

The Honorable John Carter
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
Coast Guard FY 2014 Budget Request
10:00 PM | Tuesday | April 16, 2013 | H-140 US Capitol
Opening Statement As Prepared

Subcommittee will come to order –

Before we begin, I think we should all take a moment to reflect upon yesterday's events in Boston --

In the shadow of a senseless act of terrorism, we once again saw courage from first responders, as well as resiliency and compassion from our fellow American citizens.

These events serve as a sobering reminder that there is, in fact, evil in the world and that our homeland security demands constant vigilance.

Our sincere thoughts and prayers go out to the victims and their families and we stand ready to support those who will bring the perpetrators of this heinous act to justice.

Admiral, thank you testifying before us today. No one can doubt your dedication to service...or that of the active duty military and civilians that you command.

But, our chore here today is a challenging one – we are trying to make some sense of the Coast Guard's latest budget request....a proposal that: cuts more than 850 active duty full time positions and decreases military end-strength to under 40,000; decommissions two High Endurance Cutters and numerous air assets; delays the acquisition of several vital assets; and squanders \$30 million dollars in savings per year by dragging out the acquisition of the Fast Response Cutters.

So, instead of the Administration's claimed support for frontline operations or for supporting mission requirements, this budget submission severely diminishes current, near-term, and future capabilities.

Admiral, to put it mildly, this is a budget that is very difficult for us to accept. We fully understand the challenge you faced in balancing a shrinking budget while also trying to take care of Coast Guard families, sustaining operations with aging assets, and recapitalizing for the future. This is no small task in today's fiscal environment.

But, the Congress - and this Subcommittee in particular - has never supported a plan that so bluntly guts operational capabilities...that so clearly increases our Nation's vulnerability to maritime risks, including more illegal drugs.

I believe what is at stake is no less than the future of our Coast Guard – you appear to have arrived at a tipping point between the Coast Guard that you assert is needed and the agency this Administration is *actually* willing to support.

Admiral, we know you have a tough job – that is precisely why we are relying upon you to explain how this budget meets our Nation’s needs for both fiscal discipline and robust security.

Before I turn to the Admiral for his statement, let me first recognize the distinguished Ranking Member for any remarks he wishes to make.

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