

PREPARED REMARKS

Congressional Testimony of the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
Wednesday, March 17, 2010

Chairman Inouye, Senator Cochran, distinguished members of the Committee, it is a pleasure to be here today with the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense. The CNO, Commandant, and I are grateful for the commitment the members of this Committee have shown to our men and women in uniform and to the Navy and Marine Corps. We are exceptionally proud to be here today representing our Sailors, Marines, Civilians, and their families.

The Navy and Marine Corps remain the most formidable expeditionary fighting force in the world, capable of global operations across the entire spectrum of warfare.

Today forty percent of our forces are deployed and over half the Fleet is at sea. In Helmand Province, Afghanistan, more than 16,000 Marines are engaged in major combat, counter-insurgency, and engagement operations, including the effort to clear the Taliban stronghold of Marjah. They are supported there by Navy aircraft flying close air support from the EISENHOWER and our forward deployed expeditionary aviation assets. A total of 12,000 Sailors are on the ground in Iraq, Afghanistan, and across the broader Middle East and another 9000 Sailors and Marines are embarked on our ships at sea. Off the coast of Africa, six ships are protecting international commerce off Somalia¹ and operating as partnership stations with our regional allies². Off the coast of South America another three ships are stemming the flow of illegal narcotics into the United States³. Our ballistic missile defense forces are ready to defend against any threat to international peace in Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific Rim – where our forward deployed forces continue their role as a strategic buffer and deterrent against rogue regimes and potential competitors alike. And in Haiti, the BATAAN and 1000 Marines

¹ CTF-151 (NONE); CTF-508 (USS COLE)

² USS GUNSTON HALL, USS NICHOLAS, HSV-1 SWIFT

³ USS FREEDOM, USS MCCLUSKY, USS MCINERNEY

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from the 22nd MEU continue to provide humanitarian aid, medical assistance, and disaster relief.

The Navy and Marine Corps are flexible, responsive, and everywhere that our nation's interests are at stake. Our global presence reduces instability, deters aggression, and allows us to rapidly respond to any crisis that borders the sea.

I believe that the President's FY2011 Budget for the Department of the Navy is a carefully considered request that gives us the resources we need to conduct effective operations and meet all the missions we have been assigned. Our shipbuilding and aviation requests concur with the findings of the QDR and its objectives of prevailing in today's wars, preventing conflict, preparing for future wars, and preserving the force. With this budget, The Navy and Marine Corps will continue to maintain the maritime superiority of our forces, sustain a strong American shipbuilding industrial base, and ensure our capacity for rapid global response.

Across the FYDP we have requested the funds to build an average of ten ships per year, including one carrier, one big-deck amphibious ship, ten *VIRGINIA* class submarines, and seventeen Littoral Combat Ships. We will leverage the technologies captured from the cancelled CG(X) program and truncated DDG-1000 program into what will become our Flight III *BURKE* class DDGs; these technologies include SPY-3 and the Air and Missile Defense Radar. Through the submitted shipbuilding plan, we will increase the size of our fleet to approximately 320 ships by 2024.

In our shipbuilding program, I believe we have made the most cost-effective decisions to achieve the most-capable force; one that achieves equal flexibility to confront missions across the spectrum of conflict, from the technically complex, like ballistic missile defense and integrated air defense, to low-intensity humanitarian response and regional engagement.

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In aircraft procurement, we have requested just over 1000 aircraft across the FYDP, including both fixed and rotary wing aircraft.

Over the next year the Navy and Marine Corps will continue to move ahead with changes to our acquisitions process. In compliance with the Weapons System Acquisition Reform Act, we are aggressively developing our acquisitions strategies to ensure that on time and on budget become the standard for Navy and Marine Corps programs. I am grateful for the support of this committee for the decision to recompete the LCS program when it failed to meet program standards. I assure you that we will not hesitate to recompete or cancel other programs whenever sub-standard performance demands change.

Change is also required to address the way in which the Navy and Marine Corps use and produce energy. Energy reform is an issue of national security and it is essential to maintaining our strategic advantage, warfighting readiness, and tactical edge. By 2020, I have committed the Navy to generate half of all the energy we use from alternative sources. This is an ambitious goal, but nothing has ever been accomplished without taking bold steps.

Forty years ago I stood watch on the deck of the USS *LITTLE ROCK* as a young junior officer. Today I have the solemn privilege of standing watch on behalf of our Navy and Marine Corps in a time of war and national challenge. I am honored by the trust the President and Congress have placed in me and I fully recognize the solemn obligation I have to those who defend us.

I, along with the CNO and the Commandant, look forward to hearing your thoughts and answering any questions you may have concerning our Budget request, specific programs, or policies. I also look forward to working closely with Congress as we move forward to sustain the Navy and Marine Corps as the most formidable expeditionary fighting force in the world.

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Thank you and Godspeed.