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AFCEA leadership, distinguished guests, and fellow military members, thank you for the opportunity to come and talk today.

The Pacific Fleet maritime theater covers a vast area that stretches from the U.S. West Coast to India, and from Alaska to Antarctica.

The array of challenges – and opportunities – in this theater demands one thing above all else: readiness. It is Admiral Swift’s vision for PACFLT to “Be where it matters, when it matters to decisively prevail in all contingencies from peace to war.”

That’s a pretty broad range – a lot of ground to cover – especially for a theater that’s mostly water.

But it gets simpler if we focus on the most challenging part of that, which is the high-end at-sea fight. As Admiral Swift is fond of saying, “If we are prepared to handle the high-end fight, we’ll be able to do everything else.”

I think that’s pretty smart and not just because he’s my boss, but it provides a lens through which to focus our efforts in PACFLT.

Let me give you an example of how we apply this thinking to a worst-case scenario, which, as warfighters, we must always be prepared for. On a daily basis, you communicators do a fantastic job of providing robust connectivity, keeping the information flowing among our forces and up and down the chain of command. But during a high-end conflict with a peer competitor, it’s quite possible that PACFLT forces would initially, or very quickly thereafter, be forced to operate in a communications degraded – or even denied – environment.

So how do we deal with this situation? How do we keep this terrific advantage we enjoy from quickly becoming our Achilles’ heel?

Quite simply, by learning how to live without it.

From my experience as a submariner -- intermittent communications was integral to our operational culture. Honestly, as an O-5 submarine CO, in many cases I very much appreciated being in a limited comms environment. For the record, my thinking has changed considerably now. But in this worst case scenario, the entire force needs to continue operating even if communication networks are broken.

The key element of this approach is an often-overlooked concept: it’s called commander’s intent. In any situation, understanding and executing commander’s intent is fundamental to the operations. The assumption of a communications degraded or denied environment during

conflict raises the importance of commander's intent to another level. In the absence of current direction, commanding officers must be capable of taking measured risks to continue executing the plan based on a clear understanding of commander's intent.

Now I recognize the last thing a dedicated group of IT professionals wants to hear is that the warfighter is not counting on having comms and is prepared to do battle without them. Trust me, we would much rather fully leverage the robust capabilities you deliver every day. But planning and training to operate in a comms-degraded environment represents a Phase II mindset – another hallmark of our PACFLT approach – and the recognition that the adversary gets a vote in setting the conditions. We must not count on a benign environment to succeed.

Admiral Swift has a saying regarding maritime operations, and it is: “If you're not mobile, you're not relevant.”

Applying this to communications would be: “If you're not resilient, you're not relevant.”

We require communication and IT systems and solutions that work in an ‘unfriendly’ environment or they simply won't be relevant in the Phase II fight. It will probably require solutions that leverage dual-use technologies. It should be solutions that are easily fielded and fixed, and upgraded quickly. I can update my mobile phone's operating system version in a few minutes via Wi-Fi or the Internet. This should be the goal we likewise apply to the software that drives our combat systems, our sonar processing, and all our other software based systems. That's what I mean by upgraded quickly.

About a year ago, then-SECDEF Hagel announced the Defense Innovation Initiative, which in broad terms called for extending America's competitive advantage by leveraging our national talents: our research and development capabilities, our technical community, our operational experience, and – most importantly – the initiative and creativity of our people. This is also referred to as the Defense Department's Third Offset Strategy. Within the Navy, Secretary Mabus established “Task Force Innovation” earlier this year to focus our efforts in this important area.

There are three fundamental areas to the Secretary's initiative, and the one that will be of greatest interest to this group lies in transforming how the Navy uses information -- more specifically, in treating “information as an asset.”

A pioneer in this area – who is probably very well known to this community – was Rear Admiral Grace Hopper. Always ahead of her time, she once said, “Someday, on the corporate balance sheet, there will be an entry which reads, ‘information’; for in most cases, the information is more valuable than the hardware which processes it.”

Given how much we spend on hardware, can you imagine such a valuation? It's been said that the Department of the Navy collects more data each day than the total amount stored in the Library of Congress. In all the data lies a lot of information and a lot of knowledge. If we are to realize its true value, information must be shared across systems and across organizations to empower people to make good decisions.

Now the Navy has for years called upon industry to bring us revolutionary technologies, but as an institution steeped in 240 years of tradition, I'll admit we've not always been quick to embrace change. Part of the Department's new strategy recognizes that we must become more agile and create an environment that embraces new ways of doing things. More easily said than done, but I think an imperative as we live in a world where the rate of change is increasing.

I want to circle back to where I started – a discussion on the AOR. The region today is absolutely amazing place, full of vitality and prosperity that was unimaginable just a few decades ago, when so many were still recovering from the ravages of a world war. How did we come so far, so fast? I'd offer that it was regional stability – underwritten in large part by the security U.S. forces provided – governed by an international rules based system that enabled the phenomenal growth in the region.

I'm convinced the continued promotion of the rules-based system that evolved over 70 years from the ashes of World War II, remains the best possible way forward for all nations in this region – large and small – to continue to rise peacefully, confidently, and securely. The current system that has served us all so well is the foundation for shared use of maritime waterways and resources. A rising tide lifts all ships.

Freedom from major conflict and adherence to these rules were catalysts for the economic transformation that spread across Asia in the post-war era. This international security is built upon a framework that Admiral Swift refers to as “norms, standards, rules and laws.” Norms, standards, rules and laws. Those words mean something and their order is important.

They range from informal ways of doing things that have resulted from common practice – norms – to standards of professional competence or technical interoperability, to rules that have codified certain behavior through agreements between nations (an example being CUES, or the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea) to international laws that are set forth by international convention. On one end, norms are informal and non-binding, while at the other end, laws are formal, binding and with the force of international consensus behind them. It is this framework that has provided the basis for cooperation and provided the security and stability needed for the economic miracles of the last 70 years to happen. So what does this mean to a group of communicators?

Well, you too have a role to play in advancing this framework of international cooperation on which our continued shared prosperity depends. You may have noticed as I was explaining the framework that the example of standards I provided are technical standards that promote interoperability and the exchange of information.

Certainly this applies to the communications field. In fact, it can be argued that it was the framework of standards that enabled the rise and reach of the Internet as we know it today, allowing a computer here to retrieve information from a web server on the other side of the world, when the two systems were never initially designed to talk to one another. That's a pretty amazing thing, and it speaks to the power of technical standards to promote interoperability, and it speaks to the power of standards in the larger sense to provide a basis for security and stability in our region. So let me thank you for your efforts to promote the standards of interoperability that are advancing the international framework of rules that's so critical to the continued

prosperity of this region. I'd also like to thank you very much for the opportunity to talk with you today, and thank you for all you're doing for our nation.