

VADM Tim Barrett
Chief of Navy Speech to
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Minister

Your Excellency Ambassador Christophe Lecourtier, please pass on my respects from the RAN to the French people at this time.

I'd like to thank the Submarine Institute of Australia for, once again, bringing us all here together to discuss an issue of profound importance to Australia.

I welcome and continue to encourage your ongoing support and dedication to our Nation's submarine capability.

It has been a great year for "the Trade":

- We've seen a significant improvement in availability
- We've deployed HMAS *Sheean* to India and other submarines further afield.
- Fifty percent of the fleet has been at sea for long periods
- And this has resulted in an improvement in training, an increase in confidence, and a resurgence in morale. Thirty-one sailors will have been awarded their Dolphins this year. A great result!

I recently visited the workforce at ASC to thank them for their efforts.

I think we would all agree that our success reflects the importance of, and our commitment to, the implementation of COLES review recommendations. It is all about enterprise.

But let me move onto the main purpose of my being here today, which is to use this opportunity to discuss some of the key aspects that are shaping the delivery of a regionally superior submarine capability.

I am going to confine my remarks to those aspects that affect me as the Capability Manager.

I am fortunate to follow-on from the Minister. What our Minister has told you today is:

- That the Government is committed to delivering an Australian Defence Force with the highest levels of military capability and technological sophistication.
- And that Australia will need a regionally superior submarine with the range and endurance of Collins while possessing the highest quality stealth, intelligence and maritime strike capabilities.
- As capability manager I will be ensuring that Navy can certify our Future Submarines to operate safely and effectively well into the future.

Sounds easy. Regrettably, it's just not that simple.

If Navy is to certify our submarines to be effective and to be safe, then every aspect of the submarine: its design philosophy, its sustainment program, its operating paradigm, its manning construct, its basing plan, and all the other operational and support parameters, need to be fully

comprehended across the board by everyone. Not just me or SMSUB - everyone.

It is about understanding the system in which the submarine is designed to exist. It is about knowing the submarine's rightful place in our Navy's order of battle. It is about knowing how the submarine supports the broader system.

Just to clarify, I am considering the fleet when I consider naval capability, not just one particular class of ship!

Knowing and understanding the very threads of logic that tie the core issues together is what will make our decisions sensible and our fleet system viable.

So today I am briefly going to discuss and contextualise five core issue that I have been driving for some time:

- Deterrence
- Lethality
- Availability
- Sustainability
- Affordability

These are thematic, and are central to what I need to deliver as the RAN's capability manager.

No one part can change without affecting the others and all parts are necessary

Deterrence and Lethality

Deterrence is ultimately what we are about. But it is more than a submarine capability

It is a National resolve

It is a mindset

It is about common effects

It is about how we inter-operate with our allies

You can't deter from the sidelines. We are a Global navy with global responsibilities

Ultimately, our government wants to deter conflict and contribute to the maintenance of peace and security around the world. And, for that, we have to be a player.

The Minister said that Government will ensure that Australia has a more potent and agile set of military and enabling capabilities to seize the opportunities in our region and meet a more uncertain regional and global security environment.

The Defence White Paper will outline the force structure that will deliver the ADF with this requisite potency and agility and it will do it with a balanced force.

But we can only deter if our Government is able to deploy decisive lethality to sanction anyone who might wish to use armed force to achieve political objectives and what grounds potency is decisive lethality.

This is where the submarine features in Australia's strategic reckoning.

Our submarines deliver our government with the requisite lethality to achieve these outcomes. Such is the destructive power of submarines.

Indeed lethality is the ultimate purpose of Australia's submarine capability. Fear of the consequences of that lethality is what deters armed adventurism – deterrence is a consequence of that lethality.

In summary: our submarines must be capable of offensive operations, generating strategic effect by the capacity to strike the key capabilities of an adversary; before they can be brought to bear against our interests; and when push comes to shove, destroy those capabilities!

I continue to assert that offensive operations, by definition, require our submarines to operate forward and up-threat.

As Chief of Navy, I will do all I can to ensure that our Future Submarines are designed, operated and sustained to meet the objectives of government!

But be aware, I am planning for the long game. I am thinking operations and sustainment in the second half of this century, as much as operations and sustainment when the first boat is delivered in this half.

Availability and Sustainment

However, I can have the best weapon system in the world, but it is useless if it can't leave the wharf.

Without forces available for tasking, Government can't fulfil its global objectives; it can't contribute; it can't deter; and it definitely can't defeat.

So let's move to the business part of the enterprise. We need to talk about availability and sustainment. You've heard me say this before! I'm often told I don't speak enough about warfare – but without available submarines there is no warfare. I can't say this enough. Availability, availability availability!

The efficacy of our sustainment arrangements is essential to our ability to generate both availability (the ability to be at sea when we need to be), and capability (the ability to achieve assigned missions where we need to be).

The availability of our future submarines will depend on a new enterprise approach to acquisition and sustainment that Navy, the Capability Acquisition & Sustainment Group, and industry will need to develop and maintain.

Of course, robust sustainment arrangements need to be complemented by the reliability in the first instance.

This points to the fact that we must ensure sustainment *is built into both the design and operation* of our fleet from the outset

This design needs to be that precise so I can know an individual platform's availability windows 15, 20, 25 years from now. The USN do it well in this regard.

During the recent Sea Power Conference I criticized much of the rhetoric of the past few decades, in that it focused too much on theoretical

capability management without due recognition of the capabilities actually achievable. I am resolved to change this.

The question is: how do we ensure that, together, we can manage our assets to deliver to government the submarines necessary for our national security?

One way that I am advocating is the “sustain where you operate” philosophy—exploiting the efficiencies of collocating key supporting agencies and training capabilities with industry support centres.

I call this “Ship Zero” for the new surface fleet. Let’s call it boat zero for the submarines. The key point is that it’s the first boat you build not the last.

“Boat Zero” will facilitate efficient operation of naval capability through the co location of operational and administrative support functions with class training facilities. It will transfer an increasing amount of the traditional training and competency burden from sea to ashore

“Boat Zero” would also house the land based test site and systems development cell including the finite element and electronic product model. These models support the development of understanding of the design intent and the development of training, sustainment and capability assurance requirements.

The current Submarine Training Systems Centre is a representative Australian working example. I aim to build upon its very concept and spread it across the fleet. And this is a good segue into my next point.

Interdependency

We won't achieve success if we are working in isolation from each other. Success will be about our interdependency.

I have been arguing for some time the interdependency of navies at a strategic level. Interdependency goes much deeper than government-to-government arrangements and agreements.

To deliver and manage an effective submarine capability requires us to recognise the interdependencies of the institutions and organisations that design, maintain, sustain, and evolve our submarine capability.

When managing submarine capability, there is no sharp break between organisational boundaries, where one organisation is solely responsible for this or for that.

All institutions and organisation, whether government or commercial, whether Australian or overseas, whether future or current; all entities that manage Australia's submarine capability will be reliant upon each other.

All will need to intimately know each other; and will need to be working with each other to achieve the one outcome. That is delivering a superior regional submarine capability.

Our common endeavour will lead to our common success.

Unlike capability we have previously acquired, the next generation submarine will be a national enterprise.

Interdependency is about partnership and common endeavour. As a result, I am looking for partners in industry that will not only deliver the required levels of readiness, but will translate cost effectiveness into enhanced readiness.

Remember that linkage: Deterrence, Lethality, Availability, Sustainability, Affordability. We are all involved

To support this outcome, we all need to understand the importance of optimising the readiness of current systems and capturing and managing the required knowledge for our future.

Industry needs to bring to this national enterprise the latest in effective techniques to improve affordability, such as Total Asset Management.

But as a specialist audience, you need to know that Navy sees you not just as a valued partner but as a key element in the design and delivery of this national enterprise.

If we, together, do not fully appreciate this enterprise approach we will never capture the opportunities generated by this ambitious program we are about to embark upon.

In supporting this outcome, specialist groups such as the SIA need to advise us about technology growth paths and the long-term implications of systems and technology providing operational availability at an affordable cost.

And industry needs to invest for itself; not just invest for the next project.

It is about innovation. It is about continuous improvement. It is about Navy and the Nation. It is about the future.

To conclude: In many respects, this is a make or break opportunity. I have said we either realise it together, or our navy drifts off into the world of regret for what might have been and recrimination against those who failed to capture the moment. We cannot let that happen.

The navy that I lead to operate, maintain and evolve our submarine capability must be innovative, imaginative and professional.

It will be dedicated to the great national enterprise of protecting and promoting Australia's interests. It will be a navy that engages all of us.

The SIA has a long and proud tradition of being part of that engagement, and long may it stay that way.

Thank you