

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
USS DONALD COOK (DDG-75) Arrival
Rota, Spain
10 February 2014

Good Afternoon and Buenas Tardes. I want to thank everyone who is joining us here today. As Ambassador Costos said, we have a strong and long-lasting partnership with Spain and the Spanish Armada. I want to thank Spanish Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Munoz-Delgado for being here today, and Admiral Bolibar, Commander of the Spanish Fleet, for his remarks. And I particularly want to thank the people and the government of Rota for your friendship and hospitality. Our international partnerships are important, but it isn't just with governments and navies. Partners like the people of Rota, the local government and business community, are important to our success here and around the world.

I also want to recognize the Captain and the crew of USS DONALD COOK. These young men and women are the best that America has to offer, they're technical experts, they're maritime operators, and they are true naval ambassadors. I look forward to hearing about their accomplishments and about the entire destroyer squadron once their three sister ships are here.

Our alliances and partnerships with the countries of Europe have been an important part of the success of our Navy for 238 years. It is a history that the U.S. Navy shares not only with the waters of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, but with Spain and Rota specifically. The Spanish have been at our side very nearly since our nation's founding. In 1784 when Barbary pirates captured their first American ship, the brig *Betsey*, it was the Spanish government who helped

Thomas Jefferson negotiate for the release of the crew. That attack on American trade eventually led to our nation's first war to maintain freedom of the seas, and the protection of the global commons.

That deployment of the Mediterranean Squadron for the Barbary War marked the beginning of our enduring presence and partnerships with Europe. Since then our ships have worked with navies and nations, leaders and people, to help safeguard freedom of navigation and access to the world's waterways.

On a very personal note, Rota was my first port of call as a Midshipman in the U.S. Navy in 1969.

For 213 of the 238 years our Navy has existed, we have had indispensable relationships with our European friends. That certainly hasn't changed today, and it will not change. In fact, as Secretary of State Kerry and Secretary of Defense Hagel said last week in Munich, we are entering a period of trans-Atlantic renaissance. The destroyer we welcome today and her sister ships are tangible representations of that commitment.

Rota, where we stand today, and where these ships will be forward-deployed, sits on an incredibly strategic spot. On the Atlantic, right at the Straits of Gibraltar, we are at one of the great maritime crossroads of the world. Because over 90% of the world's trade is moved at sea, the freedom of navigation which we all work to ensure has become central to the stability of the world economy. Here on the Bay of Cadiz we are on the southern shores of Europe, but just a

short distance from Africa where we see positive signs of hope and progress, but also troubling political upheaval and instability. Rota and these ships will play a vital role in the future of this area and beyond.

While DONALD COOK is pier-side behind us now, it won't be long before she is back at sea. These destroyers will conduct Ballistic Missile Defense patrols as part of our Phased Adaptive Approach to European missile defense, ensuring a capable and credible shield for our European allies and partners. They will conduct complex exercises with the navies of NATO and the EU. They will also conduct security cooperation missions with our partners and friends in Africa and the Middle East. The more we work together, the more we understand each other, the more capable we all become when a crisis looms. Security and stability requires cooperation and partnership.

To ensure that security and maintain that stability, our European and American naval forces must be there. In military terms, we call that presence. Whatever the situation, we provide our leaders and our people with immediate options because of our immediate presence. That is what the forward deployment of these destroyers is all about. Basing these four ships here gives us the same presence as if we had sixteen ships that we were rotating from the United States. These destroyers will help ensure that we are here with our friends and our allies when it counts, not just in the right place at the right time, but the right place all the time.

One of the key focus areas of our defense strategy is the strengthening of our political and military relationships with both established powers and long-time friends like Spain and with rising nations. DONALD COOK and the destroyers forward-deploying here are essential elements of America's commitment to this strategy to maintain our global responsibilities. Our commitment to our European allies will not waiver and is not in doubt. It is said, and it is true, that while equipment can be surged, trust cannot. Together, we will build on the trust and cooperation already accumulated over many years, and many shared challenges.

We are very grateful to Spain for hosting these ships. In my time as Secretary I've traveled more than 800,000 miles visiting our men and women in uniform, and consulting with our friends, partners, and leaders all over the globe, but Spain holds a special place with me and with our Navy. Spain and the Armada have been one of our most important allies. Your ships and Navy give Spain the ability to project power on a global scale. Your sailors are highly professional. You have one of the longest maritime traditions in the world. Our partnership, and our alliance in NATO, will continue to be a crucial force, not just in the Mediterranean but around the world.

In the end, we come back to this crew and this ship. The Sailors aboard USS DONALD COOK are warriors and diplomats. They are men and women who have the same spirit of adventure as mariners from all over the world, who want to see what is over the horizon. It is the same spirit as the Spanish Sailors who sailed into the unknown well before the founding of our nation, and those who serve in your Armada today. These ships and their crews demonstrate our enduring commitment to, and presence in this region. Working together with Spain and with Europe in indispensable partnership, we will address our common challenges and we will ensure the

maritime security which benefits the entire globe. Welcome to the beginning of a new chapter in this vital partnership and alliance.

From the Navy, Sempter Fortis. Always Courageous.

Thank you.