

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
City Club of Cleveland
Moderator: Dan Moulthrop, Chief Executive Officer,
City Club of Cleveland
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DAN MOULTHROP: Are we ready? (Sounds bell.) Good afternoon, and welcome to the City Club of Cleveland. I'm Dan Moulthrop, chief executive here at the City Club, and also a proud member.

It's my pleasure and privilege to introduce to you our speaker today, United States Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus. Since its birth on October 13th, 1775, our nation's Navy has been involved with more than 10 major wars and countless battles in the effort to bring security, democracy, peace and prosperity to Americans. The Secretary of the Navy is responsible for and has the authority under Title X of the United States Code to conduct all the affairs of the Department of the Navy, which is comprised, as some people often forget, of two uniformed services – the U.S. Navy and the United States Marine Corps. Today those two branches contain more than half a million active servicemen and –women.

Two hundred and forty years after the establishment of the Navy, we're here to discuss how to prepare our expeditionary fighting force for the future. Our future fighting force, of course, is increasingly relying on women in combat positions, and a study released last week indicated that mixed-gender combat units are not as effective as single-gender combat units. In an interview with NPR last week, however, Secretary Mabus took issue with the study, and I suspect we may hear a bit more about that today.

Ray Mabus is the nation's 75th Secretary of the Navy, the longest to serve as the leader of the Navy and Marine Corps since World War II. Before his appointment by President Obama in 2009, Secretary Mabus held a variety of leadership positions, including governor of Mississippi, ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and lead on the cleanup of the Gulf after the Deepwater Horizon. So you've got government, diplomacy, crisis management – uniquely qualified for the position he currently occupies.

He is a native of Ackerman, Mississippi, and received a Bachelor's degree from the University of Mississippi and a Master's degree from Johns Hopkins, and a law degree from Harvard Law School. After Hopkins, Mr. Mabus served in the Navy as an officer aboard the cruiser USS Little Rock.

Ladies and gentlemen, members and friends of the City Club of Cleveland, please welcome the 75th U.S. Secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus. (Applause.)

SECRETARY RAY MABUS: Thanks, Dan. And thank you all so much for having me here.

I'm going to say a couple of words about the City Club of Cleveland and then talk about the Navy and Marines. We were talking earlier, and one of your early speakers and members, Newton D. Baker – I have somewhat of a connection to the former secretary of war and governor of Ohio. In my office is a portrait of Franklin Roosevelt signed to my uncle, Wesley Mabus, who was a delegate for Roosevelt in 1932, the only other member of my family that's ever done politics. And I didn't know he had this picture until I was elected governor, and he was at that point the oldest living state legislator, state senator, in Mississippi. And he gave an interview and talked about having this picture of Roosevelt. So I asked him – I said, you still have that? And he said, yeah. And I said, can I have it? And he said, sure, I'm not doing anything with it. So my next trip home I went up to the attic with him. He was 92 at the time. And he still had the original string wrapped around the picture. And I asked him how he got this picture signed, and he said that at that point the delegations to the convention were done by the unit rule, so a majority of the delegation carried the whole delegation – unlike today, when it's proportional. And Roosevelt had a one-vote lead in Mississippi over Newton D. Baker. (Laughter.)

Now, Roosevelt had had previous experience with Newton D. Baker. Franklin Roosevelt had been assistant Secretary of the Navy in World War I under Josephus Daniels when Newton D. Baker was secretary of war. Josephus Daniels, you may remember – maybe not – took alcohol away from the U.S. Navy and replaced it with coffee. And so sailors would very sarcastically say, “let's go get a cup of joe,” which is where that expression came from. But Roosevelt's folks came around the Mississippi delegation and went to every one of their delegates and said, what do you need to stick with Roosevelt? And my uncle said he told him – he said, I'd like to meet Roosevelt and get him to sign a picture for me. And he paused talking to me and said, I guess I could have been an ambassador. (Laughter.)

Tonight, at the stadium, I'm going to throw out the first pitch for the Indians. (Applause.) And if you wonder if this is a good job or not, this will be my 30th stadium. This will be – Cleveland is the last of all 30 Major League stadiums that I've thrown out a first pitch in. It started almost by accident, because I name all Navy ships and we have naming ceremonies. And we were doing naming ceremonies at state capitols and at city halls and war memorials and things like that, and they were great. We would have 2(00) or 300 people come. And almost by accident we went to St. Louis, where I was naming the USS St. Louis, named it at city hall, and the mayor said, well, you're going to the ballgame tonight; why don't you name it at the ballgame as well? So I did. And instead of having 2(00) or 300 people, there were 45,000 people that all stood up and cheered.

Because the Navy and Marine Corps are America's away team. We never have a home game. We never get to play anywhere close to where we're from. And one of the ways we connect to the American people – to the people that the Navy and Marine Corps

are standing the watch on behalf of, the people being protected – is through things like ballgames, through things like swearing in new sailors, reenlisting current sailors and Marines, or naming ships.

And so the reason Cleveland is 30th is we have an award called the Bob Feller Act of Valor Award, named after one of the most famous Cleveland Indians of all times. And Bob Feller – we have this award once a year. We give it to a veteran who – baseball player who was in the military, we give it to a chief in the Navy who does community things, and we give it to an organization or a current major leaguer who does things for veterans or who does things for the community. And Bob Feller very famously said in his Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, when asked about what was his most memorable victory, said World War II.

So, Navy and Marine Corps. What the Navy and Marine Corps uniquely give to this country is presence – being around the globe around the clock; being at the right place not just at the right time, but all the time; giving our leaders options in times of crisis. We get on station faster, we stay longer, we bring everything we need with us, and we don't have to ask anyone's permission to get the job done.

One of the best examples of that happened last year when the decision was made to strike ISIS. We had a carrier launching strikes in less than 30 hours, and for 54 days – 54 days – we were the only strike option. And the reason for that wasn't that we didn't have any other aircraft in the region, because we did. The reason was that the countries where those aircraft were wouldn't allow them to take off armed for strike. We didn't have to ask: we were flying from sovereign American territory.

So, to get this presence, to provide this presence, I've organized my thinking, and the way the Navy and Marine Corps are operated, around four principles, and they all start with P: people, platforms, power and partnerships.

We have the best force that we have ever had. The Marines are the rightful heir to the Marines that fought across the Pacific and captured Iwo Jima and Guadalcanal and Peleliu. The sailors are the rightful heirs of those stretching back to the days of our Revolution. We have the best-trained, we have the best-educated, we have the most dedicated force that we've ever had, but we've put a lot of stress on them, particularly since 9/11/2001. We've been at almost constant – in constant warfare, and our deployments have gotten longer and more uncertain.

So we've been trying to do some things to mitigate some of the stress on this force and to keep – to recruit and keep those highly talented people that we want. We've done things like 21st Century Sailor and Marine, which – we had a lot of programs dealing with a lot of different issues that sailors and Marines face – things like education or family benefits or sexual assault or counter-suicide, but they were all one-off programs out there by themselves in stovepipes. We put them all together because so many things cut across some of these programs. Alcohol, for example, cuts across family violence,

suicide, sexual assault. And we made a one-stop shop for sailors and Marines to go get the assistance that they or their families may need.

In May, we launched a big new set of initiatives in terms of how we manage the force. We're managing – I've got, if you count civilians, about 900,000 people. We're managing our uniformed forces with tools that were passed or instituted in the '60s and '70s. So what we're trying to do is make careers more flexible. What we're trying to do is tap into some of the innovation that we have in the fleet. And we're doing it through things like the Career Intermission Program, which says that you can take three years off to do anything. Now, you owe us two years for each year you take off, but if you want to have a family, if you want to look after a loved one, if you want to go get another experience that we may not think is worth the Navy or Marine Corps sending you but it will help in some way, you can do that. And when you come back, you will – your lineal number will be rolled back so you're competing against people from three years earlier, not the ones that stayed in the entire three years.

Even before this program, the last commandant of the Marine Corps, Jim Amos, as a young officer took off two-and-a-half years and went and flew for a commercial airline, came back in and still became commandant. It keeps us from having to – it keeps people from having to make a choice between career and doing something else that they think they need to do or want to do.

In July I announced the tripling of paid maternity leave, from six weeks to 18 weeks, because we lose twice as many women in the three to seven year range as men, and it's almost always for the same reason, and it's to have a family. And we're trying that, some other things. Starting childcare two hours earlier and ending it two hours later, because childcare was opening at 0700 and people had to report at 0700. So which one – which one are you late for?

We're doing – we're trying to do this across the – across the force in terms of things like changing a fitness test to be a culture of fitness instead of an every-sixth-month test. We're changing the way sailors and Marines eat to be healthier. And we're doing some of these – we're trying to make the check-the-box career patterns more flexible, more open, because we want people with different experiences, different mindsets, rising to the top.

That's one of the reasons that – one of the first things that I was able to accomplish in this job was bringing Naval ROTC back to Harvard, to Yale, to Princeton, to Columbia, after an absence of over 40 years at each one of those places, because we need the differing viewpoints. But at the same time, we also opened NROTC units at Rutgers and Arizona State, the two most diverse campuses in the country.

And I will say a word about the Marines and women in combat arms. It's coming up on – Leon Panetta, when he was secretary of Defense, reversed the presumption and said everything is open – every occupational specialty in the military is open unless you request an exemption, and if you request an exemption both the chairman and the

secretary of Defense have to sign off on it. Nobody's asking for an exemption in the Navy. My senior military aide here, Bob Smith, is a SEAL. The SEALs aren't asking for an exemption. Our notion is set standards, make sure those standards have something to do with the job, and then, if you meet it, you meet it.

The Marines did a very long study – about six months – looking at women in things like infantry, armor, artillery. And at the end they came out – and I've read the study pretty carefully a couple of times – in a different place than I do because they talk about averages. And the average woman is slower. The average woman can't carry as much. The average woman isn't quite as quick on some jobs or some tasks. The other way to look at it is we're not looking for average. There were women that met this standard, and a lot of the things there that women fell a little short in can be remedied by two things: training and leadership.

And so I've been pretty clear – and I've been pretty clear about this for a while – I'm not going to ask for an exemption for the Marines, and it's not going to make them any less fighting effective. In fact I think they will be a stronger force because a more diverse force is a stronger force. And it will not make them any less lethal. And those are the two things you have to protect in the Marine Corps.

Second, platforms. Quantity has a quality all its own. On 9/11/2001, the U.S. Navy had 316 ships. By 2008, after one of the great military buildups in our history, we were down to 278 ships. In the five years before I became secretary, the Navy put 27 ships under contract. That was not enough to keep the fleet from shrinking further and it wasn't enough to keep our shipyards in business. In my first five years, we put 70 ships under contract with a smaller top line. And so, by the end of this decade, we'll be back to 306 ships, which is exactly where we need to be.

Now, we've done it using some pretty standard business things – more fixed-price contracts, more competition, just harder bargaining. And I'll give you two quick examples.

We just signed, last summer, the largest contract ever in Navy history, for almost \$18 billion, to buy 10 Virginia-class attack submarines over the next five years. Now, these submarines cost \$2 billion apiece. If you're doing math in public, 18 billion (dollars) – or two times 10 is not 18. By buying 10 at a time, by allowing these shipbuilders to have economic order quantity of their equipment, by allowing them to have stability in their workforce so that they can make the investments in infrastructure and training, we're getting 10 subs but we're paying for nine. It's like having one of those punch cards, you know, buy nine subs get your 10th free. (Laughter.) So we're saving \$2 billion on this – on this contract.

On our destroyers, we have two yards that build them – one in my home state of Mississippi, in Pascagoula, Ingalls, and one in Maine, Bath Iron works. And we were building two destroyers a year. And they were taking it sort of as an allocation. OK, we're going to get one. And we want them both to stay open because we want the

competition. So the prices just kept going up on these things. So we – instead of bidding out two, we bid out three. And we said, the low bid gets the third ship. And oh, by the way, the difference in the high bid and the low bid comes out of the high bidder's profit.

Well, one shipyard just crushed the other one in that first round. The next year, we bid out nine. Same rules – winner gets five – or the low bid gets five, high bid gets four, and the difference in the high bid and the low bid comes out of the high bidder's profit. The other shipyard won decisively. We're saving \$300 million per ship by doing it that way. And so we're getting to the size that we need, because you got to have that big gray hulls on the horizon. You've got to have them there to reassure our allies.

You've got to have them there to deter potential adversaries. You got to have them there because in today's world if you're not there if something happens, you may never get there. We can respond to anything. And today we have 100 ships forward deployed somewhere far away from the U.S., ready to meet whatever comes over that horizon. And the amphibious ships, loaded with Marines. We haven't done this at the expense of aircraft. We bought 45 percent more aircraft, than in the five years previously, using a lot of the same techniques. And we're going far deeper into things like unmanned systems and exotic things like rail guns and laser weapons that we've already deployed now into the Arabian Gulf.

The third is power. And that's what fuels our ships and our aircraft and our weapons systems. If you want to see how fuel, energy, can be used as a weapon, just look at what Russia did to Crimea, just look at what Russia is trying to do to Ukraine, look at what Russia was trying to do before the big drop in oil prices to Europe. In 2009, it became apparent that it was one of our vulnerabilities. It was a vulnerability in two ways. One is supply, particularly away from home could we get all the oil and gas that we needed? And two was price, the price shocks that go with oil and gas, because it's a global commodity.

I was given bills of several billion dollars the first few years I was there in unbudgeted price increases. And it's hard to find a billion dollars, even in the Pentagon. And the only place you can get it from is training – so you steam less, you fly less, you train less – or if the bill gets too big, you buy fewer platforms because you simply cannot afford to fuel them. So in 2009, I announced a set of goals for the Navy that by 2020 at least half of all energy both afloat and ashore would come from non-fossil fuel sources. We're going to be there this year on our bases. We're going to be five years early.

The president put it in his State of the Union in 2012 that Navy was going to buy a gigawatt, which is half of our needs, by 2020. By the end of 2015, we'll be there. We'll be there at sea as well by 2020. All our ships, all our aircraft have been certified on alternative fuels. We have demonstrated something called the Great Green Fleet, in an echo of Teddy Roosevelt's Great White Fleet. We demonstrated in 2012 every type of aircraft, every type of ship, sailing on alternative fuels, or flying on them, and the carrier is nuclear, which is another type of alternative fuel.

Partnerships. We have three very important partnerships. First is with our foreign allies and friends. I travel a whole lot in this job. I just passed 1.1 million air miles, 140 separate countries. And we're doing something with each one of them. And I go for two reasons. One is to see sailors and Marines where they are deployed instead of waiting in the Pentagon on the off-chance they may come by and see me. But the second reason is to see these – the leadership of our friends, our allies, the people that we operate with around the world.

Second is the partnership we've got with industry. And I talked about that. We owe industry certain things. We owe industry stable designs – don't design the ship while you're building it. You would be surprised how often that happens. Second is if you get a new gee-whiz technology wait for the next ship, wait for the next aircraft to put it on. Don't try to force it in. And third is, how many of these are we going to build and what's the timeframe? In return, industry owes us certain things. If they know what we're going to build, to make the investments in infrastructure and job training. And that if we don't change the design, every ship of the same type or every aircraft of the same type ought to cost less than the one before it. There ought to be a learning curve.

But the third partnership is the most important, and that's the partnership with the American people. As I said before, we're America's away-team. People don't get to see sailors and Marines much. They certainly don't get to see them doing their jobs. They don't get to see them doing – how hard these jobs are, how we expect them to do it well, how much we push responsibility down to the very lowest ranks, and how we have increased that responsibility as our deployments have increased in length and in uncertainty.

The American people are the beneficiaries of having those sailors and Marines out there all the time, day and night, standing the watch. We deploy equally in times of war and peace. There's never a permanent homecoming for any sailors and Marines. We're there all the time. And the whole purpose is to protect this unique and great country of ours. The United States Navy, the United States Marine Corps, the most powerful expeditionary fighting force the world has ever known. And it's our job to keep it that way.

So from the Navy, Semper Fortis, Always Courageous. From the Marine Corps, Semper Fidelis, Always Faithful. Thank y'all. (Applause.)

MR. MOULTHROP: Thanks very much. You can sit for a second and I'll do the little pivot.

Thank you very much, Secretary. Today we are enjoying a forum featuring Raymond Mabus, Jr., 75th United States Secretary of the Navy, or to continue his metaphor, GM for the U.S. away-team. (Laughter.) We encourage you to organize your questions for Secretary Mabus now and remind you that your questions should be brief and to the point. If you're joining us via our webcast and would like to tweet a question, we welcome that. Please tweet it @thecityclub.

We welcome all of you here and those joining us via the webcast, provided by our primary media partner, 90.3 WCPN, WVIZ/PBS, 104.9/WCLV Ideastream, or one of the many radio stations across the country and the region that carries City Club programs. Production and broadcast of the City Club is made possible by Cleveland State University and PNC.

Be sure to join us on Friday, September 18th as we welcome William Griswold, the 10th director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, for a conversation on his plans to shape the future of one of America's leading art museums. For more information about our upcoming and past forums, please visit us online at CityClub.org.

We welcome guests at tables hosted today by the U.S. Naval Academy alumni and parents. Additionally, we welcome students to today's forum from Westlake High School and Shaw High School. Could the students please stand to be recognized? (Applause.) Student participation is made possible by a generous gift from The Laub Foundation. We thank you for your support.

Now it's time for our traditional City Club Q&A. Holding our microphones today are City Club content – oh, I'm sorry – City Club Office Assistant Wesley Allen and Director of Programming Stephanie Jansky. Our first question, please.

Q: Secretary Mabus, thank you for coming to Cleveland. And I hope you can bring good luck to the Indians tonight when you throw out that first pitch. They need a few victories over the Royals to stay in the race.

A little background, my granddaughter's a resident of North Carolina. And her boyfriend is currently serving in the Marines at Camp Lejeune. Recent graduate of University of North Carolina at – or at Charlotte, and he was an ROTC, or training for the Marines, and is now, I believe, an officer.

A couple of things. I was very interested in your brief description of the study that the Marines did, and wondered if you'd go a little more into the depth of how that came about and what the practices are. You know, does that kind of study have to come up to your level for approval before it happens, or this is something that goes on at the expeditionary force level, that kind of thing.

And then secondly, I know the Marine Base Camp Lejeune has a major problem with – some kind of environmental problem with the water supply, I believe, due to chemical pollution that was previously created by the military. I assume that's a problem on other bases or a more general problem than just one place, that there are old environmental problems that need to be cleaned up. What's the military doing about those kinds of issues?

SEC. MABUS: I've got a tradition at all-hands calls, first question gets a coin. (Laughter, applause.)

All right, on the Marine study, what they – number one, I knew about the study, of course, but I don't reach down and say do this kind of study, do that kind of study. That came up from the Marine operating forces, Marine staff. But the way it was structured was they asked for female volunteers to go do the closed occupations – infantry, artillery, armor, AAV drivers – amphibious assault vehicle drivers. And the standards for women getting into those were very minimal standards. Just basically volunteer. And you had to do a certain number of pull-ups and run, but it was pretty standard.

Then they went through the thing with assigning women to – with Marines who were already in the infantry, already in the artillery, already in armor. And they did the results. And some of the results on average, women dropped out. On average, women wouldn't carry as much, or were injured more from carrying. On average, teams with women on them were slower – not much, but a little bit. But these were all on average. There were women that met every test in this. And so one of my concerns about it was we didn't do a very good job of screening people before the volunteering.

One of the things that came out of this was there were no standards, zero, for most of these jobs. You just assume that if somebody went through boot camp – a man went through boot camp that they could do it. A lot of men can't. And so the one great thing that came out of this is all of a sudden there are standards. So male or female, you're not going to get to be in the infantry or you're not going to get to – in armor, or whatever, unless you meet these standards up front. That is a tremendously good thing that came out of this study.

Once your past that, and that these standards have something to do with the job at hand they're not just arbitrary – you know, do – you got to be able to do 100 pull-ups to be in the infantry, which as very little to do with the infantry – then you got to quit looking at averages. Then you got to start looking at the individuals. Women got injured a lot – more than men on duty. Men got injured four times as much than women off duty. (Laughter.)

So you know, we got these knuckleheads who are out there, here, hold my beer and watch this. (Laughter.) So do we keep men from being in the infantry because they get hurt so much off duty? I don't think so. And so you know, I think this study served a very good purpose. It's come up with the standards. And the standards have something to do with the job. Once you've done that, I just see no reason to say because the average person, woman, cannot make it we're not giving anybody a chance.

Oh, and second, the drinking water issue at Camp Lejeune was in two housing projects. It started in the early '80s. It was a dry-cleaning solvent that leached into the water supply. And it was not discovered – I mean, it had been going on for a while. It was not discovered until the '80s. Immediately shut down, immediately new water source gotten. So there's no – there was no ongoing issue for the last 30 years or so.

There have been allegations that there was a higher incidence of illness with people who had gone through as Marines.

What we have done is we have – and we’ve done this for almost a decade now – contracted with ASTDR (sp), which is the – it’s the people that measure illness and clusters of illnesses and things like that, looking for a connection. And we’ve done it with Centers for Disease Control and now we’re doing it with this organization. And so far, we can find no correlation between the two. Now, we’ve been paying for this research for, as I said, almost a decade. And we’ll continue to. And we’re reaching out to anybody who served aboard Camp Lejeune during that period and trying to keep them posted. There are several hundred thousand, more than 200,000 people that we are in constant contact with.

Who else?

Q: Thank you for saying you’re looking for the exceptional people, the outstanding people, not the average people – that applies to both men and women. My question deals with the rise of China and its blue water navy, and the expansion of its island/reefs, and how’s that going to affect the Navy operations and especially the right of innocent warship passage through territorial waters? Thank you.

SEC. MABUS: For 70 years, the U.S. Navy had guaranteed freedom of navigation and freedom of commerce for everybody engaged in peaceful trade. We’re unique, that we’ve been the dominant naval power and we haven’t restricted that freedom of navigation to only people flying our flag or allies. And I think a very persuasive argument can be made that the economies of the world, particularly the economy of Asia, is doing as well as it is because of the United States Navy and that freedom of movement, freedom of navigation. And so we’re going to continue to assert that. We’re going to continue to assert freedom of navigation, both on the water and above the water.

We obviously keep an eye on what they’re up to. But our response to things like – I went to China in 2012 in this job. And there would always be these almost rote complaints about our reconnaissance flights and our collection ships. And my response would be, well, you know where we are. We’re adhering absolutely to international law. And you must think it’s valuable, because you sent an intelligence-gathering ship to RIMPAC in 2012, our biggest exercise – the biggest naval exercise in the world. Our response to them sending that intelligence-gathering ship was we invited them to the next RIMPAC. We said, why are you just out there collecting? Come on in. Come on. You know, we’ll include you in this. And so they came. They sent four ships to RIMPAC in 2014. Guess what else came? The intelligence-gathering ship.

We are – we’re going to continue to assert those freedoms. We’re going to continue to be with our allies in that region. We’re going to continue with the dialogue with China, because one of the things as they develop a navy, they need to become a very responsible part of the international order at sea and in the air. That’s where we want them to go. We want them to become that responsible actor. And so we’ll continue

talking to them and inviting them to things. But we're also – I'll put it this way. I'd way rather be in our place than in theirs.

Q: Following up on that comment, I understand that the Chinese have developed supersonic missiles, launchable from their submarines. What's the state of our development of that type of weapon?

SEC. MABUS: I would – well, I'm constrained in what I can say about that or any weapon system under development. But I'll just repeat what I said, I'd way rather be in our position than theirs right now.

Q: Mr. Secretary, thank you so much for being with us here in Cleveland today. My name is Grant Goodrich, Naval Academy class of '94.

I'm actually going to follow the pattern of questions on China. We did have a speaker from Naval Postgraduate School address the Cleveland Council on World Affairs, speaking about Chinese maritime strategy last week, so perhaps that's prompted some of the conversation. I think all of us walked away from that presentation a bit alarmed at the speed with which China has transformed from a brown water to a green water navy.

And I was wondering if you could talk a bit more about platforms, one of your themes today, and the speed of our acquisition process and the speed with which we adopt technology. I was a Marine Corps officer who was promised the AAV at the Naval Academy, and when I left we still hadn't seen it come into the fleet. So from design to deployment, what's our timing for aircraft and for ships today? And you mention, we're not adding technology while the ship's in the shipyard, we're waiting for the next ship. What's that process to build technology into our ships today?

SEC. MABUS: Well, number one, in terms of ships – ships take a long time to build. Not many shortcuts that you can make. And that's the reason we're dealing with the fleet size we got today, were decisions made 15 years ago, 10 years ago. And so the decisions I'm making today will determine the fleet size in the late-2020s and into the 2030s. So I think in terms of getting the platforms, those gray hulls out, that 'were doing pretty well. What we're not doing as good a job at is getting things to the war fighter from the lab. You know, you'll get – you'll get something that is a potential game-changer. And it just gets bogged down in all this red tape and all the bureaucracy and all the check-the-box sort of things. And we're not doing it. We're not keeping pace in terms of getting that technology out there faster.

Now, we've got some initiatives underway to do that. We're doing – for example, the way we got the laser weapon – we put the laser weapon out three years ago in the Arabian Gulf. We did that as an experimental platform, instead of a program of record, so that we could just move it out and see what happened in a harsh, saltwater, sandy, very hot environment. And the weapon's performed really well. So we can speed that up. We're putting a rail gun – y'all know what a rail gun is, because I didn't? But

two rails, one's positively charged, one's negatively charged. And it sends a projectile out so fast, Mach 9, that it doesn't have to have any explosives in it. It just hits with the kinetic energy. It destroys things just based on just how hard and fast it's coming in.

And we've got a pretty big rail gun now that we're going to put on a ship next year to test. But the rail gun points out the problem. The rail gun technology, we started exploring it in the '80s. We're getting it out to test next year. Who knows when it's going to get to the fleet? There's example after example after example of that. And we're trying to get after it. Our current CNO, that turns over Friday and spoke here a couple of years ago, has an innovation cell. I've got a thing called Taskforce Innovation, to try to cut through some of this, to if you've got something you know works, get it to the fleet real fast. We're doing it in things like 3-D printing now.

And I'll give you one very quick example, which is – I held this up at Sea Air Space, the big exposition in April. We've got a UAV that's about this big. It costs \$200. You can make it onboard a ship with 3-D printing. And it's a no deposit, no return. You send it out, it doesn't come back. But if you get in a fight, you send out about 2,000 of these. And they form a network with themselves. And they can be offensive, they can jam the enemy, or defensive. They can open holes in enemy's jamming to let our weapons, our aircraft, or missiles, whatever through. And they're very hard to shoot down because they're so small. And if you lose 10, 20 percent of them, it really doesn't matter. The network still works. And it's a way that we can defeat some of the – some of the ways that people are trying to go after our networks.

Getting that to the fleet has – it's run into obstacles. And it's run into obstacles because of just the contracting process, just the acquisition process that we've got today. And we've got to simplify it. I know Congress is working on it. And we're working on it. And we're getting better, but we're still not there in those terms.

Q: Mr. Secretary, in 1970, I got orders out of The Basic School at Quantico Virginia for the USS Little Rock. And my buddy said, well, the Little Rock, she's 6th Fleet flagship, and she pulled into places like Monaco and Nice, France, and Naples, Italy. So I report to Marine Barracks Newport, Rhode Island. That night, the NCO in charge says, oh the Little Rock, sir, she's up in dry dock in Boston, Massachusetts. So I was instructed to report aboard in dress blues, so here I am in my dress blues, and my shoes shined up, and looking real good, stepping over air lines, walking around equipment, these shipyard workers looking at me like I'm an alien from outer space.

And I report aboard, and I meet – or I come in contact with a young ensign named Ray Mabus, has a little of this going on because he was reading all the Z-grams, and talked a lot about this governor from Georgia named Jimmy Carter. And I just want you to compare the Navy that you served in back in the '70s with the Navy that you lead now.

SEC. MABUS: I'm very glad to see you again, after 45 years, because I reported to that same shipyard. I actually lived on Little Rock during the shipyard, which is an interesting experience. And I did have – one of my friends described my beard is it

looked like I glued two squirrels to my face. (Laughter.) And I had the worst beard anybody has ever had. And Little Rock didn't become 6th Fleet flag while either one of us was on it after that.

But I served with a lot of very dedicated, very patriotic people. We couldn't touch the Navy of today – could not touch it. I mean, you were a Marine onboard. We never left port without leaving somebody behind in jail. I mean, it just didn't happen. You know, somebody's get in a fight or get drunk and not wake up in time, you know, and we'd be gone. That just doesn't happen today. That just does not happen today. Then judges would sometimes say, you know, go to jail or join the Navy. That doesn't happen anymore. In fact, three out of four Americans 18- to 24-years old don't qualify for the U.S. military. So we are taking the very best in terms of education, in terms of health and fitness, and in terms of you can't have a criminal record and come into the Navy.

There was a lot of – a lot of work that was not highly mentally taxing, I'll put it that way, when I was in. A lot of chipping and painting, a lot of holystoning the teak decks on Little Rock. And that's gone. I mean, today you got to be very good to handle a lot of the equipment that we have just as a routine on these ships. And the last thing I'll say is when I was announced for this job, I am positive that the most surprised people on Earth were my shipmates from – (laughter) – Little Rock.

And I'll tell a quick story. When I was sworn in as governor, my captain, Gordon Nagler, who commanded Little Rock while I was on it, came. I'd kept in touch with him. He ended up a three-star admiral, he ended up N6. And some enterprising reporter found him and said, well, did you see this potential when he was a young officer on your ship? And Captain Nagler sort of paused and he said: You know, I always thought he would make something of himself. I just knew it wasn't going to be in the Navy. (Laughter.) I wish he was here so much – (laughs) – to see me in this job. But hang around afterwards, I'd love to – love to reconnect to you.

Think we got time for one more?

Q: My name is Antonio Yentz (sp) and I'm in the ninth grade.

I just wanted to ask, due to the advancement of weapons, including the ISIS weapons and North Koreans' weapons, what do the Marines and the Navy have, like, new obstacles to get over?

SEC. MABUS: Well, number one, thank you for what you're doing. I've got a ninth grader too. I don't know, how you doing in geometry, is that what you're taking? It's what she's taking. I'm not doing well in it. I don't know how she's doing. (Laughter.)

People like ISIS, North Korea, and you can look almost any point in the globe, the main weapon they have is ideology. And that's our main weapon too. We stand for

freedom. That's why City Club here stands for freedom of speech. We stand for openness. We stand for inclusion. They stand for everything opposed to that. And I think in the long run our ideas win. And certainly has shown that in history. But it takes a while. And it takes very dedicated people to do it. And individual weapons are less important than the people operating those weapons and the people that are willing to raise their hand and say, send me.

We've got about half a percent of the United States today that serves in uniform. And a half a percent protects the other 99 ½ percent. And so as you – as you go forward from the ninth grade, I hope you'll – I know that you made the commitment to Junior ROTC, but I hope you'll continue to look at it. We need really, really good people – although I would question a little bit your choice of branch. (Laughter.) And I did point out to them that they were not alive the last time Army beat Navy in football, which was sort of a mean thing to do. (Laughter.)

MR. MOULTHROP: One more.

SEC. MABUS: One more, OK.

Q: Welcome to Cleveland, Mr. Secretary. Got a short one for you. Could you give us a little update on the recent move to put women on submarines?

SEC. MABUS: I can, because I made that decision in 2010. We have women officers on all classes of submarines today. We started out on SSBNs and SSGNs, our ballistic missile and guided missile submarines. We've now expanded that to our attack submarines. And earlier this year, in 2015, January, February, we began assigning enlisted women. We had to make a few, not many, sort of changes on the sub in order to – in order to do that, but not many. And interestingly enough, the first cruises, women got their dolphins a little bit quicker than men.

And there's been very little – I mean, I made the announcement that women were going on the submarines, and it was – basically, nobody cared. A month later, the then-CNO made the announcement you couldn't smoke on submarines, everybody cared. (Laughter.) So, you know, it's been a great success. And we'll have fully integrated crews across all our submarines pretty soon.

Q: I just wanted to ask you really quick: What do you think about the naturalization to citizenship process?

SEC. MABUS: For our military?

Q: Yes.

SEC. MABUS: Well, one of the ways that we get some pretty outstanding people is through that process. In fact, I awarded a Navy ship and named a ship after Rafael Peralta, a Marine who died Iraq and saved fellow Marines by throwing himself on a

grenade, who was a naturalized American citizen. And so we've had wonderful success in that – in that program. And I certainly hope that it continues. (Applause.)

MR. MOULTHROP: Thank you so much. Just sit down here, I'll just close it out.

Today, at the City Club of Cleveland, we've been enjoying a forum featuring Raymond E. Mabus, Jr., 75th United States Secretary of the Navy. Thank you very much, Secretary Mabus. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Our forum is now adjourned.