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Homeland Security

United States  
Coast Guard



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**TESTIMONY OF  
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**ON  
COAST GUARD MARITIME SECURITY CAPABILITIES**

**BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON BORDER & MARITIME SECURITY  
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**INTRODUCTION**

Good morning Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Cuellar, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. It is a pleasure to be here today to discuss the Coast Guard's maritime security capabilities.

For more than 220 years, the U.S. Coast Guard has safeguarded the nation's maritime interests and natural resources on our rivers and ports, in the coastal regions, on the high seas, and around the world. The Coast Guard saves those in peril and protects the nation's maritime border, marine transportation system, natural resources, and the environment. Coast Guard men and women – active duty, reserve, civilian and auxiliaries alike – deliver premier service to the public. The Coast Guard is an adaptable, responsive, military force of maritime professionals whose broad legal authorities, assets, geographic diversity, and expansive partnerships provide a persistent presence in the inland waters, ports, coastal regions, and far offshore areas of operations. This presence, coupled with over two centuries of experience as the nation's maritime first responder, provides tremendous value and service to the public.

**A LAYERED APPROACH TO COUNTER MARITIME RISK**

With more than 350 ports and 95,000 miles of coastline (including bays, lakes, and rivers), the U.S. maritime domain is unique in its scope and diversity, requiring an integrated and layered approach to security.

The Coast Guard leverages its unique maritime security authorities, capabilities and partnerships to mitigate risk and improve security in our domestic ports, on the high seas, and in ports abroad. The Coast Guard's overarching strategy is to increase maritime border security through a layered security system that begins beyond the country's physical borders. This layered approach to security begins

in foreign ports where the Coast Guard conducts foreign port assessments, leveraging the International Port Security Program, to assess effectiveness of port security and antiterrorism measures. Offshore, a capable major cutter fleet is able to respond to potential threats, launch boats and aircraft in adverse sea states, and maintain a presence through all weather conditions. This capability is critical to stopping threats well before they approach our shores - and the Coast Guard's planned fleet of National Security Cutters (NSCs) and Offshore Patrol Cutters (OPCs) are designed specifically to meet these requirements. Along with the fleet of NSCs and OPCs, Coast Guard C-130s and Maritime Patrol Aircraft provide broad surveillance capability maximizing effectiveness of the surface fleet. Well before vessels arrive to our ports, screening and targeting operations provide critical information regarding vessels, crews, passengers, and cargo destined for the United States. To prevent potential threats approaching our coasts, Coast Guard helicopters and patrol boats provide the ability to 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 port stakeholders, patrol our waters and critical infrastructure, conduct vessel escorts, and inspect vessels and facilities. The Coast Guard's mix of cutters, aircraft, and boats – all operated by highly proficient personnel – allow the Coast Guard to maximize its unique authorities to exercise layered and effective security through the entire maritime continuum - from overseas to the critical ports within our homeland.

## **INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS**

To address threats furthest from our borders, the Coast Guard establishes and fosters strategic relationships with other nations and international forums. The International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code was created by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) with significant Coast Guard assistance. ISPS provides an international regime to ensure ship and port facilities take appropriate preventive measures to ensure security, similar to our domestic regime in the Maritime Transportation Security Act. The International Port Security (IPS) Program places Coast Guard men and women in foreign ports that conduct maritime trade with the United States to assess the effectiveness of their antiterrorism measures and to verify compliance with ISPS Code. To date, the IPS Program has assessed more than 900 ports and facilities in more than 150 countries. The Coast Guard also supports the European Commission, the Organization of American States, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community to reduce the number of non-compliant foreign ports, thereby reducing and mitigating risk to U.S. ports. Vessels arriving to the United States 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 may be refused entry.

## **MARITIME DOMAIN AWARENESS AND OFFSHORE OPERATIONS**

Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) is a diverse set of capabilities that support all levels (strategic, operational, and tactical) of decision-making. It is a continuum of maritime knowledge, from situational awareness through current and predictive intelligence. MDA is more than an awareness of ships en route to a particular port; it also entails knowledge of:

- People: Crew, passengers, owners, and operators;
- Cargo: All elements of the global supply chain;
- Infrastructure: Vital elements of the nation's maritime infrastructure, including facilities, services and systems;

- Environment: Weather, environmentally sensitive areas, and living marine resources; and
- Trends: Shipping routes, migration routes and seasonal changes.

Effective MDA requires efficient information sharing that demands coordination among numerous participants at international, federal, regional, state, local, territorial and tribal levels of government, as well as with maritime industry and private sector partners.

The Coast Guard Intelligence Coordination Center's (ICC) COASTWATCH program is one example of efficient information sharing. COASTWATCH identifies vessels of interest that may raise national security concerns regarding the people or cargo aboard, business practices, or crew or ownership associations. COASTWATCH is conducted in partnership with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Office of Naval Intelligence and observes vessels of interest until their arrival at U.S. ports. COASTWATCH also initiated use of CBP's Automated Targeting System-Passenger (ATS-P). ATS-P enables real-time database checks and allows COASTWATCH to develop scenario-based targeting rule sets in order to identify suspect maritime entities. It also has the capability to provide information to the FBI, CBP, and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) for persons discovered with possible terrorism links. For example, COASTWATCH has successfully uncovered and disrupted human smuggling organizations using commercial ships. In 2010, COASTWATCH screened 71.2 million people, more than 257,000 ship arrivals, and generated 309 advance warning reports regarding arriving ships, people or cargoes posing a potential national security or criminal threat.

Close coordination and joint operations with CBP and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in international programs are also critical. The Coast Guard participates in the Container Security Initiative (CSI) to ensure that all U.S.-bound maritime containers that pose a potential risk are identified and inspected before they are placed on vessels destined for the U.S. CSI encourages interagency cooperation by developing a capacity to collect and share information and trade data gathered from CSI ports, strengthening cooperation within DHS and facilitates enhanced risk informed decision making.

The Coast Guard's major cutters and deployable forces are critical to the layered security approach. Major cutters are the only Coast Guard assets able to intercept and board threats far off-shore prior to entering the U.S. waters, and when necessary near the point of departure, in all weather conditions. The Coast Guard's planned fleet of NSCs and OPCs are critical to maintaining our layered maritime defense. Coast Guard LEDETs traveling with naval vessels are also able to employ their unique law enforcement authorities far off-shore. As an example, to date in FY2011, the Coast Guard has interdicted 7.0 metric tons of cocaine from two self-propelled semi-submersible vessels—vessels specially designed to avoid detection while they deliver mass quantities of cocaine ultimately bound for our shores and streets. The most recent interdiction took place in April when the Cutter SHERMAN, one of our High Endurance Cutters, spotted a self-propelled semi-submersible vessel North of the Galapagos Islands. Once the crew realized they had been detected, they scuttled the vessel. The SHERMAN recovered the crew and a considerable portion of the cocaine.

Closer to home, we have strengthened mutual relationships with the Mexican Navy (SEMAR) and the Mexican Secretariat for Communications and Transportation (SCT). SEMAR and SCT are increasing their engagement with the Coast Guard and the U.S. Northern Command in education,

training, participation in exercises and coordinated operations, along with intelligence and information sharing.

At the Northern maritime border, the Coast Guard, CBP, ICE, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Canada Border Services Agency represent the core border security partnership, formalized in 2007. Working closely together the Integrated Border Enforcement Teams (IBETs) identify, investigate, and interdict individuals and organizations that may pose a threat to national security or are engaged in organized criminal activity along the Northern border. This effort includes 15 maritime IBET regions along the U.S./Canada Border. Over the past six years, the U.S. Coast Guard and RCMP have performed numerous pilot operations and developed an integrated cross-border law enforcement operational concept. An Integrated Cross-border Maritime Law Enforcement Framework Agreement between the U.S. and Canada has been signed and awaits ratification in Parliament. If ratified, this agreement will allow officers to perform intelligence-driven integrated law enforcement operations in the shared maritime border areas.

### **MARITIME THREAT RESPONSE CAPABILITIES**

The Coast Guard has developed new capabilities to address terrorist and weapons of mass destruction threats. Our Deployable Operations Group has forces capable of countering threats unique to the maritime environment. These deployable, specialized forces augment other Coast Guard forces and provide field commanders with additional capabilities.

The Coast Guard has also established a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) program and worked extensively with DHS's Domestic Nuclear Detection Office and U.S. Special Operations Command to train and equip Coast Guard personnel to detect and respond to CBRNE threats. In addition, the National Security Cutter is designed to operate in contaminated environments.

### **U.S. WATERS, U.S. PORTS, AND INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIPS**

Leveraging our longstanding partnerships and unique maritime authorities and capabilities, the Coast Guard and our interagency partners have significantly enhanced our nation's maritime security. One example of interagency cooperation and coordination is the Joint Harbor Operations Center located at Coast Guard Sector San Diego. Recognizing the multidimensional nature of the threat and the challenges of maintaining a safe and secure environment for legitimate trade and travel, Coast Guard Sector San Diego brought together 20 federal, state, and local agencies with overlapping jurisdictions and authorities for operational planning and information sharing. Partners include CBP, ICE, and the U.S. Department of Defense, as well as state and local agencies who work in unity to coordinate maritime law enforcement operations, including the interdiction of the illegal movement of people and drugs across the maritime border.

The establishment of additional Interagency Operations Centers (IOCs) for port security is well underway. In ports including Charleston, Puget Sound, San Diego, Boston and Jacksonville, CBP, Coast Guard and other agencies are sharing workspace and coordinating operational efforts for improved the efficiency and effectiveness of maritime assets. IOCs provide a framework to

align agency operations among DHS and other federal, regional, state, local, tribal, territorial and international organizations and port stakeholders. Additionally, the web-based information sharing system *Watch Keeper* has been deployed in eight ports to date. *Watch Keeper* supports interagency information sharing and MDA management across port entities.

Coast Guard Captains of the Port, in their Federal Maritime Security Coordinator (FMSC) role, also significantly enhance domestic maritime transportation security and preparedness by increasing cooperation and coordination. As the FMSC, Coast Guard officers manage the nation's Area Maritime Security (AMS) Plans in coordination with respective AMS Committees. The AMS Committees and maritime stakeholders exercise and review these plans annually.

AMS Plans are informed by the Coast Guard's annual Maritime Security Risk Assessment Model (MSRAM) analysis which involves the participation of hundreds of maritime security partners, including owners, operators, and emergency response and local law enforcement personnel through the AMSCs. MSRAM is used to perform risk assessments on critical infrastructure and key resources. MSRAM offers an analysis interface capable of generating tailored results to support risk management decisions at strategic, operational, and tactical levels.

Coast Guard Maritime Security and Response Operations (MSRO) reflect the application of pertinent authorities, competencies, capabilities, capacities, and partnerships to deny the use and exploitation of the maritime domain to criminal or hostile actors. The Coast Guard coordinates, integrates, and facilitates the activities of many federal, regional, state, tribal, territorial and local government agencies as well as the maritime industry to generate layered security to prevent, disrupt, protect, respond to, and recover from terror-related risks in the maritime domain.

In 2010, Coast Guard forces conducted:

- More than 2,400 security boardings of high interest vessels;
- Almost 17,000 security boardings of small vessels;
- More than 3,000 escorts of high-capacity passenger vessels, e.g., ferries and cruise ships;
- More than 1,420 escorts of high-value U.S. naval vessels transiting U.S. waterways;
- More than 850 escorts of vessels carrying certain dangerous cargoes.

The execution of MSRO's antiterrorism, counterterrorism, military outload protection operations, security response, and initial recovery operations deter our adversaries and maximize the probability of disrupting their pre-operational planning and interdicting a maritime transportation security incident.

Finally, in the event that a significant incident occurs, CBP and the Coast Guard have implemented a set of protocols to develop recommended courses of actions to help recover the functionality of the Marine Transportation System (MTS). The protocols provide a forum to identify and act on important issues to facilitate rapid MTS recovery and the resumption of commerce. They also establish a process to collect and disseminate information regarding the status of the national MTS, provide recommendations for national-level priorities, including cargo or vessel priorities, or strategic actions necessary to facilitate rapid recovery of the MTS and resumption of trade. The protocols have been activated on several occasions, most currently for the floods in the Western Rivers. The Coast Guard and CBP are currently supporting DHS in

its efforts to foster harmonized international standards for trade resumption with the International Maritime Organization, the World Customs Organization, and other multinational organizations.

## **CONCLUSION**

The President's remarks at the Coast Guard Academy Class of 2011 commencement perfectly summarize the Coast Guard's critical role in protecting and serving the nation:

“And while we can never predict what the future may hold, we know that the complex missions asked of our Coast Guard have never been more important. Around the world, we need you to partner with other nations to secure their ports, protect the vital shipping lanes of the Persian Gulf, combat piracy off the Horn of Africa, and help train foreign partners from the Americas to Africa to Asia. Here at home, we need you to stop those smugglers, and protect our oceans, and prevent terrorists from slipping deadly weapons into our ports.”

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.