

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
Acquisition Excellence Awards
Pentagon, Arlington, VA
Monday, June 14, 2010

Thank you, Sean (Stackley). We're here to recognize some very outstanding people, but before we get to the awardees I want to recognize the person in charge of acquisition for the Navy, Sean Stackley. You know, John Kennedy said, when he was elected President, that he went from being a Lieutenant JG [Junior Grade] to Commander in Chief with absolutely no increase in technical experience. And I pretty much got to be Secretary of the Navy the same way; I went from being a JG to being Secretary with only 40 years intervening where I had no technical expertise gain. But everyday that I see Sean Stackley walk in the door I know that I'm going to get good information, I know that I'm going to get good advice, I know that I'm going to get advice that does balance protecting the tax payer with getting our Sailors and Marines what they need to do their jobs. And it is also rare, I spent more than 30 years in politics and public service, it's also rare with somebody with technical expertise to be such a good speaker. And that's just not fair. But he does combine both those things. And for his service to our country, thank you Sean Stackley.

I'm only going to echo what Sean said. First is to thank you all for being here. I know that a lot of you have come a long way. And I know that a lot of you have sacrificed in terms of family life, in terms of time, to do what you have done to arrive today. We've got representatives here from commands stretching from Anbar Province in Iraq to Agana City in Guam. This is a global effort. This is a global recognition today.

It represents the global reach of our Navy and Marine Corps. It represents the global reach of what you do – of acquisitions. It represents how far flung we are and how the work goes on in every time zone that we have. Because of you and because of the thousands and thousands of the acquisition professionals that you represent, the Navy and Marine Corps, our Sailors, our Marines have the right tools, have the right things they need to do their mission, have the right equipment, the right things they have to have to protect this country.

And the reason I did come, on a Monday morning, down here was to show how important I thought acquisition excellence is. When you look at the Navy and Marine Corps there are a lot of gee whiz moments. There's watching planes take off from a carrier, watching operations of an amphibious ready group, watching some of our special forces in action, watching our Marines and going and visiting our Marines down in Afghanistan, visiting Sailors off the Horn of Africa and seeing the things that they do. None of that, none of that would be possible without what you do. Not a bit of it. Not one iota of it would be possible without the hard work that you do day in and day out to make sure that when they do get this equipment, that it's the right equipment, that it actually works and to protect the taxpayers on the other end. It's not the headline grabbing thing, in fact when you get in the headlines, it's sort of like when an officeholder gets in the headlines, it's rarely for something good. But the fact that you do such a great job and the fact that our Sailors and Marines have the tools that they need is testament to the skill level of the people in this room and the people that you represent, to the dedication to this country that you represent.

Sean said acquisition excellence is one of the priorities that I set for the Department of the Navy and we have to do it for a lot of reasons. One of them is just fiscal reality. We ought to be looking out after the taxpayers' money, we ought to be making sure we get every dollar's worth all the time, but it's especially true now with the economic climate not only in this country, but around the world. My first elected job was the State Auditor of Mississippi; I know how to follow money, I know how to look and see if something is giving us value. And the team that you represent, the team that Sean Stackley heads does as good a job for the taxpayers and for our warriors as anything I have ever seen. The President and the Secretary of Defense have both said we have got to do better in acquisition, just in terms of how we are spending our money because there is not going to be an excess of money anytime soon.

I put out five principles for acquisition excellence:

- Clearly identify requirements
- Raise the bar on performance
- Rebuild our acquisition workforce
- Support the industrial base
- Make every single dollar count

Without this, we can not build the fleet that we need, without this we will not build the aircraft that we need, without this we will not have the weapons systems that we need, without this we will not be able to do the missions we have been given.

The people we honor here today and the people that they represent have done all these things. They manage more than \$2 billion in procurement contracts and acquisition processes. And because of their efforts things like improved relationships with small

businesses, increased competition with vendors, improved innovation, better energy efficiency and significant, significant cost savings, more than \$100 million a year in cost savings for the group that's being honored today. If you stretch that out over the five years, over the course of the FYDP [Future Years Defense Program], that savings represents five additional F/A-18 Hornets. This is real savings that gives our Sailors and Marines more tools, more of the things that they need.

To the people who are being honored here today, thank you for your service. Thank you for your service to our country, thank you for your service to they Navy and to the Marine Corps. For your families here today, thank you for your willingness to allow your spouse, your father, your mother, your son, your daughter to serve. I know it's not the most lucrative job in the world, but it is one of the most important and I hope one of the most satisfying. Keep doing what you're doing. Thank you, again. Godspeed.