

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
Introduction of the Secretary of State:
The Honorable Hillary Clinton
USS NEW YORK Commissioning
New York City, NY
Saturday, November 7, 2009

Thank you all for coming today to share this moment in history. It is wonderful to be in New York City. In the harbor just south of us stands the Statue of Liberty, which throughout our history has been the first glimpse of America for millions new to our shores, and the first glimpse of home for those returning. Today we witness the birth of another memorial to liberty. Eight years ago, this city witnessed the worst of atrocities committed against our country. The *NEW YORK* will be a visible testament to our resilience, to the character of this city, to the strength of this country.

The commissioning of the *NEW YORK* is an extension of our American spirit. This ship, forged in the heat and the fire of the shipyard, echoes the birth of our nation in the heat and the fire of the Revolution. In commemorating September 11th, we pay homage to that American spirit which is represented in the ships of the Navy stretching back to the birth of the Republic – Old Ironsides, *ARIZONA*, *COLE*, and all the ships of the Navy that have borne the name *NEW YORK* with honor and distinction. Seaman Apprentice Christopher Davidson, a Navy reservist and native New Yorker now attached to *NEW YORK*, said it best, “No matter how many times you attack us, we always come back.” America always comes back. And that’s what this ship represents.

For the men and women who will sail the *NEW YORK*, Bravo Zulu, well done. The nation and our Navy are incredibly proud of you and all that you have done to

prepare the *NEW YORK* for her operational life. You have begun to shape the spirit and soul of this ship just as surely as the builders laid the keel, placed the engines, and installed the weapons. By tradition you will hear the order near the end of this ceremony to man the ship and bring her to life – but in truth you have already done so. It is the character of the ship that you set as the first crew, as the Plankowners, that will endure as long as *NEW YORK* is in commission. Think of this – most of the Sailors who will crew the *NEW YORK* long years from now on its final voyage have not yet been born. But the legacy this first crew will create in the coming years will live on in those Sailors yet unborn, just as the bravery of those who responded on 9/11 and the courage of the families represented here today lives on in the bow of the ship, crafted from steel recovered from Ground Zero. It is a heavy responsibility you carry, but just as everyone assembled here today knows, you are equal to the task.

Secretary Hillary Clinton, you represented the State of New York as a Senator on September 11th, so it is particularly fitting that you are here to honor the loss and the triumph of that day in the birth of the USS *NEW YORK*. Your strong devotion to service serves as inspiration to the men and women of her crew. As a Senator, and now as our Secretary of State, you have long demonstrated a commitment to those who serve our country in uniform and a recognition of how the Navy and Marine Corps complement our nation's diplomacy. We are especially grateful for your tireless advocacy of First Responders, for your legislation to expand health care to for our Wounded Warriors, to our veterans, to our National Guard and to our Reserve. And for the strong and principled voice you bring to the Office of Secretary of State.

Madame Secretary, by your presence you are now bonded to this ship – just as this ship will be forever bonded to the city of New York, bonded to the State of New York, bonded to the thousands of Americans who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks of eight years ago, bonded to the countless others who sought to rescue them, bonded to the country who remembers them. In the evil that was inflicted upon our nation, the murderers of 9/11 thought they would strike us down, but we rose again. They thought they would break us, but we emerged stronger. They thought our conviction would falter, it became more resolute. America has proved them wrong. We have turned the results of their hate into a symbol of this country that will sail the oceans as a participant in its defense. The *NEW YORK* is a symbol of freedom. The *NEW YORK* is a visible demonstration of our resilience as a people. The *NEW YORK* is America's ship.

Ladies and Gentlemen, just as *NEW YORK* will travel the world in service to our country, I am honored to introduce the individual who leads our Foreign Service. She is the voice of the United States in foreign policy. Join me in welcoming our 67th Secretary of State, Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton.

