

From the Chairman

Why Do We Need Aircraft Carriers?

The United States is at one of the most critical junctures in our short history. Our debt obligations, entitlement programs, and government functions have all become unsustainable. We have to make choices on where we will take risk and how we will decrease our spending. One of the biggest expense lines in the defense budget is the aircraft carrier and air wing, so it becomes an easy target for budget cutters. Commonly called a budget-based national strategy, this is the easy way out. Salami-slice the services one-third apiece, gut the programs, hollow out the force and you save billions. And you quickly fall into the readiness swamp we have seen so many times in the past.

So how do we make strategic choices for the future? We first need a national Grand Strategy that guides us on how to make the risk tradeoffs that will be required for the future. I would submit that the Constitution of the United States is a pretty good starting point for development. It states the government must provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity. For over two hundred years this grand strategy has supported freedom of global commerce and the global commons, and protecting U.S. interests both within our borders and, increasingly outside our borders.

As we look at the developments in North Africa and the Middle East, the root problems are lack of the basic necessities of food, water, and shelter. The accompanying graph shows that we have more than doubled the world population in the last 50 years, and that a large portion of that growth has occurred in the Middle East and Africa. Surveys of young people in these countries indicate that their biggest concern is for their basic survival. When the economic crisis hit in 2008, the money that the rulers of these countries used to shore up food prices and buy allegiance began to dry up. Rice production also peaked in 2008 and reduced to 50 percent of peak in 2011. The US grain harvest in 2010 was 416 million tons but 29 percent of it was used for ethanol production. The winter of 2010/2011 was the warmest, driest in decades in northern Europe which caused the European grain harvest to be very small. Food prices skyrocketed across the Middle East and North Africa, and the rulers, lacking cash reserves, were unable to subsidize prices. The Arab Spring was born! And it will continue in all the areas of unsustainable population growth.



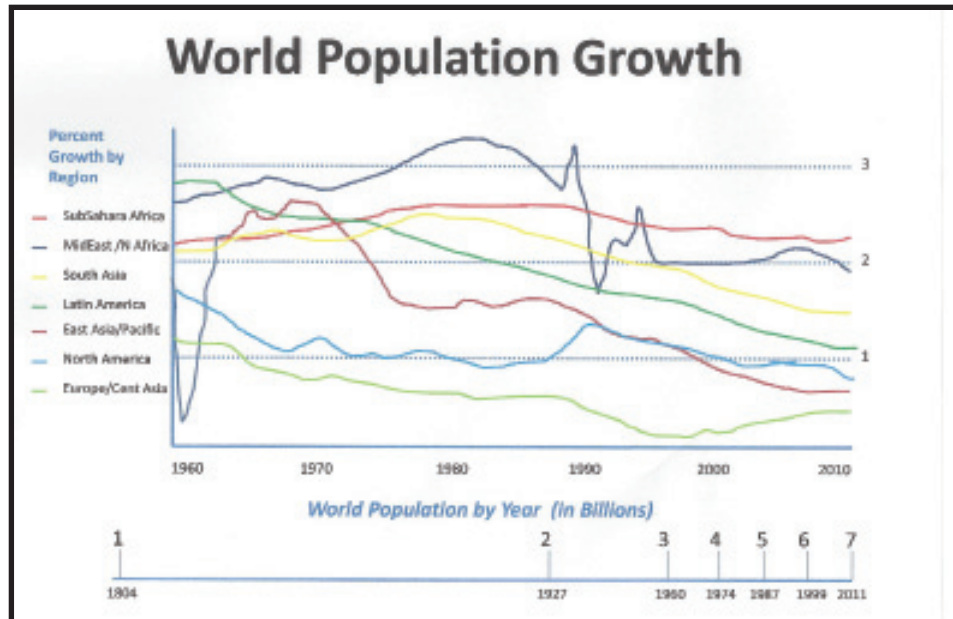
ADM Mark Fitzgerald USN (Ret.)



The point here is that we will see more and more turmoil in these areas and more pressure on their leaders who will not be able to provide for their people. Economies grow linearly and populations in these areas are growing exponentially. The U.S. will be unable to police this instability, and we should not be putting boots on the ground to solve these civil wars. So what should be our Grand Strategy.

The U.S.'s critical national interest - our economic and social well-being - depends upon international commerce to generate sales from exports and support production internally. We rely on freedom of access to the commons of air, sea, space, and cyberspace to allow the import of raw materials and goods. The seas comprise 70 percent of the world's surface, 80 percent of the world lives on or near the coastline and 90 percent of our commerce sails across it. Strategic minerals and materials are our life blood... and we need to keep them

moving through the global commons or our economic system will collapse quickly. Increasingly, just-in-time logistics support from off-shore nations to every industry has become the standard. Small interruptions to global supply trade can result in major disruptions to industrial production and jobs at home. To preserve this system, crucial global choke points and access to trading countries



around the globe must be assured.

Historically, threats to the increasingly global economic system came from large, powerful, totalitarian states. Advances in technology have made it possible for much smaller states to threaten the global system. Weapons exports to state and non-state actors who threaten our interests, jeopardize the global economy by cutting off or restricting access to resources, markets, and regions. But the big change comes from the deployment of modern anti-ship and ground attack ballistic missiles that threaten our fleets and forward bases from which U.S. forces operate, making it difficult to project military power over an ever-increasing swath of the globe. Additionally, modern adversary air defense systems are increasingly able to track, engage, and destroy nearly all but the most advanced U.S. and allied aircraft.

“Anti-access/area denial” (A2/AD) by an unfriendly nation can constrain freedom of movement to and within large geographic areas of the world and can dramatically shift the regional balance of power. Now, small states and non-state actors with malicious intent and access to modern weapons have the means to effectively challenge critical U.S. interests. States such as North Korea, Iran, and Venezuela as well as non-state actors jeopardizes global commerce in a variety of

choke points, including the Straits of Hormuz, the Straits of Malacca, the South China Sea, the Sea of Japan, the Black Sea, the eastern Mediterranean and airspace wherever modern adversary air defenses are established. The U.S. must rapidly project power to any A2/AD environment on the globe, or our economy will suffer quickly.

The Navy is the force-forward providing U.S. presence that deters and can quickly defeat these threats. While long-range bombers can provide a rapid response, the persistence, precision and power of the Carrier Strike Group is essential in quickly re-establishing freedom of the global sea and air commons that we rely so heavily on as a nation. The current aircraft carrier force has been stretched to the limit and recently the CNO announced that eight-month carrier deployments will be needed to support global requirements. The nation can ill afford any fewer carriers forward-deployed and ready to respond around the globe.

So when US decision makers look at what to cut, it should not be our own throat. We need a strong Navy, strong carrier strike groups and especially, strong Naval Aviation deployed forward protecting our most vital national interests.■

Graph: United Hemispheres Magazine, Jan 2013, pg 17, Catalogtree.



From the President

As we go into 2014, pressure continues to mount on the federal budget, including the possibility of very real reductions in defense funding. While every program should come under close scrutiny as we collectively work to rein in superfluous spending, this is a call for all serious-minded Americans to ensure that the leadership in Washington is reminded of the true value of our naval forces, particularly the Carrier Strike Groups (as ADM Fitzgerald so aptly addresses in his column, page 6).

Among the uniformed services of the U.S., America's Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard hold the distinction of being the most multidimensional forces serving the nation. Composed of highly specialized communities whose duties often extend beyond the sea, our naval forces do far more than meet the overwhelming task of carrying out naval operations around the globe. They are there to do a job no one else can do. They also offer the kind of support that often helps enable our other military forces and coalition partners to complete their missions – successfully and efficiently.

Those who routinely read this magazine know that because of their wide-ranging capabilities, the naval forces routinely collaborate with the other uniformed services to meet Department of Defense (DoD) requirements. To meet and anticipate the new challenges of the 21st century, there now exists an even more definitive connection between the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard through the historic collaborative approach to securing a better tomorrow.

As a refresher, the U.S. Constitution Article I, Section 8, Clause 12 directs the Congress:

To raise and support Armies...and
To provide and maintain a Navy.

Clearly, the Founding Fathers understood the complexity of building and maintaining the capital investment required of a deployable Navy. That task is even more daunting today, as our ship building industry has been lessened.

Sadly, as China moves to quadruple its carrier fleet, the U.S. is seeking to reduce the number of aircraft carriers it fields and deploys. Recently, *Defense News* reported that while no decisions had been made, Pentagon leadership is actively considering eliminating one (if not more) of the eleven aircraft carriers the U.S. Navy currently fields as part of its 2015 fiscal year budget request. The report, which cited numerous unnamed sources “in the Pentagon, on Capitol Hill, [and] in the defense industry,” said that a carrier air wing could also be eliminated as part of the FY 2015 budget.

While much of this piece has been focused on maintaining strength of the Navy's carrier fleet, the argument is applicable to our entire naval force structure. Just as carriers and their air wings are targeted for reduction, so should one expect to see eventual reductions in amphibious shipping and Coast Guard force structure, as well.

Some may find the comparison troubling, but the once mighty Royal Navy has been forced to accept systematic reductions to the point that now the RN has only about two dozen active ships of the line. Years of salami budget cuts in the UK has so greatly reduced the Royal Navy to a point that it is uncertain that our closest ally can retain the capability to join the



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U.S. Navy in critical maritime missions, as has always been the case in the past.

As ADM Fitzgerald mentions, the routine forward-deployed missions that our Naval forces carry out on a daily basis cannot, and should not, be allowed to atrophy, lest the critical straits and choke points around the world become insecure. The U.S. and world economies rely on free access to the global commons and those waterways are not virtual, but real places that must not fall into control of state or non-state actors that are intent on disrupting the free flow of goods and services that feed the world economy. The U.S. Navy and the other maritime services are on call every hour of every day, and our nation can ill afford to allow its Naval forces to dwindle into incapability and irrelevance.

To remind us all, the mission of the Association of Naval Aviation is “to educate the general public about the overall military status of the United States, to encourage widespread interest as to the importance of Naval Aviation in the defense of the United States and its allies...”

I ask the membership to join forces to conduct that mission to educate the general public of the importance of Naval Aviation. It is important to keep in mind that ANA is no longer a lobbying entity, though as individual citizens, we are free to contact those 535 Congressmen and Senators who have the final say on these matters. We all have pens and telephones... please use them! ■



Will Rendezvous.....with notes from the World of Naval Aviation



On 1 August 2013, USMC CAPT Michael Kingen, a test pilot, flew BF-1, an F-35B Lightning II, during a 500-pound GBU-12 Paveway II laser-guided weapon separation test. BF-1 dropped the GBU-12 over the Atlantic Test Ranges from an internal weapons bay. The F-35B is the variant of the Lightning II designed for use by the U.S. Marine Corps, as well as F-35 international partners in the United Kingdom and Italy. (U.S. Navy photo courtesy of Lockheed Martin by Dane Wiedmann)



In February 2014, ENS James Davis II received his wings of gold from his father, Navy CAPT James D. Davis. CAPT Davis earned his wings in 1964 at Training Air Wing Two, NAS Kingsville, Texas, the same air wing where ENS Davis earned his wings 50 years later. (USN photo by Richard Stewart)



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