

Summary and Closing Remarks

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Today's presentations were obviously top-notch, and I want to personally say to each and every presenter that I appreciate all the time that you put into your remarks, the thoughtful presentation, and the panel discussion—the whole works. I'm most proud of the effort, the way it turned out—obviously a very unique and knowledgeable group of presenters with a high degree of credibility.

I, like Admiral Mies, reworked my remarks a number of times. I typed them up last week at home with the full arrogance of knowing everything and have been continuing to rewrite and modify for the last two days, so I may jump around here and won't be my usual glib eloquent self.

You've heard a wide range of fact and opinion here today and a number of themes. I'd like to sum up with just one theme we heard because my background always likes me to focus on things that are practical and can get done, and I think that the theme I've picked is one. That is, what does the Development Squadron have to do to be as relevant today and in the future as it has been in the past? As I said, I picked this because I think we've certainly heard enough to draw some conclusions on that and also because it's a practical issue that will respond to action. My comments are obviously not meant as a criticism of anyone. A lot of people here, including me, contributed to today's situation. One of the few advantages of old age is the accompanying distance from the action, which can provide some objectivity.

The Squadron is a unique institution that has accomplished remarkable things, but I think times have changed faster than it has. Now the Squadron is, as is the rest of the Navy, in a confusing post-war period not of its own making. The picture is unlikely to clear in the short term: budget stresses are almost overwhelming, mission focus is not sharp, and a decreasing force level is dramatically altering the execution of the tactical development mission. The Development Squadron has been moving toward a crisis point for some time; it did not happen overnight. The high watermark of the business was in the 60's and the 70's. The Squadron was then well established in the Submarine Force. There was much to learn. Ops analysis was valued at the top of the Department of Defense. Officers were of uniformly high quality and professionally trained, and there was little competition from the rest of the Navy.

What has changed? Success has bred some degree of complacency—not an unusual issue for any successful institution. The Submarine Force lost its monopoly. The Navy embraced ops analysis as a whole. The rise of weapons system advocacy analysis in Washington to support the budget process has, I believe, corrupted the analytical process in general. You have an approach which supports the answer rather than attempting to find the answer. The rise of contractor analytical support has created a demand for more analysts than the system can support and still maintain the required professional quality—the preponderance of ex-naval types versus scientists. I think the contracting competition has diluted the quality.

As in the rest of the government, the information technology explosion has overwhelmed the traditional development process. While there is much talk of COTS and such, some small portion of it knowledgeable, this impact defies less than draconian measures. There are some fundamental indications of Submarine Development Squadron TWELVE that illustrate the depth of the crisis. Once again they are things that are easy to fix. There are no officers with formal

ops analysis training, in spite of the fact that the Submarine Force launders about four or five a year through post-graduate school in Monterey to get that degree. The analysis is done by contractors with narrow credentials and no peer group review. The same basic track reconstruction capability that was here when I was here 25 years ago as the commodore is still here. There is less in-depth analysis of less-than-important exercises. Finally, there is no clear indication of how tactical development will be done in the future with significantly fewer SSNs and exercise dates. While people talk about the issue, the future is now. We are there now.

In conclusion, it is clear to me that the Submarine Force should critically examine all aspects of the tactical development business-take it down to bare metal and redo it. Do I think it's recoverable? Absolutely. Can it be returned to its former high point? Yes, but success has to be redefined. Times have dramatically changed and are continuing to change. Do I think it should be recovered? No doubt in my mind. Do I think it will be recovered? Ask the guys in uniform. This will be a good discussion topic over drinks tonight.

It's not my intention to end these proceedings on such a somber note. I think the Submarine Development Group was a remarkable invention brought about by officers that had just won a war and understood what had to be done. They were resolute and cunning, and were immeasurably aided by the unique cohesion of the Submarine Force. The accomplishments of this organization are unmatched by any other operational squadron in any part of the military. They have played an important, often key, role in virtually every submarine tactical knowledge and hardware development for the past 50 years and were fundamental in the successful conclusion of the long Cold War. This place attracted and encouraged people of remarkable skill and determination, many of whom are here with us today.

We'll all have a drink tonight to the accomplishments of the past five decades and to the opportunity waiting to be seized for the next five.