

**Chief of Navy**

**Vice Admiral Ray Griggs AO CSC RAN**

**Keynote address to the 2013 Sea Power Conference**

**7 October 2013**

Good morning honoured guests, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen. Can I start by acknowledging the Gadigal people and the Eora nation, the traditional owners of this land and this most spectacular harbour, and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

I am pleased that for the third sea power conference in a row we kick off the conference with what is becoming the traditional service chiefs session. I welcome my friend and colleague Lieutenant General David Morrison, the Chief of Army and Air Vice Marshal Mel Hupfeld, the Air Commander who is representing the Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Geoff Brown who is unavoidably detained by other duties.

This session is important from an Australian perspective because it reinforces the fundamentally joint approach that we take to the profession of arms. Last year we had a similar session at the Chief of Army's conference which further underscored this joint approach. But to me it is the ability of our serving members, particularly our younger members, who attend these conferences to hear directly from the three service chiefs together that powerfully underlines how serious the CDF and the senior leadership of the ADF are about the joint endeavour.

For our many international visitors, thank you for coming to Australia, to Sydney and for attending the Sea Power Conference. To my counterparts and their personal representatives, I thank you for making the journey and the time that you have been able to devote to this conference – not only is it a long way but with the International Sea power Symposium in Rhode Island in the same month it makes the commitment to this conference and the International Fleet Review activities even more appreciated. Due to IFR activities which continue this week the time I would

normally have to engage one on one is considerably diminished and I appreciate your understanding in this regard.

The theme of the conference this year is 'Naval Diplomacy and Maritime Power Projection: the Utility of Navies in the Maritime Century.' The opportunity to bring forward the conference to coincide with the IFR was one we could not pass up and I am particularly pleased that we made this decision.

In so many ways, the strength of the international presence here is the best tangible demonstration of this conference's theme. Whether a nation has sent a ship, an aircraft or a delegation, our activities here are a practical demonstration of naval diplomacy.

Some of the value is evident to all, like the exercises which have gone before and which will follow the International Fleet Review. These activities further our ability to cooperate in the pursuit of good order at sea. I would particularly like to acknowledge the success of the first ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus) Maritime Security Expert Working Group (EWG) Field Training Exercise that was held in and around Jervis Bay this time last week; 11 ships and 13 countries participated in the activity. The Maritime Security EWG has been co-hosted by Australia and Malaysia for the last couple of years; I thank my Malaysian counterpart Admiral Aziz. Tan Sri it has been a pleasure to work so closely with Madam Suriani and your team in what has been a very productive period as co-hosts taking the EWG from inception to a major field training activity in such short order.

And while events such as the International Fleet Review are naval diplomacy writ large with fair dollops of pomp, pageantry and ceremony, they serve much more than an historical or commemorative purpose. Just as there was specific messaging in reviews in the past today I think the international nature of this review reinforces one of our most fundamental maritime security messages – maritime security is an inherently cooperative and collaborative venture. We cannot protect our ability to trade on our own; it is a genuine team effort.

Of course you do not always need a fleet review to achieve this. We can see the same elements at work when a patrol boat visits a minor port, or two ships conduct

a passage exercise together. The aggregate effect of such activities goes towards building habits of cooperation which we can apply for mutual national benefit. So thank you all for attending, because our practical demonstration of naval diplomacy on a grand scale is made up of the effort of each and every nation and navy which is represented.

I think it is worthwhile setting out what naval diplomacy is, to ask what distinguishes it from other forms of diplomacy and then to examine how it then fits in with and supports a nation's overall diplomatic effort.

For me, at its most fundamental, naval diplomacy springs from the common bond amongst mariners. These common bonds do not replace or overtake national allegiance, but a shared understanding of the marine environment offers different ways of engaging, different ways of viewing a subject. Through this, we can offer alternative paths to understanding and cooperation. Of course communication in and of itself is not the answer to all difficulties, but it is most certainly an essential requirement to resolving problems.

Many of the customs, understandings and freedoms on which we depend for the exercise of naval diplomacy date from the age of sail, when the commanding officer of a ship was in many ways left to fend for himself while conducting his mission. Communications were slow, a ship's captain may not have known that conflict between two countries had either concluded or broken out and this at times had some undesirable outcomes!

The modern incarnation is much more complex. The ubiquity of modern communications enable innumerable relationships and channels of communication around the world, not least through a professional diplomatic corps, As a result, successful modern naval diplomacy is a tool in the broader conduct of a nation's diplomatic effort. In that sense, ***maritime forces remain a very practical expression of a nation's willingness and ability to be involved in a region.***

This idea of giving practical expression to a nation's policy direction is important. It distinguishes good intentions and substantive action. This enables maritime forces to

be one of the primary tools nations employ in difficult circumstances, whether that be humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, surveillance and enforcement, or the threat or ultimate projection and use of maritime power.

By virtue of their routine deployments, navies can help form habits of cooperation and understanding with neighbours, partners and allies. They are directly and immediately responsive to the direction of government through their ministers. I think it will be very interesting to hear from two former Australian Defence Ministers on their employment of the Navy as a diplomatic tool later in the conference.

While naval diplomacy has a great history, I do not think we can afford to simply assume it will continue on indefinitely in its current format. The way humanity uses the maritime environment is changing and national desire for maritime trade and resources is expanding.

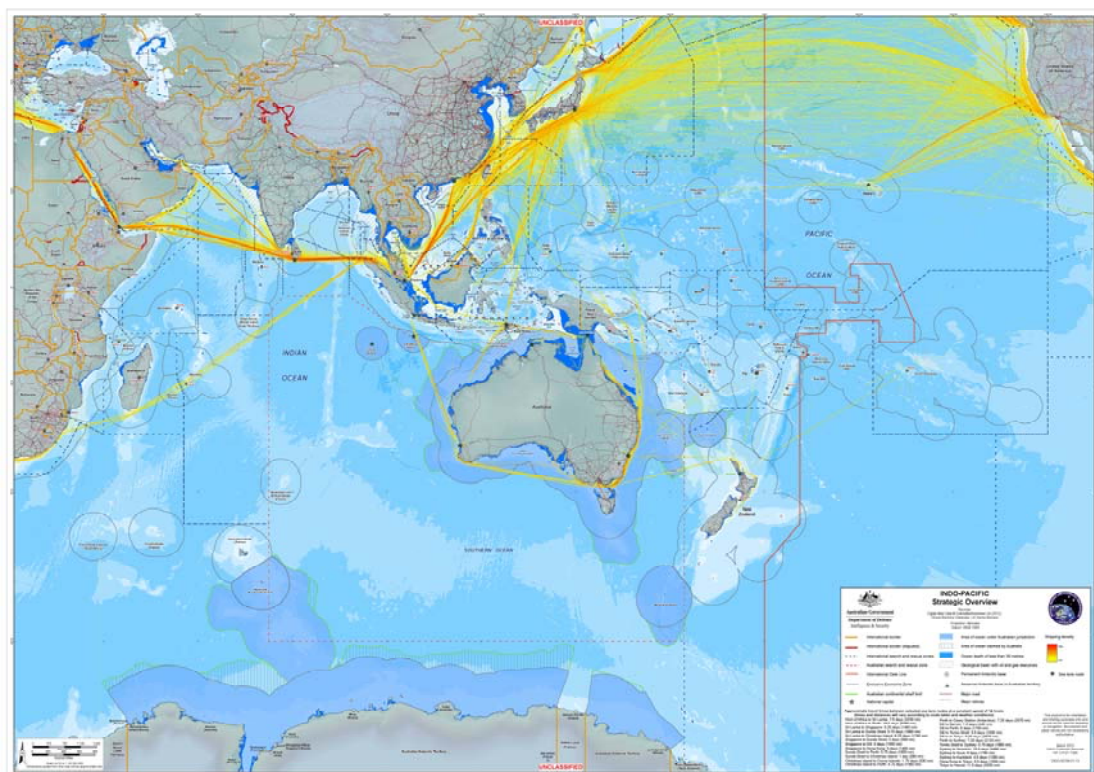


Figure 1 – Chart of the Indo-Pacific, showing major trade and transport links, Exclusive Economic Zones and national boundaries

Figure 1 is an unashamedly Australian centric perspective of the Indo Pacific. It shows the key arteries of the maritime global trading system in our region and I think it has helped focus Australian strategic thought on the importance of this broader regional construct in relation to for our security and prosperity.

So, what are the changes? Nations are increasingly looking to the sea for additional food and energy resources. For example, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, the worldwide production of farmed fish has just overtaken that of beef. Fish farming, offshore oil and gas and more recently, alternative energy production such as wind and wave, have led to an ***extension of permanent human infrastructure into the maritime environment***. The wind farm arrays in the North Sea are prominent examples and the Floating Offshore Production and Storage concept is being taken to a new level with Floating Liquid Natural Gas Plants. There is one under construction now, likely to be the first one in the world to enter service when it is deployed off the north western Australian coast in 2017, which will reportedly be 488m long and displace about 600,000 tonnes.<sup>1</sup>

If it is not a resource a nation can produce or extract for itself, then it is to the sea and to the global maritime trading system that nations will look. For example the cost of transporting a shirt from its place of manufacture to point of sale is estimated at approximately one cent, a figure I find quite remarkable. Effectively, the location of where something is produced, be it the finished product or a component, is increasingly less important, because the cost of transporting it where it needs to go is almost trivial. Even if this cost estimate is out by one or even two orders of magnitude, the point remains. As a result, our economies are as intimately linked as they ever have been; ***the influence of the global maritime trading system is all-pervasive***.

The reliability of the system means that companies carry less and less inventory. So interruptions to their global, just-in-time supply chains have an enormous impact, and those interruptions can occur almost anywhere around the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Shell Australia Media Release, *Shell lays keel for world's first floating LNG project* dated 5 Aug 13, retrieved from <http://www.shell.com.au/aboutshell/media-centre/news-and-media-releases/2013/preludflng-keel-08052013.html> on 14 Oct 13.

These are global trends, with many aspects of them expressed forcefully in the Indo-Pacific. The shift of strategic interest and weight to this region, this maritime region, will only reinforce the trends. For me, this huge increase in humanity's maritime interests and footprint leads to three immediate conclusions.

First, I think we need to re-examine the basis of our strategic thinking. While the likes of Mahan, Corbett, Richmond, Cable, Booth and others provide a good basis, I do not think they offer a complete understanding of the challenges we face into the future, nor do I think it is reasonable to expect that they should. In the Australian context, this re-examination is centred on the emerging notion of a Maritime School of Strategic Thought, to counter the continentalist and expeditionary schools of thought that have dominated Australian strategic thought for some time. Shifting our basic strategic cultural pre-disposition in Australia is not simple and it is something I know that the Chief of Army will focus on, so I will not steal his thunder.

Second, as we have all recognised for many years, and as I have touched on already it is beyond the capacity of any nation to unilaterally protect its maritime interests because of the nature of the maritime global trading system. Certainly it can be done some of the time and in some specific locations, but just as certainly not everywhere and all of the time. Maintaining good order at sea is fundamentally a collective and cooperative activity. That means we have to work together, which is to me the basis for naval diplomacy.

Third, as nations seek to make more intensive use of marine resources, maritime forces are likely to be at the forefront of regulating that use. Good order at sea may well require a larger and more specific body of knowledge; a rules-based order which enables all nations to benefit will inevitably need maritime forces which can observe and enforce this order. This will involve the effective conduct of a mix of constabulary and diplomatic tasks.

I think the idea of modern naval diplomacy being a far more integrated activity is something we should pursue in greater detail. Australia, like many nations, has been on a journey to build joint forces. In an operational warfighting sense, I think we

have achieved much success. Indeed, the whole is so evidently greater than the sum of the parts I think we must look at how we build on this concept in the constabulary and diplomatic arenas.

We need to look at ways in which we can achieve joint diplomatic effects. Certainly for Australia, as we contemplate the imminent arrival of the *Canberra* class amphibious ships, we have the opportunity to integrate Army and Air Force capabilities to achieve these outcomes. I think there is good precedent for this. The whole-of-government approaches typified by organisations like the Australian Civil Military Centre, born of our experiences of the last ten years or so, are indicative of our capacity to routinely coordinate the efforts of several agencies. Our new construct for border protection is another example of this.

I'd like to expand a little on the idea of integrated naval diplomacy, or perhaps just simply integrated military diplomacy. The program in front of us is, of course, very navy and maritime centric, Underpinning much of the discussion of the various environmental-based strategies is this perception that these are either/or questions; that we somehow have to choose which is superior.

My message, and its not just my message, is simply that we do not have to choose. Perhaps more accurately, we do not have to choose all the time. There will be times when we lead with sea, land, air or some combination. But we do not, indeed must not, choose to have only one or two. So these next few days will focus on naval and maritime, for which I make no apology, because it is vital to our nation's security and prosperity. And to be really good in our domain, we need an extensive and sophisticated understanding of what can be achieved. But so too we need that understanding of the other environments. We must not allow our enthusiasm for our maritime power, our naval diplomacy, to blind us into making a false choice. It is important, but it is not the only thing which is important and our approach must be sophisticated enough to countenance this. So we need to look at how we integrate our land and air forces into a naval diplomatic approach. I know it is not how we have understood naval diplomacy in the past, but that does not mean we cannot frame it this way in future. Being one-eyed might have worked for Vice Admirals in 1805, but it is not good in 2013. We do not have to choose.

I think there are other areas where the character of naval diplomacy may be changing and where we must prepare for the possibility of significant change. For instance, what will be the impact technological developments have on the use of navies for diplomatic ends?

The acceptance of naval forces in a diplomatic role is based on an almost unspoken understanding of their capabilities and the potential they represent. Changes in technology could upset that understanding. The current discussion over surveillance activities in Exclusive Economic Zones is one example. But this could go much further. For example, if the extension of vital national infrastructure deeper into a nation's maritime zones continues, how will that our understanding of innocent passage? Will nations seek to place conditions on access to areas around such infrastructure? The current restrictions are really very small and are mainly focussed on safety of navigation. Is there potential nations will seek to expand them and what implications will that have for naval diplomacy?

Another aspect of this whole discussion is the notion of concepts such as 'Smart Power' and 'Smart Defence' which we will also cover in the next few days. Smart Defence, is in my view the force structure pairing to smart power. While it is often discussed in terms of Europe and NATO, I think it has much broader applicability and that we already have some excellent global examples. Just here in Australia, we have at least three examples of smart defence at a certain level. I would argue that the *Anzac* class frigate with New Zealand and Germanys Blohm and Voss is an example, as it played the strengths and requirements of each partner, pooling our collective resources to the benefit of all. A more recent example is the use of Australian sailors to help crew New Zealand's HMNZS *Endeavour*, where working together has created more capability than we could have achieved alone. The same has applied with the RNZN providing specialist crews in our frigates deploying to the Middle East; it is a two-way street here.

Smart Defence does not have to be just amongst near neighbours or traditional partners. I don't think it unfair to say that it is only in the last ten years the navies of Spain and Australia have really got to know and understand each other. As we have



done so, we have identified opportunities for smart defence. Most obviously amongst them has been the deployment of SPS *Cantabria* to Australia this year. From my perspective, it has been an outstanding success, not only providing an underway replenishment capability when we required it, but providing us with an opportunity to familiarise ourselves with some of the systems we are about to acquire in the new DDGs and amphibious ships.

From a Spanish perspective, I think it has allowed them to test the extended deployment capability of this platform when they may not otherwise have been able to do so. To effectively have had a foreign sovereign warship operating as part of the RAN for nine months has been a ground breaking initiative. Many people have asked me how did this work, how could this work? Well it does, it has actually been incredibly easy. The key was finding common cause, complementary capabilities and needs and the willingness to cooperate and collaborate.

I think all of these activities – smart defence, smart power, integrated naval diplomacy – need what has previously been described as that rare kind of imagination, which not only enables us to understand our current circumstances, but to plan for the future as well. I hope you will take the opportunity this conference affords, that I have posed a few questions to start you off and perhaps, just perhaps, sown the seed for some of that rare kind of imagination we need to plan for this maritime century.