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ADMIRAL, U. S. NAVY (RET.)

16 May 1983

Admiral James D. Watkins  
Chief of Naval Operations  
Navy Department  
The Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20350

Dear Jim:

I appreciate your letter of last August regarding the status of the Surface Warfare Community. I was pleased at your positive perspective.

Recent flag moves have, however, renewed my concern. It seems unusual that none of the eleven three star officers you mentioned in your letter as having great potential were chosen to fill the void in four star surface warfare officers. In fact, I have seen several very promising two and three star officers placed prematurely in assignments that were, in my day, dead ends.

I am also concerned regarding the recent "hump" of Rear Admirals asked to retire. If I have correct information, the list included a large percent of surface warfare officers.

I admire and applaud your emphasis on tactical development and education. I believe that you are correct now that over-emphasis on technological matters is behind us. I think that

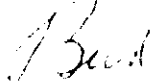
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it is extremely important that strong tactical innovators rise quickly to flag rank to support your emphasis. We also need to maintain the "fast track" to promote our young innovators to positions in keeping with their ability.

With Secretary Lehman's strong push toward large deck aircraft carriers and your natural support of nuclear submarines and surface ships, I am concerned that conventional surface ships and the officers that plan and man them may suffer unintentional neglect. I know that such is not your desire as you recognize the value of the multi-dimensional surface warfare officer and surface combatants. I believe that a four star surface warfare officer is needed now. I would enjoy discussing this and any other issues of interest at your convenience.

Sincerely,



E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.

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*Your charisma comes through  
to me and many others and  
I am*