

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
Santa Barbara Navy League Luncheon
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Chad Dreier, thank you; Ginni, thank you for having us. And all the Dreier family and Doug Crawford, thank you for inviting me to Santa Barbara.

I spent the week in California, I came out Sunday afternoon, and I've had quite a week. I'm going to share just a little bit of it with you; I'm going to tell you one quick story. I made a speech yesterday morning in San Diego at the SDMAC, the San Diego Military Affairs Council, and the person who introduced me got up and said he felt like Edward Everett, who was the other speaker at Gettysburg. I've never been compared to Abraham Lincoln before. But two weeks ago, I got to go to New York to be on the Daily Show with Jon Stewart. I've got three daughters - 19, 17 and 8 - they all went, and my wife went. I had the folks you see here with you, the travel team, and they all went. We had a Navy film crew; they were doing sort of the day in the life. So we had a lot of folks that came in the studio and in the green room. And Jon Stewart walked in, he looks around and sees all these people and said, you roll like Snoop Dog. During the course of two weeks I've been compared to both Snoop Dog and Abraham Lincoln. I suspect the truth is way more in the middle for both of those. But I do appreciate being here with you all today.

I got to spend Monday seeing the Navy and a lot of the Navy installations around San Diego. Tuesday, I was in Camp Pendleton with the Marines and I'm still a little sore from that, or as we say in the South, a bit stoved-up today. They let me do infantry immersion training, which has a complete Middle Eastern village laid out including sounds, smells, and depending on

what country we're simulating, even Iraqis - Iraqi nationals that live here now, or Afghan nationals who live here now - to role-play. And we send Marines through, one squad at a time, to do various scenarios. They don't know what the scenario is going in.

And Tuesday at lunch, I got to go eat at Balboa Hospital with some of our wounded warriors.

And this morning, I got to go to the UCLA Medical Center and meet with Dr. Jim Miller and his staff who are doing facial reconstructive surgery at no cost to our wounded warriors - our Marines, our Soldiers, our Sailors, and our Airmen - when they come back from the war. So, it's been a pretty powerful week and we're meeting some great people. When you meet some of the wounded warriors and ask them what their outlook on life is, and talk to them about what they've been through and what their plans are, you will be astounded at how resilient they are, at how optimistic they are, and how committed they are to either staying in the military or to building a life outside, and how proud they are of their service -- as we ought to be proud of them.

One of the things I get asked in this job is do we really need a Navy anymore? Do we need a Navy and a Marine Corps? The world is getting smaller everybody tells us. We've got instant communication. We've got all sorts of new technology. What's the point? What's the purpose of the Navy and the Marine Corps?

Well, let me tell you. We have 900,000 people - Sailors, Marines, civilians - working around the world today doing a myriad of tasks, doing a lot of very hard, often very dangerous, and always very difficult work on behalf of the United States. We have things that make the news - Iraq and Afghanistan - where we have about 22,000 Marines between the two doing some of the hard work, and in the Helmand province in southern Afghanistan, where they're doing some of the more difficult fighting, the more difficult work in that country.

But we also have more Sailors on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan than we do at sea in that region. We have Sailors running seven of the 12 Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan. I was in Afghanistan in August. I went down to Paktika on the southeastern border of Afghanistan near the Pakistan border -- very remote, very rural, and very high in the mountains. There's a 50-person Provincial Reconstruction Team, all Sailors, headed by a Navy submarine commander with two submarine chiefs as his leading petty officers. We also furnish almost half the combat air over Afghanistan today off our aircraft carriers.

And, we also have ships off the Coast of Africa. We've got Sailors and Marines on the ground in Djibouti doing the same thing. We've had ships for the last two months delivering disaster relief to Indonesia, to Samoa, to the Philippines. We have the Pacific Partnership Station and the Africa Partnership Station, and the Southern Partnership Station doing humanitarian assistance, doing medical calls, and dentals calls. We have the partnership building where you bring foreign military and civilian law enforcement and military units onto some of our Navy ships to help train them, or our Marines go ashore to give training. You can surge people, you can surge equipment; what you cannot surge is trust. So you have to be there persistently, day in and day out. That's why we need a global Navy. That's why we need a Navy that can be everywhere it needs to be.

Today we have 285 ships in our Navy and they're deployed all over the world. At any given time 40 percent of our ships are forward deployed and over half will be at sea. We are always the away team. If we're doing our job, we're somewhere far from home, both the Navy and the Marine Corps. We're the only service that can project power in the way that we do. We do not have any footprint. We don't have to have one inch of anybody else's soil to operate. We operate on the seas that we control and we can be just over the horizon or just off the coast. We

can linger as long as we need to and we don't have to go home and get our gun - we bring it with us. We have planes on the deck, we have missiles in the tubes, and we have Marines, fully equipped, embarked, and we can change missions very quickly. The same platforms that do high-end conventional warfare also do humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The same platforms that do ballistic missile defense, which our President just gave that task mainly to the Navy, but those same platforms are the platforms the SEALs used to rescue Captain Phillips in Maersk Alabama. We can do whatever comes over the horizon.

We're going through something right now in the Pentagon called the Quadrennial Defense Review. By its very name, every four years you look at where you think the threats to our nation are coming from and what sort of military force do we need to build to meet those. Where can we take risks? Where do we need more? Where can we do with less? But you know, if you had done this in 1989 right before the wall came down, you would have been almost 100 percent wrong as to the threats we were going to be facing today in 2009. If you had done it in 1999, you would have been more wrong than right in terms of what we're doing today. And so, as bright as the people are, as committed as they are, and as forward looking as we can be, we simply can't tell what we're going to face, and that's why the Navy and the Marine Corps are so essential. We can meet anything and we're flexible. We're flexible in terms of platforms, we're flexible in terms of equipment, and we're flexible in terms of our people.

Forty years ago, Ed and I were the most dangerous thing in the American military - we were junior officers. He was probably saved by a sergeant. I know I was saved by a chief. But I have to tell you, I served with some very committed, very dedicated, very talented people. But the people I served with in the Navy of four decades ago cannot touch the Navy and Marine

Corps today. We couldn't touch you in terms of skill or your education or professionalism or dedication.

The thing that is the best thing about this job is I get to go out and meet the Sailors and the Marines that are out there every day doing this work, protecting this country. When you count all the military in every branch, we have a little more than 2 million people in uniform; 2 million to protect 300 million. And because the military is so small in terms of our total population, I don't think people understand what our military does on a day-to-day basis to keep us safe.

And that's why I appreciate so much people like the Navy League that work to get that message out. We have the most skilled, the most dedicated, the most lethal, the most powerful force for good in the Navy and Marine Corps than we have ever fielded or that any nation has ever fielded. It's not that our technology is better, although it is, and it's not that our equipment is great, although it is; our secret weapon is what the Marines call the strategic corporal. Seventy-five percent of the United States Marines are under 25 years old; 75 percent are lance corporal or less, but those corporals lead squads, making decisions on the ground, day in and day out making strategic decisions.

The Navy has the same thing and that's what nobody else can touch. On the flight deck of an aircraft carrier moving multimillion dollar aircraft around, loading high explosives at the same time they're putting high test aviation fuel in those aircraft. The average age on the flight deck on a US carrier is 19. Nobody else can do that, nobody. And I see that as my job – to protect the Sailors and Marines and their families that represent us so well.

I'm going to talk very briefly about three other things that I want to get done as secretary. One is to try to get some handle on the escalated cost of our equipment, particularly our ships. If

we keep building ever more expensive, ever more exotic, ever longer build times for ships, we are unilaterally disarming ourselves. We have 285 ships today. In the late '80s, we had 600. Right after World War II, we had 8,000. Now, the 285 ships we have today are way more capable than the 600 we had in the '80s. But at some point quantity becomes quality, because one ship can't be in two places at the same time. So it's our responsibility in the Navy to have stable designs before you start building, to have mature technology before we start putting it on a platform, and to fall in love with the mission, but not the platform, and be able to change that platform, or change the weapon system, or change the mission packages out.

And we're beginning to drive the cost down and we're getting a lot of help from industry. Because if we're stable and we can give them a look into the future - the number of ships we're going to buy - and then they can make the investment that they need to, and the American taxpayer and the American people are the beneficiary.

A second thing is unmanned vehicles. It's going to change the way we fight, it already is changing the way we fight, and particularly in the Navy - below the sea, on the sea, above the sea. And I pay a lot more attention now to Navy recruiting ads than I did before. And so far one of my favorites, somebody showed me, was in a magazine for gaming - the games that you play on Xbox and things like that. We were recruiting for programmers, for unmanned, undersea vehicles, and they had a picture of one that's a mine hunter and the tagline was, *because the bomb-snuffing dogs just don't work that well underwater*, and they don't. But if you're looking at how a war is going to be fought in the future with swarming tactics, and long distance standoff, the capacity to remain on station, the capacity to feed intelligence back, the capacity to keep some of our people out of harm's way - we cannot afford not to be in the forefront of unmanned vehicles.

And the last thing is energy. Last week we had a Navy Energy Summit and I announced some goals for the Navy, the most ambitious of which is by the year 2020, a decade from now, we will get half of our energy from non-fossil fuel, and that is at sea and that is ashore. Now, when I was meeting with people trying to come up with what are the goals we were going to set, I was told that 40 percent was a stretch, but probably doable; 50 percent is just a little too far. And the reason it was too far was because there was no infrastructure for the alternative fuels, and that those fuels are too expensive, or the alternative generators like solar panels were too expensive. My response was to sort of flip the line from *Field of Dreams* - if the Navy comes, they will build it.

The Department of Defense uses 93 percent of all the energy the federal government uses and we use 2 percent of all the energy America uses. If we can change - and we are going to change - by 2020 half our bases, our shore establishments, will be net-zero. We will be producing as much energy as we use or more. We already have a facility, China Lake here in California that produces 20 times the energy today that it uses, and gives it back to the grid.

By the year 2015, we're going to cut in half fossil fuel use in our commercial fleet. The Navy and Marine Corps own 50,000 vehicles and they turn over about every five years. We're going to change the type of vehicles we buy and it's not that hard. We're going to get down to using half the fossil fuels that we do. By 2016, we're going to field a Carrier Strike Group that is all powered by alternative fuels. We already do power our aircraft carriers and our submarines with nuclear power. But the planes taking off from the deck and the surface ships are all going to be burning alternate fuel. And we're going to call it the Great Green Fleet; a hundred years after Teddy Roosevelt had the Great White Fleet.

These are pretty aggressive goals and, frankly the infrastructure and the technology isn't there to meet them yet, but when Teddy Roosevelt sent the Great White Fleet around the world, and I don't know if you all know this because I didn't before I starting looking into it, Congress did not think it was a good idea to send the fleet around the world, so they didn't appropriate the money to do it. Roosevelt assumed there was enough money to get about halfway. He said, I assumed Congress wants the fleet back, and I assume the money will be coming, as it was.

The Navy has always been at the forefront of technological change, particularly in energy. We went from sail to steam right before the Civil War, and people said you're giving up a very certain form of propulsion for a very uncertain form. And they were wrong, as was proven in the Civil War. Around the turn of the last century, we went from coal to oil, and again they said you've got this big infrastructure, coaling stations all around the world, why would you want to switch? Again, they were wrong. In the '50s when we moved to nuclear power for our aircraft carriers and our submarines, again, it's too dangerous, it's too experimental, why are you doing it? Again, they were wrong. We're going to do this over the next ten years. The Navy and Marine Corps have never backed down from challenges and they're not going to back down today.

I'm going to end by going back to sort of where I started. The young men and women that we have in the Navy and Marine Corps today represent the best about America. They are highly trained; they are highly skilled; they are highly dedicated; they are highly professional. The Navy I was in – we never left port without leaving a couple of folks behind in jail. Just do the math. Today, you can put a Carrier Strike Group with several thousand Sailors and Marines in any port in this world and nothing, you will have no incidents - you will have great ambassadors for the United States.

Thank you to the Navy League and Santa Barbara for getting the message out about what the Navy and what the Marine Corps are, and what these amazing Sailors and Marines do. God bless the United States Navy, God bless the United States Marine Corps, and God bless the United States of America. Thank you all.