

Opening Statement  
Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus  
HAC-D Posture Testimony  
Washington, DC  
1 March 2016

Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Visclosky, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Department of the Navy.

This is the first testimony before this committee for Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Richardson, and Commandant of the Marine Corp, General Neller. In the time since they took these positions, I have had the privilege of their frank, professional and invaluable counsel. They are officers of the highest caliber who expertly lead our Navy and Marine Corps during ever-tightening fiscal constraints and an increasingly dynamic threat environment.

This is my eighth time, and my last, to appear before you. For me, leading the Department of the Navy is the greatest honor of my life. I could not be more proud of our Sailors, Marines, and civilians. I'm also proud of the many steps we've taken and changes we've made to ensure that the Navy and Marine Corps remain as they have been for over 240 years, the greatest expeditionary fighting force the world has ever known.

First and foremost, we continue to provide presence. That unrivaled advantage – on, above, beneath, and from the seas – gives our leaders options in times of crises, reassures our allies and deters our adversaries. There is no next best thing to being there; maintaining that presence requires gray hulls on the horizon. While there has been discussion about posture versus presence, the simple fact is that for the Navy and Marine Corps, our posture is presence.

In every case, from high-end combat to irregular warfare to disaster relief, our naval assets get on station faster, we stay longer, we bring whatever we need with us and, since we operate from our ships, which are sovereign American territory, we can act without having to ask any other nation's permission. That is the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, America's Away Team, doing its job across the globe.

Resourcing that presence depends on four fundamentals – 4Ps; People, our Sailors and Marines; Platforms, our ships and aircraft; Power, how we use energy to make us better warfighters; and Partnerships, our relationships with international friends, industry, and the American People.

When I took this post about seven years ago, we had an incredibly committed and capable force, but each of these 4Ps was under pressure. Our people were under great stress from high operational tempo and extended deployments. Our Fleet was shrinking and too many of our platforms were costing too much. Our use of power was a vulnerability; we were losing too many Marines guarding fuel convoys in Afghanistan, and volatile oil prices were stressing many areas, particularly training. And our partners were seeking reassurance of our sustained engagement.

Now, our people, platforms, power, and partnerships are stronger than they have been in many years, enabling us to provide that invaluable presence, and here is why:

## **People**

We've instituted the most sweeping changes in personnel policy in many years. Promotions are based more on merit and not tenure, and Commanding Officers are empowered to meritoriously promote more Sailors and Marines. We've made career paths more flexible. One example, thanks to Congress, is the Career Intermission Program, which has been dramatically expanded.

We've also increased the professional development and education opportunities that bring America's best ideas to the Fleet by adding 30 graduate school slots through our Fleet Scholars Education Programs, and sending high-performing Sailors on SECNAV Industry Tours to great American companies like FedEx and Amazon, where they learn private sector best practices that can be applied when they return.

We are absolutely committed, from leadership to the deckplates, on combating the crime of sexual assault and the tragedy of suicide. We have revamped physical fitness assessments, making them more realistically aligned with the jobs we do, and we have promoted healthier lifestyles through better nutrition and a culture of fitness.

All billets in both services are now open to women. Standards will absolutely not be lowered, but anyone who can meet the standards will be able to do the job. This will make us a more combat effective force.

We're trying to mitigate stress on Sailors and Marines and their families by making deployments more predictable, extending hours for child care and creating co-location policies.

To tap into the innovative culture inherent in the Navy and Marine Corps, we established Task Force Innovation, which takes good ideas from deckplate Sailors and field Marines through our online crowdsourcing platform, and to recognize, fund and rapidly move the good ideas fleet-wide.

## **Platforms**

We reversed the decline in ship count and, thanks to Congress and in particular this committee, our Navy will reach 300 ships by 2019 and our assessed need of 308 ships by 2021.

In the seven years before I took office, the Navy contracted for 41 ships. In my seven years, we've contracted for 84, and we've done so while increasing aircraft purchases by 35% - all with a smaller top line.

Practices like firm, fixed-price contracts, multi-year buys, and stable requirements have driven down costs on virtually every class of ship. We are also in the process of recapitalizing nearly every naval aviation program.

We've expanded unmanned systems on, under, and above the sea and put increased focus on them by establishing a DASN for unmanned and an office of unmanned warfare systems on the CNO's staff, also known as N99, designed specifically to coordinate all unmanned programs. We're also implementing advanced energy technologies like Electromagnetic Railguns and Laser Weapons.

## **Power**

To increase our lethality and operational flexibility, I set goals of having 50% of sea and shore-based energy derived from alternative sources by 2020, at or below the price of conventional power. We met that goal ashore by the end of last year. At sea, after demonstrating the Great Green Fleet at RIMPAC in 2012, we deployed it for routine operations a few weeks ago. The John C. Stennis Carrier Strike Group is steaming right now on a blend of cost-competitive alternative fuels.

Energy efficiency has been greatly increased on our bases and at sea. Ultimately, since 2009, both the Navy and Marine Corps have achieved a large drop in oil consumption.

## **Partnerships**

I've traveled nearly 1.2 million miles to 144 different countries and territories, visiting Sailors, Marines, allies and partners.

Twelve of my trips have been to Afghanistan, where I visited every Marine Corps Forward Operating Base in Helmand Province, to be with our forward deployed men and women.

And I've actively engaged with our allies and friends around the world to build a network of navies with whom we train, operate and trust.

And we have worked in partnership with Congress to fulfill the Constitutional mandate to provide for and maintain a Navy.

We have the greatest people in the world; we are getting the right number of the right kind of platforms to meet our mission; we use less energy and different sources that are better able to power our Fleet; and our Sailors and Marines are there for us at home and abroad, around the globe, around the clock.

As President George Washington once said, “It follows then, as certain as that night succeeds the day, that without a decisive naval force we can do nothing definitive, and with it, everything honorable and glorious.”