

Navy Secretary Addresses Santa Barbara Navy League

Ray Mabus outlines his goals while in office and salutes the men and women in uniform



Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus speaks to the Santa Barbara Navy League on Thursday about his goals while in office. (Giana Magnoli / Noozhawk photo)

By [Giana Magnoli](#), [Noozhawk Staff Writer](#) | Published on 10.22.2009

[Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus](#) visited [Santa Barbara's Navy League Council](#) on Thursday during his trip to the West Coast and spoke about the value and quality of the men and women in uniform.

Mabus leads the [Navy](#) and [Marine Corps](#) and is in charge of handling the \$150 billion budget, 900,000 people and duties such as recruitment, equipment, training and mobilizing.

Santa Barbara is the first Navy League Council he has visited, and is the largest nonport city chapter in the world, said Doug Crawford, Navy League national director and Santa Barbara Council vice president.

It's a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonpolitical organization that survives on donations, and Santa Barbara's group has more than 1,000 members supporting all branches of the armed forces. Units adopted by the group include the crews of the [USS Ronald Reagan](#) and the [USS Stockdale](#).

Having a strong Navy is essential because of its flexibility, Mabus said. With ships, the military can change missions very quickly — from being stationed to delivering relief, for example — and “don't have to go home to get our guns. We bring them with us.”

A worldwide presence also is important for relationships, Mabus said. “We can surge people, and we can surge equipment, but we cannot surge trust,” he said.

His to-do list while in office includes some goals people have told him are out of reach. First on the list is addressing the escalating cost of equipment, especially ships — of which there are 285.

“We're unilaterally disarming ourselves,” he said.

He also wants to be at the forefront of the use of unmanned vehicles and cut dependence on fossil fuels.

Ninety-three percent of the federal government's energy use comes from the [Department of Defense](#), and if it cuts down, others would follow, Mabus said.

A “great green fleet” would be useful both tactically and economically. Aircraft carriers and submarines already use nuclear energy, but less dependence on volatile nations for fuel and savings in time and money would be a great advantage, he said.

It costs about \$400 to get a gallon of gasoline to Marines on the front lines in Afghanistan, Mabus said. The Navy's already in possession of the world's first hybrid warship, the [USS Makin Island](#), which is expected to save a quarter-billion dollars in fuel over its lifetime.

Although his goals are focused on equipment, he spoke admirably of the people who are responsible for the Navy. The men and women in uniform are among the most talented, skilled and professional people he has known, he said.

Having support from civilian groups such as the Navy League is an integral part of the system. “If we’re doing our job, we’re always the away team,” he said. “Organizations like the Navy League let people know why we’re important.”

Mabus was previously the governor of Mississippi and was appointed secretary of the Navy in July by [President Barack Obama](#).

He was also featured on [The Daily Show](#) with [Jon Stewart](#) this month. His large travel team and family entourage prompted Stewart to tell him, “You roll like [Snoop Dogg](#).”