

Oral Testimony  
Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus  
House Armed Services Committee  
Washington, DC

Chairman McKeon, Congresswoman Sanchez, members of the committee, first, thank you for your support of the Department of the Navy, our Sailors and Marines, our civilian employees and our families.

General Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, and Admiral Greenert, Chief of Naval Operations, and I could not be prouder to represent those steadfast and courageous sailors, Marines, and civilians. No matter what missions are given to them, no matter what hardships are asked of them, these men and women serve their nation around the world with skill and dedication.

In the past year the Navy and Marine Corps Team has continued to conduct the full range of military operations, from combat in Afghanistan to security cooperation missions in the Pacific to disaster recovery operations in the streets of Staten Island, Sailors and Marines have gotten the job done.

As the United States transitions from two land wars in Central Asia to the maritime-centric defense strategy announced fifteen months ago, our Naval Forces will be critical in the years ahead. This strategy which focuses on the Western Pacific, the Arabian Gulf and on continuing to build partnerships around the globe requires a forward deployed, flexible, multi-mission force that is the Navy and Marine Corps, America's Away Team.

Within this strategy we have to balance our missions with our resources. We are working under Secretary Hagel's leadership on a strategic choices and management review to assess how

to deal with the budget uncertainty facing the Department as we go forward. He has directed us to review the basic assumptions that drive the Department's investment and force structure to identify institutional reforms that may be required, including those reforms that should be pursued regardless of fiscal pressures. As he said during his testimony before this committee last week, everything will be on the table during this review.

2013 has been hard because we began the fiscal year operating under a Continuing Resolution that gave us little room to be strategic and to prioritize, limiting our ability to manage the Navy and Marine Corps through this new fiscal reality. Thanks to your efforts and your Congressional colleagues we have an appropriation for this fiscal year, but sequestration is still forcing us to make across-the-board cuts totaling more than 4 billion dollars from our operations and maintenance accounts and about 6 billion dollars from our investment accounts.

These cuts will have real impacts. We have prioritized combat operations in Central Command and deployments to Pacific Command. However, we have had to cancel a number of deployments to Southern Command. In order to maintain our priority deployments in 2013 and 2014, and meet the Global Force Management Allocation Plan, funding shortfalls will cause our units at home to cut back training and maintenance. Pilots will get less flight time, ships will have less time at sea, and Marines will have less time in the field. It will take longer for repair parts to arrive when needed. Our facilities ashore will be maintained at a much lower level.

The Department's 2014 budget request is a return to a measured budget approach, one based on strategy that protects the warfighter by advancing the priorities I refer to as the 4 P's: People, Platforms, Power, and Partnerships.

We are working to make sure our people are resilient and strong after more than a decade of very high operations tempo with programs like 21st Century Sailor and Marine. With this we aim to bring all the efforts on protection and readiness, fitness, inclusion and continuum of service together as a coherent whole. This encompasses a wide range of issues from preventing sexual assault and suicide to fostering a culture of fitness to strengthening the force through diversity to ensuring a successful transition following four or forty years of service. In the Marine Corps, we continue decreasing manpower to meet our new end strength of just over 182,000 by FY16. But we are doing this in a way which helps retain the right level of non-commissioned officers and field grade officers and their experience.

We are also working to make sure that our Sailors and Marines have the tools and the platforms they need to do the missions they are given. One of most important of these is our fleet.

On September 11th, 2001 the U.S. Navy had 316 ships. By 2008, after one of the largest military buildups in our nations' history, that number was 278. In 2008, the Navy put only three ships under contract, far too few to maintain the size of the fleet or our industrial base, and many of our shipbuilding programs were over budget or over schedule or both. One of my main priorities as Secretary has been to reverse those trends.

Today, the Fleet has stabilized and problems in most of our shipbuilding programs have been corrected or arrested. We have 47 ships under contract, 43 of which were contracted since I took office, and our current shipbuilding plan puts us on track for 300 ships in the fleet by 2019.

The way we power our ships and installations has always been a core and vital issue for the Department of the Navy. We continue to lead in energy as we have throughout our history.

From sail, to coal, to oil, to nuclear, the Navy has led in moving to new sources of power, and, each time, it has made us a better war-fighting force. Today from Marines making power in the field to alternatives on land, on and under the sea and in the air, the Navy and Marine Corps are powering innovations that will maintain our operational edge.

Building partnerships, interoperability and capacity and capability in our partners is a crucial component of the defense strategy. The strategy directs that this be done in low cost, small footprint, innovative ways. This is precisely what the Navy and Marine Corps do.

The process we used to craft the Department's budget request was determined, deliberate, and dedicated to our responsibility to you and to the taxpayer. And, like the House and Senate budget resolutions, we do not assume that sequestration will continue in FY14.

Mr. Chairman, the budget we are submitting supports the defense strategy. It preserves the readiness of our people and it builds on the success we've achieved in shipbuilding.

For 237 years our maritime warriors have established a proven record as an agile and adaptable force. Forward deployed, we remain the most responsive option to defend the American people and our interests.

Thank you very much.