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Delivers Remarks at the Conference of Defence Associations Institute

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Thank you very much and it truly is a pleasure to be here with you, to be part of this conference. General Natynczyk, Dean, [VADM McFadden], great to see you again. I do want to talk a little bit about things that I find of great importance, but it's also important for me to just convey the impressions and the congratulations on a truly, truly magnificent Olympic Games that was held. It is clear to me that the hospitality and the warmth and the pride of Canada was transmitted to all the world and I congratulate you and I thank you for that hospitality and everything that was done in Vancouver. But I'm also here to pay some tribute as a result of the final event of the Olympic Games. And I would be remiss if I did not, Dean, present you with a hockey puck from the U.S. Naval Academy hockey team.

I'm convinced that if we used that puck, the outcome would have been much different than it was. But it is wonderful to be here with you today and for me personally, Dean, to be able to spend a little bit of time catching up as well. The last time that we were together in October was at the International Seapower Symposium in Newport, Rhode Island, where 102 countries and 91 chiefs of naval service came together. It was the largest gathering of naval leaders in history and it afforded us an opportunity to discuss and think through the challenges, but more importantly, the opportunities that confront many nations.

During the briefings that were given, Vice Admiral McFadden presented a very complicated organizational chart for maritime partnerships and as all of us stared up at the tangle of lines and boxes, he said something that each and everyone of us took away from that symposium- quite possibly it was the message of that symposium when he said, and I'll quote him, "Just because it doesn't brief well it doesn't mean it isn't worth doing."

It is a statement that is very, very applicable to the very complicated world we live in today. It is not easy to explain, it truly doesn't brief well, and it doesn't fit into the bizarrely preferred way that at least in my military we choose to communicate through that medium called- power point - but that doesn't mean that we give up on it.

More often today our challenges and our opportunities that are presented in those challenges are hardly straightforward -they are clearly, clearly seldom easy to brief.

Whereas wars were once state against state, fought out on the open sea or field, and between readily identifiable foes, conflicts today involve multiple state and non-state actors, fights in cities and towns, and foes that are not only difficult to identify on the field– they might not be on the “field” at all, they might be in cyberspace.

The nature of warfare continues to change: it always has and it always will, but some constants will remain: regardless of how much certainty we seek, we will from time to time be surprised and violence will prevail in war.

I find that surprises are normally best when they don’t involve ammunition – but as the adage goes, “the enemy gets a vote...”

This reality is less than helpful when it comes to national security decision-making.

Despite an uncertain future, and changes throughout history, however, seapower, as an instrument of defense and global influence, endures.

It endures because the sea remains the domain of commerce, communications, and resources and it endures because seapower has proven, over the course of history, to be a flexible, adaptable, rapid reaction force that a nation can use regardless of time or situation – as long as the right capability and capacity exist.

The flexibility and the rapid response inherent to seapower will grow more important as uncertainty prevails, and the resources available in the global commons at sea become more dear.

Take, for example, the naval capability of power projection.

The old image of power projection comes from the black and white grainy films of Normandy. Power projection was certainly useful then but those were the good old days, right?

What does power projection mean today?

Or how about launching 75% of strike sorties from the sea in the opening days of the war with Afghanistan? That is still power projection.

How about striking at terrorist camps from ships and special operations force formations from sea where no soldier can set foot? That is power projection today.

And how about storming the beach, not with tanks and guns, but with food and water because there was no other good option to move such quantities to relieve the people of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and most recently Haiti? That is power projection from the sea.

Power projection from the sea is an old concept – and many people think that it belongs to history - but its utility endures to this day. From launching strikes, to launching disaster relief, to launching evacuation missions: the need to project power will grow in our disordered and easily disrupted world as populations migrate to the coasts; climate change pressurizes and imperils

coastal populations; and a large presence on land becomes politically problematic or internationally uncomfortable.

Power projection may be old but the more things change the more things stay the same.

But seapower isn't just about power projection – let me go further. Consider the age old naval task of convoying and, conversely, intercepting enemy goods.

This was something we did in our navy to counter the Barbary pirates in the 19th century and a tactic in World War II considered by some to be a relic.

And now?

There were the Tanker Wars in the 80s in the Arabian Gulf - fought to protect trade and preserve the flow of oil coming from the Gulf as Iran and Iraq sought to destroy one another.

There is Joint Interagency Task Force – South that intercepts the illegal flow of narcotics coming via speed boat and semi-submersible that does such harm to communities throughout the world.

There is the global Proliferation Security Initiative that aims to prevent and interdict the trafficking of weapons of mass destruction that are most easily transported via the sea.

And finally, if you think the value of convoying or protecting trade has diminished: consider the Gulf of Aden.

While it is not convoying in the most traditional sense, suffice to say that the threat of pirates against commercial shipping in the Gulf of Aden was enough of a concern to bring together an international Fleet of ships to protect it.

Ninety percent of the intercontinental trade is moving on the surface of the seas and further \$3.2 trillion dollars of trade swims with the fishes in undersea cables that lace the ocean floor.

If you think that the value of seapower – of protecting legitimate trade and interdicting illegal trade – will diminish, I believe you will be disappointed.

And what about logistics?

In the old days there was no way but by ships.

But the advent of trains, planes and automobiles has by no means supplanted the utility or the efficiency of logistics by the sea.

Ninety percent of military materiel in Desert Shield and Desert Storm came over the seas and 95 percent of what came back travelled on the sea.

I often think of our Ballistic Missile Defense as another good example. If you want me to go from covering the Western Pacific to defending the Mediterranean, no problem. Give me the transit time and I can give you a first class Aegis ballistic missile defense ship on station without the need to infringe upon the sovereignty of any nation to do so. I need nothing more than a fair course to get us there.

If you wanted to achieve the same effect on land, you'd have to negotiate for a new base; you'd have to arrange for no less than 35 lifts of C-17'S from the Western Pacific to that Mediterranean location.

My point is that the effects that only a naval force can deliver were as relevant in the past as they will be relevant to the future. Indeed I believe seapower will be even more relevant.

Take hybrid war – the term du jour for the wars that we are in and those we are likely to face. The value of seapower endures.

Riverine operations and riverine squadrons, so useful in the conflict in Vietnam, are again at work in the hybrid war in Afghanistan.

Power projection from the decks of our carriers in the North Arabian Sea is literally a lifesaver for troops on the ground in Afghanistan. No other service can do what we do, because we do not require a pre-positioned base. Just - as I said before – all we need is a clear course to steer.

And maritime interdiction – the flow of money, equipment, and personnel remain as relevant to victory for a terrorist today as they did for a state in the days of sail. The Mumbai terrorists did not come across the border, they came from the sea. It is up to our ships, and our cooperative schemes to use those ships, to interdict the guns, drugs, money, and resources that fuel conflict today.

Even the very nature of our operations – ships operating and communicating across long distances – has positioned us well for the cyber challenges that are likely to grow in the 21st century. In fact, I have recently reorganized the Navy Headquarters by merging the command, control, communications directorate with our intelligence and information directorates into one, and we've created Fleet Cyber Command/10th Fleet, to bring our cyber capabilities together to improve them for the future. The important thing to note here is that we already had these cyber capabilities. In fact, when we sat down to bring together the people that are involved in that enterprise, that enterprise of cyber operations and information dominance, we saw that we already had the makings of a corps of 45,000 people who will fight that fight today and tomorrow.

Beyond the interdictions, beyond the power projection, beyond hard power entirely, however, we cannot forget the uniquely diplomatic nature of a Navy.

As a Navy, we can send a force, large or small, to the international waters off the coast of any nation and have our presence felt, we can change the calculus of international decision-making.

That option is unique to a naval force, because it is a response in the skies cannot be sustained long-term and a landward response can challenge diplomacy as much as it can promote it.

We can also conduct diplomacy at sea. We can send a destroyer or a frigate to operate with a PLA Navy ship in the Gulf of Aden to counter piracy and in turn improve the communication and understanding between our navies and our nations.

I can even send an amphibious ship to the Gulf of Guinea, to go ashore to deliver humanitarian aid and encourage the development of local maritime security capabilities, such as fisheries protection for some of the states who need that to fuel their economy.

The uniquely diplomatic and preventive nature of seapower is rightly identified as important to the prevention of conflict as important as winning in conflict.

Indeed, the Department of Defense Quadrennial Defense Review recently completed in the United States not only recognizes the enduring quality of seapower as a tool of diplomacy and power in the 21st century, it has validated the strategy that we laid out two years ago in our Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower:

A strategy that places equal importance on preventing wars as it does on winning wars. A strategy that fosters global maritime partnerships to increase understanding among nations and confront common challenges in the global commons. And a strategy that keeps in the forefront the capabilities that have served our Navy so well throughout history and will no doubt be of greater importance in the future: that of having forward presence, providing deterrence, providing sea control, delivering power projection, conducting maritime security and humanitarian assistance and disaster response.

To imagine that seapower will somehow become less relevant in the 21st century is certain folly.

As a nation that has 58,000 kilometers of mainland coast and a significant continental shelf, the value of seapower could not be more clear to Canadian strategists. Over its 100 year history, Canada's Navy has gained a reputation for being tough, for being professional, for punching well above its weight and it is also in rare company as a Navy that truly has a global focus. United States Sailors have many, many reasons to admire and to thank our enduring and stalwart shipmates in the Canadian Navy. From working through a minefield in the Arabian Gulf to recover the USS Princeton after she was mined, to your support for recovery after Hurricane Katrina, to repeated deployments, and full integration of Canadian frigates with strike groups on deployment, to your enduring efforts against narcotics trafficking as part of the Joint Interagency Task Force – South to your invaluable leadership of Combined Task Force 150 and partnership in the fight against piracy in the Gulf of Aden to the notable and distinguished service of all Canadians who have fought and given so much to the cause of peace and stability in Afghanistan – a service for which our United States Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines are deeply appreciative and forever grateful.

The Canadian Armed Forces, and in particular, the Canadian Navy is one to make all of Canada proud and has earned the thanks and admiration of nations around the world.

But, despite all that the Canadian Navy has done, all that navies all over the world do, it is sometimes difficult to appreciate – as Dean McFadden has put it, maritime blindness affects many nations.

As I have often said to my friends and colleagues in Washington, a Navy ship is seldom beloved when it is consuming your budget faster than it is consuming any enemy.

Or as your countryman and historian C.P Stacey put it, “the building of ships is a slow business, the training of sailors even slower.” To which he added “Armies are improvised much more rapidly than navies, and a coast which is undefended in peacetime will be undefended in war.”[1]

Budgets have never made Navies popular...

Remember for instance, Nelson’s great ship HMS Victory of Trafalgar fame. When she set sail she was the most expensive ship in the British Fleet, probably the most expensive ship in the world and she engendered the feeling that Winston Churchill later put so succinctly when he said, “what could you possibly hope but to be sunk in a more expensive ship this time?”

And yet, Victory, and so many ships that followed her in many different navies, achieved greatness that money could not buy. A Navy needs ships to have seapower. And – just as important, a Navy must have an industrial base that can build those ships.

As the Chief of Naval Operations in the United States, I can tell you that I think about the health of our ship building industrial base often. No Navy has ever been, or ever will be, great without a shipbuilding industry equal to its ambitions.

In conclusion, I cannot tell you with any certainty what the 21st century holds for Canada or for the United States – I must disappoint you on that account. But I can tell you that despite this very uncertain future, the value of seapower will endure and grow because it is flexible and adaptable. It will endure in its value to the nations that possess it, and moreover, it will endure in its value in our globalized world. The challenges and uncertainties in the global commons are too great for any one nation to shoulder – and it makes the relationship between the Canadian Navy and United States Navy today absolutely invaluable.

Indeed, the world needs the Canadian Navy’s help to maintain the fragile world order upon which we all rely. Canada and the world need Canadian seapower for the 21st Century.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

[1] Tucker, The Naval Service of Canada