

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
Defense One Leadership Briefing Breakfast
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BRAD PENISTON: Welcome, everybody. I'm Brad Peniston. I'm the deputy editor of Defense One. And I would love to welcome you to this second Defense One Leadership Briefing Breakfast of the year. I'd like especially to welcome and thank Lockheed Martin, our underwriter, for making this event possible.

I hope everybody's gotten a chance to grab a cup of coffee, or as some like to call it a cup of Joe, after another Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, who banned rum from warships and therefore the Sailors named their replacement beverage, coffee, after Mr. Daniels. I'm not sure what a cup of Ray would be.

But we're delighted to have Ray Mabus here, Secretary of the Navy, to talk about the only global naval force today. Mr. Mabus has been governor of Mississippi. He's been ambassador to Saudi Arabia. And, as of yesterday, he is the second-longest serving Secretary of the Navy since the formation of the Department of Defense.

Going back a little bit longer, I'd note that 200 years ago today Commodore Stephen Decatur sailed with a flotilla of vessels off to do battle with pirates halfway around the world. And so it seems that in 200 years, a lot has changed but a lot hasn't. And so we're going to talk about some of the things that are going on today.

Anyway, we're delighted to have Secretary Mabus with us. So I guess, come on out, right? All right. Thanks, Ray.

KEVIN BARON: Well, good morning, everybody. Thank you for joining us bright and early – well, for some of us. If you're in uniform, this is not early at all. But if you're a reporter, like I am, this is really early, at 9:30 in the morning. (Laughter.) And welcome to this great venue and welcome to the Secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus.

I wanted to just make a couple of my own introductory remarks. This is our second leadership briefing, as Brad said. We conceived this briefing for a couple reasons. One, we're kind of a restart of Government Executive Magazine, which is what we're a spin-off of. They used to have a series called The Leadership Breakfast, where they had leaders from across the federal government come and talk about their jobs, what they do. So we wanted to kind of launch that again under the Defense One brand.

And I find it's a great opportunity for leaders like Secretary Mabus to come really talk about their jobs. We all hear so much in the news about what they do and we get the soundbites and maybe we'll make some news today – I hope; he doesn't. But I really

want to know more about what does it take to be a leader these days and how do you manage these incredible times?

We keep hearing from the secretaries and from the chiefs and presidents and congressmen about how what's going in the world right now is unprecedented – the number of threats, the number of conflicts, and, really, the number that the United States is involved in some way, and in what levels. So you have a lot of decisions to make every day.

So I'd like – I'd like to start big and then work our way small. And big, meaning, you know, the state of the globe right now and the state of threats and America's involvement, and what the United States can do about any of them. When you look back every morning and you read the papers, you see what's happening in the Middle East with ISIS, a day like this weekend with Ramadi, the South China Sea, when it hits you all, how do you start your day and manage – (inaudible)

SECRETARY RAY MABUS: Well, one of the things that is my job is to make sure that no matter what the crises are, whatever the situation is, no matter where it happens, that our leaders have options of how to react to it. That's what the Navy and Marine Corps does. We uniquely provide presence around the world around the clock. We're in the right place not just at the right time, but all the time.

And the way I've tried to organize my thinking about Navy is, to get this presence you need four other Ps. You need people, our Sailors and Marines, and I can talk about that some more. You need power, or the energy to power these ships and aircraft. You need partnerships. You need the countries around the world. You need the partnership of the American people. But, to directly answer your question, you need platforms.

On 9/11/2001, 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, we only put 27 ships under contract – the Navy did. That wasn't enough to stop the slide in the size of the fleet. It also wasn't enough to keep our shipyards going. In the first five years I've been Secretary, we've put 70 ships under contract, with a smaller top line.

So what this means is that as we rebalance to the Pacific, as the President announced in 2011, where we're putting 60 percent of our fleet there as opposed to 55 percent today, it's going to be a much bigger fleet. And we're going to have more ships to be able to go there. We'll have two more destroyers in Japan. We'll have four littoral combat ships in Singapore. We'll have another sub in Guam.

But at the same time, it also means we'll have more ships for the – for the rest of the world – for Central Command, the Arabian Gulf, the northern Arabian Sea, for the Mediterranean, for the Baltic, putting DDG-51s, our guided missile destroyers, anti-ballistic missile ships, into Rota, Spain permanently – so that while we're rebalancing to the Pacific we're not ignoring the rest of the globe.

And you can't forget when all these things are going on, that we've got pirates off of East Africa. We've got pirates off West Africa now. We've got transnational crime off – in the Gulf of Guinea. We've got Islamic extremists moving from east to west in Africa. We've got – we've got Marines today training park rangers in places like Gabon and Chad because so much of the extremists and civil wars are being financed through poaching. And so these park rangers get involved in pitched gun battles. And we're trying to train them to shut off the flow of that – of that money.

So it's to – it's to make sure that we have enough of those big gray hulls on the horizon, that we are flexible enough and well-trained enough that no matter what comes over the horizon, we can do it.

And the last example I'll give you is that when the decision was made to strike ISIS, which you mentioned, we had a carrier on station launching strikes in less than 30 hours. And for 54 days – 54 days – that was our only strike option. And it wasn't because we didn't have other assets in the region, we did. It was because the countries in the region wouldn't let us take off from their soil armed to strike in Iraq. We didn't have to ask to come off an American carrier.

And one of the lessons we've learned is that no matter how close the friend, no matter how close the ally, you cannot be 100 percent sure they're going to let you use their territory to do what needs to be done. And so coming from the sea gives you that extra advantage.

MR. BARON: What decisions for something like that – (inaudible) – the chiefs or the combatant commanders?

SEC. MABUS: Well, the –

MR. BARON: By the time it gets to that point, when it's time to strike, get the carrier in the region?

SEC. MABUS: The decisions – operational decisions are made by the President, by the combat commander. (Coughs.) Excuse me.

MR. BARON: Want water?

SEC. MABUS: Yeah, probably ought to do that. Thanks.

The available assets though, the combat commander makes the request to the services. So a carrier, a carrier strike group, an amphibious-ready group, Marines, whatever they need has to come through us.

And I think our decisions have to be much longer term, the way we think about it, because we're dealing today with a fleet that – whose size was determined 10, 15 years ago. If we don't make the decisions today to build those ships, if you miss a year on a

ship, it's not like anything else. You can't make it up with money. You can't make it up in time. You just lost – you've lost that ship. You've lost that for the next 30 years.

And so I think the way that a service secretary or Secretary of the Navy has to proceed is: What do I have to do today to make sure that for as far as you can see into the future, we're going to be ready.

MR. BARON: So let's talk about that. I mean, you made reference to shipbuilding and numbers. But talk also about the composition and the makeup. So in the last month we had some confrontation with – or something happening with the Iranians and the Strait of Hormuz, and they went after a cargo ship and the U.S. had to start accompanying – not escorting, I learned – different ships.

But we've also – we've had articles, we've had writers talk in the last year about how what we need in the – what the U.S. fleet needs there are more smaller boats to combat Iranian – (inaudible) – for example, rather than the fleet we have now. Is the U.S. behind the threat in the Gulf when it comes to the size and the type of ships that are needed – we think of ships like LCSs and other smaller available options?

SEC. MABUS: No, I don't think so. But I'll be happy to talk about them. We're building a very balanced fleet. We're building two submarines a year – two attack submarines a year. And by the way, we signed a contract for 10, we paid for nine. We got a free submarine out of that deal by buying 10 at once. We're building two destroyers a year, two DDG-51s a year. We're building – we have 24 LCSs now either in the water or under contract. We're going to build to 52. The last 20, at least, will be the new fast frigate – it'll be the up-gunned, more lethal, more survivable version.

And I'm really glad you asked the question, because in the Arabian Gulf we have patrol craft that several years ago we up-gunned pretty dramatically. And combat commanders requested them because while the Iranian threat is small boat, and you've got to – you've got to meet that with your own small boats or with weapons designed for that threat, but we sent those PCs forward. They're doing some of the most dangerous jobs we've got. They're escorting ships through the Straits of Hormuz. They're escorting ships into port. When the Maersk Tigris was seized, we had three PCs around it. That was our response immediately.

But because we're building the fleet and because that goes against the narrative of some, particularly in Congress as that somehow our fleet is shrinking, in last year's Defense Authorization Act it was directed that we could not count those PCs as part of our battle fleet. So we're going to get to 304 ships by the end of the decade. We would get to 314 ships. We got the same number ships; they just won't let us count them. They won't let us count those that are mostly – that are somewhat the main ones in harm's way. And as you pointed out, they're going to be replaced by LCS when we have enough LCS in the water to do that.

MR. BARON: Are you comfortable with the timeline on LCS, how they're rolling off?

SEC. MABUS: Yeah. We're doing three this year, you know, knock wood or whatever that is. It looks like we'll get three next year in the NDAA and the appropriations, which is the speed we need to – we need to come out at.

MR. BARON: So you mentioned the Maersk. How does – how does that incident change, I guess – again, to go back to your job and decision making. Something like that happens, does it make you rethink the lay down for CENTCOM or for the Gulf? Or is it status quo, we can handle that, just keep an eye on what's going on?

SEC. MABUS: Well, we've known about the Iranian small boat capability threat for a while –

MR. BARON: There's a second ship too – two cargo ships.

SEC. MABUS: – for a while now. You know, one of them was fired upon. One of them, the Tigris, was actually seized for a while. And we escorted ships for a while through – escorted merchant ships through that – through that – through the straits. But as I said, you have to have the right mix of not only platforms, but also what do those platforms carry. And we've got a laser weapon now in the in the Gulf on the Ponce that – it's there as a test, but it can be used.

MR. BARON: Was it used?

SEC. MABUS: No. I mean, but it's designed to work, this sized laser weapon, against unmanned aircraft and against small boats. And it's pretty good against either one of those threats. Later follow-on lasers are going to be bigger, more powerful; you can use them against bigger things.

But we've got – and one of the things CNO talks about is making sure that we have enough of the right kind of weapons. Platforms are just a way to get things there. But what comes off of that platform? So we've got the laser. We've got a rail gun we're testing next year. And we've got some, you know, on the Zumwalt, the DDG-1000, a gun that is incredibly accurate way over a hundred miles.

So we're getting the right weapons there into the fleet. We just got to make sure that that technological advantage, that technological edge – and that's one of the things that in the budget, in the way that I and other people at Department of Defense have to think, is, OK, what are the threats going to be? And even if we don't know what the threats are going to be, how flexible are these weapons systems? How flexible are these platforms to carry them?

MR. BARON: And those are – those are great futurism, you know, weapons that we hear about, but minesweeping is one of the main concerns for the Gulf still. And it's

been a while since there's been a – I think, a major exercise. Is it time for something new like that? Or how are the partnerships and the ability to –

SEC. MABUS: Well, actually, last year we had a very big countermine exercise in the Gulf. We had – we had 30 – right at 30 countries that participated. But right now the way we – the way we hunt mines is we put Sailors on a minesweeper in the middle of the minefield, which is not ideal.

The way LCS will fight mines is they'll – it'll send an unmanned vehicle – unmanned underwater vehicle in to find the mines, and then to destroy them you'll have either manned or unmanned helicopters to go out. So you keep the Sailors out of the minefield. And when you put those two capabilities together, it's a very lethal mine-hunting capability.

MR. BARON: You mentioned, you know, 30 nations were involved. And earlier you said piracy, and I thought of – I think you told me a story about being at a piracy conference when some piracy was happening right offshore. How did that go?

SEC. MABUS: That was in Togo. There was a Navy Europe sponsored conference in Togo that had all the – that had a good many of the West African countries around the Gulf of Guinea, had some European countries there. And I went and spoke. And I spoke, I think, at 9:00 in the morning. At 7:00 there had been a piracy event that you could see off the coast. So it brought a little more immediacy to the – to the effort.

MR. BARON: I mean, that's all – that's right there. Talk about –

SEC. MABUS: I'm not sure they had signed up for the conference, though.
(Laughter.)

MR. BARON: Right, they – could have come here, you just have to register.

But I want to talk a little bit about piracy. You know, maybe five years ago or so when you were – these stories were bubbling up to the level of the Pentagon press corps, at least, there was serious stories to cover, but also a bit of a chuckle about piracy, really what effect – this is really a think that's happening. And it seemed to have continued and to have grown.

But something's changed about the way that ships are being protected, right? So now there are a lot more private maritime security firms, a lot of other countries using them to, you know, do whatever navies don't want to do or aren't equipped to do. How have things changed and what are your thoughts on the state of security for those vessels?

SEC. MABUS: Well, the piracy that got all the news was off the horn of Africa. And several things happened. Number one, there were several taskforces – one from the EU, one from us, one from NATO – that went out. There were also other individual countries that sent – that sent ships. Like China sent two, basically to escort their own

flagships. By doing that – but this is a huge area of water. You know, it was impossible to escort every ship. And the pirates kept moving farther and farther out, getting closer to India than they were to Africa.

What basically helped solve the situation – beside having those naval ships there and being able to get places pretty fast – was shipping companies themselves took some pretty basic protective measures. If you go over 12 knots it's really hard – these are not high-tech pirates. It's hard for them to catch the ship. You put razor wire around the – around the deck, it's hard for them to get on because most of these pirates come onboard with ladders – with little ladders that they put up. You have a security team – whether armed or not armed on the – on the ship. You have a citadel – a safe haven for the crew, so that if the pirates do take over they can't – they can't get to the crew.

Once that started happening, once shipping companies decided it was cheaper to do that than it was to pay ransoms, which – and we had been advocating that for a good while – you saw piracy begin to decline. And now it's – I won't say it's gone, but it's declined dramatically, dramatically in that part of the world.

Where it has not declined and where it's on the upswing is on the other side of Africa, in the Gulf of Guinea. Earlier than that, there was piracy in the Straits of Malacca – around Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, those waters. And what happened there was the countries on land took care of it, not giving pirates a place to go, not giving them any sort of sanctuary. That was – that had not been an option off the coast of Africa because of the inability in Somalia to do that. I think that ability of the Somalis has grown to some extent now.

MR. BARON: So you know, you were saying taking care of it on land and my thought went straight to the migrant news across the Mediterranean, where that seems to be where that story is headed now is talk of going after the captains of the ships that are bringing migrants over. What's the U.S. Navy doing watching this – watching this unfold?

SEC. MABUS: Well, I mean, going back to the original part of your question, one of the ways you're going to have to stem this is on land. By the time people get to sea, then you've – then you may have a really dangerous situation, a humanitarian crisis in terms of these ships going down or intercepting and things like that. We're sort of in a watchful mode. And if something does happen that requires rescue or things like that, we will – hopefully we will have assets to be able to help.

MR. BARON: You sound very hesitant.

SEC. MABUS: Well, I mean, it depends on where these things are and it depends on –

MR. BARON: It's not hesitancy to get involved?

SEC. MABUS: It's not a hesitancy to get involved in a humanitarian issue. But it's a – it's not the – it's not the main mission of the ships that we have there. It's one, if they're close enough, of course we'll help.

MR. BARON: So, I mean, you mentioned the Straits of Malacca – (inaudible) – (laughter) – China and the South China Sea and these islands. What can the U.S. do about it? And should the U.S. do anything about it?

SEC. MABUS: Well, one thing I think that's absolutely necessary for us to do, whether it's in the South China Sea or anywhere else, is to make sure that international waters remain international, that freedom of navigation is an absolute. And you know, there's – we've got a littoral combat ship over there, the Fort Worth, that was – that's been doing transits through. People seem to think this is something new, that we're somehow expanding. It's really not. We've been doing this for about 70 years now, since the end of World War II, making sure that these sea lanes are open.

I mean, 40 percent of the world's trade goes through those sea lanes, goes through the Straits of Malacca. And I make a really good argument that the world economic system, particularly in Asia, is doing as well as it is because of the United States Navy, because, unique in history, we've kept the sea lanes open for everybody. Usually when there's been a dominant naval power historically, they've kept the sea lanes open for ships with their flags and the flags of their allies.

We've kept it open for everybody and we're going to continue to do that. We're going to continue to assert freedom of navigation, freedom of the seas. And to do that you've got to have those gray hulls. And to do that, you've got to be forward-deployed. To do that you've got to be – to be there and you got to be there all the time. And one of the reasons that it's important to be there all the time is that if there is a crisis, if there is an incident, we're not escalating because we're not having to send things in. We're already there. And so, you know, we're not escalating and perhaps we'll deter some stuff from happening.

MR. BARON: And are you speaking to the PLA? I mean, what's the line of communication? What's the tone like between the American and the Chinese – (inaudible)

SEC. MABUS: Well, I mean, the –

MR. BARON: Better? Is that better? OK, I don't know why I have this, but OK. Go ahead. (Laughter.)

SEC. MABUS: Fort Worth yesterday was – it and a Chinese ship came within pretty close proximity to each other. We had established rules for what happened if these unplanned encounters at sea – and they were followed. They were followed by both sides – by our side and by the PLAN, People's Liberation Army Navy – and that ship. Those sorts of conversations, yeah, we're having them a good bit. I mean, our CNO, Admiral

Greenert, their chief of navy, Admiral Wu, have had a lot of conversations in this regard. We do some search and rescue exercises with them, some we call them passing exercises with them.

MR. BARON: Well, just go back, just the fact that we're talking still, what should we make of that? I mean, three years ago the ships would bump in the night and it was still the era of, you know, six months of silence with the PLAN because of that. This is something major. This is a strategic concern, a long-term deal.

SEC. MABUS: Well, I think it's important that we keep talking – particularly sailor to sailor that we keep talking – so that we know how each other operates. I mean, we invited them to RIMPAC and they came. I mean, they did the humanitarian stuff at RIMPAC, the non – the non-purely-military stuff at RIMPAC. And one of the conversations I've had with the Chinese was, you know, they always complain about our special reconnaissance operation flights that go through the area or our ships that go through the area.

And my response before RIMPAC 2014 was, well, you know, you know exactly where we are. You know exactly where we're going to be. You know that we're complying with international law in all cases. And you must think this is valuable because you send an intelligence-gathering ship to RIMPAC and shadowed RIMPAC. And our response was to invite you to the next one, not to complain about it. Just to invite you, come on it. So the Chinese came in 2014. They brought four PLAN ships. And guess what else showed up? The intelligence-gathering ship. Why?

But what we – what we want China to do is, number one, be more transparent. What are you doing? Why are you doing it? And number two, take the responsibility of being a country your size with a navy your size in terms of keeping those sea lanes open, in terms of making sure that the world's waters are safe.

MR. BARON: So what's the most immediate thing that you're watching now with China? I mean, again, going back to your job, your day, you wake up?

SEC. MABUS: Well, again, I think in these jobs – because my job is recruit, train and equip; it's the COCOMs, the president that have to decide what you use these things for and how many the COCOMs want. Now, we will never meet all COCOM demands, ever. If we had a thousand ships in the Navy, they'd want 2,000. And I don't blame them. I would too.

MR. BARON: See, you're giving Randy Forbes soundbites. You got to be careful.

SEC. MABUS: (Laughs.) But our job is to make sure that they've got as many of these as we could possibly have in ways that are needed. I mean, we've done a force structure assessment in terms of what ships do we need. We redo it every couple of

years. And what ships worldwide are we going to need? And where do they need to be and how do they need to be forward-deployed?

One ship – those four LCSs that will be in Singapore – now, they’re rotational but they’re going to stay for a long time. Crews will fall in on them, so we’re manning them differently. But those ships, the four DDGs in Rota whose crews have moved to Spain, for every one of those ships that we’ve got that are forward deployed, it takes the place of four if they were home-ported in the United States or based in the United States.

So today we’ve got – and this is what I think about – today we’ve got a hundred ships forward deployed. Twenty years ago, when we had more than 400 ships in the Navy, we had a hundred ships forward deployed. We’re going to keep those forward deployments up, but we’re going to keep those big gray hulls on the horizon, but to pivot to another one of my Ps, we’ve been extending the time of deployments. They’ve become much more uncertain.

And we’re trying to put some certainty back into when ships deploy, how long they’re going to be gone, so that our Sailors know, so that their families know, so that they can plan, but also so that we get the right maintenance done because we’ve been wearing out some of our ships without the – we haven’t had the time to do, the yard availabilities to do the maintenance that we need to do. And unlike a land force, we reset every day. We reset in stride. Our maintenance, our yard availabilities are what reset the Navy.

MR. BARON: Well, let’s talk start talking about that then, the pressures on the force on both – on the equipment and the maintenance and on the people. And I’ll tell the crowd, prepare your own questions, we’ll get some Q&A at the end for sure. I’m not sure where my timekeeper is, someone give me – flash me a card.

So you made an announcement last week about personnel. Give the real short version for everyone here what you announced and why now.

SEC. MABUS: I announced a lot of things.

MR. BARON: I know, you’re a very busy man.

SEC. MABUS: (Laughs.) Andrea Shalal is out there because she was – she was there.

MR. BARON: Uh-huh. She’s everywhere.

SEC. MABUS: Well, what I tried to do was make an announcement that talked about everything that would happen in a person’s career, every timeline in a career. So everything from how we bring people in –for example, we don’t have enough women; we’re upping our recruiting for women – to how we pick communities and how we fit the right officers to the right communities and the right enlisted to the right communities, to

merit promotion. We're going to a cap of 5 percent, but 5 percent of the force we're going to let COs meritoriously promote in enlisted. We're trying to get away, as much as the law will allow us and we're asking that the law be relaxed a lot more in officer promotion, to allow us to promote on merit versus year group.

We've asked Congress to go from six weeks of paid maternity leave to 12. And that's a congressional thing. I can and have – we're going to open child care centers two hours earlier. We're going to keep them open two hours later so that people don't have to choose between dropping off their child and showing up to work on time. We're asking Congress to dramatically expand – and this is in now, a legislative proposal that's in now – the Career Intermission Program from 40 slots to 400 to allow people to take off up to three years to either have a family, look after an aging relative, to do something else that they think would be helpful, and then come back in without harming their career.

MR. BARON: How much of this is forced upon you by budget cuts or end of the war-years resetting? How much of this is just changes that are evolutionary and actually for this organization that you wanted?

SEC. MABUS: I think –

MR. BARON: What's the reality of – you know –

SEC. MABUS: Most of it door number two. Most of it is – and it's – these things are overdue. I mean, we're operating with a personnel system that's been in place at least 35, 40 years, that really doesn't meet the needs of today. We need to be way more flexibility in terms of our way we manage the force, way more sort of family friendly, but also get a more diverse force. A more diverse force is a stronger force.

And one of the things I announced was there's going to be something called the Secretary of the Navy Industry Tour. And we're going to send some of our very brightest mainly junior, mid-level officers out to industry for a year or two with our best companies, and try to cross-pollinate. I mean, I think they can give industry some pretty good ideas, but I think we can – we can learn a lot as well. But value that – value that experience.

I just – I put 30 more slots into fully paid resident education at some of our best universities – private universities around the country. The first guy was at the Annapolis speech. He got into Harvard. And we didn't have a way to send him. He was going to have to make a decision on whether to go to Harvard or get out of the Navy. And so I opened that up by 30.

I mean, that's a valuable thing that he's going to go and get a degree at the – at the Kennedy School in terms of management and policy and things like that. We ought to try to keep those sorts of people instead of – instead of forcing them out. The last thing, what we're trying to get away from is this golden career path that you check these boxes and you'll keep moving up. There ought to be a lot more than one way to the top.

MR. BARON: It's an interesting era, I think, for all the services. There are a lot of changes being discussed or pushed or considered for pay, benefits, retirement, how you get promoted, what you can do with your career. It'll be interesting to see how it all plays out.

So with our time I want to open it up to audience questions. I know there's a lot of people here, a lot of folks. We mentioned Andrea, I saw her before, so I'll right to Reuters first.

Q: That's great. Thank you so much.

SEC. MABUS: I don't know if this is ethical for news people, but I have – I have a tradition at all hands calls, first question gets a coin. (Laughter.)

Q: Catch it – you're going to make it me catch it, oh no. (Laughs.)

SEC. MABUS: Yay, you got it. All right. (Laughs, applause.)

Q: I felt so sorry for the poor midshipmen – (inaudible) – missed it. (Laughs, laughter.) Oh, I guess I need this for the question. (Laughter.)

You were talking about China. We're talking about the relationship and the sort of, you know, tensions – growing tensions with China both at sea, also in the cyber domain. There's a report out saying that the Navy is considering replacing its IBM servers, after China has bought Lenovo. Can you talk about that and also this recent report by Michael Gilmore talking about nearly every weapons system is vulnerable to cyber attack? SASC has put \$200 million into the budget for next year for the, you know, department to do an assessment of every major weapon system. Talk about where you see problems and this question of the servers specifically.

SEC. MABUS: Well –

Q: And thank you for the coin. (Laughter.)

SEC. MABUS: You'll probably have to report that or something. Number one, cyber is a – is one of the futures of warfare. And one of the things we're seeing now – I mean, when Russia went – (off mic) – coming into the territories in Georgia, the first thing they did was a cyber attack. And it was followed very quickly by more traditional forms, but cyber is in everything now.

And it's not just weapon systems. It's in every system that we have, because we are so networked. And so, yeah, we've got to pay a lot of attention to this. The Lenovo thing is one of those, you know. I think in terms of IT, in terms of cyber, in terms of things like that, you want to be sort of platform-neutral because it's the – it's the data, it's not the platforms. But if there is a danger or if there is a potential threat with the

platforms, then you got to take a look at that. In terms of the – I mean, we’re paying a lot of attention not only to weapons systems, but to command-and-control systems, to communications, to the IT world, because we are networked.

And one of the things we’re trying to far more realistic about in things like war games is, are those networks going to be there? What do you do if they’re not? How do you fight if the networks just aren’t there? And one of the philosophical things that has not been answered – and it’s really hard one, a legal and philosophical thing – is when does a cyber attack constitute an act of war? And I know that a lot of discussion has gone on, but that there’s really been no good answer yet as to – as to when you can have a kinetic response, when you can have a more traditional, lethal response to a cyber attack.

I mean, is it when a plane goes down because somebody seized the controls in a cyber attack? Is it – you know, if somebody takes the grid down in the U.S., is that a – through a cyber attack? So it’s not just the military. It’s also everybody who supplies us. It’s also things like the grid out there. And I will pivot a little bit and say that’s one of the main reasons that onshore we’re moving to, number one, alternative energy and, number two – (inaudible) – so that so that if the grid happens to go down for whatever reason, we can get off the grid and still provide our military – still do our military job.

MR. BARON: Leave it to you to find a way to get alternative energy in there.

SEC. MABUS: (Laughs.)

MR. BARON: I like that. Over here. And I think we’re getting near five minutes. I apologize for the shortness, but we’ll try to get a few in to end us out.

Q: I have a pretty loud voice so I’ll just –

MR. BARON: Tell us who you are.

Q: I’ll use my command voice. I’m Lieutenant Commander Rosie Goscinski, sir. I’m the chief of Senate congressional affairs to General Philip Breedlove, European Commander.

First and foremost, as a surface warfare officer, I thank you for the initiatives that you have put out to try to recruit more women into the sea services, specifically the goal of 25 percent in the future.

SEC. MABUS: Actually that’s – I think that goal is too low. I know that people have been talking about that goal, but that’s not my goal. My goal is beyond that.

Q: That’s not my goal either, sir. My goal is 75 to 100 percent. (Laughter.)

SEC. MABUS: Go for it. (Laughter.)

MR. BARON: The women shall inherit the sea service.

Q: Yes, sir.

I also represent the 1,792 female Navy officers that are in the Female Navy Officers Facebook Group. And one of the initiatives recently that you announced was the uniforms and making these more gender neutral. One of the concerns that we've had in the past is the population that has fit-tested or wear-tested the uniforms being from a demographic between 18 and 21-year olds. Some of the – some of the uniforms that have come out haven't necessarily – we feel have accommodated for women.

And we talk about wanting to diversify the force and the strength of the force and the strongest teams are the most diverse. But we as a population are a little bit confused about the unification versus the diversity aspect. And we would like to have uniforms that fit well, that look professional, but still maintain our femininity and professionalism in the force. And we would like to work with you in order to make sure that the initiatives that you've put forward to make us look more professional, that we can actually achieve that in the future.

And I would – I would really like to offer that to you, because we feel that you have our best interests in mind in the Navy, the things and the changes that you've put in order to make this better. And we would definitely like to offer that to you because we feel that you're a great leader and that you listen and we're very, very thankful for that and for our service. And so we just want to offer that to you in all of the new initiatives, both as we move forward in looking at the uniforms, but specifically there are – I've received about 697 comments knowing I was coming to this breakfast –

MR. BARON: OK, let's let the Secretary get his comment in.

Q: Anyway, that's what I offer to you, sir.

SEC. MABUS: OK. Well, number one, thank you. And thank you for what you're doing every day. The whole goal about uniforms and uniformity – I mean, the word uniform means the same – is that when you look out over a group of Sailors, you don't see male Sailors and female Sailors, you see United States Sailors. Now, part of that is we haven't done a very good job of making sure our uniforms fit either men or women. I mean, I get as many complaints from men in terms of the way it fits as I do from women. I mean, there are very few heads that are round, but our covers tend to be round.

So as we're redesigning this, we're trying to actually make them fit. And we're trying to make them fit men and women, obviously differently. The choker whites for women don't have pockets. That was one of the feedbacks that we got from the – from the wear test for women. They're cut differently. Now, if you stand back, they still look like choker whites, which is an iconic Navy uniform. And the whole idea – and I do want

to work with you because most of the – most of the things I announced in Annapolis came out of all-hands calls, came out of things as I go around the fleet.

I think wearing different uniforms has segregated women, sometimes in not good ways. And if we ask any other group – any other group to wear a different uniform, can you imagine the outcry? Can you imagine what people would say? Women having a different uniform is a sort of historical accident because when women first came in as WAVES, they were given different uniforms because they were not a part of the main Navy, because they were an auxiliary. Women are fully part of the Navy. I think every occupational specialty ought to be open to women.

I'll work with you in terms of making sure they fit, in terms of making sure they're tailored correctly, in terms of making sure that women have input into what these – what these are. But in terms of wanting everybody to look like a United States Sailor or a United States Marine – and I'll do one more; we're running out of time here.

MR. BARON: Really short, and get a couple more questions in.

SEC. MABUS: OK, all right. But anyway, I'll talk to you.

Q: OK, sir.

SEC. MABUS: Right? Thanks.

MR. BARON: This is good. And we went to – with Secretary Gates to talk about the war in Afghanistan. And the first question was, could you get a new washer and dryer at our forward operating base? Because it broke and we've been asking for weeks. (Laughter.) So there are realities to go with (inaudible).

Let's get a couple questions and then we're going to have the secretary decide how he can quickly answer them all. So we have one – we have over there – your hand up first. Yes, sir, you in the glasses.

Q: Great. Good morning, sir. Doug Hardison, General Atomics Aeronautical.

MR. BARON: Wait for the mic.

Q: And you're hosting a range of questions, so I'll – maybe this is an easy one for you or not, I'm not sure. With the advent of – you're looking at tactical lasers, 150 to 300 kilowatts. And we're working – our company's working towards that, Rail guns, same thing. Is there any concern – because you've got that long-term vision – is there any concern with today's ships and the ships that you're planning for being able to handle all these different high-energy applications, because ships typically are producing five to six megawatts of power. And the power we're talking about is going to be – will be game-changing, but if we can't produce it, it won't matter.

SEC. MABUS: No, you're absolutely right. And that's – power generation and power storage, and the ability to do it quick and release it quick. The Zumwalt, for example, the DDG-51, an all-electric ship which has – all of our ships are demanding more power. It's not just from things like that. It's also from radars, and a lot of our newer systems are just power hogs. So two things: One is, yes, we are designing that – to take that into account for the future. And there's still a lot of R&D and some of these science projects going on in terms of some of the storage and things like that.

But second – and I would hope to do it – we also got to change the way we get that energy. And that's why we're moving to a green and alternative structure so that we won't be – so we won't be limited in terms of either price or ability with fossil fuels.

MR. BARON: Let's squeeze in our last one there. This gentleman had his hand up.

Q: OK. Yes, sir. All right, OK.

SEC. MABUS: You got a mic coming.

MR. BARON: There's a mic right behind you.

Q: Thank you. George Rufito (sp). I'm a contractor with the U.S. Air Force.

With the increases in nuclear and conventional attack submarines in Russian, Chinese and other foreign navies, threats also increase to the two main offensive capabilities of the Navy. And that is, first, the SSBNs and, secondly, the aircraft carrier battle groups. Concerning the SSBNs, while the Trident system can operate at extreme ranges away from those areas heavily controlled by enemy ASW assets, there are also some situations where it could also operate close to shore where you have to destroy a time-critical counterforce target.

And secondly, the second part of the question is that the aircraft carrier battle groups operating in both littoral and open-ocean areas are also threatened by both nuclear and conventional submarines. And what I was going to ask was: In your opinion, what do you see moving forward as innovations, advances, or perhaps force augmentations and new technologies to counter this increasing threat.

MR. BARON: It's a good question. Maybe you can talk about UCLASS in there as well, as one of these, you know, new protection measures.

SEC. MABUS: Well, number one, today we own the undersea domain. And I think it's always going to be true that there will be concerns or threats coming up. There's always a race between measures, countermeasures, this sort of thing. On the – the attack submarines that we're building today, the Virginia-class, the systems that they have are clearly and demonstrably the best in the world. And – but they're changing. They're changing pretty fast. Hull number one, the Virginia, is very different from the

Colorado and the Washington that are coming out now. They've got very different systems. I mean, it's just an evolutionary thing.

And so we're going to continue to do that. We got to keep that technology. That's why one of the reasons in the budget, you got to protect S&T and R&D money, but you've also got to make sure that those things get out into the fleet a lot faster. I mean, the rail gun that we talked about, we started working on that in the late '80s. We're going to put it on a ship next year to test it. I mean, that's just way too long. Our time horizons are just way, way too long. And we're trying to shrink that down.

But you know, in military speak, anti-access/area denial, A2/AD, for whether submarines or carrier strike groups, there are concerns out there. Obviously, we're working to both offensively and defensively meet those threats. I think that in terms of – I can say some things about some weapon systems, I can't about others, but right now assuming that we don't hit sequestration again and that we continue on the path that we're going, I feel pretty comfortable in terms of how we're going to be able to meet those threats today, but also five years from now, 10 years from now.

MR. BARON: So on UCLASS, are you – are you looking for armed or for ISR? And then that's –

SEC. MABUS: No, I'm for full-up penetrating strike fighter. And what I want to – what we want to do is use UCLASS, because we've shown with UCAS-D that we can land on a carrier, that we can take off from a carrier, that we can refuel, that we can do – that we can do deck – everything. For UCLASS, our notion is that ought to be – we ought to have endurance, we ought to have range, we ought to have payload, and that it should be an ISR platform, it should be a refueling platform, but it also should be a strike platform.

MR. BARON: Everything.

SEC. MABUS: Now it – well, strike now in uncontested or minimally contested environments. But that it ought to be the bridge to fully, full-up strike fighter – autonomous strike fighter that, in contested environments – and I said about a month ago that the F-35, as much as we need it, as much as we want it, as much as we look forward to having it in the fleet – ought to be and almost certainly will be our last manned aircraft. And we see UCLASS as getting to that. Now, we've been ready to put the RFP out on UCLASS for a while now. It's been held up by a DOD study.