

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
U.S. Green Building Council Federal Summit
Washington, DC
Tuesday, 10 May, 2011

Thank you so much. Before I start, I want to say something about the operation ten days ago. We got a lot of publicity but you've got literally tens of thousands of people serving in uniform, in all the services around the world, who have equal skill, equal courage, and equal dedication and we ought to be proud of each and every one of them.

I am honored to be here with the Green Building Council. I know a lot about your work. When I set up the Navy Energy Office, I stole Tom Hicks from the Green Building Council to run that office so you have an insider to keep me posted and keep Navy abreast of what you are doing.

Before I start talking about what we are doing in sustainability and green buildings I want to take one minute to talk about some of those amazing people in uniform. I want to take one day, one day in the Navy. I'm going to take March 19th of this year. On March 19th of this year, Navy and Marine Corps were doing the following things. We were beginning to establish the no fly zone over Libya. Elements of the Essex Amphibious Ready Group - our surface ships, our submarines through Tomahawk missile strikes - that was the first day of establishing the no fly zone. That same day, March 19th, USS Reagan strike group was off the coast of Japan helping them recover from the tsunami and earthquake. The Reagan had been on its way to conduct combat air operations over Afghanistan and they turned in a matter of hours and headed to Japan and they used exactly the same targeting information that they had been practicing for Afghanistan to deliver humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to make sure that the right

things got to the right places in the right order. That same day, March 19th, we had 20 thousand Marines in combat in Afghanistan. That same day, March 19th, the amphibious ready group that is normally stationed in Okinawa, which had been off the coast of Indonesia, also headed north to help with the tsunami. That same day, March 19th, we had ships off the Horn of Africa fighting pirates. That same day, March 19th, we had a ship in South Pacific Partnership Station; we had a ship in Continuing Promise, which is the partnership we have with South American countries; we had a ship off the west coast of Africa in Africa Partnership Station. That's one day. Globally engaged, globally deployed, able to do an incredible range of missions, using exactly the same equipment, using exactly the same people. The ability of the United States Navy and Marine Corps to do that, to do this range of missions, ranging everywhere from high-end combat through irregular warfare, through disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, partnership, training, nobody else can do that. I think it's incredibly important that we have that capability, that we have the ability to do this on a global scale. Unique in history.

One country has the naval power to keep the sea lanes open and we do it for everybody. In history, when one country has achieved that sort of naval might it's usually been to restrict the use of the sea and the maritime economies to its own ships. We're out there for everybody. It's making world trade go; it's making the world a little more secure, a little more stable for all of us.

But to get back to you here at the Green Building Council, I want to commend you for your ambitious goal of making green buildings available to everybody within a generation. It is a goal that will make a better America and it is a vision that I hope the Navy and Marine Corps will help create.

Last year – you heard during the introduction - I talked about five energy goals for the Navy and Marine Corps. And the most important, I'm going to repeat it, is that by 2020 at the latest, at least half of our energy – afloat and ashore, will come from non-fossil fuel sources. And another one of those goals, the one that is most relevant to you here today, is that no later than 2020, at least half our bases will be at net zero in terms of the energy that they use. Ensuring that our new buildings are energy-efficient and ensuring that they use the latest technologies is an important part of meeting this goal, and I'm going to talk about how we're going to get there in just a minute.

But I do think it's important to set a framework for why we established these goals. It's all about our energy security and moving toward complete energy independence. Our military and our country rely too much on fossil fuel. That dependency degrades our national security; it also harms the environment and has a negative effect on our economy.

For the military, it creates a strategic challenge because too much of our oil comes from either potentially or actually volatile places on Earth. We don't have to do anymore than read the headlines about that. We would never allow the countries that we buy petroleum products from to build our ships or our aircraft or our ground vehicles. But we give them a say as to whether those ships sail or those airplanes fly or those ground vehicles operate. We give them a say because they provide fuel for it.

There are also some tactical reasons. The number one thing we import into Afghanistan – number one – is gasoline. And getting a gallon of gas to a Marine front line unit in Helmand Province is hard and it's expensive in a lot of different ways. You have to take it across either the Pacific or the Atlantic. You have to then put it in a convoy and either go up over land and

then over the Hindu Kush mountains or down through the northern distribution network, through Russia and down through the Amu Darya River and then through Afghanistan, Helmand Province. It's long, it's expensive and it's dangerous. For every 50 convoys, we lose a Marine, killed or wounded. We just have to find another way to do things; we have to make the energy where we are - we have to make it there. And we have to get our folks back to doing what they were sent to Afghanistan to do, which is not to guard convoys, but to fight, to engage, to rebuild.

And so it's for strategic and tactical reasons and very military reasons - it makes us better warfighters - that we established these goals that every day we are getting closer to meeting. In the little more than 18 months since I set out these goals, we have flown an aircraft on biofuel, the Green Hornet. They made a movie about that I think. The aircraft went 1.7 times the speed of sound and didn't notice the difference in terms of fuel. Then we sailed a ship on biofuel, we have sent equipment into Afghanistan with our Marines to power their small electronics by roll-up, solar blankets that they put in their packs. It not only saves us from bringing gasoline in, it saves them from hauling pound after pound after pound of batteries when they go out on foot patrol. We have also started working with small businesses, venture capitalists, academic research institutions, states and other departments of the federal government like Energy and Agriculture to help bring about a new energy future and a new energy economy. And I want to put in a plug for our commander in chief, for President Obama's leadership, his vision and establishment of some national energy goals as we move forward into a new economy and into a new reality of how we use and produce energy.

At our bases ashore, we're doing a lot of different things towards meeting these goals. Across the Department, we have 100 MW of solar power planned and when we're done building it, we will be able to power a city the size of Norfolk, Virginia. Nationally, we are partnering

with a lot of local companies. We're doing geothermal, hydrothermal, solar, wind, wave energy. Whatever makes the most sense for the base that we have. One of our bases, China Lake, has already moved past net-zero and is putting energy back on the grid because of geothermal power, and by 2020, as I mentioned, at least half of our bases will be at net-zero.

We are also committed, like the U.S. Green Building Council, to building the most energy-efficient, sustainable buildings that we can. That effort started last year with our advanced metering initiative, which when we're finished, we're going to have 27,000 smart meters nationwide at our bases.

One of the things I've noticed, when I was first in this job and I would go to a base, I would get good briefings, but they would be all over the map. Now when I walk into a base, the first thing they want to talk about is energy. Not surprising. But, one of the bases I went to, the base commander had his energy bill, had his electric bill, and 15 percent of the energy said where it went, what it was used for, the other 85 percent was one line, it said, line lose. He had no idea where that energy was going, no idea which buildings were using it, no idea what time of day was most energy inefficient, who was using it, where it was going. And that's what the smart meters are going to tell us so that we can take some action here.

We've also set some goals in terms of what kind of building we're going to do and in doing this we have a slight advantage over other folks. When we make a decision to build to a certain standard, we can mandate that standard, and we can ensure that it's met. But as a result of all these things, our departmental energy code is 16 percent more stringent than the most stringent code of any state and that's California's Title 24.

Sustainable building also means building to LEED standards. Almost half of our new Department of the Navy buildings meet LEED Gold standards, with all of the remaining meeting LEED Silver standards. We have several hundred other buildings that are registered and awaiting certification. Hundreds of buildings is a pretty high number, but we can do a little bit more. Even though we are an expeditionary service even though we do go to sea a lot, we have 72,500 buildings, and as these are removed, as these are replaced or renovated, we have a tremendous opportunity to make sure that the highest energy efficiency and sustainability standards are met.

Using LEED makes sense for the Navy and Marine Corps. It makes sense because it is the key to meeting our goals for reducing energy consumption, for reducing water consumption, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

And I am happy today to announce here at the Government Summit that from today forward, the Navy will build to LEED Gold standards. For every new building that's going to bid in FY11 and FY12, we will require a LEED Gold option package. That will give the Department's top priority for in-scope modifications. What it means is if we can get it in the contract price and it doesn't involve a significant delay, we will execute the LEED Gold option as part of the normal design and construction process.

But beginning in FY13 - and for those of you who have never had any experience in the Pentagon, it is incredibly hard to know what year you are in. You're spending money in one fiscal year; we're in FY11 now, I've already testified about FY 12 and we're in the process of preparing for the FY13 budget. In fact, everyday is pretty much budget day in the Pentagon. - but in FY13 which is coming up in a little more than a year, LEED Gold will be required,

required for every single new Navy and Marine Corps military construction project. And we will do this without using any additional money; we're going to use exactly the amount we have in the budget over the next five years, we're just going to build a little differently. It shouldn't cost anymore, particularly in this economic environment, to build buildings that are sustainable than it is to build building that are not. It's going to require some creative contracting and some creative building and construction practices, but I am absolutely confident that we will be able to do it. It's been my experience all during my career that if you set sort of low goals, that's where people tend to head, if you have high expectations, it's also where people and organizations tend to end up.

Leading change, particularly in energy, is absolutely nothing new for the Navy and Marine Corps. We have always been on the front of innovation. In the middle of the 19th century, we moved from sail to coal, in the early part of the 20th Century we moved from coal to oil, and then in the 1950s we introduced nuclear power into the Fleet. And every single time, every single time, there were folks who said you're trading one very proven source of power for an absolutely unproven one, and oh by the way, you don't have any infrastructure, price is too high. In fact when we moved from sail to coal, a panel of Navy admirals blasted away at it, saying we've used wind for literally thousands of years, and where are you going to get these coaling stations that you would have to have all around the world., Another group, equally adamant when we moved from coal to oil, said you've got all these coaling stations all over the world. What in the world are you going to do with them if you move to oil? The same thing with nuclear power.

A lot of this opposition in the past has come from within the service itself. But I have to say in this case leadership of the Navy and Marine Corps are fully onboard. The Marines, as

Marines often do, have seized this and are leading in changing the way we do energy. The Commandant has institutionalized alternative energy going into combat, so now every Marine unit that is about to head to Afghanistan, part of its training is on the use of alternative energy. It is saving Marine lives to do that and it is making them better fighters.

Every case where we have changed energy, the naysayers have been proven wrong, and I am absolutely convinced we're going to do that again. That we're going to lead in this energy revolution. Innovation is a hallmark of the Navy. Innovation is a hallmark of the Marine Corps. Innovation is the only thing that is a constant in our world.

When our tactics have been inadequate, we have changed them, where our technology has been lacking, we have innovated. When the threats have evolved, we have risen to meet them. Last week was the 69th anniversary of the Battle of Coal Sea. It was the first battle in naval history that the fleets never saw each other. It was all conducted by air. Now the year before that, before Pearl Harbor, nobody would have thought you would have a naval battle like that, but because our fleet of battleships was destroyed at Pearl Harbor, we had to innovate, we had to change tactics. It's the same thing with energy.

For 235 years the Navy and the Marine Corps have been the most formidable expeditionary fighting force the world has ever known. We are that because we have innovated, we have adapted and we have overcome. That is what we are doing today, innovating, adapting, and coming out victorious on the other side.

Thank you very much.