

**REMARKS BY
ADMIRAL MIKE MULLEN
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF**

LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2008

ADMIRAL MICHAEL MULLEN: While I assure you, growing up in the Santa Ana Valley is a gift, I never thought I'd be standing here. It's a very special place. And to Council President Garcetti, to the councilmembers, and to all of you who mean so much to this vital city, and are dedicated to a better future here for – not the city itself but really the people who make it up. I am honored, humbled to be here with you today with my wife, Deborah, who we met actually living on the East Coast.

It was one of those situations where our mothers who are here went to a reception. And gee, I have a daughter living in Washington. I have a son at Annapolis. As mothers are wont to do, some 40 years later, it's still very, very strong. And I could not be here without her support. She's raised two sons while I was gone a lot. And believe me, we're partners in this. And so it's special for both of us.

To those of you who are serving here in the military, in the police and the fire department and throughout the city, I also want to say thanks. Thanks to you. Thanks to your families who support you in this. A couple of you I talked to recognize the challenges that we have in terms of wanting to get back from Iraq, National Guard units and you represent the best of America, the best of Los Angeles. And it is a privilege to be here with you. And again, not unlike me, you wouldn't be out here without tremendous support from the family members. I can't say enough about how much we appreciate it, what you do for our nation. Thank you.

I won't go on for long except to say this is a vital hub of our country. And some 350,000 young men and women in the Los Angeles vicinity serve either active or reserve in our military. And their families are equally supportive. So it is not often thought of as a military town. But when you consider that number, it really in many ways is. We are incredibly dependant on them, on the support for them as they serve.

I had the privilege the other day – Friday morning, actually – of speaking in New York at a conference called "Service Nation." And I was taken back by the spirit of service that was there. And I spoke to those who are my age, as what I call a leading-edge baby boomer – and those who are actually my age who are retired in our country and have a wealth of talent that can also help us in these very challenging times across the full spectrum of services.

I was also very moved by the 22-years-olds and 23-year-olds who were there serving in capacities across many, many institutions, both nationally and internationally. And they also are very similar to those young people who serve in the military these days who have a spirit and a patriotism and a dedication and understanding to do something for something beyond themselves to make a difference. So I'm very encouraged by that.

And Mr. Garcetti talked about this spirit of service here. And I think it is clearly a wonderful aspect of what we're discussing now across the nation. And certainly, I've been not just across this nation but around the world. And we live in a time where that is very much needed. You honor us today being here. It is very special to come back to Los Angeles and to see friends and to meet people. In fact, Dennis and I – my brother and Dennis were high-school classmates at Notre Dame. And pretty quickly, reuniting people that you have not seen or known of for an awful long time – indeed, I go here to spend a couple hours at Notre Dame High School with the student body there.

And they are, to me, what our future is about: investing in our young people, investing in a way where their future is assured – here, across our country, and in fact, in many ways, around the world – so it's a special treat to be here. I look forward to spending a few days here over the weekend with both family, friends, as well as individuals who are making a difference in ROTC and recruiting and in the military.

Believe me, as I indicated, I had no plans to be here. When I left here at the age of 17 and went to Annapolis, it was the other side of the world. It isn't now. But back in the '60s, you just didn't get on an airplane and fly across country very often. And the underpinnings that I have here from my family and from my community serve me – have served me to this day. And they're underpinnings I'll absolutely never forget. So thanks for all you do.

Thanks for supporting the 2.2 million young men and women who serve. I would ask you to pay attention to those families whose military members have been wounded, the families of the fallen whose lives have changed forever. They still have the American dream. They want to own a piece of the rock. They want to have jobs. They want to raise their kids in security. They want to go to – they want their kids to have an education. They want an education.

The way they get – the way they achieve their dream may be a little different because they're injured and their lives have been certainly redirected temporarily. But they are inspirational young people. And in particular as well – and the only way I know how to take care of them is to have the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and really communities throughout the land reach to them to make sure that their sacrifices are recognized and they're in good shape for the rest of their lives.

So please keep them in mind as you go about your business. They are wonderful young people who have done what we've asked them to do as a country – not blinked an eye about it and just moved on and made a huge difference.

So again, thanks. Thanks for your support. Thanks to – it's great to meet the firefighters, the police, and those who serve with the same kind of spirit that our military does, both in our country and around the world. Please – I know you take good care of them. Recognize them. They really do make a difference. Thanks.