

Admiral James G. Foggo III  
Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa

Defense Writers Group

18 December 2019

**DWG:** Admiral, I'd like to get started because you have a plane to catch. First of all, welcome and thank you so much for coming to the Defense Writers Group this morning. It's a real pleasure and an honor to have a four star admiral here. It doesn't happen as often as I would like. And you're a four star admiral who has a really extraordinary set of responsibilities.

Maybe I'll start by just asking you to, we've just been talking about the Med and the Adriatic, and I think we probably imagine the Commander in Naples thinking about that space, but you have the Baltic, the Black Sea, the South Atlantic Coast of Africa, the Indian Ocean side of Africa, the Arctic, in addition to the Med and the North Atlantic. So what are some of the things that you concern yourself with as you have that huge amount of water to worry about and to lead the Soldiers and Sailors, mostly Sailors, that are in that space.

**Admiral Foggo:** Absolutely. It's an extremely large tactical area and area of operations. I'm blessed to be the commander of three different commands and two headquarters in Naples.

So we have the Allied Joint Forces Command, Naples, which is the NATO Headquarters in a place called Lago Patria. It's not far out of town. And it's really brand new. It's about five years young. Everything works, IT systems, it's a beautiful looking building. It's kind of like the DIA building here, almost like a space station if you would. I spend the preponderance of my time in that headquarters. There's about a thousand people there and we have operations all over the theater.

The other headquarters is at Capodichino which is on the airport, and it's an odd place for a Navy headquarters, but when we consolidated and moved out of Naval Forces Europe in London,

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

the one location, we put that command ship, USS Mt. Whitney in Gaeta, the former headquarters of 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet, and moved everybody, CNE, Naval Forces Europe, Naval Forces Africa, 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet, into Capodichino. So great access to the airport. It can get crowded sometimes but the Italians are a very, very gracious host nation.

Priorities is probably my biggest challenge. So where do you go? And we try to make sure that we're looking at the entire theater, and I mean the continent of Europe and also Africa where we operate, and that we have a naval presence where it matters and when it matters. So periodically we'll do exercises around the theater. BALTOPS has been one that's been around for a long time. And as a four star commander, the commanders of the fleets that run BALTOPS report to me. But the good news is, I've been in Naples three times so I've had an opportunity to command that exercise twice myself, in 2015 and 2016. That was the first time a NATO Commander had actually taken it since 1972. It's typically an American exercise that was conducted in Europe and now it's a NATO exercise with NATO people doing great things with partners and allies.

We also operate in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. We do three signature series exercises every year around Africa and it's called the Express Series. Meghan's very familiar with this. She's been around and covered Cutlass Express and Phoenix Express. Cutlass Express, East Africa; Phoenix Express, North Africa; Obangame Express, West Africa.

When there are tensions, heightened tensions, we try to go where those tensions are to deter any activity which may be contrary to the needs and the desires and the policies of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or something that might threaten North Atlantic security.

So on any given day I can have a plan, but as you know, David, I think General Dempsey was one as he departed the pattern as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs a few years ago, he said he'd been

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

doing the job for about four years and he'd never seen a more busy or an even more tense situation around the world globally. So we see that every day and we do I think a pretty good job of managing risk.

So it's about priorities, it's about risk when you wake up in the morning. And then you have to be flexible, you have to be agile and say well, I'm going to put that plan or that agenda item on the shelf and we're going to go solve this problem.

That's why I love my job. As a submariner I was always trained to be able to be thoughtful and proactive but also reactive if necessary.

**DWG:** Are there submarines under the ice in the Arctic? And what are they doing if so?

**Admiral Foggo:** Well, I don't want to start off with the typical refrain that I don't discuss operations, so what I'm going to tell you is yes, I've been there twice myself. I was there on USS Sea Devil in 1985, June of 1985. John's got a picture somewhere of that because we gave a slide yesterday at two of my presentations with Sea Devil in the Arctic in 1985, and then USS Oklahoma City operating in the vicinity of the Arctic, north of the Arctic Circle, 66 North and close to the Pole in the year 2000 when I commanded that ship.

So the United States Navy and the United States submarine force operates everywhere in the global commons. We have a lot of experience operating in the Arctic, in the Arctic Ocean and in the marginal ice zone and under the North Pole. We know how to do that. We've been doing that since USS Nautilus circumnavigated the world.

That's an area that is very interesting. It's a great training ground. You have to prepare extensively for that. We have specialty people in our Arctic ice labs that assist us. Ice pilots. So we're periodically out and about and up there, but

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

at any given time I wouldn't be able to tell you exactly who and exactly when. Suffice it to say, we're there.

**DWG:** Okay. Otto?

**DWG:** Admiral, Dave cited the expanse of your area, and apparently you're seeing more activity by our good friend the Russians in both the Med and the Black Sea. But you are somewhat resource starved, particularly for a theater as big as you are and with the responsibilities you have.

So talk about what you're seeing the Russians doing these days as part of their naval activities, and how do you stretch what few resources you have to cover your vast AOR and all of your responsibilities?

**Admiral Foggo:** Thanks, Otto. That's a great question. I've written extensively on this back in 2016. The Naval Institute helped me publish an article with Dr. Alarik Fritz that was entitled "The Fourth Battle of the Atlantic." The first being World War I, German submarine forces in the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Admiral [Donas] who was a commander in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War and then a Fleet Admiral in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, and his Wolf Pack strategy almost brought us to our knees. But we defeated Germany and prevailed, and at the end of the war we moved into the Cold War. Nary a shot was fired during the third battle of the Atlantic. It was a cost-imposing strategy. Then in 1989 in Francis Fukuyama's famous words, "We reached the end of history," but it really didn't happen.

Now we're back into the fourth battle of the Atlantic. It's a competitive environment.

There was an article in the Barents Observer on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October that talked about Russian submarine activity and some of the references that they used in Norway and having ten Russian submarines out at the same time.

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

I think you've probably seen that article, and I think that article is fairly accurate.

With that amount of activity, we're seeing a surge in undersea activity from the Russian Federation Navy that we haven't seen in a long time.

Russia has continued to put resources into their undersea domain. It's an asymmetric way of challenging the West and NATO Alliance, and actually they've done quite well.

We in the United States submarine force still enjoy the competitive edge. I think we're the best in the world and we need to stay that way, which is why I wrote that article. It was a warning order.

I think that Russia will continue to put rubles into submarines. They have some very capable ones. Severodvinsk comes to mind. It's an excellent platform. Very challenging. They six new Kilo Class submarines in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea, hybrid diesel electric propulsion, state of the art. Very quiet when they're on the battery. It's very challenging. They carry the Kalibr cruise missile, and Russia's about to put an extended range on that missile. You can read the stats. They're out there. In excess of 1500 kilometers. It's kind of like a Tomahawk land attack missile.

So that being said, we're very, very busy in the undersea domain. This has been one of the busiest years that I can remember and I've been doing this since 1983. I've been a submariner since I graduated from the Naval Academy and went to Nuclear Power School. And all my time is in the Atlantic. I have not served in an underway operational billet in the Pacific. I've been out there before, but on the land fleet sailor. So that's what I've done. That's why I make that comparative analysis.

That said, we have to maintain a position of strength. We have

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

to continue to do research and development. We have to continue to be the best that we can be, particularly in the undersea domain. That means being out there and operating, and yes, you're absolutely right, we are challenged by resources right now. We have a very generous defense budget. The President has been very generous to the military and to the Department of Defense. And how the Secretary of Defense and his staff prioritize that is something for the policy-makers to decide.

But we're in a great power competition, and those two great powers that I'm talking about are China and Russia. Secretary Esper has said that he puts China as the number one priority, and he knows that Russia's still out there and it is strong, so we do the best that we can with what we have. That's what every military commander will do. You might call it a zone defense approach. So the beauty of the platforms that I operate with, particularly the late generation Virginia Class submarine which is the best in the world, has the ability, flexibility, agility, well, can stay in places for long times, submerged, stealthy, and it has speed. It gets twice as fast so I can move it around like a chess piece on the chess board. So I'm pretty comfortable with what we're doing right now with regards to any activity in the undersea domain with what we have.

**DWG:** How do you use your allies? NATO Has two or three standing naval forces, a nuke and a surface fleet. How do they fit into your plans and how do you use that?

**Admiral Foggo:** You're absolutely right to bring up the allies. We have 29, soon to be 30 NATO nations in the alliance. We have 41 partner nations. Of the 29, John will have to check but I think over 20, 21 have navies and have an interest. Many of those have professional submarine forces, destroyers and frigates that have antisubmarine warfare capability. The French, the British, the Dutch, for example. The Norwegians. Incredible partners. Just like the Brits and the French. They are force multipliers for us. They are plugged in and they are with us and they are interoperable and they are professional.

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

So it's great to have the allies and partners with us because we have like-minded concerns about our own national security and about our collective security because all those nations are members of the NATO Alliance. So thanks for bringing that up. The allies and partners are extremely important.

And you know from a lot of my rhetoric, speeches and blogs, I'm a huge believer in the transatlantic alliance, the stronger the better.

**DWG:** Michael Gordon, Wall Street Journal.

**DWG:** Sir, since the Russians obviously had, following on Otto's question, a longstanding asset in the Port of Tartus in Syria, but since they intervened in Syria in a major way in 2015, I'm just assuming that it's been upgraded and being used more.

Can you explain, how has that changed? How are they using it? How are they upgrading it? Even today there was something in the Russian media about projects they're projecting to improve the infrastructure there. How important is it to them? How have they improved it?

**Admiral Foggo:** It's very important, Michael. And it's interesting because the Russian presence in Syria is nothing new. Obviously Bashar al-Assad asked the Russians to come and help him as he struggled to maintain a grip on power, and they did that. However, his father, Hafez al-Assad had an agreement with the Russians that dates back to 1971 or '72 for use of the base in Tartus. They're also now in Latakia. They have a regular naval presence there. That presence has grown over time. I have the benefit of hindsight, so my first job as a one star from 2010 to 2012 there was limited Russian activity there. In 2014 to 2016 we actually neutralized Syrian chemical weapons, and we did that with the Norwegians as interlocutors and Chinese and Russian warships combined with a ship that was specially designed to destroy chemical weapons, [chlorine] and sarin gas. And it worked out well. Then the conflict took a downturn in

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

Syria and we saw a stepped increase in Russian activity.

During the time frame prior, so we had strikes into Syria in April 2017, primarily U.S. only. Two destroyers. Then just about one year later there was a coalition that responded to the use of Syrian chemical weapons against civilians. It included the French and the British and the United States, and we struck again. Three sites. They were quite specifically picked to limit collateral damage but send a strong message.

Up until the time prior to that strike, we saw a lot of Russian activity out off the coast of Tartus and Latakia. Dozens of ships out there. The Kilo class submarines that I mentioned, notionally about four in the Black Sea and two operating in and out of Syria are out in the Med and it's important that we know what they're doing and where they are because they have that Kalibr cruise missile capability, so we need to know what they're up to. That missile can range any acpital in Europe. It's not to say they would use it, but prudence would dictate that we understand the indications and warning and where they are and what they're doing. So it's become a very important area.

Russia is a creature of habit. It's done the same thing that it's doing in Kaliningrad. There's a very high density of people, military systems, weapons, concentrated in Kaliningrad in the Baltic Sea. Likewise, since the illegal annexation of Crimea there's been a buildup of anti-access aera denial systems in the Crimea. S-400, for example, which has been in the news lately. Same thing in Syria. They take advantage of their foothold there and they've put military hardware and software including people into Syria. I think they'll probably remain there for the foreseeable future.

**DWG:** Just to clarify and follow up quickly, In Syria, what is there on kind of a regular basis? You mentioned the submarines. They're basically staged out of Tartus now in Syria, the Kalibr carrying submarines?



Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

**Admiral Foggo:** The Kilo --

**DWG:** -- Russian assets are kind of regularly in Tartus and maybe you could amplify a little bit on the A2AD in Crimea.

**Admiral Foggo:** Typically warships, supply ships, two Russian Kilo Class submarines that operate in and out of Syria at any given time.

**DWG:** And those submarines wouldn't have been there prior to 2015? Or they would have?

**Admiral Foggo:** I think the announcement of the six Kilos to the Black Sea, and it was intended that they would go to the Black Sea, and lo and behold, two of them stopped outside the Black Sea and operated in the Mediterranean.

And it is possible under the Montreux Convention that if you're going to do maintenance that you can move a submarine in and out as a Black Sea nation, and they've taken advantage of that. So of the six they have some flexibility. But typically four in the Black Sea and two out of the Black Sea. That's what we've seen. From around 2014-2015 to present.

And as to A2AD activity, buildup in Crimea particularly of the S-300, S-400 weapon systems, coastal defense radar systems, anti-ship cruise missiles, and the like that would be able to deny access to the waters around that territory.

**DWG:** Thank you.

**DWG:** Katy Williams, Defense One.

**DWG:** Hi. NATO in London I believe set this new focus on China. You mentioned that Secretary Esper's office has this as his number one priority. I'm just hoping you can talk a little bit about what you were seeing your AOR, just what that means for

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

you.

**Admiral Foggo:** Absolutely. In great power competition we talk about China and Russia. The Secretary and the policy-makers have biased towards China. They see it as a rising power and it's my hope that China rises peacefully. But this is not just about China and the Western Pacific. When you talk about great power competition it occurs in my area of responsibility as well, particularly in Africa. So having gone back and forth, again from 2010 to 2012, '14 to '16 and '17 to present, what I have seen is in the Horn of Africa, for example, the establishment of a Chinese naval base in [Dorla], a Chinese facility, multi-purpose facility. And that's part of the China long term strategy of One Belt One Road issue now.

Throughout the African continent, particularly in the coastal regions where I operate, because we do a lot of exercises down there, so we're present. And we had the U.S. naval ship Carson City in and out of five ports in West Africa last summer doing a training mission, maintenance mission, interaction, medical best practice sharing. As you go into those ports, what you see is an increase in presence, a rise in Chinese activity, Chinese presence, cultural centers. But also places where they're conducting infrastructure projects, and that's occurring all over Africa. They have the cash to do it, and everybody has a right as a democratic nation to pick and choose who are their partners, and whether they're business partners or security partners. I think and many of my African friends think that the United States is the partner of choice, and we try to keep it that way through our robust exercise program, but let there be no doubt, the Chinese have a significant presence in Africa and I think that's important for us to take into consideration.

**DWG:** Is there anywhere particularly I think on the western coast at this point that you are watching and thinking okay, that's an obvious target for Chinese basing? For new blue water basing?

**Admiral Foggo:** The Chinese are interested in lots of bases everywhere so that they can expand their access and yet can expand their refit capability. They've taken a play from our playbook because we've enjoyed global access in the global commons and places around the world. Our own facility in Djibouti is a good example. We've been there a very long time and they saw it as an opportunity to come in and establish a base in the Horn of Africa just like the Americans and some of our coalition forces down there, and they've followed suit.

The difference between them and us is when the United States goes someplace and establishes a forward operating base or a cooperative security location, we typically put a little money into the economy. We hire local wage workers and construction companies we contract out, and that's part of the deal. It's a return on investment of that country's confidence in us. For example, in Camp Lemonier, we've got about a thousand day workers that are Djiboutian that come across the gate every day and do a multiplicity of services for the troops down there. I think we've got about 8.5 percent of the GDP of the Djiboutian economy that is generated by American activity and American business down there related to Camp Lemonier. That's not true of the Chinese. They bring their own labor and they bring their own materials.

One of the pitfalls and something to be aware of and I tell my African partners this, be cognizant of this. If you take the Sri Lanka example, about 8.1 billion dollars in debt because of Chinese infrastructure projects, and sooner or later investors are going to call in that debt. There was a debt forgiveness plan, and that \$3 billion that was offered as debt forgiveness because the lease on the port of Hambantota for 99 years. My concern there is who will control access to that port? That's a key port. That process and that protocol could repeat itself all around Africa. I hope it doesn't. That's why we maintain good relations down there and that's why we're there.

We've seen Chinese activity in Nigeria which is a country with

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

significant resources and close ties to the United States of America. They're building the airport. That's fine. They need a new airport in the capital city. They're also building piers down in Lagos. That does not deter us from going in and continuing to operate with our traditional partners down there. In fact my philosophy is if they're going to pay for it, then we'll use it. It's like the railway system between Addis Ababa, the African Union where we do business, and NATO's Strategic Direction South Hub in my headquarters and Djibouti. That's actually a pretty good railway system so if you needed it for communication nodes of transportation or communication between those two points then why not use it?

Thanks for the question.

**DWG:** Meghan from USNI.

**DWG:** I wanted to go back to Otto's question about Russian activity and just kind of ask a so what question. So if Russian subs are in this fourth battle of the Atlantic that you've described before, what more do you need from the U.S. Navy to counter that? Is there anything more that can be done to provide greater presence or readiness in your theater? Is there anything you need, maybe fast track on the acquisition or research side? What would you ask from big Navy to deal with what you're seeing?

**Admiral Foggo:** Thanks, Meghan. Great question.

Like I said, in 2016 when I published the article it was a warning order, a wakeup call, and both the United States and NATO responded to that. This is what they did. I mean we brought back an entire fleet headquarters. 2<sup>nd</sup> Fleet Headquarters in Norfolk which had been dormant. NATO voted to stand up a new Joint Force Command in Norfolk which is headed by my friend Vice Admiral Woody Lewis. There are only two joint force commands right now. One is in Brunssum in the Netherlands, and the other is me in Naples in Joint Forces

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

Command Naples. So we've added Norfolk to the mix. It's a little different because it's a three star officer and there's a four star officer in Brunssum and a four star officer in Naples. However, Admiral Lewis has command of both a fleet, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Fleet, and a standing NATO headquarters. So that has made the transatlantic bridge that much stronger. When you talk about preservation or control of sea lines of communication, there's a lot of force structure that's available to respond in peacetime or in crisis from Norfolk, and so that's reassuring to the allies and the partners.

The other thing that we've done in NATO is at the recent London Summit you've seen all the discussion about, and you've seen the discussion about burden-sharing for a very long time. Our President has put that in the forefront, and quite frankly, I think that was absolutely the right thing to do. It should have been done 10, 20 years ago. The Secretary of Defense made that statement the other day, that that was pretty forthright. He said there should be no free riders. Everybody should take part in support of their collective defense.

So since 2016 we've seen a rise in about 130 billion euros in defense spending for NATO. Some of that dialogue and some of that really robust and honest and open commentary between nations has been tough to swallow. However, I can tell you that of all the military officers and the nations and partners that are represented in my headquarters, they're happy to see money flowing for fuel, for readiness, for tanks. Some of the other things that we did to respond to this buildup, this interest, increasing interest in both the Atlantic and the Arctic was a pretty heady exercise program. You were part of Trident Juncture. It was the largest exercise since the end of the Cold War. So my headquarters took command. 50,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines; 265 type model series of aircraft from all over the alliance including Sweden and Finland; 70 ships, some of them pretty big. The USS Harry S. Truman, the Iwo Jima ARG MEU. And 10,000 tracked or rolling vehicles -- trucks, tanks, heavy equipment transporters. All in Norway for

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

an Article 5 operation.

Why is that important? First of all, it sends a message. Right? It changes your risk calculus. So if you're President Putin you say to yourself, that's a pretty significant force and they moved it pretty quickly. Readiness is a big deal in NATO right now. The NATO Readiness Initiative was discussed in London -- 30-30-30-30. But if you look at it, NATO can move quickly. NATO has a preponderance of force. So why would you take a risk? Why would you risk some kind of a land grab like Crimea? That's an important message.

We're also very open about it. We're transparent. We invited Russian observers to the exercise. We had two from Russia and we had two from Belarus. We have great relations with Belarus. So the idea is to show NATO is capable, NATO is credible. When we make a promise, we keep it and we move pretty fast. That was seven equivalent brigades in 30 days.

One thing I'll tell you that we continue to work on, it's something that everybody needs to be cognizant of is, I learned this lesson as the commander of Trident Juncture. Logistics is really important. Logistics is, in my humble opinion, the sixth domain of warfare and I hope that we continue to embrace that. NATO has. They've established a Joint Logistics Support Group at both of the JFC Headquarters in Brunssum and in my headquarters in Naples, and there's an overarching headquarters that provides oversight for those JLSGs. If you can deliver an Army to the fight but you can't give it gas and food, beans and bullets, then it's no good. And that's been the Achilles heel of any Army since Alexander the Great roamed this earth.

There is an increase in activity. There are threats out there. I think NATO and the United States as a good partner of NATO have risen to the challenge.

**DWG:** The Navy and Marine Corps are starting to move out pretty quickly with unmanned vehicles and all that means. Longer range

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

weapons, longer range sensors. Is there anything that you would ask them to keep in mind or kind of any considerations for your theater that you would want them to take into account as they're pursuing these new technologies?

**Admiral Foggo:** I think that's a great initiative. NATO just embraced space as a 5<sup>th</sup> domain. Cyber is also important. Knowing what's going on out there is extremely important. So for unmanned systems, ISR is probably one of our limitations. We could use more of it. Indications and warning is important. If you can put an unmanned system up then there's less of a risk, less of a threat. We've seen some of this recently, the Iranians shot down one of our unmanned drones, and one was also shot down over Libya. We didn't lose a pilot, we lost an unmanned system. So that's indeed unfortunate and it's wrong, however, we can use more of that in the theater to give us better intelligence and better situational awareness of what's on the ground so I'm all for it.

As far as defensive capabilities, as I tell the allies and the partners, if you are limited in the amount of resources that you have and you want to protect your shores, then think about what the Russians do with A2AD and go after similar systems. Smart mines. Anti-ship cruise missiles. Coastal radars that are connected.

For ten years we've assisted the Africans with the Yaoundé Code of Conduct in joining coastal radars down the Gulf of Guinea so that they have seamless integration across maritime territorial boundaries, and now if there's a bad actor out there, somebody who's trafficking or somebody who has other malicious intent, they can pass off that information if he crosses a maritime domain boundary to the next nation, who can go out and intercept. If they can do that, we can do that. And there ought to be an investment in that sort of thing in the future. So I'm all for it. AI, unmanned.

I've got to put a plug in for the MQ-25 Stingray, too. Our

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

unmanned aerial vehicle, long range tanker. What that does is it's out there, we've got the first one operating and it gives the carrier an extended reach so you can put the strike fighters, F-35 and F/A-18E/F further over the horizon. What does that do for you? It extends the range of the strike capability or the reconnaissance capability of that aircraft, but it also puts the carrier in a position where it can be more stealthy and it can remain in the fight. So unmanned, all goodness.

**DWG:** Dmitry, TASS.

**DWG:** Good morning, Admiral. Thank you for doing this.

I wanted to ask you about 1972 U.S.-Russian agreement on the prevention of incidents over the high seas. You're pretty familiar with it I imagine.

**Admiral Foggo:** I am.

**DWG:** The Russians are encouraging the Americans to sort of modernize and update this agreement as far as I understand. I don't know the details, what exactly the Russian government is proposing, but I wanted to know what you think about this as a senior U.S. military leader in the submarine arena. Does it make any sense? Does it need to be updated?

**Admiral Foggo:** Dmitry, as a matter of fact I was in the Pentagon yesterday and I was just talking to Admiral Mike Gilday, our CNO, about the INCSEA Agreement. From 1972 to present, the INCSEA Agreement, it's a bilateral agreement as you know, that is intended to reduce the number of mistakes and miscalculations that might occur in the maritime domain or in the air domain. It's a very important agreement.

General Wolters was just here a couple of weeks ago and he talked to the Defense Writers Group. I think you were here, David, for that. And he made the statement, which is absolutely



Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

true, that we haven't had an untoward incident in the air or on the sea in the European theater for three months, 90 days. Why is that? There's a couple of reasons. This gets to your question.

From Trident Juncture forward, the Secretary General, and he was up in Norway, former Prime Minister of Norway and I went out with him a couple of times. He talks about the three D's. Deter, Defend and Dialogue. Dialogue with those who might have differences with the NATO Alliance, particularly Russia. That's what the NATO-Russia Council is all about. That's why Russia has an Ambassador in Brussels who has access to NATO Headquarters and to the Secretary General himself. So dialogue is really important. The Secretary General has maintained that dialogue with senior Russian leaders throughout his tenure and he's done a great job.

Dialogue at the same time, I mean we've come through strategic thoughts to a NATO military strategy that really boils down to what my boss, General Wolters, calls Deter and Defend in the Euro-Atlantic area. We spend, and he'll tell you, we spend a preponderance of our time on deterrence. Trying to avoid any kind of conflict. With that goes the dialogue.

Both General Wolters and his predecessor, General Scaparrotti, enjoyed access, personal meetings and also phone calls with General Gerasimov over the course of their tenure. I think that has contributed, as has Air Chief Marshal Stu Peach, the Chairman of the Military Committee at NATO, has had an opportunity to talk with General Gerasimov. That dialogue is really important. I think it reduces mistakes and miscalculations.

So INCSEA is very important in maintaining communication. And INCSEA contributes every year when we get together and we compare notes on what constitutes an unsafe or an unprofessional incident at sea or in the air, and typically the United States will have few of these incidents and Russia will have a few of

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

these incidents and we'll talk about them. We don't always agree. But it is a very open, honest and robust dialogue.

They used to be held one year in Moscow, one year in Naples, Italy in my headquarters. One of the last ones we did was with my Chief of Staff and Russian Vice Admiral Oleg [Bertsov], and at the end of the day we'd sign a set of minutes and publish what we talked about. There's goodness in that.

I can tell you from my own personal experience on the other side of the world, back in 2013 I did a very interesting assignment for the better part of a year on establishment of rules or standards of behavior in the maritime domain with the People's Liberation Army/Navy. And the counterpart to me as a U.S. Navy Admiral on the other side of the table was a Chinese admiral named Rear Admiral [Li Gi], and we got hung up on words. On whether or not we were going to agree to rules or standards of behavior.

One day Admiral Li said you and I need to have a private conversation about this so we can move forward. So we had breakfast, and during that breakfast he said Admiral Foggo, do you know why we're here? I go yeah, I thought we were here to negotiate standards of behavior in the maritime domain, to reduce mistakes and miscalculations between our forces. He goes no, that's not why we're here. He was very, very blunt. He said if our two nations were to go to war, that would be a decision for President Xi and at the time President Obama. That would not be a decision for men in the cockpit of an aircraft or on the bridge of a ship. And he was absolutely right. I said you're absolutely right. We're here to avoid mistakes and miscalculations. Then we moved forward and got past all the silliness of arguing over words, and there was actually a memorandum of agreement signed at the ASEAN Summit back in 2013 as a result.

However, that has not borne fruit in the South China Sea, so they haven't been true to form on that.

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

But INCSEA, same thing. CUES is the same thing, Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea. Russia's a signatory, China's a signatory, France is a signatory, U.S. is a signatory. It's a broader version of INCSEA.

As to the changes, there's going to be another INCSEA discussion again next year, location to be determined and agenda to be determined, but I am fully in favor of continuing this dialogue so that we can avoid the kinds of mistakes and miscalculations that might lead to an untoward event at sea. If something happened out in the Western Pacific between a Russian warship and a U.S. Navy warship, the Chancellorsville and the [Udaloy] recently and we did not consider that a safe practice. We made it quite clear to the Russian Federation that we did not.

You've read some things in the newspaper just yesterday about the presence of a Russian intelligence vessel operating off of the East Coast of the United States. A couple of hundred miles out but the United States Coast Guard put out a statement that the activity by this vessel was unsafe because it was not responding to signals or bridge to bridge radio or in the evening, in the hours of darkness, operating running lights at sea.

So Dmitry, I take you back to, everybody in here, many of you probably have children. Probably one of the scariest things I did was driver's ed for my kids when they were in high school, trying to teach them how to drive. And it was back to the basics during the hours of daylight because I'd rarely take them out at night when they were learning how to drive. But it was all about okay, just like the UN Convention on Law of the Sea and the rules of the road, the general prudential rule. You are a defensive driver with my car. So be very, very careful and don't be aggressive on the highways.

The second thing is, if you were driving at night, or my son or daughter were driving at night, we'd be fools not to have the

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

headlights on or the fog lights in the fog. The same thing applies at sea. If you're not running your running lights at night, you put yourself at risk and you put others at risk.

Some of these merchant ships that are operating in the sea lanes up and down the United States have radar that operates and a signal goes out, and a mariner who may not be on the bridge has to go to the bridge. So you go up to the bridge and you don't see anything because the ship's not lit. You put yourself in a very awkward position.

The same thing applies for a response to bridge to bridge radio. You know when you're in your car you don't like something somebody does, you honk your horn. We have whistle signals at sea. When somebody doesn't respond to those, then you pick up, you roll down your window and you yell. At sea, you pick up the bridge to bridge radio and you talk. And I don't think it's an excuse to say that we don't understand English on the bridge of the Russian ship because most of the time if you send a spy ship to the United States, people on the bridge speak English.

I think that INCSEA's a very honest and open dialogue and I think it should continue. I don't know exactly what you're referring to on the changes. Like I said, this instruction is signed up by the Chief of Naval Operations. It's his instruction. His to change if he wants to. And it's been around, it's been sacrosanct since 1972 so it's a pretty good track record of achievement over time.

**DWG:** A brief follow-on to that. AS far as I understand, I'm mostly operating based on what I've read from Deputy Prime Minister [Ayeavko]. He was the one talking about this, publicly talking. At least a couple of times lately. But hearing your take on that, I'm under the impression that the reason to have the dialogue, at least on that --

**Admiral Foggo:** I can't --

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

**DWG:** -- the Russians, [inaudible] --

**Admiral Foggo:** I can't talk to the active dialogue for the following reason. Because of my locality in Naples and the fact that I'm a forward deployed operator, and really what you're referring to is a question of policy. However, over the course of a year there is dialogue about INCSEA because you've got to decide when the next meeting will take place and where it will take place. So presumably go back and forth, Naples/Moscow, Naples/Moscow. St. Petersburg. The last one being in Washington, DC. We'll see where the next one lands and when it lands.

What's important is that we continue it. And as the relationship which has its periods of tension goes up and down, I think it puts potential future dialogue at risk and I'd hate to see that happen.

**DWG:** Voice of America.

**DWG:** Thank you very much for doing this.

You mentioned Russian undersea activity in the Atlantic. A number of the Arctic nations have expressed concern not just about Russia but about Chinese activity in the Arctic. What are you seeing from the Chinese, and how concerned are you about what they're doing?

**Admiral Foggo:** What I can tell you is the polar ice cap is receding and has been for quite some time. I saw differences myself even between 1985 at the geographic North Pole and driving up there 15 years later in the vicinity of the marginalized zone. So that has opened up avenues for activity, commerce, tourism, and it's not just European Arctic nations that operate up there or that send ships up there. There's a lot of commercial shipping traffic and a lot of Cosco shipping traffic from China and a lot of Russian activity up there.

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

Russia has recently made some claims on the continental shelf in the Arctic and it's done the right thing by taking that for adjudication to the United Nations who is the final arbiter on the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea. Again, that's a policy agreement and that's something that's being done in the right way. The jury is still out.

There is much more Chinese activity than we've ever seen up there. They use it to come across the Pole because it makes fiscal sense and business sense to them. I think it's in accordance with their Arctic Silk Road policy that they're going to use that route to their benefit. As long as they do that peacefully, there's absolutely no problem. There should be transit passage available through the three routes that are in the Arctic. The Northwest Passage over the top and the Northern Sea Route.

Russia's made some statements recently about if you're going to use the Northern Sea Route then you've got to ask for permission 45 days in advance and put Russian pilots on board and we're typically not inclined to do that sort of thing because we see it as transit passage and it should be freedom of navigation in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

So there's a lot more activity up there that I've noticed in the time that I've been doing this. I think that portends for more oversight and more supervision. And in the event that there was some kind of accident of a cruise ship up there, a Titanic-like incident, you'd want to be able to go and rescue those people.

So it's becoming a much more active region.

China and Russia are collaborating more in the Arctic and as I always say, I advise the Russian Federation to think about that because I'm not sure that China's interests are Russia's interests and vice versa.

**DWG:** What does that do to the resources with the increased

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

Chinese activity, Chinese military there? How much more of a crunch does that put on your resources and what more do you need specifically to address those concerns?

**Admiral Foggo:** I think that question has been undertaken here in Washington, DC as we look at resources. We're trying to build a bigger Navy and get to a 355 ship Navy. I think we have a generous budget that allows us to hire more people and actually bend more metal and we have a plan to get there. But it becomes a question of priorities and right now I think the National Defense Strategy is pretty clear. We're in a great power competition -- China and Russia. As Katy Bode pointed out, the Secretary of Defense has indicated a higher priority for China which means activity in the Western Pacific. But there is, to your point, significant interest in the Arctic, significant interest in keeping the Arctic calm and cool, no pun intended, so that everybody has an opportunity to use the Arctic safely and with respect to the environment and be able to conduct transit passage up there peacefully. And certainly if you're an Arctic nation like the United States is, as a function of our contiguous territory in the Arctic Ocean then we have a say as do all the other nations.

**DWG:** Wall Street Journal.

**DWG:** Hi, Admiral.

I just want to start with a practical question. The USS Truman just left the 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet AOR and has moved into the Red Sea. In the year ahead, how frequently do you anticipate having them, a carrier strike group in the 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet AOR given the demands coming from the Middle East?

**Admiral Foggo:** That's a great question. I was just out on the Truman. I was out last Monday, before last, so almost a week and a few days ago. She came through the theater, it was great to see her. She was, of course, the mainstay of Exercise Trident Juncture. She implemented for the first time in person,

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

dynamic force employment. The ability to take a large asset with five associated support ships, cruisers and destroyers, and change the plan, and instead of going into a traditional location like the Eastern Mediterranean at the time, and conducting strikes on [Dice] which she did, she the moved into the Adriatic and flew missions for the first time in history in BALTOPS, across land. That was interesting. And then went back home and everybody said oh, it must be broken. It wasn't. We did that on purpose. Then we brought her back out again. Actually I started seeing newspaper articles that she was coming back across the Atlantic, oh, the Truman is going to the Eastern Med. Surprise, surprise, she went north to the Arctic Circle. And we hadn't done that since the end of the Cold War in ice. So that was a very successful implementation, and they really wrote the book on dynamic force employment.

So this time when she came through we had an opportunity to say will she remain in this theater for a short period of time, a long period of time? And can she swing from one theater to another? Again, a policy decision was made and obviously there are some concerns in the Middle East, particularly with maligned Iranian influence, completely unsatisfactory behavior, attacking ships in port, attacking ships at sea with limpet mines on the sides of their ships, shooting down an American drone, and attacking Saudi Aramco. So we send our carriers to where there's heightened tension. So she's going exactly where she needs to be.

As to whether or not we'll see other carrier deployments here in the future, undoubtedly yes, but the beauty of that carrier and the way it's designed for flexibility, agility and speed and dwell is that we can swing it to any theater in the world. I mean she could be in the Mediterranean and within a week to ten days she could be in the Red Sea and in another combatant commander's operating area.

We have this thing called the Unified Command Plan line. It's become fairly transparent over time. I mean there's no rigid



Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

boundaries, I mean there are, right, as far as global force management of your force. But I consider myself kind of the left bank, if you will, the supporting fires for CENTCOM and we've shown in the chemical weapon strikes in April 2018 that there was just seamless integration. That an operation run by CENTCOM, by Admiral Aquilino when he 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet, and as a four star, I was the supporting commander to the Vice Admiral who's now a four star himself out in the Pacific. So your Navy has that flexibility, so we can go anywhere at the time and place of our choosing. Our platforms allow us to do that.

**DWG:** What I hear you saying though is rather than sort of sitting in 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet's AOR for a sustained period of time it would be for more likely for shorter visits as it moves towards the Mediterranean. Am I hearing that correctly?

**Admiral Foggo:** No. If I led you to that conclusion, then that would not be the conclusion I would want you to have.

We can go anywhere we want, any time we want. So we can stay in the Med and we can get to the Arabian Gulf, or we can get to the Pacific if we need to. It's obviously a further slog to the Pacific. Likewise, if you're in the Pacific you can come here.

So as the situation changes, both strategically and tactically, we'll move the chess pieces around on the board and that's what having a global Navy with this kind of force is all about.

So if there were a crisis to happen somewhere in the European theater, in the Mediterranean, then you would see a force flowed to respond to that crisis. Right now tensions are pretty high in the Middle East and so we are responding. We're using dynamic maneuver and dynamic force employment to do that. So we have this plan that we've embraced of distributed maritime operations. We can operate ships that are under one umbrella like an Amphibious Readiness Group and a Marine Expeditionary Unit with one ship in the Mediterranean and the other two of this group of three operating in the CENTCOM AOR, and they all

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

communicate. It's fairly seamless across networks. If they need to aggregate, they can. They can come together in one theater or another. That's why access, and that's why passage through choke points and straits are so important. That's why the Suez Canal, the Straits of Gibraltar are so important. That's why partners and allies are important too. It gives us that opportunity to do so.

**DWG:** And then you wrote a piece in Defense, and I think it was in September about the Navy and Coast Guard training [inaudible] Africa to protect their waters there. It occurred to me that when the Army was sort of building relations in Africa they had the advantage that there was a Russia and China competing so they sold the same weapon systems, they were speaking the same language, going through the same courses. And I'm curious, it seems to me you're at a time when you're now competing with Navy purchases by African countries from Russia, from China. I'm curious how much that changes the advantage or what you gain from these exercises when they're buying potentially a Russian-made ship or a Chinese sailor training along with your African partners?

**Admiral Foggo:** That's another great question. Last summer when we deployed the USNS Carson City, it's a former Joint High Speed Vessel. The Navy has retagged it as an Expeditionary Patrol Frigate. So it's a bridge to a time when we get a new frigate that we're designing right now. I took that ship and I put a lot of people and a lot of material on board. I put some medical people on board, some chaplains on board to conduct some outreach. I put Sailors on board from other commands. We had all volunteers and the cost of this was pretty much cost neutral. I mean we just took it from the Navy. I had no shortage of number of people that wanted to go and do this.

They went down into five different African ports. We were in Cabo Verde; we were in Lagos, Nigeria; we were in Cameroon; we were in Dakar, Senegal; and we were in Accra, Ghana. I advertised a year in advance to the Africans, and we had several

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

conferences on this. I said hey, as far as our partnerships go, as far as the use of an exercise with our warships go, the only ship I'm going to ask you for is your friendship because friendship leads to trust over time and it leads to access, and when you have a problem and you pick up the phone, say you had something happen and you had to do a non-combatant evacuation operation. You want to be able to talk to a friendly person on the other side of the phone and say can you help me with this please? It's in a neighboring country, or it might be in your country. So that ship went down there, but the one premise that I gave my African partners is we're going to do all these things with chaplains, medical best practices, and we're going to do some maintenance and some training. So you've got a few ships that you've acquired over time that are older defense articles, excess defense articles like U.S. Coast Guard cutters, like U.S. defender boats, which we started selling them back in my first tour in Naples, 2010 to 2012. They've been rode hard. And they've got maintenance problems. Some of them are sitting alongside the pier and can't get underway. I said I'm going to send some guys down and we're going to have a big parts locker and I'm going to have mechanics, you know, guys that actually fix engines in the Navy because the Navy's pretty black box right now and they're going to help you. I'll fix anything except a Chinese ship or a Russian ship. So if they're sitting alongside, they can stay alongside, but if you have other former colonial power vessels -- French, British, U.S. -- we're happy to help. That's what we did.

We fixed a number of things in port, but the other thing is we got together and we showed them here's how you do the maintenance, change the filters, change the oil to keep these things going. Make sure that the bumpers are safe so that it's safe for people to get on-board when you go to sea and you come back in. Or you do a permissive boarding on a platform at sea, which can be pretty dicey. I think they appreciated that. I don't think the message was lost on them, either. And I haven't seen the Chinese do anything similar. They might now, if you publish that story. [Laughter].

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

**DWG:** We've got just a couple of minutes left.

**DWG:** Russia obviously is one of the [inaudible] information. I'm wondering if you're seeing any evidence or examples of them trying to mislead people about what the Navy is up to in that theater.

**Admiral Foggo:** One of the examples I gave you is we started to see some stories when Harry S. Truman came out of Norfolk in the middle of this dynamic force employment, deployment, that she's headed back to the Eastern Med. And she wasn't. We headed up north. It was kind of a surprise and an aha moment for everybody.

First of all, I'm a huge fan of the media. You guys probably know that from the fact that I will talk to you any time, anywhere at any place. I believe in what you're doing and I appreciate the accuracy in media. And if I say something on the record and you publish it, it's on me, it's not on you. That's why I like the book "War in 140 Characters". I don't know if anybody has had an opportunity to read that book by David Patrikarakos, but its premise is if the prelude to war becomes the war itself, then we've got to rethink our entire strategic and tactical doctrine and military forces, actually in DMPG, Diplomatic Military and Policy of Governments. What Patrikarakos talks about are a series of vignettes that take place all over my theater on misinformation and the misuse of social media. He gets into the MH-17 shootdown and he uses social media to pinpoint the culprits. He does that through third parties like Eliot Higgins of the United Kingdom who started the company Bellingcat that uses the internet of things to track people and material and hardware and prove outcomes.

The best weapon against mistruths or misinterpretation or I hate the term fake news, but I'm going to use it. The best weapon against that is the truth. That's what that book advocates for. And there's activity in the Middle East. A young 16-year-old

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

girl during strikes in Gaza who uses a cell phone to tell her story. Very effective. Big powers respond to that.

So the truth is the enemy of mistruth. We're starting to see this now. It has always held Western democracies to account. The truth always holds us accountable because the truth will always come out. So things like Wikileaks that are out there on the net that nobody likes to talk about, they're out there on the net. So you have to be accountable for those kinds of things.

Other nations have gotten by over time. China is one of them. And the two events that have occurred in the last month that are interesting are the stories of the Uighurs and the story of Hong Kong and some of the activities that have been conducted there by security forces which are indeed unfortunate.

The other one is in Iraq. The truth that's come out about some of the maligned Iranian influence in Iraq and some of the things that the regime have done to its own people. That's the value of what you all do. We see this happen day after day after day. So you can help us with that by helping us tell the truth.

**DWG:** Do we have time for one more?

**DWG:** Thanks for doing this. And I apologize for coming in late.

You mentioned unprofessional activities or operations by the Russians. Are you seeing a ramp up of those sort of activities or unprofessional --?

**Admiral Foggo:** Actually what I said was General Wolters had commented that we hadn't seen any untoward incidents or activity by Russian forces in the air or on the sea for the last 90 days and that's true. And I attribute that to dialogue.

Some of the discussion about the unsafe or unprofessional

Admiral Foggo - 12/18/19

activities that may have taken place in the past was in the context of the Incidents at Sea Agreement where we get together and talk about these things. But most recently you can read about it in the press and you can see that the Coast Guard's gotten notification out about the Russian spy ship running up and down the East Coast without running lights and without response to bridge to bridge radio. That's just not professional behavior at sea. It's not what we do. We pride ourselves as mariners that when you come across a warship you engage that other warship by exchanging information on who you are and what your mission is so that you deconflict.

I'm here conducting flight operations. I request you stay outside of five nautical miles of my range while I'm maneuvering. The professional response to that is to say okay. That's what we do as navies.

Everybody exercises at sea, and so you want to keep out of one another's way. So INCSEA's a good method for dialogue and so is CUES, the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea. I just wish more of the signatories would use it more religious.

**DWG:** Thank you, Admiral.

**DWG:** I appreciate it.

**Admiral Foggo:** We have the submarine, USS George Washington in theater, but I can't tell you where she is. [Laughter]. Thank you all very much for coming.

# # # #