

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
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Admiral Roughead, thank you for that introduction. But also, personally thanking Admiral Roughead ... I am so fortunate to have him serve as the CNO while I am Secretary. America is fortunate to have Gary Roughead serving as our CNO and the world is fortunate to have him, because of things like this, because of his interest in the world and in our maritime security. To the distinguished leaders of the world's Navies, thank you for being here today at the Naval War College, and thank you for having me here today. For over fifty years this War College has served as an international professional university, where our officers and officers from around the world have come together, learned from each other, and worked together to address the issues of our day. A lot of you know this from experience, having attended as students. To you I say welcome back to Newport and to the War College. And to those for whom this is a first visit, welcome to Newport.

It's an honor for me to be here participating in this continuing legacy. It's an even greater honor to be the only civilian granted the privilege of addressing you. The obligation to be a good speaker is not lost on me; following our CNO is never, ever an easy task.

The CNO mentioned that early in my life that I served as a Naval officer and I served here. My ship was home ported about a mile from here, and I went in and out of Newport numerous times. And I am glad to be back here and particularly glad to be back with you, because looking around the room, the depth of experience and the depth of talent represented here is simply incredible. You collectively hold more than 3200 years of maritime experience. That's why this Symposium is so important and why – as the civilian leader of America's Navy and Marine Corps – I want talk about where the United States Navy fits into the global maritime community, as well as address some of the challenges that I see that confront us as an assembly of nations.

Your presence here at this symposium clearly demonstrates that the bonds of naval service and the bonds of mutual respect transcend national boundaries. This forum is critical to maintaining open lines of communication across borders and across political divides. It is in these face to face meetings and the personal relationships that are started or strengthened here that will bear fruit in our dealings with one another. In a lot of cases, it is your work, and the work of your officers back home, that set the stage for diplomatic engagement, and act as a complement to the discussions between our Foreign Ministries.

This Symposium is also a reminder to the United States Navy that we are part of the greater fellowship of the sea forged by the timeless bonds of wind and wave. This truth has become even clearer to me as I've traveled around the world and talked to our young men and women in uniform. Our Sailors, our Marines, at all levels in the chain of command, increasingly think in terms of joint operations, combined operations, coalition operations. The junior officers I've met with talk of the links they've established during operations with their junior officer counterparts in South America, in Africa, in Asia, in Oceania, in Europe. What this tells me is that our young Sailors and our young officers are reaping the benefits of your efforts at a senior level to tie our nations closer together and combat the world's burgeoning maritime challenges. If our junior officers are talking, if they're establishing close personal ties at an operational level, and they consider doing so a natural part of their naval profession, then as those individual relationships grow so will the bonds between our countries.

The ocean is a big place, and each of us is just one partner in the global maritime community. The ocean connects us all, it sustains us all, and is the foundation of commerce upon which the world economy rests. Any security challenge that impacts freedom of the seas and the free use of the maritime commons ultimately affects the economic prosperity and stability of us all.

The United States is not alone, and we recognize that good ideas come from everywhere. You are the experts in your own regions and you are all confronted by individual regional issues that blend into the greater challenges faced by the maritime community, challenges that can be better met by multi-lateral solutions. We have seen

this illustrated globally in the form of resurgent piracy, a universal problem that requires and is receiving a cooperative international solution.

It is the effort of our Navies to work together that will lead to this improved maritime security. This begins with creating the ability to communicate with each other and then using that ability. All around the world, I am encouraged by the efforts of the international community to facilitate open communications. As the CNO mentioned in his remarks, off the Horn of Africa there are over twenty nations that are participating in anti-piracy efforts. Some are contributing ships, others aircraft and still others are prosecuting criminals ashore that were apprehended at sea by patrolling vessels. The close coordination is only possible because of the work done at the tactical and operational level to set up common communications frequencies, to deal with each other to establish procedures for contact, and to share information between our forces on station. The international community has united against a common threat, and created mechanisms to deal with it.

Anti-piracy efforts are obviously a high point, and get a lot of publicity these days, but they are far from the only example and are echoed by operations and initiatives around the world. In the Caribbean, Central and South America, 13 nations work together under the auspices of the Joint Interagency Task Force-South, and in concert with CARICOM nations, South American, and European partners to locate, interdict, and destroy the flow of illegal narcotics between nations. During OPERATION CONTINUING PROMISE 2009, 10 nations contributed medical professionals to medical missions in countries throughout the Caribbean. And this I know has a special place in CNO heart because his daughter was on the ship that participated in this mission. Off the west coast of Africa, in the Gulf of Guinea, we have joined with West African states in the Africa Partnership Station to improve regional security awareness and capability. In response to Cyclone Nargis, this May in Southeast Asia many countries provided disaster relief. And worldwide 55 states subscribe to the Maritime Safety and Security Information System (MSSIS), which shares Automatic Information System (AIS) data on commercial shipping freely among all nations.

It is clear and good that we are already working together, sharing information, combating piracy, responding to natural disasters, and diminishing the flow of narcotics. Our efforts matter. But we – all of us - can do more. Our efforts, as they develop, will continue to improve maritime security and maritime cooperation. Systems like AIS and other information sharing exchanges can give a complete and accurate picture of vessels traveling the seas, and when that information is fused with radar inputs provided by shore stations and ships, we will be more able to identify, track, and intercept those ships that exploit the sea for illegal purposes. We will be better able to protect our ports and fisheries. And we will be better able to ensure the free flow of trade across the high seas. That is why we are here, to strengthening those bonds and continuing to find international solutions to our common problems.

Cooperation and partnership will also help us face the crucial issues of the future. As professional mariners tied to the sea, many of you from island nations and maritime countries, the challenges spawned by climate change and our use of the oceans are causing us increasing concern. In the Arctic, those junior officers now entering service will be the ones leading your Navies when they confront a polar region free of ice in the summer, and deal with the security, economic, and environmental implications of a Northwest Passage that is open much of the year. Over the next half-century, over-fishing in some areas will send fishermen further afield in search of a catch and could create disputes about the use of the maritime commons – resulting in challenges for fishery protection and for enforcement. And globally, energy use and resource procurement will increasingly become a factor in decision-making for all of us as the power requirements of the maritime community continue to grow.

As a result, the global security implications of climate change and energy use will become one of the great challenges for our successors, as they are becoming for us, and I am committed to placing the U.S. Navy on a path to do something about it. I am committed to looking at the way in which our Navy uses power, and committed to taking leadership inside the United States in looking for ways to make our energy use more efficient. I want to find places where we might be able to shift to alternative sources of energy in our infrastructure, in our shore management, and in our fleet. And I look

forward to working with you, as our international partners, to find solutions to this common issue.

I want to thank you again for your attendance at this symposium. Your attendance here speaks volumes of the importance of international cooperation and of the importance you place on working together to meet these challenges. Thank you for the invitation to speak here. We have a lot to learn from each other and so much we can accomplish by working together.

Working together, we can effectively combat terrorism and deter piracy.

Working together, we can stop weapons proliferation and arms smuggling.

Working together, we can counter human and narcotics trafficking.

And working together, we can protect fisheries and the bigger ocean environment.

An old proverb reminds us that our best protection comes not from fences, but from friends. As friends, as colleagues, we will turn our challenges into opportunities and we together will make our world more secure.

Have a great Conference. Thank you.