

**OFFICE OF  
THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS**

**USMC ENERGY SUMMIT**

**REMARKS BY  
HON. RAYMOND E. MABUS,  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY**

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2009  
9:00 A.M.  
HYATT REGENCY HOTEL,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Ladies and gentlemen, please join us in welcoming the 75<sup>th</sup> secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Raymond E. Mabus. (Applause.)

**SECRETARY RAYMOND E. MABUS:**

Thank you very much. I can't tell you how happy I am to be here today. I'm particularly happy to be here with your fine Commandant. I have – it's been my great pleasure and privilege to get to know General Conway, and a lot of the Marines over the past three months that I've been in this job.

I want to talk – before I get to energy, I just have to do this – I just got back, Tuesday, from theater. And I went to Afghanistan, Iraq, Djibouti, three ships at sea, Iraqi oil platform and Bahrain and then came back through Landstuhl – through the hospital at Landstuhl in Germany. And an overwhelming impression that I came back with was how our young military – and particularly the Marines; I want to brag on the Marines in particular – under the most trying conditions, under just tough, tough environments in every way possible, how well they are performing and how high the morale is.

You know, you ask these Marines what do they want to do, can I do anything for you? And about half of them wanted to know how they'd stay in. Can you leave us here longer? The ones in Iraq said we're beginning to draw down here; how to I get to Afghanistan? This country ought to be amazingly proud of the troops that represent us overseas. (Applause.) You know, our Marine Corps – two-thirds of them are under 25 years old; two-thirds are on their first tour; two-thirds are a lance corporal or below. And yet, the skill level, the devotion level, the commitment level, the involvement of these folks cannot be understated.

So it was really an amazing trip for me. I learned a lot but mostly, how proud I am of the sailors and the Marines that I came in contact with. And in a way, it gave me a new appreciation in terms of how we get our energy, because I was off the Horn of Africa, I was in the Persian Gulf and I was on an Iraqi oil platform through which a very large percentage of Iraqi oil flows out of the country. That was one of the hottest days of my life – (laughter) – out on this oil platform.

But I left – after 3 or 4 hours – the security team that is there – the ships that patrol the area. And you go into combat and you look up at the radar scan and it's almost unbroken white line because there's so many contacts – there's so many contacts out there probing, fishing – unclear what they're doing. But the level of focus that you've got to have to do that is just truly astounding. Energy is one my priorities of the Department of the Navy – energy in all its aspects.

You had a great speech. You had a terrific speech from the Commandant, who said some of these things way better than I'm going to say them. But we have simply got to have a different source of energy than we have today. We have simply got to begin to move away from oil as the source of energy for our military. You look back and you can make a pretty good argument that World War I and II were fought in large part, at least the tactics of it, over energy. World War I – the British fleet had just moved from cold water and the First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill said that we have to be owners of, or at least the controllers of, a very large portion of the oil that we require.

And if you look at what was fought over during World War I, Churchill was prophetic over that. World War II, both in the Pacific and in the Caucasus, if you look at why movements were made by the Japanese, who went down through the Central Pacific, why Germany went into the Caucasus, it was all about energy – it was all about oil. And in a previous job that I had, ambassador to Saudi Arabia, I learned a lot about the history in that region – how, on Valentine's Day, 1945, President Roosevelt met with King Abdul Aziz outside of Saudi Arabia on the USS Quincy in the middle of Great Bitter Lake in the Suez Canal and how the main purpose for Roosevelt being there was to make sure that America retained the oil concessions in Saudi Arabia.

Roosevelt gave Abdul Aziz the airplane that he came in as a gift. Times have changed a little bit. Can you imagine the president of the United States giving away Air Force One today? (Laughter.) Churchill came through about a week later to see Abdul Aziz. Roosevelt had not told Churchill he was going to make that stop and Churchill was, obviously, fighting for British interests at the time. He gave Abdul Aziz the first Rolls-Royce that came off the assembly line after World War II. But the focus that oil, petroleum energy has driven towards specific regions of the world and toward certain strategies is pretty astounding.

And if you look at just chokepoints – vital points – 40 percent of all the world's seaborne oil and 20 percent of the total oil in the world goes through the Straights of Hormuz; 36 percent of that oil – of all oil – goes through the Straights of Malacca; 10 percent through the Suez Canal. The vulnerability of that supply for the world is pretty dramatically illustrated just by those three potential chokepoints. Three-point-three million barrels a day go through the Gulf of Aden and all the piracy that has been in the news so recently.

While I was out at the oil platform, one of the things that struck me – because a big tanker came in while I was there – you look up on that tanker and there, all around the deck, was razor wire to prevent pirates from coming up against the back wall platform of that oil tanker. We have focused, for a long time, on the national security side of energy and oil, and rightly so. But the places that this energy comes from, sometimes, aren't the most stable. Geography is against us. And it leads us to make decisions that perhaps we wouldn't make absent the need for that source of energy.

We've got to pay attention to sort of where the energy comes from and what kind of energy we're talking about. We have to move away from some unsustainable energy that we've got – got to move away from oil as the source of most of our energy. The United States consumes 25 percent of the world's oil, yet we control the production of only 3 percent of it. National governments or their state-run entities control 77 percent of the world's oil. Sixteen of the top 25 oil companies are national companies.

And what this does is it gives some disproportionate influence to some states that otherwise would not have that amount of control, that amount of leverage, that amount of influence in the world. We even have a presidential doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, talking about if there is a stoppage, if there is aggression in the Persian Gulf, that we would consider that an attack against our national interests. And based upon what has happened and the Combat Action Ribbons and Purple Hearts that you see, we have enforced that doctrine in some very vigorous ways.

You know, in our military, we use a lot of energy; we use a lot of oil just to get more oil. We use a lot of energy – we use a lot of oil just to get oil from one place to another. I know the Commandant used the analogy of taking water across rivers – 10 percent of the oil we used in Iraq was used for combat vehicles; the other 90 percent was used for other things, including, a good part it, to get the energy there for those combat vehicles. Of the Army's top 10 fuel-using vehicles only two are combat weapons. And the cost is truly staggering.

The Air Force says that it fuels – it delivers a gallon of fuel in flight for \$42. The cost of fuel in a ground vehicle in theater starts at \$15 a gallon and goes into the hundreds. You know, if you look at the world's oil markets, all the signs are there that you're going to have increasing demand, that you're going to have rising prices, you're going to have, at some point, either flat or decreasing supply. You've got developing nations that are using more and more of this energy; you've got the volatile price shocks like last summer. And not only does it hit your family, it ripples around the whole world and causes amazing disruptions.

We have to make energy a strategic asset instead of a strategic potential liability. And we have done some things in the Department of the Navy that have been successful. And we're doing a lot more. Some of the folks I talked to before I came into this room today were talking about the things that the Navy-Marine Corps, other places are doing to try to begin to look not only at energy efficiency, although we really have to do that, but also at different forms of energy.

At China Lake – the Naval Air Weapons station – we have a geothermal project that produces 270 megawatts of electricity. It's the largest geothermal plant in the Department of the Defense and the third-largest in the country. We've got wind farms that produce up to 25 percent of some of our bases' energy needs. We've got recycling programs going on. We have military construction that is building to energy-efficient standards.

We've got some other things, like our newest amphibious ship, the *Makin Island* (LHD-8). We've got a new propulsion plant. Somebody described it as – you know, it's the first hybrid warship. It's the [Toyota] *Prius* of warships, although slightly larger – (laughter) – and with more firepower. It's got an innovative propulsion plant that replaces the steam in other LHDs – half-a-million dollars a year in savings, \$21 million over the lifetime of that ship. And electric motors provide 70 percent of the propulsion needs when it's operating at low speed.

We have a lot of things we can do. DOD is the largest user, by far, of electricity and energy in the U.S. government; 93 percent of all of the energy used by the U.S. government is used by DOD. Two percent of all the energy used in America is used by DOD. And I want what the Commandant wants; I want the Department of the Navy to not only lead DOD, but to lead the United States in energy efficiency research and in transference from the forms of energy we use today to some new ones of tomorrow.

You know, I've resisted, so far, setting some sort of percentage goal of either energy usage, reduction or moving to alternative sources of fuel. And the reason I've done that is because generally, when you put a percentage goal in there, it becomes a ceiling and not a floor and it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. But you know, at some point, it may be worthwhile to do it. But if it's done, it needs to be very high. It's needs to be something that's going to be a real stretch to get to.

And there's some easy stuff we can do. The Department of the Navy has 50,000 vehicles. We buy a pretty a pretty big percentage a year of new vehicles. We've got to begin to move toward alternative-fuel vehicles in what we buy and what we've got on bases. We've got to get untethered from oil. We've got to make sure that the energy that our military needs, that the energy our military has to have, comes from stable sources, comes from, if at all possible, American sources, comes in ways that are secure, comes at a price that is affordable. And we have got to move our military, both onshore and deployed, to different ways of thinking about, different ways of getting and different ways of using energy.

The Commandant and the CNO and I talked a lot about this and we're working on this. The Commandant is putting an energy office in my office and I'm putting one in mine. So is the Navy. We've got to pay more attention to this. We've got to take this very, very seriously. There are few things more important to the long-term stability and future not only of our military, but of our country. You know, I have never doubted the ingenuity, commitment and dedication of the American people.

I have never doubted our ability to get things done once we decide they need to be done. This is something we need to do. This is something we need to do now. Thank you for your participation. Thank you for your willingness to be a part of this. Thank you for this important contribution to the future of the United States and the strategic dominance of the United States in this vital area. God bless the United States Marine Corps and all that serve in it in dangerous places around the world. God bless the other United States services, and god bless the United States of America, the greatest nation and the freest place on Earth. Thank you all. (Applause.)

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