



Director, Surface Warfare

23 April 1999

Dear Admiral Zumwalt,

Thank you very much for your time and invaluable insight during our lunch last month. Your significant contributions to national defense and the naval service provide me with a valuable perspective that will enable me to develop the resources to support today's surface force and look to the future to determine the Navy's surface ship requirements into the next century.

I have attached a letter addressing some of the force structure issues we discussed and some of my concerns in trying to meet the increasing number of naval requirements in the post Cold-War world. As you mentioned, the problem will be increasingly difficult given the current force structure we have and it is past time that we examine the need to increase the number of ships that we are currently building to. I hope I have captured your thoughts on the issue.

Again, thank you for spending some of your valuable time with me in support of our Navy. The experience was invaluable to me and will help set the framework that we build the future on.

Very respectfully,

M. G. MULLEN
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy

Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., USN (Ret.)
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Mr. _____,

I am writing to you on an issue of grave concern that I see emerging as we continue to draw down our Navy from the Cold War force levels that have shaped our Navy for the last 50 years. As you are well aware, our Navy is still actively deployed around the globe, showing the flag and maintaining the forward presence element of our armed forces that has been our trademark since the Barbary Pirates threatened our overseas trade and commerce. Specifically, I am concerned that the force restructuring currently underway is counterproductive in today's much more complex world and unstable global security environment.

While I believe the policy we are pursuing to downsize our Navy to face the realities of a diminished direct military threat to our shores is correct, I am concerned that our naval forces are being stretched to the breaking point by our nation's continued security commitments around the globe. While I view these commitments as vital to our nation's interests, I am deeply concerned about the long term impact such commitments will have on our Navy in the face of reduced military resources.

I firmly believe that our Navy cannot continue to reduce force structure and still be the same effective force upon which Americans have come to rely. The resulting impact of these reductions on our global commitments would be devastating to the maritime preeminence and domestic security that we now enjoy. Consequently, trying to maintain the current tempo of operations and forward presence deployments that we currently do with a smaller force will stress our Bluejackets to the breaking point. There is no elasticity left in the system.

The pace of recent U.S. Navy contingencies and deployments exceeds the requirements that I faced as Chief of Naval Operations with a force twice the size of our current fleet. Given the uncertainty of the global security situation, it is crucial to our long term security that we maintain a strong, effective and capable Navy and avoid a return to a hollow force incapable of supporting our national goals and objectives.

I have kept abreast of the technological advances that the Navy has incorporated since I left active duty and am very excited about the potential that a net-centric, maritime force brings to national defense. I am also a very strong supporter of current efforts to

leverage technology as a force multiplier and believe in emphasizing capabilities as the main tenant of future force structure.

With the global security situation getting more tenuous with each ballistic missile test, I believe that the current naval force is the absolute minimum force we can have and still be an effective Navy capable of projecting power overseas while protecting our shores at home. I believe numbers do count, because even a highly capable network-centric force is limited in the number of places that it can be at one time. Post World War II history has proven that international engagement is the key to promoting and maintaining global security and stability. A U.S. Navy that possesses the capability to project power around the globe by leveraging its forward presence, is the best deterrent to international aggression and a guarantor of American security.

The nation has bestowed a sacred trust in you and you have my full support. As we sail down the uncharted seas toward the promise of the new millenium, it is easy to ignore signs of changing weather conditions. But the prudent mariner knows from experience how quickly the storm can form. He must always be vigilant because the penalty for neglect is severe.

If there is anything I can do to assist you in your efforts to ensure that we maintain a strong Navy and a vigilant defense, ready to weather any storm that threatens our security , please don't hesitate to call on me.