

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON WITH SECRETARY RAY MABUS

SUBJECT: SATISFYING THE NAVY AND MARINE CORPS ENERGY NEEDS

MODERATOR: ALAN BJERGA, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

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ALAN BJERGA: (Sounds gavel.) Good afternoon, and welcome to the National Press Club. My name is Alan Bjerga. I'm a reporter for Bloomberg News, and President of the National Press Club. We're the world's leading professional organization for journalists and are committed to our profession's future through our programming and by fostering a free press worldwide. For more information about the Press Club, please visit our website at www.press.org. To donate to our programs, please visit www.press.org/library.

On behalf of our members worldwide, I'd like to welcome our speaker and attendees to today's event, which includes guests of our speaker as well as working journalists. I'd also like to welcome our C-SPAN and Public Radio audiences. After the speech concludes, I will ask as many audience questions as time permits. I'd now like to introduce our head table guests.

From your right, Steve Sami, Military and Diplomats World News; Emily Whitten, a Washington, D.C. attorney, and a new member of the National Press Club; Ann Roosevelt, Deputy Editor of the Defense Daily; Austin Kiplinger, Chairman of the Kiplinger Washington Editors, a World War II Navy carrier pilot, and a 69 year member of the National Press Club; Gladys Commons, Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

Skipping over the podium, Andrew Schneider, Associate Editor for Kiplinger Washington Editors, and Chairman of the Press Club Speakers Committee; skipping for the moment over our speaker, we have Shawn Bullard, President of the Duetto Group, and the National Press Club Board of Governors member and Speakers Committee

member who organized today's event; Sean Stackley, Assistant Secretary of the Navy; John Donnelly, Congressional Quarterly national defense correspondent, and a member of the National Press Club's Board of Governors; Jim Noone of Clark & Weinstock, retired Navy public affairs officer, and President of the Navy Public Affairs Alumni Association; and finally, Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, a guest of the speaker. (Applause)

Today's speaker started his career in public service nearly four decades ago when he served as a naval officer in the U.S. Navy after having graduated from an Ivy League law school. Less than 20 years later, he earned a seat in the Mississippi governor's mansion at the age of 39. In the 1990s, he was tapped by President Clinton to serve as U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Today, he joins us as the 75th Secretary of the Navy, where he is the vocal advocate for the nearly one million men and women who serve in the Navy and Marine Corps. He's responsible for a budget of about \$150 billion annually, and today he is here to respond to the Navy and Marine Corps' push to produce at least 50 percent of its shore-based energy from renewable sources within a decade.

Looking at the military's global land and sea footprint, he has been charged with revamping the way sailors, marines and naval aviators consume energy, whether it be jet fuel, ship system engine design or simple composting. The Chief of the Navy is developing ways to reduce consumption. For example, citing the military's insatiable appetite for fuel and energy, he has identified armed services fuel consumption as a potential point of vulnerability. Recently, he stated it was strategically imperative to reduce America's reliance on foreign sources of fossil fuel to get the military better down the roads to energy independence.

The Chief of the Navy also has taken recent action to allow women to serve on submarines. Other issues under his purview remains from future aircraft acquisition programs to whether he believes Congress will change the Department of the Navy to the Department of the Navy and Marine Corps. Please welcome to the National Press Club the Honorable Ray Mabus, Secretary of the U.S. Navy. (Applause)

SECRETARY MABUS: Thank you, Alan Bjerga, for that wonderful introduction. I want to only recognize a couple of other people. Shawn Bullard, who covered me all those years ago when I was governor. I'm glad to see you again and see that you're gainfully employed. And Tom Vilsack. Tom Vilsack was an astoundingly good governor of Iowa, and he is continuing that as Secretary of Agriculture. I'm going to talk about the Agriculture/Navy partnership. I am incredibly fortunate to have Tom Vilsack as friend, and America is incredibly fortunate to have his talent as Secretary of Agriculture

I'm honored to be here today and be speaking with you. My understanding is that the very first speaker at the National Press Club was Teddy Roosevelt. I do want to point out, however, that both Theodore Roosevelt and his distant cousin, Franklin, were Assistant Secretaries of the Navy. (Laughter) Today is a Navy birthday; 212 years ago today Congress authorized the Department of the Navy. It was a pretty different place

and organization from the Navy of today. Then, the Navy only had three commissioned frigates, the *United States*, the *Constellation*, and the *Constitution*, still in service in the Boston naval shipyard. We had a tiny navy and one which had never fought. Since the days of the revolution, the Navy had been pretty quiet. Although you can make a pretty good argument that the reason America changed from the Articles of Confederation to the Constitution that we have today was because we could not field a national navy to deal with the Barbary pirates. And that was one of the main impetuses for getting together in Philadelphia in 1789.

In 1798, then-Secretary of the Navy, Benjamin Stoddert, had three ships, a few, very few, squadrons of marines to sail on those ships, and it was a very decidedly regional and limited navy. Today, things have changed a little bit. Some of the things that Alan talked about, today we have 286 ships in our battle fleet, 3,800 aircraft, over 900,000 people, 4.4 million acres, 72,500 buildings, and a budget north of \$150 billion. But the numbers don't tell the story.

And what I'd like to do is spend just a very few minutes doing what I call Navy and Marine Corps 101. What do we do? Why do we need a Navy? Why do we need a Marine Corps in today's world? We are everywhere. The Navy, Marine Corps are America's away team. If we are doing our job, we are usually somewhere far from home. We are in combat today in the things that you see and what you report on day after day. More than 19,000 marines in Afghanistan. There are also, today in the Middle East, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, 12,000 sailors on shore doing things like running provincial reconstruction teams and doing counter IED duty. We have more sailors on the ground there than we do at sea in Central Command.

But today as well, we've got ships off the Horn of Africa fighting piracy. We have ships around Africa engaged in the Africa partnership station, ships in Asia engaged in the Asia partnership and around South America doing the same thing. We can do everything from high end conventional warfare through irregular warfare through humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to partnership building. And we do it all with the same equipment, we do it all on the same platforms, and we do it all using exactly the same people. We have to be flexible, we have to be ready for whatever comes over the horizon. Because as smart as the people who do the planning, as far-sighted as we can be, we simply cannot provide for every eventuality, and we have to be trained, we have to be ready, and we have to have a frame of mind that does not get us into one way of thinking, but is flexible to meet whatever challenge comes at us. Whether it is that rescue operation in Haiti, or whether it is flying combat over Afghanistan in support of our soldiers and our marines there.

One of the overlooked things about what we do in the Navy is the engagement around the world, day in and day out. You can surge people, you can surge equipment; what you cannot surge is trust. Day after day, American warships and American sailors and marines are going into countries and partnering with those countries doing humanitarian assistance missions, training the local navies and marines and meeting with local citizens and leadership. Oftentimes, the Navy is the only face of America that the

leadership of these countries will see, and particularly the population of these countries. So I think the Navy in that engagement, in that partnership building, has become an integral part of how people view America, and of our diplomatic efforts around the world.

The big difference in the United States Navy in the 40 years that has passed since I served, is not so much the equipment, although that's gotten a lot better, and it's not the technology, although that has advanced beyond my imagining four decades ago. It is the people who serve. I served with a lot of very dedicated, very skilled and very motivated people. But they simply could not touch the sailors and marines we have today in terms of skill level, in terms of education level, in terms of commitment, in terms of all the things they have to know how to do. And we're the only country on earth that can produce the numbers and the quality of people that today serve in our armed forces. We're the only country on earth that pushes the responsibility down to the second class seaman in the engine room, to the lance corporal on patrol. The Marines have a term, "the strategic corporal." We have that in spades in the Navy and the Marine Corps.

I want to talk about one specific thing that we're doing that Alan mentioned in his introduction. We are trying to change the way the Navy gets and uses energy. We are simply too dependent on foreign fossil fuels. We would not let, we would not allow, our warships or our weapons to be built by the countries that we do allow our ships to be powered by their fuel. This is a strategic vulnerability for us and one that has to be addressed. And we are doing a lot to make sure that we meet this strategic imperative. It's a matter of energy independence, it's a matter of our security. It's a matter of making sure that when we need those ships at sea, when we need those aircraft in the air, when we need the Marines on the ground, we have the energy produced right here in the United States to do that.

We use a lot of energy. The federal government uses about 2 percent of all the fossil fuels used in America. DOD uses 90 percent of what the federal government does. And the Navy is about a third of DOD's requirements. Outside the overall strategic reasons to do this, there's the tactical. And the example that I like to use is getting a gallon of gasoline to a marine front line unit in Afghanistan. You have to put that gallon of gasoline on a tanker. You've got to take it across the Pacific. You have to put it into a truck, and truck it over the Hindu Kush and down through Afghanistan. Now, as you do this, you've got to guard it. And one of the most dangerous assignments today in Afghanistan is convoy duty. We lose marines in convoy duty, we lose sailors in convoy duty. And we take marines away from what marines should be doing; fighting, engaging, helping to rebuild that country.

So if we can reduce the demand for energy and we can produce it locally there, we have made our marines better fighters. Today, we have solar powered water purification units in Afghanistan. Today, marines are using spray-on insulation for their tents. They are reducing the amount they need and they're changing the way we get energy. I've set five goals for the Navy in energy. The biggest one is one that Alan

mentioned; ten years from now, one decade, half of all energy usage in the U.S. Navy ashore and afloat will come from non-fossil fuel sources.

There's some others. In ten years, half our bases ought to be at net zero. They ought to produce at least as much energy as they use. We have one base today, China Lake, in California that thanks to geothermal energy produces more energy than it consumes and it's putting the excess energy into the local grid. We have done some things that some of you have reported on. Last week, we flew the Green Hornet, an F-18 Hornet. And if you recognize the Green Hornet, I know you are of a certain age. The Green Hornet, a regular off the shelf F-18 that flew last week, supersonic, on a mixture of regular gasoline and biofuel, biofuel made from camelina. Camelina is in the mustard family; small seed, not edible, and it can be used in rotation with wheat and it can be used-- it can be grown in every single state in this union.

Which brings me to one other thing that this energy push is doing. We can, through partnering with Tom Vilsack and the Department of Agriculture, we can help American farmers. We can help move America to a new energy economy. And it's a move that America has to make. It's a move that we cannot afford to fall behind on. We signed an MOU, Agriculture and Navy did, in January, to coordinate our research and to work together. We had our first big event in Hawaii. Hawaii's got a big Navy, big Marine presence. Hawaiian farmers are also having difficulty as sugar cane is leaving. And Hawaii is the most dependent of all 50 states on imported foreign energy.

We're going to help all three of those things. The two obstacles that we've identified to reaching our energy goals, one is the price of alternative fuels today. And second is the lack of infrastructure to deliver those fuels. In a flip on the line from *Field of Dreams*, if the Navy comes, they will build it. If we create the demand, if we create a market, if the military does what the military can do, which is be a market leader, which is create the demand early, we can drive the price down, we can help American farmers, we can help American small business, and we can cause that infrastructure to be built.

At the same time that we are moving towards these new forms of energy, it's imperative that we also use less to do the same job. We launched our first hybrid ship last fall. It was built in my home state of Mississippi at Pascagoula, and it uses an electric drive for speeds of 10 knots or less. On its first voyage from Pascagoula around South America to its home port in San Diego, the *U.S.S. Makin Island*, a big ship, a big deck amphib., saved almost \$2 million in fuel costs. Over the lifetime of that ship, if fuel prices remain absolutely the same, we will save about a quarter of a billion dollars in fuel. We're prototyping that engine to be retrofitted onto our guided missile destroyers so that we can begin to move that further out into the fleet.

We're doing a lot of things, and we're getting a lot of help. Operation Free, which is a group formed of former military personnel just out of the military who have made it their goal to wean not only the military but the United States off the dependence on foreign sources of energy. We're getting help from, as I mentioned, the Department of Agriculture. We have five working groups going today with the Department of Energy to

make sure that we are coordinated. We're working with Karen Mills, the administrator of the Small Business Administration to make sure that small American businesses are included in this. Because so many of the good ideas, so many of the things that are going to affect us in the future come from those small, entrepreneurial businesses that have the audacity to think about things in a different way.

We're doing a lot of things, and we're doing it for one major reason. It makes us a better war fighting force. It makes us better at being the Navy and the Marine Corps that America needs. America, America's Navy, has always led when we have changed sources of energy. We changed from sail to coal in the 1850s. We changed from coal to oil in the early part of the 20th century. We went to nuclear for our subs and our aircraft carriers in the 1950s. Every single time, every single time, that we made one of those changes, there were people that said you are abandoning one source of proven energy for one that you do not know whether it will work, and by the way, it's too expensive.

Every single time, there were those naysayers. And every single time, they were wrong. And I have every confidence that they will be wrong again. The Navy and the Marine Corps do not back down from a challenge. The Navy and Marine Corps fulfill every mission given to them, including helping us become energy independent. Thank you very much. (Applause)