



**E. R. ZUMWALT, JR.**  
ADMIRAL, U. S. NAVY (RET.)

23 February 1990

Admiral Frank B. Kelso, II  
Commander in Chief  
United States Atlantic Command  
Norfolk, VA 23511-5100

Dear Frank:

I enjoyed the opportunity to discuss parallels between now and the post World War II era with you. I reiterate my congratulations and strong support.

I had two additional thoughts I wanted to pass on and I promise not to bother you further.

The briefings for former CNOs have, traditionally, been inconsistently held. In my judgment, they are an important means of insuring that, to the maximum extent possible, those of us who go on talk shows, give speeches, or write, link our thinking to the incumbent CNO. I strongly recommend that the briefings be held every six months. (Nobody expects the CNO to be there more than briefly so it is not a time waster for you.)

Now that Arleigh has become infirm, I seem to be the principal point of contact for a very wide range of surface warfare officers. In the last year I have received an unusually large number of inputs that point toward concern about the future of the surface warfare community. The middle grade officers do not see a clear path to four star success for those who are identified as hot-shot operators but rather have the feeling that the surface warfare community top slots are relegated to those with staff experience to the exclusion of operational excellence.

Admiral Frank B. Kelso, II  
23 February 1990  
Page Two

I know of no better way to deal with this concern than to call it to the attention of you who must now deal with balancing the concerns of all three of our "unions".

Guard your health and don't let the bastards get you down.

Sincerely and very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.", written in dark ink.

E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.

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