



**TESTIMONY OF
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**ON
“BORDER SECURITY THREATS TO THE HOMELAND:
DHS’ RESPONSE TO INNOVATIVE TACTICS AND TECHNIQUES”**

**BEFORE THE
HOUSE HOMELAND SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE
ON BORDER AND MARITIME SECURITY**

JUNE 19, 2012

INTRODUCTION

Good morning Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Cuellar, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. I am honored to be here today to discuss the Coast Guard’s role in combating emerging border security threats, and in particular, the Coast Guard’s role within the maritime domain.

Threats to the nation’s border are dynamic and widespread, ranging from known illegal drug and migrant smuggling in the Caribbean Basin and Eastern Pacific to the potential for terrorist and criminal organizations to impact security, safety, and resiliency of our nation, and hamper the safe and secure movement of commerce through the global supply chain.

A LAYERED APPROACH TO COUNTER MARITIME RISK

With more than 350 ports and 95,000 miles of coastline, the U.S. maritime domain is unique in its scope and diversity. Under 14 U.S.C. sections 2 and 89, the U.S. Coast Guard has the statutory authority and responsibility to enforce all applicable Federal laws on, under, and over the high seas and waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

The Coast Guard leverages its unique authorities, capabilities, and domestic and international partnerships to maintain maritime border security through a layered and integrated approach that begins beyond the country’s physical borders. This layered approach to security begins in foreign ports where, through the International Port Security Program, the Coast Guard conducts foreign port assessments to determine the port security effectiveness and antiterrorism measures of foreign partners.

Offshore, a capable major cutter and patrol boat fleet respond to threats, and launch boats and aircraft to maintain a vigilant presence over the seas. Closer to shore, Coast Guard helicopters, small cutters and boats monitor, track, interdict, and board vessels. In our ports, the Coast Guard, along with our federal, state, local, and tribal partners, working in concert with other port stakeholders, monitors critical infrastructure, conducts vessel escorts and patrols, and inspects vessels and facilities. The Coast Guard's mix of cutters, aircraft, and boats – all operated by highly proficient personnel – allows the Coast Guard to exercise layered and effective security through the entire maritime domain.

This layered approach, which is risk-based and facilitated by our participation within the national intelligence community, allows the Coast Guard to effectively position its limited resources against the Nation's most emergent threats.

INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS

To combat threats furthest from our borders, the Coast Guard fosters strategic relationships with partner nations. The International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code provides an international regime to ensure ship and port facilities take appropriate preventative measures comparable to our domestic regime under the Maritime Transportation Security Act. Under the International Port Security Program, Coast Guard personnel visit over 150 countries and 900 ports on a biennial cycle to assess the effectiveness of foreign port antiterrorism measures and verify compliance with the ISPS Code. Vessels arriving from non-ISPS compliant countries are required to take additional security precautions, may be boarded by the Coast Guard before being granted permission to enter, and in specific cases, may be refused entry.

Additionally, the Coast Guard maintains 42 maritime bilateral law enforcement agreements with partner nations, which facilitate coordination and the forward deployment of boats, cutters, aircraft, and personnel to deter and counter threats as close to their origin as possible. These agreements also enable us to assist partner nations in exerting their span of control and maintaining regional maritime domain awareness.

To address the threats and leverage the opportunities for improving border security closer to the United States, the Coast Guard, U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), the Mexican Navy (SEMAR), and the Mexican Secretariat for Communications and Transportation (SCT), have strengthened their collective relationship, in part through the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP). This commitment demonstrates that the United States and Mexico share many areas of mutual interest that are vital to the security of each country. SEMAR and SCT are increasing their engagement with the Coast Guard through training, exercises, coordinated operations, and intelligence and information sharing.

The North American Maritime Security Initiative (NAMSI) provides an operational relationship between SEMAR, NORTHCOM, the Government of Canada, and the Coast Guard and coordinates standard procedures for communications, training, procedures, and operations. Since the inception of NAMSI in December 2008, there have been 24 joint cases yielding 62,816 pounds of narcotics seizures.

On our shared border with Canada, the Coast Guard is an integral part of the Integrated Border Enforcement Team operations where U.S. and Canadian agencies work together sharing information and expertise to support interdiction operations along the U.S. and Canadian border. From this partnership, an operational relationship known as Integrated Cross-Border Maritime Law Enforcement Operations, commonly referred to as Shiprider, was developed. The Shiprider Framework Agreement is on schedule to be considered for ratification by the Canadian Parliament during the summer of 2012. This will allow unprecedented law enforcement flexibility in the shared waters of the U.S. and Canadian maritime border.

When the Shiprider Framework Agreement is ratified, specially trained U.S and Canadian officers from Federal, state, local, and tribal agencies will be granted cross-designated law enforcement authorities. U.S. officers will become Peace Officers in Canada, and Canadian officers will be Customs Officers in the United States. They will facilitate improved integrated operations and provide the ability to U.S. and Canadian law enforcement officers to carry weapons and conduct law enforcement operations on both sides of the border. The Coast Guard is the lead U.S. agency, or Central Authority, for Shiprider, as is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) for Canada. The Coast Guard and RCMP have developed an educational curriculum taught at the Coast Guard's Maritime Law Enforcement Academy in Charleston, South Carolina. To date, law enforcement officers from the Coast Guard and RCMP, in addition to officers from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and tribal law enforcement officers from the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe (United States) and Akwesasne Tribe (Canada) have been trained and cross-designated.

DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIPS

As outlined by President Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Harper in the Beyond the Border declaration, border security includes the safety, security, and resiliency of our Nation; the protection of our environmental resources; and the facilitation of the safe and secure movement of commerce in the global supply chain. Specific to our Nation's southwest border, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) implemented a Southwest Border Security Initiative to keep our communities safe from threats of border-related violence and crime, and to weaken the transnational criminal organizations that threaten the safety of communities in the United States and Mexico.

The Coast Guard coordinates and conducts joint operations with other DHS components and interagency partners to ensure a whole of government response to border threats. A DHS Senior Guidance Team (SGT), co-chaired by the Coast Guard, CBP, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, serves to improve efficiency and effectiveness within DHS. Recently, the SGT facilitated promulgation of the DHS Small Vessel Security Implementation Plan as well as the Maritime Operations Coordination Plan, which ensures operational coordination, planning, information sharing, intelligence integration, and response activities.

Coast Guard Captains of the Port are designated as Federal Maritime Security Coordinators. In this role, they lead the Area Maritime Security (AMS) Committees and oversee development and regular review of AMS Plans. AMS Committees have developed strong working relationships with other Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in an environment that fosters maritime stakeholder participation.

The Joint Harbor Operations Center (JHOC) in San Diego, California is another example of the evolution of joint operations at the port level. Located at Coast Guard Sector San Diego, the JHOC is manned with Coast Guard, CBP, and local Marine Police watchstanders. JHOC-coordinated operations contributed directly to the interdiction of 1,103 illegal immigrants and 80,500 pounds of illegal drugs in FY 2011 and FY 2012 (through May 27th). On a national scale, the establishment of Interagency Operations Centers (IOCs) for port security is well underway. In ports such as Charleston, Puget Sound, San Diego, Boston and Jacksonville, the Coast Guard, CBP, and other agencies are sharing workspace and coordinating operational efforts for improved efficiency and effectiveness of maritime security operations.

Joint interdiction operations with federal partners are coordinated through the Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S). Additionally, Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachments are deployed aboard U.S. Navy and Allied assets to support detection, monitoring, interdiction and apprehension operations.

The Coast Guard has also established formal partnerships to collaborate with CBP on their maritime Predator Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) program (land based), and the Navy on their Fire Scout UAS program (cutter based), to continue efforts to develop this expanding capability. UAS capability will improve detection and surveillance activities.

When the Coast Guard is alerted to a threat to the United States that requires a coordinated U.S. Government response, the Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR) Plan is activated. The MOTR Plan uses established protocols and an integrated network of national-level maritime command and operations centers to facilitate real-time federal interagency communication, coordination, and decision-making to ensure timely and decisive responses to counter maritime threats.

MARITIME INTELLIGENCE AND TARGETING

As the lead DHS agency for maritime homeland security, the Coast Guard screens ships, crews, and passengers bound for the United States by requiring vessels to submit an Advance Notice of Arrival 96 hours prior to their arriving in a U.S. port. The Coast Guard, through its two Maritime Intelligence Fusion Centers and our Intelligence Coordination Center's COASTWATCH unit, works with CBP's National Targeting Center to analyze arriving vessels to ascertain potential risks they may pose to our Nation's security. In 2011, the Coast Guard screened more than 120,000 vessels and 28.5 million people. Screening results are passed to the appropriate Coast Guard Sector Command Center, local intelligence staffs, and CBP to be used to evaluate and take action on any potential risks. This integration has led to increased information sharing and more effective security operations.

The Coast Guard also participates in the Container Security Initiative, led by CBP, to ensure that all U.S.-bound maritime shipping containers posing a potential risk are identified and inspected prior to being placed on vessels bound for the United States. This initiative encourages interagency cooperation through collecting and sharing information and trade data gathered from ports, strengthening cooperation, and facilitating risk-informed decision making.

CONCLUSION

The Coast Guard has forged effective international and domestic partnerships to optimize maritime border security while minimizing delays to the flow of commerce. We foster training, share intelligence and information, as appropriate, and coordinate operations to deter and interdict current and emerging threats to our border.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and for your continued support of the U.S. Coast Guard. I would be pleased to answer your questions.