SQUARING THE CIRCLE: ADMIRAL JONATHAN W. GREENERT ON AMERICAN MILITARY STRATEGY IN A TIME OF DECLINING RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION:

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SPEAKER:

ADMIRAL JONATHAN W. GREENERT, US NAVY

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JON KYL: Ladies and gentlemen, I’m Jon Kyl. I’m a visiting or senior or something fellow here at AEI. I think it’s visiting. And it is my pleasure this morning to help us engage in what is a third in a series of meetings with our chiefs of our military branches.

And, today, we are especially fortunate that we have Admiral Greenert here, the CNO, the chief of naval operations of the United States of America, especially because of the events that are unfolding in the Middle East and other issues on Capitol Hill, I think we are very fortunate that Admiral Greenert could be with us here today. So it is my pleasure to introduce him.

He is our 30th chief of naval operations for the US Navy. A native of Butler, Pennsylvania, Admiral Greenert has served at every level of command, to include command of the USS Honolulu, the 7th Fleet, the US Fleet Forces Command, and, now, as chief of naval operations.

Following command of the USS Honolulu, Admiral Greenert was presented the very prestigious Admiral Stockdale Award for his visionary leadership. He’s the recipient of a myriad of other awards and honors and commendations. We owe him a debt of gratitude for his distinguished service to our country. Our Navy could not be in better hands.

So, ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Admiral Jonathan Greenert. (Applause.)

ADMIRAL JOHNATHAN GREENERT: Thank you, Senator.

MR. KYL: Thank you.

ADM. GREENERT: Thanks, Senator. And thank you for your service, taking care of our sailors and our Marines and our servicemen during your time in the Congress. I deeply appreciate that.

Thank you all for the opportunity to address you today. My name is Jon Greenert and I’m a service chief. And I think I’ve got the best job in the world, frankly, because I get out and about and I get to see our sailors and our Marines, our Coast Guardsmen, airmen and soldiers, and they’re doing a remarkable job.

As we look around the world, you know, it’s dynamic and there’s a lot of stuff going on, and we’ll talk about that, but it’s the people who are our asymmetric advantage. All the technology in the world is great, but without the right people, forget it. And that has been our asymmetric advantage.
And this is the 40th anniversary of the all-volunteer force. And I think it’s a good idea to take a minute every now and again to be thankful that we have a generation and have had generations of people willing to step up and serve like that.

Let me, if I can, talk a little bit about Navy update today, what we’re doing out there today, and what I think we’ll be doing for a while, some budget challenges that we have out there. And I’ll talk a little bit about the long-term sequestration impacts, kind of how we see it as we plan out there into the future. So can I have the slide up, please? Here we go.

Six hundred and thirty thousand people in your Navy today, 320,000 active, 110,000 Reserve, and 200,000 civilians. So, as you can see here, we have 285 ships today, about an average of 95 deployed. And this is about a 90-day average. Today, there are more out there here and there due to operations as we positioned around the world. But we’re about 10 down in this deployment piece. That is we were at 105 deployed about a year ago. And that is a factor of this last year of the budget limitations that we’ve had.

Presence remains our mandate. We have to be where it matters and we have to be ready when it matters. And I think where we are postured today and the things we’re prepared to do is a clear example of our ability to, when required, to quickly position ourselves as necessary and offer options to the National Command Authority. We reassure allies. We deter aggression and ensure that the US interests around the world are properly served.

We have about a third – pretty easy math there – of our forces, of our ships – excuse me – deployed. And we had about – that’s about 33 percent, right? Well, we had about 30 percent about in 2001 and we had about 25 percent before that, in the ‘90s. So you can see that more of your Navy is out and about by ratio as we’ve gone through the last decade and some time.

A little bit about where we are today. Go to the next one, please. If you look out there, in the Easter red, this is where the destroyers are, approximately. The Nimitz is down there, in the Red Sea. And that’s the Nimitz carrier strike group. It’s not just the Nimitz and her air wing, also her escorts: three destroyers – two destroyers and a cruiser I think literally. And then, let’s not forget the Truman carrier strike group is in the Gulf of Oman so where it matters, when it matters, able to reposition out there very quickly.

I would give you a little factoid here. You might recall, a while back, we moved four of my – actually moved eight mine countermeasure ships to – four – excuse me – four countermeasure ships to the Arabian Gulf and we moved two back. We’re about to move two more back to the Pacific Command theater of responsibility. The capability remains the same. We’ve been able to evolve in the Arabian Gulf and our capabilities in mine countermeasure.
And my point to you is we are still continuing our rebalance to the Pacific and that’s a small tad of that. This rebalance to the Asia Pacific, despite operations around the world, despite Mideast operations continues. It has slowed down. The continuing resolution of ’13 and sequestration has slowed it down, but it’s moving ahead.

And it’s about forces. We are moving forces to the Asia Pacific region, the first kind of tangible effort of that, clearly, clearly tangible is the Freedom, who is continuing her deployment down to Singapore. There will be more from Joint Strike Fighters, first deployment from the Triton, which is the Broad Area of Maritime Surveillance, to eventually littoral combat ships, to Japan and continuing down to Singapore. So it’s forces. But it’s also capability.

The Western Pacific remains our benchmark for capabilities from anti-submarine warfare to electronic warfare, to surface-to-surface warfare, all of those we benchmark the Asia-Pacific. Our home port migration to 60 percent west, 40 percent east continues as ships are being commissioned and as ships come out of overhaul. So that is continuing a pace.

And it’s also about intellectual capital. We are continuing our advanced exercises. And we’re stepping up a little bit our operations with Japan, with the Republic of Korea, with Australia, with Singapore, with Indonesia, who wants to do more today.

And I will meet, starting this weekend and into next week, with my counterpart, who is the head of the People’s Liberation Army Navy, Admiral Wu Shengli, as we continue our mil-to-mil relationship evolving and the maturing of that relationship. You probably know today we have three PRC ships going to Hawaii. There are two headed to South America and the Peace Ark – excuse me – their hospital ship continues operations. We have operated with Peace Ark recently. So there’s an evolution going on. And it’s all about the intellectual capital, if you will, capacity, as we look to the Asia-Pacific region.

I recently took a trip in May to Japan, Republic of Korea and Singapore and put eyes on what’s happening out there. And the message back that I got clearly was, you know what? We see that you are rebalancing to the Asia Pacific. We see the tangible nature. We look forward to this continuation as we go through the decade that you are going to continue that rebalance. So, again, the budget is going to slow it down. Mideast operations cause a little hitch in it here and there, but the fact is we are continuing that rebalance.

I’m focused for 2014 in four areas that I would pass to you. The undersea domain – I’m very comfortable where we are in the undersea domain. I like to say we own it. I get reports from time to time when our folks come back, our submarine commanders and I’m very comfortable that we can do what we need to do, what your country needs to do in the undersea domain.

Also, the electromagnetic spectrum – to me, that’s a big part of our future, the ability to detect, the ability to jam, the ability to understand it, the ability to maneuver in
it, the ability to understand what we are putting into the atmosphere, if you will, into the electromagnetic spectrum is very important and a big part of our future.

Our Arctic roadmap continues at pace. About 18 months ago, the oceanographer of the Navy, probably about two years ago, actually, came and said, well, I think we’ve got about 15 years before there will be major traffic up in the northern areas. And about a year ago, he came and said, well, I think we’ve got about a decade before we have operations on there. So we are looking hard up there, what is the appropriate amount of presence, what’s the appropriate amount of discussion with our allies.

I look forward to talking about the Arctic with Admiral Wu Shengli. I talked with Admiral Viktor Chirkov, chief of the Russian Navy recently. And we have our people getting together and sorting out what is the appropriate protocol, if you will, and presence for all of us, including the Coast Guard, including our northern NATO nations in the Arctic as we continue thinking of that.

The Navy Marine Corps future operations – how are we going to integrate together, as the Marine Corps comes back to sea? And General Amos and I have talked about quite a bit. Our exercises show that as we look at concepts for the future, matching up with our ships and their equipment for the future. So those are my big four.

But an area that continues to have my full attention is sexual assault. This is a challenge for my time, for our time in the Navy, for our time in the military. And make no mistake: we are at this challenge every single day.

For us, it is four key areas I think that would sort of summarize what we’re after. One is prevention, and it’s about a climate of dignity and respect for our people. We owe it to them, those that join. Your sons, daughters, nieces, nephews, anybody that joins our military deserves that. And it’s unit leadership which will make sure that happens.

It’s about victim response and advocacy that our folks who are victims, that they have a special victim counsel, that it is easy for them to report. There are 10 different ways and one of them involves the chain of command to report an assault. And it’s to eliminate the perception of retribution so our folks feel comfortable reporting this awful offense.

It’s about investigation, make sure we have the right litigators. And we do. We’re getting there, let me say. We’re not completely there, but we’re making good progress in that regard. Investigations are taking less and less time to bring to fruition and to completion. It’s about having the right senior review of these things and getting on with the process and bringing this to accountability, pursue aggressiveness in our prosecution and make sure that we publish the results so that our folks can see that we’re very serious about this and there’s a tangible outcome for this pursuit. And we’ll continue to assess this effectiveness we go through, through the years.
I’ve had other areas – if you’ve heard me before read what I write, I had four areas – one was sexual assault. The other was suicide. And we are making progress in this regard. The resiliency of the force is showing better. And I get feedback from that. Our suicides are down. I wish I could tell you precisely why. I don’t know precisely why. I know that the force feels more resilient and we talk to them in that regard.

Gaps at sea, our manning at sea – we are doing – we are making measured progress in that regard. I can see it in the manning and I get the feedback from our people. And we’re getting a better handle on our op tempo, particularly our individual people. (Audio break) – where do they – what are their operations? As they go from unit to unit, what is their op tempo and we called individual tempo. And we’re doing pretty good in that regard. I’m reasonably happy.

But there are a bunch of challenges. So a few words on that. The effect of sequestration, the continuing resolution in fiscal year ’13 pretty much came about as we predicted and as we testified to. The budget reduction was about $11 billion to us, to the Navy. And we were fortunate enough to reach back to prior year money, which hadn’t been fully obligated, and pull that forward into ’13, and it helped to mitigate that.

But that’s a one-time operation that we were able to do. We, in fact, had to cancel five ship deployments in fiscal year ’13. Our surge capacity, the ability to respond here, those ships that are back here in the continental US, usually we have three carrier strike groups and three amphibious ready groups able to respond within a week. We have one now and that’s going to be the story in fiscal year ’14 as we look ahead. So it’s a reduction in surge. That’s where a lot of the – if you will, the reductions in the budget kind of manifested themselves.

We’ve done very little shore maintenance upgrades. And if there’s an area that I’m concerned about and I have to watch closely, it is our shore readiness. This is where we’re taking a lot of the reductions and we’ve got to be careful of that.

So as we look into ’14 – we had about 11 billion (dollars) reduction in ’13. Well, it’s 14 billion (dollars) in ’14. It’s 10 percent. We, again, have, as you probably have read, have exempted manpower. And it’s the right thing to do. So that means instead of 10 percent per appropriation, the appropriations that receive a reduction, non-man power, get 14 percent reduction.

So what’s going to be the impact? Well, subject to any action and help from the Congress as we move ahead, we probably have to cancel about half of our surface ship availability. So that’s 34. We’ll cancel a lot of aircraft availabilities, about 190. And last year, we cancelled about 90. So we’re getting a backlog that is concerning in that regard. And it would take a long time. If we restore the budget after ’14, and said, OK, tell you what; you got full-up operations and maintenance budget, it would still take about five years to get that backlog in aircraft maintenance down.
Navy wide, we’ll reduce training for those who are not going to deploy. And that gets back to that surge element that I mentioned before, reduction in that regard. So those that are not deploying in fiscal year ’14 will have less training.

We’ve got – we’ll have some air wings that will go to what we call tactical hard deck, which means they’ll fly, the pilots will fly, and the air crews will receive training at a level which is really just above what we’re comfortable with for safety of flight, and it gets them at a point where when they get ready to deploy, they can ramp up relatively quickly. There’s nothing magic about it. It’s a statistical point, not where I want to be. And I will be pursuing to see if we can get more flying money to train our pilots above that level and get our kids to sea more often in fiscal year ’14 as we look for reprogramming opportunity, the ability to move money. So, again, our surge capacity I predict will be about one third of the norm as we look into ’14.

Now, remember, sequestration is – and we’re assuming it occurs in ’14, FY ’14 – it takes reduction in every single account so our ship building reductions, which we were able to attenuate with prior money in ’13, will take a hit in ’14. I would see loss of a littoral combat ship there, again, without help, and a float forward staging base, which is an important part of our future, and advanced procurement for a Virginia-class submarine and for a carrier overhaul. We might lose two more – might lose a submarine procurement in ’14 and a destroyer, again, if we are unable to reprogram, to move money into those ship building accounts from other accounts.

So these will be challenges. These will be issues we’ll be working with the Congress as we move ahead. In aircraft, we’ll probably lose about 25 aircraft, and if you say, well, what kind, I’ll say there isn’t any that won’t probably be lost, from helos, to P-8s, to F-35. They’ll all be affected by this because it goes to every single account.

Hiring freeze will probably continue through that period. And there’s a great potential we’ll have to do a RIF, a reduction in force, in our civilian workforce, and so we’ll start a voluntary program, probably immediately in ’14, offering programs for voluntary retirement to help attenuate the need to have to do a reduction in force.

The key to all of this is this transfer, being able to transfer money to get reprogramming for us in order to have a balanced approach. And if I were to estimate what I think we need, we need about $1 billion to get into the operations and maintenance account and about $1 billion to get into the procurement account so we can get that into ship building, which will be my number one priority, our number one priority in the Navy.

Now, if you look out beyond ’14, if you look at ’15 through, say, the rest of that 10-year period that the Budget Control Act has affected, we’re looking right now in the building, in the Pentagon, among the services, we’re building an alternative look from FY ’15 to ’23 to say, OK. If this continues and we just rather than doing this year by year, we just look at it, what would this mean?
And the Strategic Choices and Management Review was a snapshot of that. It took scenarios and said, well, if we looked at this this way, this would be the impact. And it helped provide the secretary of defense that understanding of what kind of scenarios might be out there. So we don’t have the scenario now but we have scenarios that we kind of lay in there.

My approach to this is going to be to make sure we maintain a credible and modern sea-based strategic deterrent. That’s my number one program, the SSBN-X and the current Ohio program, along with the command and control features and along with the extension of the missile.

Next, we need to maximize forward presence using the forward deployed naval force. That’s the concept we have in Japan and the concept we’ve been offered in Rota, to bring ships, bring our sailors and the families over there. We get great leverage from that but also to forward stage station ships also so forward presence.

Three, we’ve got to have adequate readiness. The ships that are deployed have to be ready because it’s all that much important in a smaller budget with a smaller Navy that that Navy which is out and about is absolutely ready.

We’ve got to make sure that our asymmetric capabilities continue to be developed, the undersea domain, electronic warfare and the electromagnetic spectrum, the electromagnetic rail gun, our laser technology which is coming along. And you probably know, we are deploying a laser gun next or this coming summer, if you will, in summer of ’14, I should say, to the Arabian Gulf, and we’re looking to bring along the electronic rail gun.

Cyber and people. Remember, people are asymmetric advantage so we’ve got to do that right. We will reduce force structure in this plan, but we have to do it while preserving the right capacity to at least do a one MCO as we look out into the future. And we will have to reduce procurement. There’s no doubt about it, but I’ve got to look at the industrial base and make sure that, as much as possible, we’re doing this in a deliberate and planned Navy.

So that’s kind of the principles of this look ahead. Let me give you a scenario. If you say, well, OK. What might you look like? And a scenario could be, in the future, if you take 2020, and you say, well, what was your plan, some of you may have seen this, and say, well, the plan was to get to 295 ships, with 116 planned to be deployed, and that’s in the red here. And you say, a future, if we had to retire a number of ships, might be a 250 ship Navy in 2020 and able to get about 96 ships deployed.

Now, a couple of thoughts about this. This is really leveraging forward – operating forward, as I like to – is one of tenets in there its using the forward deployed naval force, forward stationing ships. It’s bringing along ships like the littoral combat ship, the joint high-speed vessel, the float forward staging base, and putting them in key areas of the world where we can leverage their usage. And you get sort of a picture like
that. There is not a lot of surge here. This is a Navy which – you can do the math, 97 – 96 divided by 257, you see how much is forward and out and about.

So the reduction of our manpower associated with such a future where we reduce forces is completely connected to our force structure. And what I mean by that is we man equipment. That’s the principle in the Navy with regard to manpower where some of the other services, they equip their manning. So it’s all about where our people are. And we have it about right now. We’re just about where I want to be on the number of people per unit. So it’s about retiring units, if you will, if you want to get a lot of savings out there as opposed to reducing people.

There’s also a compensation entitlement reform and an overhead reduction which is part and parcel to a future look at that and we are studying that closely.

So I’ll close now and say, look, preserving presence is key. That’s our mandate, to be where it matters and to be ready when it matters. And we’ll continue that rebalance to the Asia Pacific. We’ll be moving ships forward. That’s kind of a key element as I look into the future. And we’ve got to remain ready forward so we can do the things, like I showed you in the little graphic today, be able to respond quickly to what the nation needs. But throughout it all, sailors and our civilian workforce, our civilian sailors are going to be the asymmetric advantage, are going to be sure that we keep a force which is whole, W-H-O-L-E, and not hallow. So I look forward to your questions. And thank you very much. (Applause.)

MR. KYL: Admiral Greenert, thank you very much. Why don’t you join me here? And what we’ll do now is have an informal conversation. And I’d like to take your questions. Let me begin with a question that may be on people’s minds. And then, that will give you the opportunity to determine what you’d like to lead with here.

Admiral, obviously, on the minds of many folks is how we will be able to deal with the situation in the Middle East right now, potentially some action with regard to Syria. The Navy is a big part of that.

Could you speak just a little bit to both our capabilities without getting into the tactical operations, how – this is the second part of the question – how these cuts in funding may affect your approach to such an operation and how it could be affected, let’s say, five or six years down the road if it continues?

ADM. GREENERT: Well, the focus that we’ve had for those forces that we put forward today – and the ships that you saw here in position were all forward deployed so we haven’t surged anybody over for this operation, or potential operation specifically. They are ready. They were organized, trained, and equipped, and delivered to the combatant commanders fully ready for a vast spectrum of operations, including operations that they may be asked to do from launching Tomahawk missiles to protecting, you know, the ships themselves over in that regard.
So I’m very confident in that regard. We have them loaded when they go over. So we will continue that into next year. And that will be a centerpiece, as I build any alternative POM or any future budget that those ships that we put forward are ready to go no matter what the number in the Navy are. And then we get as many forward as we can using the principles that I discussed from forward deployed naval force or rotate crews, whatever that might be.

MR. KYL: Yes. Let’s just go right ahead. First of all, yes, sir.

Q: Sure. I’d like to follow up on that – (off mic). Congress has developed a plan that would give you 60 to 90 days. Do you need 60 to 90 days to do a limited strike? What would you estimate 60 to 90 days would cost you? And do you think that perhaps you might need a supplemental to do something like that? And then, also, to what extent do you think that limited naval strikes would reduce Assad’s ability to use chemical weapons once again?

ADM. GREENERT: Well, let me see here. A supplemental might be the order of the day. Let me give you some – I’ll give you some factoids, and then, as we worked through how long operations are going on, I think that will help us understand the degree of the problem.

A Tomahawk missile costs about $1.5 million so that’s kind of a factoid, if you will. A carrier strike group operating out there will cost you in extended operation – so I’m talking about a lot of flying going on as opposed to say routine flying – will cost you about $40 million a week. If it isn’t flying that much, say routine, it’s about $25 million a week. A destroyer I think costs about $7 million a week. And I’ll get you those numbers if you want to follow up on that or you want to put something down. So that helps us understand for the extended amount of time the additional burden, if you will, on the budget.

Now, many of these ships were going to be out there anyway. As I said before, they’re forward deployed. In the case of the Nimitz, she was to be headed home. So if we extend her much beyond say a week or so, she starts – going to be in that theater longer than we had planned. You probably recall she was on her way back and we said, OK. Hold on here. We may need you.

There are a vast number of options provided to the national command authority. And so it’s not only do I not know which exactly they’re going to use. That’s the business of the theater. I organize train and equip. I don’t know which package they will choose. There’s a long list of things that are available. There’s a long list of opportunities or effects that they’re also available.

Q: (Off mic.)
ADM. GREENERT: Again, there’s a long list of effects, if you will, that can be
done. And that would be really up to the national command authority what they choose to
do.

MR. KYL: This gentleman here.

Q: Thanks very much. Dick Coffman (sp). Admiral, I’m worried about 2020 and
the out years. Obviously, we have a crisis now, but 2020 plays into that. I read that the
Navy may be down to two carrier strike forces available worldwide by 2020. And that
reduction also means a reduction in the industrial base and a reduction in our – or a
diminishment in our ability to build back up if we have to. Frankly, this reminds me of
the post-World War II period when we went down very fast and we paid – almost paid
for it in Korea. Am I right to be worried about that?

ADM. GREENERT: You are right to be worried about that. We don’t talk about
people. And I would tell you, we’ve really got to do that right because you might recall
we had a training issue after World War II. And in the early days of the Korean conflict,
we were concerned and we found, hey, these folks weren’t ready to go.

So you know, in what – the job that I do, people are the foundation of that. And
I’m pretty comfortable about what we have today, but we’ve got to watch what are – how
are our folks motivated for the future to want to stay Navy, stay in the military.

I look at it. It’s a little equation. They look at what is the quality of the service that
I am providing the nation because they’re not a money, you know, seeking group. They
look at a balance of what is my quality of life there? Are you taking care of me? Do I
have a decent place to live, decent pay? Can I advance my education? Are you training
me for a future? And they have a quality of life that is approached – do you support my
family? And then, there’s a quality of work, which I’m looking at that those added
together equates for me the quality of service. But the quality of their work, are they
manned? Do they have a proper supervisor? Does that supervisor motivate them? Is their
division manned properly? They have the right spare parts. They have a predictable
schedule. Are we wearing them out? And that’s the part that I think we really need to be
careful as we look into the future.

So that’s one. The industrial base, we got – everybody’s looking at the big guys.
We got to look at, I think, those next level down and maybe one more. In our nuclear
industrial base, we have well over 50 percent, and I think the number might be 80 percent
of our – of suppliers for nuclear technology, are sole source. So we’ve got to keep our
eye on these folks. If they go under and they make a widget or a pump, a valve, or
whatever of high quality material, how do we recover that?

And to your point, as you mention, if you want to reconstitute, are you prepared?
So that’s that balance in the industrial base that I am concerned about. And as we build
here toward the future, I – we, the services think, we need to do this very deliberately, no
year by year. We have to sit down and do this in a broader, more deliberate manner.
MR. KYL: There was a question up here. Yeah, this gentleman right here. I naturally turn to my right, your left. I’ll try to turn over here next time.

Q: Thanks for speaking here today, Admiral. I’m Jon Harper with the Japanese newspaper “Asahi Shimbun.” I was wondering if you’re concerned that potentially US strikes against Syria could lead Assad to retaliate against US interests in the region and thereby draw the US into a long-term conflict there.

And also, Senator Kyl, if we could get your views about whether or not you think the US should intervene militarily there and what concerns you might have about that. I’d be interested in hearing that as well.

ADM. GREENERT: Well, I would tell you. The Central Command is vigilant for just such a thing and have their eyes open very wide on that. So we – we’ve got all our – all our sensors out in that regard to, you know, what could be potential reaction and make sure that our force protection measures are in place and that we’re postured to react accordingly.

MR. KYL: I’ll just refer you to a “Wall Street Journal” op-ed piece that former Senator Joe Lieberman and I have authored that I think will run tomorrow that expresses our views. The summary is that notwithstanding a series of mistakes and putting the United States in a bad position with respect to Syria, sometimes you don’t have any option but to take action. And this is one such situation.

Let me try to get this gentleman in the back and – where mikes are?

Q: Admiral, Tony Capaccio with Bloomberg News. A couple – two questions. Can you give a little sense of the capability that this new Tactical Tomahawk brings to the United States that would help overcome the advantage Assad’s forces have had to disperse and hide? This is a – this can be loitered and apparently for hours and check out targets.

Second question, what impact does the presence of the Russian Navy – do Russian Navy vessels have on potential Navy operations, including, wouldn’t that take away from the use of submarines that would normally be tracking Russian vessel movements from participating in strikes?

ADM. GREENERT: Well, the – I think you’ve hit on a key advantage of the Tactical Tomahawk, which is you fly it, and it can receive changes. It can receive changes in targeting, changes in direction. So it can go up and actually loiter. Some call it – it’s an unmanned aerial vehicle. It’s just that when it’s done, it destructs and creates an effect. So yes, it is a quite a good capability. We have quite a few of them out there. And it brings a really good option to the commander.
I don’t discuss great operations, and so the wherewithal of particularly our submarine force and rest of the vessels is really inappropriate.

Q: (Off mic.) – factor.

ADM. GREENERT: I guess I would characterize it, given what you said, a neutral factor.

MR. KYL: The lady in the back and then I’ll get this gentleman on the aisle here.

Q: It’s on. Thank you, Admiral. Sandra Erwin with “National Defense Magazine.” On the alternative POM, can you talk a little bit about your thinking on aircraft carriers? I mean, if you have 11 carriers now, is your thinking that they would not be ready and equipped properly and you would rather have maybe nine or eight that are trained and equipped properly? I mean, you keep emphasizing that point. So what’s your thinking on that issue? Thank you.

ADM. GREENERT: Well, our aircraft carrier remains a key and critical element, if not the – and it’s really about the air wing and the piece of it. So as I look out into the future, I look at what is the air wing of the future, the technologies that we bring in. And I mentioned the asymmetric piece, particularly electronic warfare, bringing in the UCLASS, you know, into that air wing. And what do I need in that capability and how to disperse it around the world? Well, the aircraft carrier is obviously the way to get it out there.

I would like to have 11. That remains our requirement in our force structure assessment. But when you look at the limited fiscal resources, you have to look at it in a balance. What kind of force structure can you afford to sustain and that what you sustain or maintain, however you want to look at it, it has to be organized, trained, and equipped to deploy and to respond properly. And mistakes have been made in the past, where you say, well, look, I’ll just hold on to the force structure. And then we’ll – you know – we’ll recover. And frankly, if you let it go too long, any of those ships, they won’t make their expected service life because you haven’t maintained them properly, just like your automobile won’t make its expected life if you don’t.

So to me, I’m about having forces, the right kind of forces, the right number that I can organize, train, and equip, and maintain ready. But it’s a balance of procurement. We talked about the industrial base. It’s a balance of people. We’ve got to make sure we take care of the people, the quality of work is appropriate, because if we start losing them, if you will, on their commitment, that’s the very foundation.

MR. KYL: Somebody over here. I – maybe this gentleman here.

Q: Richard Sisk, Military.com. Sir, on your slide you had four destroyers, one amphib in the Easter Med. What’s happened to the Mahan? Is that on its way home or is that not committed to operations should Congress authorize them?
ADM. GREENERT: Well, the Sixth Fleet commander is discussing what to do with Mahan. And she was just not in that eastern part. So she can be made available if necessary. And I think they’re still commiserating on the need for Mahan. You know, she was completing her expected time and they’ll determine what to do with her.

MR. KYL: Right here on the aisle.

Q: Hi, Willy – (inaudible) – I go to SAIS. Switching gears for a little bit, what future confidence-building exercises do we have planned with the PLA navy and, you know, efforts to reduce crisis – crisis instability. I know in the past year, we’ve done two anti-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden with the PLA navy. What else can we expect in the future? Thanks.

ADM. GREENERT: Well, the group, the surface action group that is going to arrive in Hawaii here in just a few days, one of the things we’ll do is a search and rescue, which seems rudimentary, but it will run a quite a spectrum of command and control. In the Gulf of Aden, we recently did a counter piracy operation, as you mentioned before. But we – their helos landed on our ship, our helos on their ships.

Once you break through that barrier and you get the command and control feature of that, you can start ramping that up into all kind of operations: counter smuggling, maritime intercept operations. What I would like to do is – and I have my folks working on – determine what kind of operations are acceptable for, you know, our – within our policy constraints in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2000. And present them in modules to my counterpart and to the – you know, the PLAN, let them look at it. And if we can bring those modules to bear, so that they can be approved relatively quickly, it’s too constrain, it’s too – takes too much time to get one simple operation going on.

I want to move ahead in that, so that our folks, when they get out there, they can do more. So that’s one.

We recently did a humanitarian assistance operation in Brunei with the – I kind of mentioned that there with their hospital ship, the Yangwei. And I want to move out on that and explore the opportunity of maybe doing a combined operation. We have the Comfort & Mercy. They have the Peace Ark, as you know, medical, you know, bringing comfort, a consistent thing. Project HOPE has been in China. Project HOPE is here.

So I’m looking for overlap also in that regard. They’re interested in putting together a code of conduct, if you will. How do we talk to each other? How do we agree to talk to each other, our commanding officers? And also, speaking of officers, get our junior officer, midgrade officer exchanges going, and senior enlisted. Because we got to build on that foundation. When they grow up to be in my chair, when they grow up to be in Admiral Wu Shengli’s chair, they know each other and they, you know, and they know internationally who folks are. And that way, we can solve problems.
MR. KYL: Can I just do a follow up to that? I – when I was in the Senate, obviously, a supporter of the military-to-military context, not only with the big countries like a Russia or a China, but some of the smaller countries that could become important at any given time in the history. And we’ve seen how those military-to-military contexts can have a very beneficial effect for us. With respect to the Chinese in particular, could you just share with a little bit – without making news – your view of the attitudes of your counterparts, what they think they get out of it, and more importantly, what we think that we get out of these contexts?

ADM. GREENERT: With regard to the Chinese?

MR. KYL: Yes.

ADM. GREENERT: I think what they get out of it – and I – all the signals I get from Admiral Wu Shengli and speaking to his vice chief of naval operations a week from yesterday, where he was here with their minister of defense and our secretary of defense had a dinner. So we were chatting. They want to move on to a consistency of dialogue. They want to move on and get away from miscalculation. He has a challenge of a growing navy and an assignment and their – you know, and an intent by their nation to operate in the South China Sea in that area. Well, they know that we’re going to be there too. And they, frankly, know that the Japanese navy is going to be there and the Philip. So he wants to move into a – get away from miscalculation and preclude an embarrassing or a scenario that they just wish they hadn’t got themselves into. And we all know that these things can happen.

Secondarily, also realizes that where – in order to be out and about, things can happen. Humanitarian assistance, you’ve probably seen that the Chinese have shown a proclivity to want to contribute in this regard. In our recent Libyan operation, they did a non-combatant evacuation operation. And they want to get better at that, so that they too can take care of their citizens abroad and they’re expanding around the world.

So there’s a pragmatic and a practical approach that they say look, I’m responsible for my people. I have an assignment and a task. And I want to – I want to approach this in a manner which is – speak again – responsible and deliberate and not more helter-skelter and don’t want to get myself into something I didn’t intend to.

MR. KYL: Good, thank you. We got about another 13 minutes or so. Let me get this gentleman here and then we’ll go to you. And I promised – OK, we got two in a row right here.

Q: Sir, Tom Curry, NBC News. For the taxpayer who doesn’t follow these issues closely, who’s outside of Washington, D.C., they hear about the sequester and other parts of the federal spending being cut as well as the Navy. And they read about the Libya operation. They need in the newspaper that maybe 11 US Navy ships were involved in that roughly. And in the – if there’s a Syria operation, maybe that number, maybe fewer. And just in the most simple terms, because, you know, they’re not engaged in this full
time, what – if they ask you the question, well, why do we need 285, it seems like a large number of ships if our typical operation in this era, you know, every couple of years, we use a dozen ships, what would be the answer?

ADM. GREENERT: Well, we have to be able to respond wherever it matters. The economy of the world flows through what I call the maritime crossroads. Any event in there – interruption in there, causes – has an immediate economic impact. And if you walk your way back through to price of oil and you watch the cycle of the price of oil, I won’t – you know – I won’t get into – that’s an obvious economic impact.

The Strait of Hormuz have to remain open, the Strait of Malacca, all of those. So number one, you have to be sure that the lifeblood of the world flows. And we have to be there to make sure that that’s – that happens.

The operations here that you’ve seen, the crisis that is emerging has had an economic impact. To be able to respond to that immediately is key and critical. So we have to – you have to have a navy that is out and about. Having one third of the navy out and about is not bad because if the 90-some are out there, you know, there’s about a similar number doing simple math that have to be ready to go out there. And that rotation alone is pretty good, by doing any ration.

So I would tell America that I think you’re getting a pretty decent bargain when you have over a third of your navy out and about at all the crossroads of the world, able to respond, like we’ve done here, able to respond in the North Korean missile crisis, where there’s a threat of a launch, and in 72 hours, we’re on station, able to report that we can protect Guam, that we can protect the United States, and we can protect Japan from a threatened missile launch, able to respond to Haiti, able to respond to Tomodachi, to Japan in days. Whereas, if you looked on that chart there, and I can get it, if we have to wait back home and steam over there, it’s a two or three-week operation, simple math.

So I think this is what the American people is owed, both in response for how their country responds, but also an assurance of economy in the future.

MR. KYL: A question here.

Q: Hi. Admiral, Sydney Freedberg, BreakingDefense.com. You mentioned the supplemental. If you don’t get a supplemental and there is a, you know, operation that’s more than a flash in the pan, what gives elsewhere? You’ve got a very tight budget. Without supplemental, do you take that bite out of shipbuilding, out of maintenance, out of, you know, faster force structure reductions, out of training, because something will have to give if you don’t get extra money and you are doing extra things.

ADM. GREENERT: Well, for the remainder of this year, the remainder of the weeks in September, we’re comfortable that we could accommodate the kind of – you know – the operations that would occur there. In other words, many of those ships are
already over there and already budgeted to be over there. Gets back to that’s what you get when you have a forward deployed navy.

If you start running into ’14 and you take something like the carrier strike group Nimitz or a carrier strike group, and you retain her over there for longer periods of time, we would – there’re a number of mechanisms, Sydney. One is a supplemental. Another is we would ask for a forward apportionment of money, take money we were going to get in the fourth quarter of ’14 and say, how about forwarding us that money, you know, into this quarter to help pay for these costs. And then, we would reprogram in the middle of the year to kind of pay it back, if you will.

So it’s a borrowing from our own budget, if you will. Then there’s the simply reprogramming itself. Give me the opportunity to take it from an investment account into the operating account.

So the numbers are caught nagging and they are another challenge, but they’re not extraordinary at this point, yet, Sydney.

MR. KYL: How about way in the back here. There’s a lady and then there’s a gentleman right by the door. Let’s get both of you.

Q: Hi, Colleen Waterston, US Global Leadership Coalition. I’m wondering with the budget cuts and what not, what are your thoughts on development and diplomacy being including in the country’s national security strategy?

ADM. GREENERT: The development and diplomacy in the budget you mean?

Q: (Off mic.) – how development and diplomacy can work together.

ADM. GREENERT: Work together? Well, I’ll tell you what. Right off the bat, I look to my week next week, my sitting down with my Chinese counterpart and taking the time to work through where we want to go strategically with our requisite navies and synchronizing that with the Department of Defense policy and Department of State policy, which we’ve worked together. It’s working with our country teams abroad and our combatant commanders in making sure where you want to go in this region, how can we and the Navy help that.

And then, as I mentioned, in this rebalance to the Asia-Pacific, there has to be a balance to that. So what I mean by that is we are going to rebalance. We’re going to move equipment. What is the right ship, what is the right equipment to put down in Southeast Asia? High-end Aegis, you know high – (inaudible) – and missiles and guns? No. It’s a ship that resonates with the need for the missions and our allies and partners down there, a littoral combat ship.

Similarly, an Aegis destroyer and that kind of thing is what we need to assure our allies in Northeast Asia. So my point is we need to synchronize our efforts with our state
partners in this regard, working with the country teams who are out and about right there in the countries in the future, and then leverage – leveraging each other’s budget, so we’re not going across purposes or in parallel paths and not connected.

Q: Senator, Admiral Greenert, thanks for being here today. Lieutenant Colonel Ethan Griffin, Air Force fellow at CSIS. Sir, looking forward to 2020, in light of budget reductions, can you speak a little bit about where you see unmanned, give us your perspective on how unmanned fits into global operating forward, and especially into anti-access/area denial areas?

ADM. GREENERT: Sure. Thank you. The Broad Area Maritime Surveillance, we call it the Triton, which is a Global Hawk with a marinized feature, will be deployed by 2020. So it will be in the Western Pacific probably operating out of Guam and provide us about 2,000 miles – you know, take a 2,000 miles circle and draw it around and say we will have that kind of maritime broad coverage out and around where that can be.

Well, that’s not – we don’t have that today. We have maritime patrol aircraft, but that unmanned feature right there is good. So that’s in the air.

On the aircraft carrier, by 2020, I would hope to have an unmanned carrier-launched surveillance and strike, called the UCLASS, which will be able to – has to fit into the air wing, has to fit into the cycle time, and can provide ISR, can provide ordinance, can provide – you can put a ball on it or you know, you can – or other, if you will, surveillance equipment on it, so operating there. That will get us, as you know, if you fly, there’s an extraordinary amount of wait associated with an airplane, on the person in that airplane. You remove all that and you’re talking fuel or payload or ordinance.

So that should be out and about. I’m very – recently, we got some feedback on some unmanned underwater vehicles, autonomous, things you can program and send them out to surveil, come up, send out messaging and what it’s got, report what its findings and that will give us a broader picture of the undersea domain. That should be on deployment by 2020.

And lastly, in countermine, if you look at the littoral combat ship, there’s a mission module. It’s a mining feature. It will provide us four times the area and one-fourth the time of our countermine capability we have today.

So we’ve got a lot of great potential out there. And it’s starting to become quite tangible. I mean, we’re into the point where we’re putting stuff – getting it wet, as I like to say, and not the aircraft the – out there today.

MR. KYL: Admiral, just a quick follow up on that. In the past, our technology and our advances in technology have been one of the reasons we’ve been so successful compared to any potential challenge. But more and more we find that either through espionage of one kind or another or simply dedication of other forces, the time lag
between our development of some interesting capability like this and that of another country, potentially an adversary, has been shortened. How far behind, with regard to these kinds of technologies, are some of the other leading powers in the world? How far behind us?

ADM. GREENERT: The concept of putting something in the air or under the sea unmanned is – it’s out and about obviously. You see it is commercially driven. The ability to put an appropriate sensor on it or weapon and the ability to network it and the ability for it to be safe, for it to be reliable and have the persistence of some of the stuff we’re developing is not there. So that is our advantage, you know, and in the end, our people can operate this stuff. So it’s people who can swap over from being out there on a helo deck to swap – and operating a helo, to going to the drone, a Fire Scout, our pilot.

I give it just a little clip. About – I guess it’s about six weeks ago, we had the demonstration of the unmanned carrier aero-vehicle, UCAS, that was in the press quite a bit. I’m out there on the flight deck and I watch the flight deck crew, which as always – if you’ve been out there – it’s like an amazing teamwork feature, if you ever seen that. And they – that vehicle just integrated into the flight deck. And all – what I mean by that is it’s unmanned, but you got the guy bringing it forward, signaling to the drone, if you will, right, to the UCAS. And the guy that was operating it was actually looking at it.

So it fit right in. Our kids adapted and adopted right around that thing. And it was flawless. And we’re able to do that. That’s the difference that we see.

MR. KYL: I’ll take one last question here and then we’ll wrap it up.

Q: Sir, George Nicholson (sp), a policy consultant with USR.com. I went to numerous briefings that you and General Schwartz talked about the air-sea battle concept. One of the points you kept making that it’s an enabler. A lot of the naysayers say, well it’s only China-centric. But in terms of what you’re talking about the new TLAMs, what it’s able to do, and I think in your briefings, you talked about taking feeds – (inaudible) – from Air Force aircraft, whether it’s AESA radars or anything else, will – I wonder if you can speak to it – but will the TLAMs potentially being used in Syria have this capability of taking inputs from Air Force aircraft, be it JSTARS, AWACS, or any other aircraft in the area?

ADM. GREENERT: That capability resident in the TACTOM, we call it, the Mod 4 in the Tomahawk, is there. It’s an option, as you said. I don’t know precisely what they’re going to use. But we organize, train, and equip them. They’re forward and they’re ready.

MR. KYL: Ladies and gentlemen, it’s easy to focus on the negative that we have self-imposed on ourselves through the sequestration and other budget cuts that will drastically affect our military capabilities if we’re not careful. But I think you would agree with me that we’re fortuned to have somebody in Admiral Greenert who appreciates the priorities, has an understanding of the centrality of our men and women in
the military and in the Navy specifically to be the forward part of our national security, and who appreciates the constructive approach, the positive ability to get something done, rather than focusing on the negative. We’ll leave the negative focus to people like me.

ADM. GREENERT: Well, I still have plenty of time for that. (Laughter.)

MR. KYL: Yes, I know, but you put forth a very positive view about how we can get it done. And that’s what we expect of the leaders in our military. And I want to thank you, Admiral Greenert, for not only being here with us today and sharing your views, but all of the challenges that you’re dealing with, the constructive way in which you do it. And we’d ask that you pass on the support of everybody in this room to those folks that you work with, who are manning it 24 hours a day and every day of the year, let them know the support that we have for their efforts. And I had hoped that all of you will join me in thanking Admiral Greenert for his presence here today. (Applause.)

ADM. GREENERT: Thank you.

MR. KYL: Thank you, sir.

ADM. GREENERT: I appreciate it.

(END)