"Global Power and Sea Power"
By
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The first half of ADM Stavridis' presentation involved going around the world analytically and pointing out a number of challenges and concerns. They included:

1. *Violent extremism*, as vividly demonstrated by the 9-11 attacks. Groups fitting this profile, with more to come, include Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Al-Shabaab, and Boko Haram.
2. *Humanitarian disasters* in the Middle East. The Syrian civil war has left 600,000 persons dead, with another 14 million forced to flee abroad. Crises plus extra-regional meddling by states such as Russia are sure to produce more refugees, which will continue to roil European politics.
   a. ADM Stavridis is pessimistic about these problems abating anytime soon.
3. *Iran* will continue to challenge the US presence in the Middle East. Washington's response is hampered by an inability to understand Tehran's self-perception as a former and rightful imperial power.
   a. When religious streams and geopolitical streams cross, as in the case of Shiite Iran and Sunni Saudi Arabia, virulent war is likely to result, embroiling our ally Israel in the process.
4. In Asia, ADM Stavridis focused on *North Korea*, attributing some 50-70 nuclear weapons to that country. He said that its leader, Kim Jong un, is playing his cards well. But with serious negotiations, Stavridis is cautiously optimistic that Washington could deescalate this confrontation.
5. ADM Stavridis made a number of points about *Putin's Russia*. Russia recently put 8,000 troops in eastern Ukraine and seized Crimea, and like Iran, this may be a country whose self-perception we do not understand well. Additionally, Moscow is spending on very advanced weapon systems, and is drawing closer militarily to China.
   a. He pointed out this reliance on China could come back to bite Moscow, as resource-hungry China may be eyeing Siberia.
6. *China* too is becoming more powerful, developing a fleet of ballistic missile submarines, and fortifying its claim on the South China Sea. Whereas Washington and Beijing have a number of bilateral disputes – e.g. cyber activity, trade, intellectual property theft – Stavridis is cautiously optimistic that we will be able to find an accommodation.
7. Stavridis said that *cyber* is America's most worrisome problem. The US's electric grid has received relatively little modernization, and is vulnerable to perhaps devastating attack.

8. The *environment*, typified by rapid sea-level rise, needs to be recognized. Dealing with a multi-pronged hazard like climate change will require a concerted strategy.
9. Centrifugal forces pulling our *NATO* allies apart.
10. Political *gridlock* in the United States. Gridlock impedes our ability to deal coherently with all our challenges.

Given a long slate of challenges, distracted allies, and domestic gridlock, ADM Stavridis went on to ask *how we can create better security*. He had a number of recommendations:

1. Listen more – to fellow citizens, to allies, and to opponents.
2. Read more, in order to build intellectual capital. This includes novels, which help us to unlock ideas, understand the world, and formulate strategy.
3. Treasure our values, to include democracy, freedom, gender and racial equality, etc.
4. Appreciate alliances. The 29 NATO countries, for example, account for 52% of world GDP. He also mentioned the importance of coalitions, such as the 77 countries which took part in operations against ISIS. Stavridis opined that India would be a pivotal 21st century partner.
5. Keep a strong US military, although it will look different in the future (cyber, artificial intelligence, unmanned vehicles, etc.) He emphasized the importance of tapping the capabilities of young people. And he said that the military should engage in soft power operations such as hospital ship visits and literacy programs.

In sum, ADM Stavridis stated that hard power, such as classic sea power, still matters, and that it also underscores soft power. Regardless, he stated that all instruments of power must serve to create conditions for *hope*.

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