

DRAFT vEA Target: 15 min, simultaneous translation
Littoral OpTech East
VADM Aucoin Keynote Address
1 Dec 2015 – Grand Hotel Ichigaya

Good morning and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today. Thank you to our hosts, the Naval Postgraduate School, ONR Global, and SAAB, for sponsoring this forum for us to connect and collaborate.

Maintaining our competitive edge is a topic that is on my mind, as well as the minds of our senior leaders. Like many of us, my staff and I are nearly consumed by the daily task of responding to the security challenges in the vast Indo-Asia-Pacific region. But we know that our ability to maintain security in the long term rests on the ability of our collective efforts to maintain the advantage over any would-be adversary. This workshop gives us the chance to step back and give thought to this challenge.

The U.S. Navy has a long history of creating an environment for innovation. In the past century, our Sailors, together with industry, put

the intellectual toil into creating and deploying the strike aircraft carriers of WWII, the amphibious operational concept of our Navy-Marine Corps team, and the use of nuclear power on submarines and ships. I would note that not all of these historic innovations occurred with generous budgets or with strong support from leadership. What they had in common was groups of professionals who responded to a threat with vision and tenacity.

More recently, we have seen an explosion of technology in unmanned and autonomous systems, the birth of laser weapons, and the development of the railgun and its hypervelocity projectile. In littoral operations, we have focused much of our recent effort on the Littoral Combat Ship, or LCS, and its various mission modules which employ unmanned systems. In the 7th Fleet we have begun to receive our first platforms and they are already proving to be an invaluable asset to peace and security in the Indo-Asia-Pacific.

Last February, our former Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Jonathan Greenert, provided insight into why the LCS is so important. Speaking at ONR's annual Future Force S&T Expo, he urged focus on

the future of warfare, highlighting: (1) the importance of the undersea domain; (2) the need for the U.S. Navy to move away from gunpowder at sea; and (3) the need for stamina, modularity and payload capacity in our growing fleet of unmanned systems. The LCS and its modules – ASW, MIW, and Surface – addresses these priorities and, along with other technologies, will help fill the functional and spatial coverage gaps caused by a more austere funding era.

Building on Admiral Greenert's comments, in April at the annual Sea, Air and Space Exposition, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus shared with industry our Innovation Vision for the Department of the Navy.

The first 3 of the 5 focus areas are related to the Navy's internal structure and processes for carrying out this vision, but I'd like to address the last two areas as they are directly applicable to external participation venues like this Littoral OpTech East. First, we need to get emerging operational capabilities out to the Fleet more quickly, and second, we need to create breakthrough warfighting concepts. In this region, we can see the urgency of the Secretary's Vision. If we cannot more quickly develop and field breakthrough capabilities, we run the

real risk of losing any technological advantage over potential adversaries.

Just a couple weeks ago at a Navy outreach event with the private sector, our new Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral John Richardson, spoke on a panel titled “Harnessing Innovation for Defense: the Role of Defense and Non-defense Companies.” Admiral Richardson discussed his belief in the importance of creativity and initiative to the future of the U.S. Navy. The CNO emphasized that with the current speed of change, learning faster on both the individual and the team level is key to keeping pace with and enabling innovation. After my numerous jobs in the pentagon, I couldn’t agree with our CNO more. There are pockets of innovation and creativity, many of them, throughout our Fleet. Our young Sailors and officers are identifying creative solutions to problems new and old. We need to figure out how to harness these innovations and then rapidly transition them into action, in spite of our somewhat cumbersome traditional acquisition processes. We can also help if we create environments that cultivate innovation. We should encourage experimentation, even failure, but at the right times and places. Ideally,

this would be very early in the development process so that we can learn and build from those failures.

At 7th Fleet we have focused on innovation for the past 3 years through our relatively new Commander's Initiatives Group (CIG). Through the CIG, we conduct operational analyses and studies that are specific to our Area of Operations. This often leads to field experiments at sea to test out innovative ideas. On occasion we incorporate emergent commercial technologies – not yet programmed by the military – in very realistic and often austere operating environments. For example, the CIG recently completed an experiment in which we used commercially available communications technology – similar to what is installed on many cruise ships for high-speed internet service while underway. This technology was installed in USS FORT WORTH, one of our LCS ships, which then functioned as a communications hub to provide high-speed communications to other navy ships inside a 4G 'bubble' created by FORT WORTH. The demonstrated capability was roughly 10 times faster than what an aircraft carrier typically can achieve. I know there are other technologies on the shelf today which the fleet can employ in

innovative ways to help solve problems – some of which we probably don't even know we have yet. I need you to get at these problems.

Regarding the LCS, some of you who track developments in U.S. Defense may be aware of the fact that we are a little behind in fielding the mission packages or modules for the different mission sets. That is not preventing us from forging ahead in employing the LCS here in the 7th Fleet. LCS-3 has been doing super work in theater for over a year, and more of these platforms will be sent our way soon. We are also introducing emerging technologies to employ on LCS in new and innovative ways, such as the Mk18 Mod 1 and 2 mine hunting UUVs—both examples of where the Navy has figured out a way to fast track acquisition.

This workshop and similar venues with the private sector and partner nations provide opportunities to cast a wide net and examine the difficult operational problems to of the littorals. We can work together to begin solving them. This first execution of the Littoral OpTech Workshop in Japan, with our Japanese partners participating alongside,

will assist us in being able to provide new technological capabilities for our shared operating areas and shared maritime security challenges.

Today you will hear from leaders representing the Defense, Naval, and Research establishments of our Japanese hosts and partners, as well as several experts from the academic, technology and military communities – some with significant experience in each of these three communities. I encourage active participation in the panels and request that you to ask tough questions that will challenge us in moving our capabilities forward in the focused area of littoral operations.

I look forward to our discussions.