Meeting the Demand for Maritime Special Operations Forces Capability

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[The following is a question and answer interview with Captain Charles Wolf, United States Navy, Commander, Naval Special Warfare Group 4 (NSWG-4). The interview originally appeared in *Special Operations Technology* (SOTECH) online, November/December 2009, www.special-operations-technology.com.]

Question: Good afternoon, Captain. Could we start with an overview of Naval Special Warfare Group 4? Does it look basically the same as it did a year ago, and are you expecting any growth in the near term?

> **Answer:** Naval Special Warfare Group 4 is at about 1,400 man end strength, which includes capacity for 700 Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen (SWCC). The rest would be staff and enablers. In fact, I have a heavy enabler staff when you look at the maintenance and support that it takes to manage these vessels. The ratio is much like the one found in an aviation squadron.
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> As far as growth is concerned, the Special Operations Forces (SOF) community will see an increase across the board in the 3-5 percent range; and that will eventually trickle down to us. As Admiral Olson [Admiral Eric Olson, Commander of Special Operations Command (USSOCOM or SOCOM)] and Lieutenant General Kearney [Lieutenant General Frank Kearney, USSOCOM Deputy Commander] have been putting out in testimony, we really should not expect and plan on anything more than about 5 percent overall.
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> We have always said that people are more important than machinery, and it takes time to grow SOF. That is certainly true of the time it takes to grow SWCC. When all is said and done, 3 percent is probably what we can assume in growth.

Question: And how about the organization itself?

> **Answer:** We actually have not changed much in regards to the special boat teams. The most significant addition, of course, is Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School (NAVSCIATTS) down at the John C. Stennis Space Center, Mississippi, co-located with my Special Boat Team 22.
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> NAVSCIATTS is a schoolhouse that is primarily responsible for teaching foreign military partners small boat seamanship, handling, maintenance, logistics, sustainment, etc. We are advancing it into patrol officer courses of instruction where they will learn how to operate as a task-organized unit instead of individual skills. This will teach the students to start putting everything together collectively and be able to conduct exercises before taking those skills back to their home country.

If you look at USSOCOM's new role in security force assistance and as a synchronizer for security force assistance, what we are doing is an increasingly important function in more regions for the Command overall, and more specifically for Naval Special Warfare.

Right now I am in a number of regions including east Africa and in particular Kenya, which is probably one of the more mature locations. We have been in country there for more than four years. Interestingly, in Kenya it is not just the military we are working with but a number of different agencies including Kenyan wildlife, fisheries, and their near shore police. We definitely work with a combination of military, law enforcement, and department of interior agencies.

Kenya has a fairly small coastline, but they have keen awareness of their natural resources both along the coast and the interior. They are also interested in flexing their regional influence. To their north there are the ungoverned spaces of Somalia, and to the south the Tanzanians are an important ally. They want to be able to demonstrate their capability to take care of themselves and their mission.

This is important as Kenya has become a very key strategic ally.

Question: What about Africa's west coast?

Answer: On the west coast of Africa, we are working with Cameroon, which is probably not as mature of a relationship as we have with Kenya; but Cameroon represents a key geographic location on the west coast of Africa.

The importance is more than geographic but can easily be seen that way by looking at the north-south lines of commerce and the economic potential of Cameroon, including oil and the foreign allies to the north like Nigeria and to the south Equatorial Guinea.

You can also look at what the UK and French are doing in the region. Right now we are seeing a request for maritime security assistance along that whole western coast of Africa from Sierra Leone transiting all the way down to Equatorial Guinea. There is a lot of instability there.

The countries we are working with throughout that area are really coming along in their own capacity, and they are asking for more support. That is where NAVSCIATTS will play an important role.

Question: Does the United States go out and look to offer our services and skills, or do we wait for the host country to approach us with a request for assistance?

Answer: It comes from both a chicken and the egg kind of thing: Which comes first the United States or the foreign partner? We can go into a country and tell them what we have available as far as training options, or the foreign partners come to the United States and realize the kinds of things we can provide.

For example, in the Kenyan relationship, since we have been in there for a while and we have been exposed to each other, it is easier to work together and see the strengths and weaknesses. As they improve their skills, they are asking for more. They want to know where they can get better skills, better training, and better capabilities.

What we have tried to do is take what we are teaching overseas and make that an in-residence course here and take it to the next level where they learn more of the

maintenance, sustainment, etc., where the partner nation can attend these courses almost year-round we now train 49 weeks a year.

And we have also put much of this in electronic format where they can actually go to a web site and find out what courses we offer. There are now twenty-four participating countries in the program. It is absolutely amazing what NAVSCIATTS has gone through in the last ten years—in fact it just celebrated its 10-year anniversary under Naval Special Warfare (NSW) in September [2009] with a Global Maritime Security Force Assistance Symposium, attended by eleven key partner nations. The week-long opportunity strengthened both bilateral and multilateral ties that are essential in building regional stability.

Question: Does the same model that works in Africa work elsewhere?

Answer: If you look at the model for northern South America, the Colombia model, the ability to partner with a dedicated nation with a dedicated force on a reoccurring basis, you can see the good things it has done for Colombia.

We identified a special forces' partner down there some thirty years ago, and they have developed a really capable military in the region.

That is due, in part, to a constant United States military access, placement, and reoccurring contact.

We are also looking to use the same model in the Pacific. As we look at, and work with, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, for example, we see real opportunities. The Pacific partners, notably the Australians, Singaporeans, Malaysians, and Indonesians, have been key allies; and we work hard at maintaining those great relationships.

Question: NAVSCIATTS has a heavy emphasis on boat operator/maintainer training. Does it also get into tactical skills and tactical employment methodologies, or is that left for another time and place?

Answer: We have not really focused on that. We primarily teach non-tactical courses.

Now what we are looking at doing is a patrol officers course, I mentioned, which will give a foreign military representative a more comprehensive feel for how to conduct operations. But we are not necessarily looking at creating a United States-like capability. We want to give them the over-the-horizon small craft operations similar to what we do with our small boats.

Some of the foreign military sales include boats, including the 85-foot Mark V (MK V) Special Operations Craft (SOC). Additionally, the Coast Guard and Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) are selling boats overseas; and what I am trying to do is buy that same craft that my partners are operating and teach our people how to work them and then pass that along to our foreign partners. When you buy a boat from us, you get a warranty, a limited training package; and what we want to do is continue that warranty and training package for the long term.

It does not just stop at the boat either. We also want to work with their prime movers, their simulators, and so on. We are looking to the future to the possibility of expanding the simulation capabilities at Stennis both for our own United States personnel and my foreign residents. If I can teach a guy in a simulator before I put

them on the water, it is far less maintenance and cost on boats. Many times I have used the parachuting-wind tunnel adage, every hour, every minute you spend in a wind tunnel, you are that much more confident when you go out and actually jump.

We are looking at teaching a combination of maintenance, the craft itself; but it will be on-water operations primarily from the law enforcement perspective limited non-risk boarding, enforcing fishery zones, enforcing tariff zones, etc.

Question: What does the school mean for the students?

Answer: The path the school is on is a definite win-win for both Group 4 and the students that pass through.

It is a win for Group 4 in that it is exposing me to an entirely new course of operations. When SOCOM took on the Special Forces Association (SFA) mission, we had already begun moving in that direction. It seemed like the natural progression. I wanted pre-hostility involvement with our partners. If we can prevent war, it is far less costly in manpower and resources than to become involved in a conflict.

We have been so focused on the land war in the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) arena that we have not been able to be as involved with many of our foreign maritime allies as we had in the past. NAVSCIATTS has been able to reverse that. We have had incredible demand from United States ambassadors and foreign representatives alike asking for maritime security assistance. It has forced us to look at new ways to utilize funding. International education and training money was not something we were used to dealing with, but we are getting very fluent with [it] now.

In the past NAVSCIATTS did not have the capacity they had the experience and the expertise to train. I am now partnering them up with my special boat crewmen from the special boat teams, meaning they are getting both a master training specialist and the capacity so I can engage in more countries, more frequently as opposed to the less frequent, more episodic engagements that were common in the past. The old, infrequent posture just was not working.

For the students, I do not think it has really changed all that much in what they see in the curriculum, which has always been good. What has changed is that in the past the courses were smaller and less frequent. I think we will be in a position to change that. I hope to be able to bump up class size a little bit and possibly up frequency of courses.

Now that Bill Mahoney [NAVSCIATTS Commander] has my attention, he is able to push me things that I can act on.

Question: Development of the Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman has progressed steadily over the past decade from a transient-type assignment to a fully rated position with its own career path and training. Has this made it easier to attract and retain the professional operators that you need? What else are you doing to make sure you keep standards high and meet your manning levels?

Answer: The fully rated position of the SWCC is probably the one of the most significant changes we have made personnel-wise within the community in a number of years.

To take and eliminate that transient mindset is fabulous. When we train partner nations, we stress a closed-loop group of people that we will work with on a reoccurring

basis because you get more professionalism from them in the long term. They view themselves as long-term professionals, and they recruit similar-minded people to have around them.

And that is the same thing we have done here with the SWCC. I can now look out this window and watch these guys on a daily basis as they operate to and from the piers here and see the results. I remember one day when they had one of their first classes out teaching new guys fairly simple seamanship—teaching guys to bring a boat up alongside the pier, throwing the line up around a bollard and securing it, and transferring equipment. You think of that as being very basic; but when I watched five boats come in and every single boat did it the exact same way, I said to myself that they have standardized and professionalized from the simplest skill sets to the more complex. They have become the professional mariners that we were always looking for.

And that is not to say that the transients prior were not professional, but these guys have become the master mariners.

We are able to keep them longer, even though they may move from shore to sea billets, from riverine detachments to off-shore detachments; but they look at what they do as a profession. I hope that when a guy does twenty years working in this community, he leaves with the accreditations that prove to the civilian community that he is that master mariner.

The same holds true for our maintenance teams that they have developed the long-term skills that translate anywhere he goes.

As far as retaining the people, we have. I think that the professionalism has contributed significantly to our numbers. If you recall, when you talked to Evin [Captain Evin Thompson, formerly Commander of Naval Special Warfare Group 4, SOTECH 5.4 2007], he was probably 150—maybe even 200—people short of his end-strength numbers. I am less than 100 short of those same numbers right now; and given my current recruiting and accession numbers, I should be able to fill that in less than a year to a year and half.

I am also retaining the guys. Now for a number of years, we have been drawing special pay; and that has been a contributing factor for retention. Those bonuses are all gone now. The retention pay, reenlistment bonuses for the most part are gone; and still our numbers are up.

Some may think that people would start leaving for a variety of factors, but they are not. And I think that is because we have afforded them a professional pipeline that they are proud of and is satisfying to them and their families.

Question: I would like to touch on three pieces of technology that are important to SWCCs and Naval Special Warfare. The first is the development of the combatant craft family—heavy, medium, and light. Could you tell me a little bit about what you are looking for in the boats, and what they will be able to do for the naval special warrior? Do you hope for some degree of commonality?

Answer: The current SOF surface mobility plan is a plan that was validated in the 1980s by USSOCOM. We looked around the world at the range of operations that Naval Special Warfare was conducting, and we saw that we could not do it with one platform.

Starting with the smallest vessels, you have the combatant craft light, which are my rubber boats, my jet skis, etc. These are my very small craft that move individuals or small squads to and from their area of employment.

The next step is the combatant craft medium, which is in the 40- to 45-foot class and are really my workhorses.

The MK V SOC is a combatant craft heavy and falls in the 85-foot category. Finally, and still part of the combatant craft heavy, are the Military Sealift Command (MSC)/ mother-ship class, which are the commercially available or larger MSC vessels and Navy gray hulls.

So you have this family of vessels that allows you to operate across the range of military operations in the maritime domain. It allows us to operate in peacetime, the in between pre- and post-hostilities period, as well as during hostilities. The [challenge] we have is that these vessels have all been around for quite a while, many pushing fifteen years and many reaching the end of their service lives.

The first of the vessels that we have chosen to replace is the combatant craft medium Mark I (MK I), which will be a replacement for the Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB).

This will be a vessel that I am saying will be in the 40- to 45-foot range. Depending on what industry can come up with, it could be open, semi-enclosed, or enclosed; but the idea is to take everything that industry has developed over the years and put as much of it into the design as possible. When we built the original RHIB, we were just getting into Global Positioning System (GPS). It seems like we have had GPS forever, but it is really only been about fifteen years. Those boats were really not built to incorporate the new navigation technology. It was not built to include shock mitigation through hull shape and seats—all of that came afterward. Some of these technologies have since been incorporated but through aftermarket add-ons and fixes. So what has happened is that I have taken a boat that was never designed to do most of the things it is currently doing and is forced, through aftermarket add-ons, to be more capable. I think we are at the very end of what can be done, even with aftermarket add-ons, to keep the boats effective in the current battlespace.

The encouraging piece to this is that industry has responded incredibly well. Last January [2009] we held an industry day; and later, in June at the Multi Agency Craft Conference, it was amazing to see what industry brought to the table as far as platforms and capabilities.

Industry has made it clear that they can build the boat I want. They can make it lighter. They can make it faster. They can make it go farther with more people and equipment. It can have the expanded bandwidth I need for internet and communications on the move. It can have remote weapon systems. It can be less visible. I was able to give them my vision, and they have come back saying they can do that and more.

Once we get through that one, I have to then look at the MK V. That boat is an aging platform as well and at the end of its service life. I have to look at having to extend it sometime into the future.

I am paying very close attention to what the Navy is doing with their Landing Platform Docks (LPDs) and the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) vessels and working with them to

make sure those platforms can accommodate SOF surface platforms whether they be the combatant craft medium MK I or smaller.

In the future, we may be able to replace the MK V either with a new vessel or a totally new capability. LCS as a mother ship, for example, gives me that type of capability partnered up with my combatant craft medium MK I.

Now if we want to look at scenarios like denied access where, for political reasons or some other benign circumstances, I can not go in somewhere looking as aggressive; then I have the MSC vessels. They have [proven] themselves incredibly useful. You can look at their use in the Philippines and some of the things we have done in Africa. Here I am able to operate military platforms off of a non-military platform—basically a contracted non-military platform. This has been a really good partnership because I can lease those vessels when I need them without the overhead of development, and I do not have the overhead of sustainment when the mission is over—I hire them when I need them, and I can tailor their capabilities to my mission needs.

We are seeing that . . . in the MSC realm that they are very willing to make those adjustments to meet my needs.

These are very good partnerships. Considering how small technology has become, how expeditionary Naval Special Warfare and the Navy itself has gotten, I can move components around from platform to platform far more easily than I could in the past.

A ground-based communications station required a whole bunch of power and space requirements; and now, with a satellite radio, that really is almost man-portable—a small amount of space to work out of and a few computer terminals, I am good to go. The tools I have to work with today are fabulous.

Question: The second technology is the integrated combat and bridge systems—basically the electronic brains of the boat. What are the key elements that would do your operators the most good?

Answer: The electronic brains of the boat were really initially just the communications including both classified and unclassified lines. What we have done is expanded that; and now when you look at our systems, we look at improved strike, communications, and electronics to support that. We look at satellite communications (SATCOM) and other systems for communications on the move and small technologically advanced conformal antennas that are not these huge appendages. We are looking at unmanned vehicles. We look at improved intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) through both the infrared and day/night capability that we have on our camera balls—much of which was developed for fixed and rotary wing assets.

We are also working to seamlessly integrate ISR information from a variety of platforms and have a fairly robust capability to download video and communications from about five different types of fixed wing platforms.

If you take the integrated bridge and the electronic keel, which integrates all of the different sensors that go to support your unmanned vehicles, your ISR platforms, navigation inputs, it draws in your camera ball, your SATCOM, your current operational picture; it works with all of your communications; and it ties all of these separate pieces all together into a single system.

The integrated display has chart and navigation plotters that afford my operators maximum flexibility in driving these boats in the safest way possible with as much situational awareness available.

It also looks at what the engines are doing. In the past, we have always fixed something regardless of whether it was broken. You fix something that is on a 200-hour repair cycle every 200 hours whether it needs it or not! What we are trying to do is break that fix-it-when-it-is-not-broken cycle and fix it only when it needs it. The electronic keel—the boat's backbone—will tell me when it needs to be done. We have made huge gains in our ground vehicles with this same kind of predictive analysis, and I want to leverage that into my boats. And there are some unique challenges in the maritime environment, but we are getting much closer and some huge end-result-type gains.

Question: Last, the human factor technology that needs to be built into the boats, where are your major focuses?

Answer: I currently have two focuses on the human performance side of things.

There is human performance itself, which is the physiological; and there are the human factors, which are the technological aspects. We are partnered up with Bill Shepherd, USSOCOM's Science and Technology Adviser to Admiral [Eric] Olson; and he is working with the international community, mainly the Brits and the Aussies who have some of the more advanced testing capabilities and looking at the technologies to test shock. We know intuitively that our guys are getting beat up in the boats, but we have not been able to quantify it.

For example, the Marines used a system in their ground mobility vehicles to test shock to the head of the vehicle occupants. I am trying to install those same kinds of things in our boats. We want to demonstrate that over the course of a crewman's lifetime, he is going to sustain a certain amount of abuse in our platforms.

From that, then we look at how we can mitigate that. Part of that is shock which is vertical—a solution might be chairs that lean backwards and forward against the longitudinal acceleration. But the worst shock is the side hit—in a quarter inch sea where with each side hit your neck is jerked violently. A possible solution would be [a] side strike airbag that limits the contortion of the neck to the left or right. We have to figure out a way to do that in the boat.

There is one company out there that is right now working on a system that is really an integrated bridge that combines sea ride and ride quality including throttle and tabular responses that take into account all of the changing dynamics of the water surface—and trying to impart that into the throttles and wheel to make the boat ride as smooth as possible.

You also look at hull design—take for example a Deep Vee or a multihull, which might have foils attached—which I am not fond of because I am not a fan of appendages. The hull shape may change; or there may be a floating cockpit within the vessel, which are just some of the examples of what is possible and will factor into the design of the boat and what the technology can bring to the human factors aspect of the boat.

We have to figure out what is happening to the individual and then figure out through systems how to minimize the negative issues.

The other part of it is the human performance piece, and it comes down to preventing the injury through preventive physiotherapy to keep guys from getting hurt. What we know is that knees, hips, the lower back, and neck all take severe wear and tear out on the boats. So we are looking at what we can do to strengthen those areas.

We have brought in specialists in physical therapy who have identified those key locations that are prone to injury and are utilizing training advances to the operator to make sure they [are] working to strengthen those key areas and make them as strong as possible.

Question: How much integration has there been to accommodate the use of unmanned, including aerial and surface, platforms from your boats?

Answer: Unmanned platforms have more than proven their weight in gold. If you look at what we have done in Iraq and Afghanistan with unmanned platforms, they have been incredible force multipliers.

It took quite a while to transition to that—from manned to unmanned. The Air Force has always been manned, the Navy has always been manned, and so on; so when we said we wanted to take the man out of the platform, it took some time for people to embrace. Now we are proving the value every day. With lower risk, we can get more payload into a smaller platform since we are not as worried about survivability.

I am trying to do the same with the platforms that are going to service us off the boats—they have to be small enough that I can transport them. They also have to be valuable enough, meaning the airtime and the payload capability to be useful. Ideally it also has an armed capability. It can not take the man out of the process, but it can take them out of the seat. This way we can fly this thing against hostile targets and see what's actually going on at a location. It becomes our eyes and ears farther out than we would risk a manned platform.

But it is really hard for me to launch and recover a fixed wing platform from a small surface combatant. So what we are really looking hard at are rotary wing unmanned ISR capabilities—something maybe in the 9-foot diameter range. Basically I need a helicopter, but one that is really small and gives me maybe three or four hours of on-station time.

We are also working with surface platforms. One in particular, the SeaFox, is a 7-meter RHIB—about the 25-foot class—which offers some very interesting capabilities. The hull shape was a little squirrelly, so it did not perform probably as good as it could have. But the concept was sound. This unmanned platform can be used in all weather scenarios. It not only takes the operator out of the environment; it extends that operational capability. Irrespective of the weather conditions, I can use it for bridge or coastal defenses, harbor patrols, and security, possibly for adversary interdiction, up alongside a platform that may have an adversary onboard during maritime interdiction. This can be my forward eyes and ears, come alongside with a loudspeaker and a camera and see what is going on. The biggest challenge has been how to get something out here that is unmanned, has the dwell time, and can do all of those things. I think we are going to see more and more opportunity as more in industry develop their own solutions either as whole platforms or parts for the platforms.

Something else they would be great at is range security. Normally we have to have left and right manned flanks and patrol boats. The unmanned vessel can do that for you.

We also have unmanned subsurface vessels as well. Those are used primarily to look at hydrographics and boat channels mainly to decide before you commit boats whether the water is deep enough.

All of this is great, but you have to have the mother ship to operate off of. The concept all looks really good sitting in the compound; but then trying to lay it all out and then try and put it on your platform, it becomes a challenge to make it all fit. We have to figure out how to integrate the operator's station onboard your platform—whether it is [an] RHIB, MK V, or other surface vessel. How do we incorporate the ground-based station, how do you incorporate transport of the system to and from where we need it—these are all huge issues that we are dealing with daily.

While these may be limitations, they are certainly not prohibitive.

Question: Is the SeaFox just a Naval Special Warfare program, or is the larger Navy involved?

Answer: It is actually a Navy program, and they just asked me to employ it for [a] while. So we did for about a year. We shared it with Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek Fort Storey to check it out in a force protection role here as well. We have actually just recently had a conversation with a company about taking an even larger platform and making it unmanned. So we are looking at it as taking a manned platform and giving ourselves the option of being reconfigured and going unmanned.

I think people will be more apt to use it if they know that there is a safety observer onboard during the testing, especially if the system is armed.

Question: Assuming a good portion of your Command is deployed, how do you keep training levels at their peak? Do you have dedicated simulators for boat operators and gunners?

Answer: Right now, unfortunately, we are not using simulators. It is something that we are starting to get some ground swell behind as I identify simulation systems that may be utilized in a maritime environment.

As we start getting our hands around the requirements and define them more precisely, I am going to come out and say this is exactly what I need. Right now what I am doing is whenever a visitor who is interested in what they can do to help me, I tell them I need to invest in some simulators. We have some simulators where I can train ground-based systems—weapons, driving, and others—and I need to bring that to the maritime guys.

We have been at a number of science and technology demonstrations and have seen some simulator systems that with some modifications could suit many of my needs. For example, I need to show an entire bridge display that allows an individual to practice bringing a boat in alongside a pier, allows them to do all of the navigation plotting, allows them to run formations with multiple boat platforms, etc. What I need is to take it to the next level and incorporate weapons systems on it so I can get more training without spending more on ammunition.

To keep the standards up, what we did was, under Evin Thompson, we looked at it doctrinally. A detachment (DET) needs to be about this big—and took any of the excess capacity we could—really focusing on those senior enlisted guys—those E7s, those E8s, and the warrant officers—and said that part of your progression is that after you have gone through the tactical pieces you will go into the training departments and give back to the community. These guys are really starting to pay dividends. Guys

who have three, four, or five deployments, many in the combat zone, are now working in the training departments passing on what they know and have learned.

Across the Command I have tried to standardize the training whether it is through conferences, instructions, video teleconferences (VTCs), and constant dialogue to standardize the training and through Command level oversight supervise that training to make sure they're meeting the very high standards that have been set. This is an ongoing process to first off, standardize the training, second ensure that we've got the right expertise teaching the training, and third follow up on that training.

There is a final aspect to training, and that is the foreign partnerships. If you look at training, and again using Africa as an example where the Brits and French are also training partner nations that we will someday most likely train with, what I would like to do is to also standardize the international curriculum.

The Western or coalition partners that are teaching small craft instruction are all doing basically the same thing. And it would be very easy for me to go into a partner nation and take them to the next step so I would not have to start back at square one. A common training standard would go a long way to helping all of us, our coalition partners and the host nation, if we were all training the same basic courses in the same basic way.

There is a similar problem even here in the United States, where, for example, the Marines might teach a group something one way, while the Navy teaches it a different way, and we might take a different route as well. If we could standardize even some of that, it would be an improvement. I mean navigation is pretty similar around the world, so let's make sure we all teach it the same way.

There are about 24 partner nations that we work with in maritime security right now. Of those 24, if I could just get to a similar level of training, a similar level of tactics, techniques, and procedures employment, it would improve our training capabilities and their capabilities.

Question: Anything you would like to add?

Answer: I am incredibly proud of where Naval Special Warfare has gone and very proud of where the SWCC community has gone. As a Sea, Air, Land—United States Navy military special forces team member (SEAL) who drove boats in the SEAL community, for me to come in and see what has been done within the SWCC community and the professionalism of the community reflects how far we have come in a short period of time.

I think that it is only going to get better. The Commanders that I have are phenomenal. The fact that we brought NAVSCIATTS in underneath us is going to open up venues that we have not even considered yet. It has already opened up venues with the Coast Guard and with NAVSEA.

I am seeing that as we stood up Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC), the riverine group, and the maritime security teams, we are developing standard partnerships of nonstandard relationships.

Down in the Caribbean, I supported the Stiletto, which is an advanced technology demonstrator platform. SOUTHCOM needed a combatant craft heavy, and I could

not give them one. But I could give them a crew. So they came up with a boat, and I partnered with the Army and the Coast Guard to do interdiction operations.

It is encouraging when you look at what Congress has done with funding programs such as the Sea Lion, which is another advanced technologies demonstrator with a really high-end platform. I am going to have two of them in the next year or so. This is an incredible amount of capability that somebody else has afforded me. It has not necessarily gone through the formal programmatic. What I am looking at is the flexibility and partnerships that flexibility gives me. There is SOCOM money, Navy money, DOD money; and I am trying to take advantage of it at every point possible.

The other aspect is that I have seen the demand signal increase fairly significantly. When you look at what my total capacity is and what the world is looking for, they are looking at about one-third more than I have. So I have to look at vessels, I have to look at personnel, and I have to look at how I can solve the security requirements where we need to be engaged. The answer is having other people involved. So I have a vested interest in talking to Tony Kruger over at NECC Navy Riverine Group and making sure that we are partnered up. Even if a mission is not totally his or mine, at some point they will overlap; and we know where his responsibilities end and mine start. We will probably be bringing them along with us in Africa and the Philippines. NECC, in fact, may be the ones that eventually inherit the training mission.

We are also doing the same thing with the Coast Guard. That is a force that we have not worked with extensively but are trying to partner with them more.

The relationships between NSWG-4, Department of State (DOS), interagency organizations, Coast Guard, and conventional Navy continue to grow exponentially; and the stability built there will only serve to support progress in ensuring maritime security.