

Address By Vice Admiral S. H. Ingersoll

At Seventh Fleet Change Of Command Ceremony

January 28, 1957

Distinguished guests, officers and men of the SEVENTH Fleet.

This is my last appearance before you as Commander SEVENTH Fleet. It is an occasion which I shall always remember...partly because I have such pride in the accomplishments of you officers and men of this Fleet...and partly because, quite understandably, I feel a deep personal regret at terminating, at least for the present, my association with you.

The SEVENTH Fleet has a distinguished history of service in the defense of the nation and of the free world. During World War II it played a major role in the conflicts of the Southwestern Pacific leading to the liberation of the Philippines and to the final victory in the Pacific. During the Korean War it dominated the seaward flanks; striking the Communist forces with planes, guns, and amphibious troops as well as insuring a continuous flow of supplies and personnel in support of the Army, Air Force, and Marine forces ashore. After the cessation of hostilities in Korea the SEVENTH Fleet guaranteed 'Passage to Freedom' for thousands of liberty loving people of Vietnam; it successfully evacuated the threatened Nationalist Chinese from the Tachen Islands; it stands now on guard against any eventuality in a vast and vital area.

The SEVENTH Fleet today is a worthy heir to the traditions and the naval victories of the past in the Western Pacific. Its personnel, its ships, its aircraft are instantly ready. It is immediately available to the President of the United States to conduct any type of operations, military or diplomatic, throughout the vast expanse of the Western Pacific. The SEVENTH Fleet has forces which can be tailored to fit any contingency that may arise. Its strength is being steadily improved by the orderly assimilation of a growing arsenal of new weapons. The latest models of high performance jet aircraft and air-to-air guided missiles are being added to the Fleet to greatly increase its combat potential. The Fleet's mobility, supported by the existing efficient mobile logistic forces and enhanced by a high state of readiness, makes it a great barrier for peace: a barrier which reaches from the Sea of Japan and the Northern Pacific down through the East China and Philippine Seas into the South China Sea and which could be extended at any time that National policy might make such extension necessary.

The SEVENTH Fleet is the largest single integrated naval force today. It is a significantly well balanced force consisting of aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers, submarines, minercraft, amphibious craft, tankers, supply ships, and other auxiliary types. Although in peacetime it uses a limited number of shore bases primarily for the purposes of economy and to expedite training, this Fleet is a completely mobile fleet. It has great sea-keeping capabilities and its combat effectiveness is not controlled by bases nor adversely affected by the uncertainties of international politics.

Today in addition to major fleet exercises the SEVENTH Fleet is engaged in many tasks, both of training and of surveillance. One of our important regular tasks is to keep a careful watch on the straits of Taiwan, and SEVENTH Fleet units, especially destroyers, and aircraft, constantly patrol and search for any indication of an active threat of aggression against Taiwan or the Pescadores. Units of the Fleet conduct training operations with our friends, the Nationalist Chinese, the South Koreans, the Japanese, and the Filipinos. The Fleet has engaged in bilateral naval operations with the armed forces of Thailand. It has had successful SEATO operations at sea with our neighbors and allies in the Philippines, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, and Pakistan. We have learned to work together with our friends in this area of the world and have improved our capabilities to employ our combined military and naval strength in anti-submarine warfare, in surface action, and in the air defense in the waters of Vietnam, in the South China Sea, and in contiguous waters.

In addition to our work-a-day tasks, we have found much pleasure in visiting various countries in this part of the world. We have made many good friends in the ports of Japan, Korea, and Nationalist China; also among our neighbors farther south in such

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