

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
Canadian Navy Centennial Celebration
Canadian Embassy
Washington DC
Tuesday, May 25, 2010

Vice Admiral (Dean) McFadden, thank you for that introduction. Ambassador (Gary) Doer, thank you for hosting this evening's event. Admiral Roughead, Vice Admiral (Axel Fritz Fromund) Schimpf and guests from around the world, thank you for joining us here tonight.

I am incredibly honored to be here tonight, joined by 20 other nations to celebrate Canada and the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Maritime Forces. Each of our nations shares the bond of the sea, one that connects us all in the eternal shared dangers and joys of Sailors.

It is also a bond that has led us over the last decades to recognize that cooperation and partnership founded on mutual respect between our nations is critical to safeguarding the maritime commons, defeating the dual scourge of piracy and maritime crime that plague the seas, and preserving the bounty of the oceans for those that follow us.

I am here tonight to particularly celebrate one unique partnership in the fellowship of the sea, because nowhere has a relationship been more steadfast than that forged between the navies and countries of Canada and the United States. Canada has been a true and constant friend in peace and in war. From the fields of France, to the Battle of the Atlantic, through the Cold War, to Afghanistan today, our nations have made common cause and have shared common sacrifice. Almost 150 Canadians, from every service, have given their lives in Afghanistan.

Canada has stood with us, as have so many in this room, in times of conflict. Canada has also stood with us in times of crisis. In the late 1970s, I was one of millions of Americans who gave a deeply heartfelt thanks to Canada for what they did in the aftermath of the take-over of our embassy in Iran. Passing by this building, everyone honked their horns in gratitude. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, it was a 1000 member Canadian task force led by then-Commodore McFadden that sailed to the aid of the Gulf Coast.

And in the aftermath of this January's earthquake in Haiti, the destroyer *Athabaskan* and the frigate *Halifax* deployed to join the international relief effort there. It is a measure of the ties we share that without difficulty, both ships were able to integrate into our established command and control organization and logistics network.

And today our mutual interests extend to ongoing maritime security operations around the world. Canadian frigates, like the *Toronto* and the *Charlottetown*, often deploy as organic parts of our Carrier Strike Groups to carry out combined operations in the Arabian Sea, Mediterranean and Pacific.

In the Caribbean and South America, Canadian ships and maritime patrol aircraft routinely participate in counter-narcotic operations under the command of the Joint Interagency Task Force – South. And off the coast of Somalia, Canadian maritime staffs and ships, most recently the *Fredericton*, are an integral part of the international effort to safeguard global commerce and maritime shipping lanes.

In every case, the professionalism and dedication of Canadian Sailors and Canadian ships have gained the respect of our Fleet Commanders and every U.S. ship that has had the privilege of working with them. In every case, the Canadian pledge that

“All Challenges Will be Squarely Met” has not only been fulfilled, but exceeded. In every case, Canadian ships on the horizon have been a welcome sight to the eyes of American Sailors.

Just as our history and our present are shared, the future of our two nations is inextricably tied together. In the Arctic, we confront the prospect of an ocean free of summer sea-ice sometime this century, and we confront the possibility of greater international development of mineral and natural resources across the Arctic. As a result, it is imperative that our countries lead the international community to an agreement on equitable use of the Arctic Ocean and protection of its fragile environmental balance.

It is also imperative that our two navies learn to operate together in the unforgiving environment of the North. It’s clear to me that the U.S. Navy can learn a great deal from our Canadian colleagues, and this summer we will take the first step toward combined maritime operations in the Arctic.

In August, during Exercise NANOOK 2010, we will dispatch a destroyer, a maritime patrol aircraft, and a mobile diving and salvage unit to participate in the exercise, thereby extending our combined operations to yet another corner of the Earth; building the next century on the legacy of the last.

Together, our two navies have confronted every common foe and every common challenge before us. Together we have forged an insoluble friendship of equals. Together we are looking forward to the next century and another 100 years of common purpose.

Dieu bénisse le Canada. God bless the Canadian Navy. Yours aye and Godspeed.