launched a ballistic missile. We said okay, we'll shoot it down if need to, because we can do that. Because we can be where it matters when it matters.

Progress will remain our mandate, ladies and gentlemen. I firmly believe that. We're just as comfortable being the supportive commander for undersea warfare, that's our big ballistic missile defense afloat. That's our gig. We're supporting things such as close in missile support. We'll support in Afghanistan. Uh huh, it's still going on. We're still doing that. And expeditionary warfare with our partners in the Marine Corps.

Our compass for these decisions, these long range decisions to be able to do that. It's strategy. A good strategy. A strategy that suits the evolving additions that we have in this really, really complex world.

Let me share with you my concept and what I believe is the importance of a Navy strategy is. And I don't have this nailed down. These are my thoughts and observations. I need help. We your need help. We need your thoughts, like I said before.

Now to some, the concept of strategy is pretty simple, but I've struggled with it sometimes. What I struggle with is what I am telling my commanding officers and our leaders we really need to do in this strategy. If they read it, they say, what do these

words mean? What is this word that we've invented inside the Pentagon perhaps or in the beltway. That's not in my vocabulary or it means something different. We have to work on that. My strategy has to be sensible to a commanding officer and a chief petty officer. Billy, Suzy, we need to talk about this. And we have to be able to talk about it. Because if we can't do that, we're not communicating. So I struggle with the defense strategic guide to a point before we could take it and break it down. And that's a pretty well written document in my view.

So how it translates to commanders and leaders, and oh by the way, our allies. I spent a lot of time over this last period, what does this mean? Well, it's like this. So that takes a lot of beer, coffee, wine and tea to sit down and walk this through. And we can do better and we have to do better. I need your help doing that.

Strategy is over-used sometimes. It's overused. Do you mean plan or vision, your objective, tactics? What is it we're calling a strategy? So at the end of the day, it's different things to different people. Sometimes the document is nothing more than well, we've got an end, ways and means so we've got a strategy. And you go, the ends for what? What are those benefits? Where do you go from there? If it's what we try to do sometimes in the Pentagon is say let's take this strategy and we'll run it down through an O-plan or defense planning strategy and we'll be able to precisely do that. So, that's very good. The problem is so what have we accomplished by doing that? And the O-plan is what people call the strategy phase zero. What's the strategy? Well, we're doing this [which ends up being] the phase zero of the O-plan. They say is that really a strategy? I don't know the answer to that but I'd like to wring this stuff out because I think we're confusing our kids. Because I'm having trouble getting through. We can do better and I know we will when we put our minds to it.

In Washington in the world that I live, the budget drives the strategy. It's not all that bad, because the money that they give you is our reality and what we can do. We buy and employ the Navy that we can afford.

Others say that strategy is a narrative. It tells you who we are and it's a message inward, message outward, and it tells the story. That kind of agrees with me that strategy needs to do that.

Now at this Current Strategy Forum as I said before, we've got scholars that can help us think about it. I just met with Sir Lawrence Friedman. He's done a nice job. He's written a pamphlet for those of you, on strategy. It's actually, I don't stand here and endorse books but... I started reading this book, and it deals with strategy in a whole host of ways. If you haven't read this book I would recommend it to you. What he actively discusses is Moses and the Ten Commandments and the Jews and their plight with the Egyptians. And I've got to tell you as a Roman Catholic, I've read Exodus and I've seen the movie with Charlton Heston, Yule Brenner, "so let it be written so let it be done." And the ten plagues, I never had it right. You read this book, you will understand the ten plagues, God's strategy with the pharaoh, with Moses, the whole thing. You think I'm kidding. I'm not. Sir Lawrence Friedman goes through quite a bit. But it's called *The Strategy History*. It's good. It's one more way to look at strategy at this point. How has history looked at strategy and good strategies? Strategy is sometimes thought of as the art of creating power, that's sometimes thought of as the art of creating power. How to create the best that you can with what you have.

So for me, as we go forward, I think our strategy has to ground us, around us, has to set our foundation, and it has to guide us and help us anticipate the challenges. This is important, to invest accordingly to those challenges, focus our effort, be judicious with what we have. That's people, money and time. That's what we give our commanders. We give them people. They have to use them judiciously, their time and of course the money that they have. And we have to articulate our needs. What we're about to give our allies and our partners and our adversaries as well.

As I said before, I've been through this, tell me about the QDR and my counterparts in the UK, Japan, France, Canada, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia just this year, where that was an agenda that I identified. It's very important to our allies. They follow us very closely on what we're going to do with our strategy.

So it's got to be comprehensive. To me there are compulsory aspects of our strategy -- deterrence, strategic, nuclear and conventional. Sea control. That needs a little refinement. What is maritime air superiority, what do we mean by undersea dominance and to own that domain? How are doing power projection? That's clearly an important part of what we do. So from sea, land and space.

Maritime security, that's where our allies and our partners come together. And access. To get where we need to get in every domain, the cyber domain, the undersea, surface, air, when we need to do it and as long as we need to do it. That's a lot about AirSea Battle.

So what do I want now? What do I tell Jamie Foggo and what I'm asking you all to think about to think about as we go forward?

We need to approach this thing as a continuum. For starters, the strategy itself is a framework for action. It's not necessarily an end point but a lot will say that strategy has to define an endpoint. So tell me, fill in the blank, what can this thing do? Well, there's a host of things it can do. What does it do? Well that would be, again, precisely wrong. I don't buy that, the Chairman doesn't buy that as we go through the QDR. We can't do that. I just don't think that will work and it's not going to be helpful. But what we do need is we need process, we need people and we need a system for our strategy. We need a process to draft, implement and evolve it. I don't want to write it, put it up here and say that's that? We'll say that until somebody else comes along in some number of years and says this is kind of old and dusty where its been sitting on the coffee table.

We need people, people like you and those that Apostles that are confident in their thought and understanding of strategy, have diversity of thought and a willingness to. We need a system to produce and to nurture these connectors.

So here's what I want to do. One, we've got to refresh the current strategy and that's in progress. That's part of the process. We'll take a look at, and I'll ask you to take a look at it, Jamie and the group with Michelle Howard. We've put together a pretty good framework if you will for doing that. I need it scrubbed by not just the academics. I need the junior officers to look at it. The mid-grade officers and the senior officers. We need all hands on deck to take a look at it and see if it makes sense for us. By the way, this is a sea service in the end. Signed by the Marine Corps commandant, Coast Guard Commandant, and the CNO. So Foggo will give you these in the next few days.

Number two, we need to clarify the Navy strategic enterprise. That's the systems part of this. Organizations and staffs that will develop, communicate and assess our strategy. We're taking

a look at it in a systematic way, not periodically not just when people get together. I want to be more organized in that aspect. Put the talent and the energy in this in a focused manner and make sure that the strategy that we have today will be connected.

Three, I want to reestablish a relationship between the strategy and the budget process. Good luck with that, right? No, I think we can do that because when I have, when my staff brings me a proposed budget, they say well here's the shipbuilding plan, the aviation plan, here's how many this's and that's. What can it do? Number one, do we strategic deterrence, is that fully funded, and what are my picks?

So the strategy should be a means, a lens or a filter that we run our budget through to make sure that what we are putting together we haven't gone outside the strategy of where we want to go, and it makes sense that what we put together, we'll get what we think it will get. Get us where we think we need to go. So I want to get that connection back together.

You see a lot of the budget process, you'll see something printed that's really popular around Washington, winners and losers. How many of these things you bought? But what does all of that mean? What does that get us? We need to establish that relationship.

Number four, we need to nurture a Navy strategic cadre of people. So we need an educated future forces, graduate programs, masters programs at the Post Graduate School and the War Colleges. And Ted I commend you for what you've done on the Navy pilot program, master's program. That's a good start. Let's take it from there and move out.

We need positions to pick mission strategic specialist carefully, keep in the mainstream, make sure that their moving on, and attract the maritime strategists and assign them so we can get some sort of return on investment. Don't plug them in out there and they produce nice things and they just sit there. Put them where they're best utilized.

And last, number five, we need strategic mentorship. Officers and civilians, who are interested in the strategy, give them strategists and our young people, and talk about strategy. Because we need your help. We need Peter Schwartz's and Robbie's, and all you guys to continue to do that, and nurture. And bring someone around. I'm a recovering budget officer and

Dave Rosenburg, a long time ago, put his arm around me and said come along with me on Thursday night. I said I don't have time for that, that's when Cheers is on, that's when Frasier is on. He said you're going to have to defer that TV. So I went to that and I learned so much more.

We need to continue to nurture to be able to do that.

So let's work at reinvigorating the strategic mindset. We've got the talent, we've got the energy, and we've got the ideas. They're all out there in and around the fleet. We need to focus, nurture and align the future.

I want to thank you all for coming to this forum very much. But, I need you to listen, I need you to learn, I need you to speak up, I need you to engage. For those of you out there in whites in the shoulder boards I need to meet and I need you to write it and I want you to publish your ideas. You are the future. You will decide where we're going to go. We'll try to align it build a framework for it, but you're that future

So all of you, I look forward to your feedback. Thank you very much for listening to me. I'm ready to take your questions.

#