

**Chief of Naval Operations
Admiral Gary Roughead
Remarks as delivered at FAPAC Conference
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Doctor [Kin Wong], thank you for that introduction. I have to thank JJ [Cmdr. Janette Jose] for the work she's doing and also like to thank Grace [Spence] for being a coordinator of the events that bring together so many people, so many public servants to the Pacific Northwest, a place that is very important, not just to our Nation but also to our Navy.

I have to admit that I was on the phone this morning calling back to Washington [DC] and I commented to the person on the phone that I was in a better Washington than they were in...so I may get to stay for the rest of the conference.

But it really is so good to be here with you and to lead off on what I consider to be a very important gathering for our Navy men and women, both who are in uniform, as you can see in the Navy band there - and I'd like to take this opportunity to offer them a round of applause - not just for the men and women in uniform but for also our Navy civilians who are so much a part of what we are able to do around the world. This 26th FAPAC National Conference is an invaluable opportunity for them and indeed for all of us to hear new ideas about how our various agencies' are approaching diversity, and for you to hear in the course of events, what the services, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the Air Force, the Coast Guard, and Army are doing towards that end.

Before I address the action that we in the Navy are taking to improve the core strength of our force, I would like to recognize FAPAC for the crucial role they play.

FAPAC is an important organization that figures prominently in our Navy with its outreach, with its information, and its support to members, and has nurtured great leaders within our Navy, such as Captain Sunita Williams, a Navy pilot and record-setter for female astronauts in space, and Captain Myles Esmele, an engineering duty officer who became the first active duty officer to lead the council until his assignment in support of our country's efforts in Afghanistan. And we in the Navy are particularly proud of Tia Chu, one of our professionals from NAVSEA, who is being recognized at this conference for her contributions. So Tia, thank you for what you do, day in and day out and for representing NAVSEA.

I look around the room and I am struck by two things: what diversity FAPAC holds within its council, but moreover, what we all have in common. Here today we have all manner of race and ethnicity, educational and professional background, but all of us here in some way chose to serve our country.

No matter what different roles in government we fulfill, the members of this organization value education, service, and leadership to a degree that we find at a premium in our country today.

For those of us in this uniform, Asian Pacific American heritage month and this conference give us a chance to reflect on Asian Pacific Americans whose leadership the Navy has benefited from

in the past, and will surely require in order to respond to the Nation's needs in a future that will demand much from the United States.

Our Navy is familiar with the contributions of naval officers like Rear Admiral Gordon Pai'ea Chung-Hoon, a decorated commander and our first native born Asian-American flag officer for whom we have named one of our premier warships in his honor.

Our Navy has benefitted from the leadership of Asian Pacific Americans such as Vice Admiral Harry Harris, who commands our Sixth Fleet in Europe, who was so intimately involved with our operations in Libya not too long ago. Rear Admiral A.B. Cruz, Deputy Commander of the U.S. Fourth Fleet, Rear Admiral Colin Chinn, the Medical Corps Officer who directs our Integrated Health Care Delivery System for the entire Western Region, and Rear Admiral Pete Gumataotao, Commander of U.S. Naval Forces in Korea, who is here with us today and who, I will add on a very personal note, has done so much to bring not only our navies together from the United States and the Republic of Korea, but our countries together at a time this past year where events on the peninsula required great leadership, great insight, great intellect. So Pete, for what you have done there I thank you and I congratulate you on that and I wish you best on your upcoming assignment but I know you're going to be sad to leave there, so thank you for that.

Asian Pacific Americans are particularly well-positioned to lead and are leading today, and they have an even greater role to play in our Navy in the decades to come.

You are all well aware the Navy is in high demand today – as evidenced by recent operations as varied and dispersed as Libya, Afghanistan, and Japan. While we were all very proud of our SEALs and the rest of the team that saw to the demise of Osama Bin Laden, there are many other contributions the Navy makes day in and day out.

In our forceful response to the Libyan regime's unacceptable violence against its own people, we brought unique capabilities from the sea to create the conditions where a no-fly zone could be imposed and innocent civilians could be protected from harm.

Over Afghanistan, aircraft launched from one of our aircraft carriers in the North Arabian Sea continue to provide 30% of the air coverage for our troops on the ground there, and we have been doing that for over nine years.

And of course our efforts to support Japan with humanitarian assistance, nuclear and medical expertise, transportation, and divers to clear shipping channels that will permit the free flow of international aid have proven crucial to the Japanese people in their time of need.

The Navy is of course a much richer and a much more agile force – one that is able to deliver results in these complex and simultaneous missions as well as maintain the global presence the nation values so highly – because of the diverse perspectives we now hear from within our own ranks.

But we are entering a period of converging challenges that requires greater diversity of background, of expertise, and of thought so that we continue to provide a relevant service to the American people.

Global trends in economics, demographics, resources, climate change, and threat proliferation promise disruption and disorder in the years ahead.

The speed of global commercial transactions in the digital age will continue to be broadly positive for all, but the speed with which events develop will challenge our ability to anticipate the impact of local frictions, and our interconnectedness will deliver those impacts more directly than they have before.

Finally, the nature of the naval profession itself is changing, this time due to pervasive information technologies which have added a new domain in which to live and operate – cyberspace.

The Navy is an organization that values being at the forefront of developments like these, and we will be unduly challenged if any communities are marginalized, or if we don't emphasize the right mix of skills for a future where forward engagement and global presence will be integral to how well the United States leads a network of information age nations.

The kind of diversity of background and expertise in this room stands to have a major impact on how well the United States preserves its interests in the Asia-Pacific, which is of particular interest to the Navy. It is from this region where more of the economic growth and activity in our world will emanate, and it is in this region alone where countries with outstanding maritime and natural resource disputes are building world-class navies.

The Navy works closely with our partners and allies in this vast region as we have for over six decades, and has benefitted from being able to ask someone like CDR Hung Ba Le to take his ship USS LASSEN in to Da Nang, Vietnam, in November 2009, or someone like CDR Michael Misiewicz to take USS MUSTIN to Cambodia in December 2010, a place he had left as a small child and to which he thought he might never return. And I think that is a demonstration not just of the opportunities that exist within our Navy but the opportunities that uniquely exist in our great country.

Today, our Navy is recognized for best practices in diversity, and we do have good initiatives yielding measureable results that we could only have achieved with a sustained approach.

In the last two years, the Navy has won seven awards from independent organizations for being a top federal agency for diversity, a forward-looking organization that supports diversity in a technical workforce, and a model of corporate ethics for training-to-employment models geared towards wounded warriors transitioning from active duty.

Last month, the Association of Diversity Councils named Navy's strategic diversity working group the best in the nation – ahead of Fortune 500 companies, renowned medical centers, publishing houses and leading research universities.

While we welcome these accolades, they are not the goal of our efforts. They are also not indicative of the long-term commitment we have to building a stronger Navy for the nation.

The recently completed Military Leadership Diversity Commission report recommended all the services adopt diversity accountability reviews the Navy has conducted throughout my four years as the Chief of Naval Operations.

There was no short cut to achieving the most diverse Naval Academy and Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps accessions ever, with the Class of 2014. At the Naval Academy 35% of the class that enters will be diverse, and the Reserve Officer Training Corps, 40% will come from our diverse citizens.

The marked increase of high-quality diverse recruits we've seen, in terms of grade point average, standardized testing, technical background, and across the board over the last three years is no coincidence.

Programs such as the Nuclear Propulsion Officer Candidate Scholarship or the Supply Corps internship-to-employment model, these are not short term approaches.

Our young investigator program, which awarded \$10.8 million in research grants to diverse scientists and engineers at 18 premier academic institutions, was launched in 1985 and has supported the professional development of over 500 talented individuals.

These are important initiatives to which we are committed, but we will not let up in our effort to view diversity is a core strength of our Navy, a key determinant of our cultural competency, and a driving force within the United States Navy. A greater emphasis on STEM education among our uniformed and civilian components will be part of how we form powerful teams with talented people from different backgrounds, as well as continued focus on greater language proficiency for the global engagement that we know best serves the nation's interests.

In these efforts, particular attention must be paid to the flattening trends of Asian Pacific Americans joining our Navy as officers.

While Asian Pacific American promotions to the grade of commander within our surface community - those who drive our ships - show year-on-year improvement since 2007 ahead of what we call the selection 'board rate,' Asian Pacific American accessions into our Reserve Officer Training Corps are slightly lower than they were in 2007, and Naval Academy accessions for this group are flat over the last two years.

When viewed alongside the fact that Asian Pacific Americans were the only minority group to grow in real terms within a contracting surface warfare officer community over recent years, yet still only account for 8% of all surface warfare officers even though they remain better represented at every grade compared to the wider Navy, the data suggest we are not yet on a path to achieve the throughput required for more proportional Asian Pacific American representation at our senior ranks.

This is not to draw attention to only one section of one community among several in our Navy, but rather to convey the challenges that we face in improving recruitment, retention, and promotion of Asian Pacific Americans in our Navy to my goal of 13% of the admiral selection pool by 2037.

A focus on the substance of what our nation needs for a viable defense, a vibrant economy, and how the two are inextricably linked through education, outreach, and your mentorship of others as FAPAC members will be a crucial part of how we improve these trends.

This is why I applaud the interest and leadership displayed by each of you in this audience, and why I am convinced that our combined energy and commitment to outreach in all our organizations, and mentorship for those following you, will exponentially improve our prospects.

Whether young men and women choose to serve in federal government or not, the young people involved in FAPAC-sponsored events and programs will understand because of your example the importance of public service.

What we have learned in our efforts to institutionalize diversity in our ranks is that it takes early and continuous engagement, and targeted outreach where we know some still aren't aware of what we do – and, quite critically, what they can do with us to help their fellow Americans.

In the Navy, we are pursuing the first components of an innovative core educational partnership which emphasizes STEM education at the middle school level, pre-college experience at our working labs, and graduate-level scholarship opportunities, because as we continue to re-imagine sea power in the information age with cyber capabilities, we will need new skill-sets in sufficient capacity to outpace developments, and beyond cyber we will need the depth and breadth of expertise to thrive in an era of complex economic, demographic, and technological change.

We have transformed our institutions, our processes, and our culture to take advantage of new opportunities and to communicate more broadly with people. With all of these opportunities comes a realization that our future will be more competitive than was our past. In the business of ships, submarines and aircraft, we have a healthy advantage today, but our capabilities and abilities rely on ready access to networks and information, something we cannot assume if we're not prepared to defend it. In all these efforts, people represent the most important change, and our most important investment in the future.

We have today the finest Sailors in the history of the Navy, and we understand we are a global and powerful Navy thanks to our people, first and foremost. Diversity of thought and expertise are strategic imperatives for our Navy precisely because they produce more of the high-quality Sailors we prize and will prepare the kind of leaders we will need for global leadership tomorrow. Thanks to your efforts within FAPAC, I have little doubt your agencies will see the same imperatives. All of us serve in changing and challenging times, but some of these changes present us with some extraordinary opportunities for us to harness our advantages, particularly the diverse advantages that are represented in this room.

Over the course of 235 years, the Navy has gone from strength to strength through times of change and, even before Commodore Perry's expedition, with considerable contributions from Asian Pacific Americans. We as a Navy must build upon our valued heritage of adaptability in earnest, for as American demographics change, the pool of potential leaders changes with it, and we must include as many qualified applicants as possible. But in more general terms, we as public servants, all of us, with the trust of the American people must leverage our uniquely American advantages in diversity if we are to lead institutions poised to deliver greater peace and prosperity to generations to come.

I'm confident that we will all seize the opportunities presented by this conference, presented by the relationships that you develop, presented by the new ideas that you gain here, to advance the cause that is so important to all of us.

Thank you.