

**Remarks as delivered
ADM Mike Mullen
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Well, good morning. I want to thank everybody who has put this together, particularly Jackie and Bob who have worked so hard. I find it very uplifting that at this point in time as we have worked on putting this maritime strategy together that we could have such a conference as this, both the topics that it covers and the speakers who are certainly linked up to participate.

And I would echo what Jake has said, where I see us in the maritime strategy rollout right now, and with its arrival in the near future, that it is conferences like this and debate and lots of interaction that will move us to understand what this strategy really means for the future, and how it continues to evolve.

So, again, I appreciate all that you have done to put this conference together. I would like in particular to thank Jake and his staff at the War College. He has been a real energizer for this overall strategy development, he and John Morgan, and their energy has certainly made a difference.

I actually very much appreciate the opportunity to kick off this 37th IFPA Fletcher Conference, and talk a little bit about my views on strategy and what role it plays in the preservation of our way of life in a dangerous world. And I really want to emphasize the strategy piece. It's quite frankly all too often we're often doing things before we have a strategy to do so, and I'm not just talking about the development of a maritime strategy; I'm talking about all too often in many things that we do, it's hard work, and it takes an awful lot of effort to get it close. Once you have that, you have the overarching guidance, the overarching views from which we should all proceed, and to which we should frequently refer as we move forward.

And, indeed, we live in a very, very tough and trying time: fast-paced, continuous change, and in some ways, the more things change, the more they stay the same. In walking through the front doors today, I was reminded of something our late President Ronald Reagan said in his 1982 address to the Mother of Parliaments. In taking stock of the global threats at that time, he said the "ultimate determinant in this struggle now going on for the world will not be bombs and rockets but a test of wills and ideas."

He was of course talking about the struggle against Soviet communism, but Reagan's words ring as true today as when he uttered them. The physical nature of the threats we face have changed – has changed. That much is very clear, but at the broad strategic level, it still remains a contest of wills and ideas. And I'm not so sure we senior military leaders spend enough time, enough of our time thinking strategically about how to win that contest. And I believe we need to do better.

That is why at the Current Strategy Forum, to which Jake referred, in Newport last year, I issued the challenge and called for a new and balanced maritime strategy to promote and protect our national interests, our vital national interests, and we should always keep those in mind as we move out and then as we look back, while recognizing they are intertwined very much so with global interests. And in short, that is why I called for the Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century.

And I'm not here to roll it out today. It's still a work in progress, though we really are in the final stages of development. What I am here to tell you is that John Morgan, Jake Shuford, and hundreds of other brilliant individuals accepted that challenge, rolled up their sleeves and got to work. And I knew it wouldn't be easy and it would require some serious efforts on the parts of a lot of people, which is one of the reasons I approached Jake at the War College.

And I knew that although the Navy took the lead, we couldn't approach crafting that strategy alone. And I want to give John and Jake and the team a great deal of credit for what has been done, including in particular the aspect of conversations with the country.

One of my concerns with the Navy has been whether or not the American people know why we have a Navy, what we're about. We certainly think internally to the Navy, and we know in the Department what a great job we are doing in the benefits we bring. But at a very high level, I believe we have the Navy the American people need. And being in touch with the American people, engaging them, listening to them about what they expect and who we are and having that conversation has been very important.

The process we have gone through is designed to generate a competition of good ideas, and we listened to a thousand voices over the course of last year, including many from our Navy. It's been inclusive, and it's tapped into the intellectual capacity of component and combatant commanders, as well as the other maritime services, the Marine Corps, and our Coast Guard, and our nation to help us look above and beyond, that is, to get our heads above operations and tactics and look well beyond the horizon.

And in looking at the audience here and looking at the agenda over the next two days, I am very encouraged. Just as the global threats and challenges we face today abroad, so too it seems is the interest in countering them. We are all indeed in the midst of a global ideological struggle, and the world needs better ideas, your ideas. We need your robust intellectual rigor and energy in developing any strategy to contend with a very dangerous and a very uncertain future.

That is why we are here, to take the long view, to think in reasonable terms to generate questions, to challenge ourselves, to help prevent the mistakes of the past, in other words, to think strategically.

“Reason and free inquiry,” wrote Thomas Jefferson, “are the only effectual agents against error.” These words resonate today.

In this conflict, this test of wills and ideas, reason and free inquiry, and innovation and boldness, and willingness to pursue multicultural enlightenment will undermine the flawed doctrines of extremists, insurgents, politically aligned oppressors, and ideologically stunted demagogues who, unwilling to contend with change, live shackled to the past and threaten freedom and stability around the globe.

The world is changing, and that is not necessarily a bad thing, though change can be tough. We have got to deal with it; I believe actually we have got to lead it. Globalization in its many definitions is what is driving that change today, and that is not new either. Trade has driven multiple civilizations throughout history to globalize within their known world. The growth of the Roman Empire, the Islamic civilization’s transfer of science, medicine, literature and mathematics, and the British Age of Empire were all driven by trade.

Good ideas led to the technological innovations that launched this round of globalization, and it will take your ideas, your good ideas, to sustain the economic engine that drives the borderless finance, diffusion of knowledge, redistribution of high-value services that characterize our world today. And that is where your ideas, this conference, your intellectual rigor, your passion for the scholarly tackling of tough foreign policy issues come in. And we cannot shy from these issues.

For all its benefits, globalization does come with some challenges. By its very nature, it depends on relationships. And anyone who has relationships knows they have to be tender, they have to be cared for, they have to be tended to. Any relationship can be a challenge, and yet there is excitement in growth and sustaining it.

In the words of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, “Globalization begets interdependence; interdependence begets the necessity of a common value system to make it work, and idealism thus becomes realpolitik.”

The essence of military strategy in this globalized world is therefore the interdependence of the players. In thinking about crafting military strategy in this context, two key questions come to mind: Who are the players, that is, who is “us” and who is “them”; and what is the common value system Prime Minister Blair referred to. If ascribing to the notion that democratic nations never go to war with each other unless in self-defense, then the “us” can be defined as free people dedicated to upholding the values of democracy, religious and ethnic acceptance, respect for the dignity of every human being, and for the rule of law. “Them,” it logically follows, is everyone else.

But defining “us” in such ideal terms and using those values as a benchmark narrows options down quite a bit. There is a lot of “them” in the world, and we do need to reach them if we are to have any hope of lasting peace.

Think about how much more difficult it is to build a relationship under the rubric of exclusivity. No, I prefer to look at things from a more sensible and broader perspective. Military strategy, such as our new maritime strategy, which I expect to be unveiled by my successor at the International Seapower Symposium next month, must be envisioned and developed with the idealism embodied in our Constitution, but must be crafted in a realistic tone to ensure military employment remains flexible and adaptable to a rapidly changing world. It is a very precarious balance.

Sound military strategy must be developed to address the entire spectrum of engagement, from constructive humanitarian assistance and civic action all the way to major theater war. Executing such a strategy in support of our national goals and interests will undermine the base for, and so the options to violent ideological transnational terrorists and criminal groups, as well as other state and non-state threats to global stability and peace.

But in the process, we need to lend the proper level of strategic thought and carefully shape the advice we provide our senior civilian leaders so our strategies indeed reflect the best interests of the American people, and help the United States remain a beacon of freedom in the world.

“The spread of liberty,” remarked Secretary of Defense Bob Gates last week, “both manifests our ideals and protects our interests. In making the world safe for democracy, we are also the champion and vindicator of our own.” In looking at both Woodrow Wilson’s idealism and John Quincy Adams’ realistic perspective, Secretary Gates eloquently captured the balance that is so critical to the development of strategy. In keeping such a pragmatic and balanced tone, we can maintain the strategic flexibility and adaptability that will translate to operational and tactical agility which is a must in the world in which we live right now.

The challenges we face today have certainly evolved from those that Presidents Reagan, Roosevelt, Wilson, or Washington faced. Our threats are incredibly complex and multifaceted and their reach is irrefutably global. And so is our reach, and in crafting strategy, whether it is our new maritime strategy or the national military strategy, our vision must be global as well as realistic.

It’s easy to become focused on what pains us the most right now. It is a natural human reaction to conflict. And the most pressing priority right now, and rightfully so, is the conflict in the Middle East. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan weigh heavy in the minds of the American people as it weighs heavily on mine. But to the degree that we narrow our focus solely on those two pieces of the overall global puzzle, we lose sight of other state and non-state threats in the region and around the world, as well of opportunities to engage world populations at the grass-root level, and promote the desire for liberty from within.

This brings me back to the importance of being practical and defining the principles that underline peace. In looking at things from 30,000 feet, I see that any

strategy for success in the Middle East must be envisioned in the context of a broader global view. It must also be focused on our own vital national interests. And in this globalized world our national interests, however defined by our civilian leaders, are inextricably linked with the interests of other nations.

As players in the large global system, security and prosperity of the United States depends as much on the well-being of the rest of the world as the rest of the world depends on the well-being of the United States. And today's global system is more economically coupled than ever.

In his book, "The World is Flat," Friedman talks about the global supply chain symphony leading to the Dell theory of conflict prevention. Friedman argues that no two countries that are both part of a major global supply chain, like the Dell computer – like Dell computer company, will ever fight each other as long as they both are part of the same supply chain. And the viability of that chain is guaranteed through credible security.

But we will be hard pressed to help the global community safeguard that global system without the tools to do the job. That is why in my Senate confirmation hearing recently, I was so adamant about the need to reset, reconstitute, and revitalize our forces, but especially the ground forces. And with about 90 percent of global commerce traveling by sea, maritime forces play a key role in global security, and must also be properly equipped and employed. And our new maritime strategy will address that fact.

John Morgan and Pat Walsh will talk to you about the thinking that has gone into the development of the maritime strategy, but I'll tell you that it is a core component –of our overall military strategy and key to safeguarding global economic prosperity. Though Friedman's theory is a single example, I believe it be representative of a practical and compatible value that underscores the common value system Tony Blair was alluding to.

In considering trade and industry development as the foundation of a universal value system, then economics becomes the practical embodiment of Blair's idealism as *realpolitik*. If we can agree that economic progress is the prime driver for global interconnectedness, then we can use that as the common language for the building up -- and in the case of our new maritime strategy, global maritime partnerships, or in the case of national military or national security strategy, global security partnerships. And we can therefore be very pragmatic in the distribution of our military forces.

It is no secret that the global economic center of gravity has made a shift towards the Pacific and Indian Oceans. There are threats, like North Korea's ballistic missile program in that particular part of the world, that underscore our still-mounting global responsibility. To defend against those threats, I believe we need to rebalance global strategic risks for the future. That is not an ad-hoc process and does require strategic intellectual rigor.

The longer, larger war against radical jihadists -- and I believe it to be a long war - and the preservation of the global economy will require worldwide persistent engagement to foster relationships and trust, and to assure that our economically driven global system blossoms into the universal driver of peace and prosperity we hope to enjoy following the defeat of Soviet Communism.

Crafting a strategy where economic interdependence becomes our global unifying vision gets to the ideal and the pragmatic balance that Secretary Gates was referring to in his address at the world forum on the future of democracy. In pursuing economic interdependence as the universal common value to make globalization work, both our national goals and our military strategy will open doors allowing not only for the spread of the ideals we value and hold to be true, but also for helping those ideals take root and grow from within the population.

In the end, by anchoring the lofty ideals we value to the realities of the world we live in, we can and will overcome the test of wills and ideas that are defining our new era, but it will take time, years, decades even. You have a unique opportunity to use your reason and your free inquiry to influence the debate to help develop our strategy over these next couple of days and beyond. So I challenge you today to give us your thoughts, bring us your ideas, and help us keep our heads above and beyond the fog as we consider how to approach the crafting of strategy for the 21st century.

Thank you, and I'll be glad to take any questions and comments you have.