



**TESTIMONY OF  
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DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR OPERATIONS POLICY AND CAPABILITIES**

**ON  
“WHAT DOES A SECURE MARITIME BORDER LOOK LIKE?”**

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

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**Introduction**

Good morning Madame Chair Miller, Ranking Member Jackson-Lee, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. I am honored to be here today to discuss the Coast Guard's role in maritime border security.

The U.S. maritime border is vast and challenging in its scope and diversity. It encompasses the expanse of our ports and internal waters, our Territorial Seas, Contiguous Zone and our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) out to 200 nautical miles from shore and beyond in some cases for Extended Continental Shelf Claims. Threats to our maritime border have the potential to adversely impact our national security and economic prosperity. These threats include illicit smuggling and trafficking activities conducted by Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs), undocumented migration, illegal exploitation of our natural resources, potential terrorist activities, and the disruption of maritime commerce. Securing our maritime borders requires a layered, multi-faceted approach of authorities, capabilities, competencies, and partnerships. To accomplish its mission, the Coast Guard optimizes the use of operational resources, leverages intelligence and maritime domain awareness programs, and fosters domestic and international partnerships. These activities deter, and disrupt threats as far from the United States as possible. The Coast Guard is at the forefront of securing the broad and varied expanse of ocean that makes up our maritime border while facilitating the smooth and efficient flow of legitimate maritime commerce and transportation.

**Maritime Domain Awareness**

One of the most important aspects of the Coast Guard's layered security approach is to understand the movement of vessels, people and goods across our maritime borders. By combining security operations with effective governance such as vessel and cargo screening protocols, enforcing notice of arrival requirements and leveraging intelligence and information resources from across government, the Coast Guard facilitates the secure and efficient flow of commerce through our nation's waterways.

Vessel screening applies analytical criteria to inbound vessels to develop a manageable set of targets for a potential Coast Guard boarding and/or inspection. The Coast Guard screens ships, crews, and passengers for all vessels required to submit a 96-hour Advance Notice of Arrival (ANOVA) prior to entering a U.S. port. Complementary screening efforts occur at the national and tactical levels. At the national level, the Intelligence Coordination Center's Coastwatch Branch, which is co-located with CBP at the National Targeting Center, screens crew and passenger information. Through our partnership with CBP, we have expanded access to counter-terrorism, law enforcement, and immigration databases and this integration has led to greater information sharing and more effective security operations. In 2012, Coastwatch screened approximately 118,000 ANOVAs and 29.5 million crew/passenger records.

At the tactical level, each of the Coast Guard's Area Commanders receives support from a Maritime Intelligence Fusion Center (MIFC), which screens the commercial vessels operating within their areas of responsibility (over 350,000 in 2012) for unique indicators, as well as providing additional screening for vessels that submit an ANOVA. The MIFCs focus on screening characteristics associated with the vessels itself, such as ownership, ownership associations, cargo, and previous activity. Coast Guard vessel screening results are disseminated to the appropriate DHS Maritime Interagency Operations Center, Sector Command Center, local intelligence staffs, and CBP and other interagency partners to evaluate and take action on any potential risks.

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

### **Operations to Counter Maritime Risk**

Coast Guard cutters, maritime patrol aircraft, and Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDETs) embarked on U.S. Navy and Allied nation vessels are critical enforcement and deterrence assets in the offshore environment. They are capable of responding to threats far from our coasts and maintain a vigilant presence over U.S. interests on the High Seas and in our EEZ. Closer to home, Coast Guard helicopters, patrol boats, and boat stations monitor, track, and interdict vessels of interest. In our ports, the Coast Guard partners with federal, state, local, tribal, and industry stakeholders, to monitor critical infrastructure, conduct vessel escorts and patrols, and inspect vessels and facilities. The Coast Guard's mix of multi-mission cutters, aircraft, boats, as well as deployable specialized forces, allows us to exercise layered and effective security throughout the maritime domain.

To leverage existing programs, the Coast Guard established formal partnerships to collaborate with CBP on their maritime Predator Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) program (land based), and with the Navy UAS programs. Incorporating the UAS capability with manned patrolling will improve detection and surveillance activities at a significantly reduced cost when compared to manned aviation.

During a recent proof of concept deployment aboard USCGC BERTHOLF, the ScanEagle UAS proved to be a superb force multiplier in two separate law enforcement cases, resulting in the removal of 570 kilograms of cocaine and the detention of six suspected smugglers.

When the Coast Guard is alerted to a specific maritime 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 a timely, unified and decisive response to maritime threats.

### **International Partnerships**

To detect, deter and counter threats as early as possible, 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 consistent with our domestic regime under the Maritime Transportation Security Act. Through the International Port Security Program, the Coast Guard conducts foreign port assessments to determine the port security effectiveness and antiterrorism measures of foreign trading partners. Since the inception of the International Port Security Program in 2004, Coast Guard personnel have visited more than 150 countries and approximately 1,200 port facilities. These countries generally receive biennial assessments to verify compliance with the ISPS Code and U.S. maritime security regulations, as appropriate. Vessels arriving in non-ISPS Code compliant countries are required to take additional security precautions while in those ports and may be boarded by the Coast Guard before being granted permission to enter U.S. ports. In specific cases, these vessels may be refused entry.

To more effectively counter maritime threats in the offshore region and throughout the Western Hemisphere, the Coast Guard maintains more than 30 maritime bilateral law enforcement agreements with partner nations. These agreements facilitate coordination of operations and the forward deployment of boats, cutters, aircraft, and personnel to deter and counter threats as close to their origin as possible.

To further address maritime threats and to improve security along with Southwest Border of 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 relations through the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP). Through the SPP, SEMAR and SCT are increasing their engagement with the Coast Guard through training, exercises, coordinated operations, and intelligence and information sharing. Furthermore, the North American Maritime Security Initiative (NAMSI) provides an operational relationship between SEMAR, NORTHCOM, Canadian Forces, and the Coast Guard built upon standard procedures for communications, training, and operations. Since the inception of NAMSI in December 2008, there have been 30 joint narcotics interdiction cases resulting in the seizure of 97,200 pounds of illegal narcotics.

Cooperation and collaboration with Canada remains one of the Coast Guard's most enduring and effective international partnerships. As outlined in the U.S.-Canada 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. The Coast Guard is a key part of Integrated Border Enforcement Team (IBET) activities, where U.S. and Canadian agencies share information and expertise to support interdiction operations along our common border. From this partnership, an operational relationship known as Integrated Cross-border Maritime Law Enforcement Operations (ICMLEO), commonly referred to as *Shiprider*, has emerged. The ICMLEO arrangement spans the shared waterways of U.S./Canadian maritime border, and greatly facilitates cooperative, integrated maritime operations by providing U.S. and Canadian law enforcement officers the authority to conduct joint law enforcement operations on both sides of the border.

### **Domestic Partnerships**

The Coast Guard coordinates and conducts joint operations with other DHS components and interagency partners as part of a whole-of-government response to maritime border threats. Along the Southwest Border, DHS partners continue to apply a broad-based approach to keep communities safe from threats of border-related violence and crime, and to weaken the TCOs that threaten the safety of communities throughout the Western Hemisphere.

In our ports, the Coast Guard Captain of the Port (COTP) is designated as the Federal Maritime Security Coordinator (FMSC). In this role, COTPs lead the Nation's 43 Area Maritime Security Committees (AMSC) and oversee the development, regular review, and annual exercise of their respective Area Maritime Security Plans (AMSPs). AMSC's assist and advise the FMSC in the development, review, and implementation of a coordination/communication framework to identify risks and vulnerabilities in and around ports. Additionally, AMSC's coordinate resources to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from Transportation Security Incidents (TSIs). AMSCs have developed strong working partnerships between all levels of government and private industry stakeholders.

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.

The Regional Coordinating Mechanism (ReCoM) is another example of the evolution of coordinated joint operations among interagency partners. Located at San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Francisco the ReCoMs are manned with Coast Guard, CBP, and state and local law enforcement agencies. The San Diego and Los Angeles/Long Beach ReCoMs coordinated operations contributing directly to the interdiction of 1,002 illegal migrants and 210,900 pounds of illegal drugs in FY 2012 and FY 2013.

To counter the drug and migrant smuggling threat in waters off Southern California, the Coast Guard, in partnership with other federal, state, and local agencies increased our levels of effort for the standing Coast Guard Operation Baja Tempestad.

This combined operation brings additional resources to the fight against TCOs, including flight deck-equipped cutters with airborne and surface use-of-force capability; increased Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection maritime patrol aircraft flights; additional non-compliant vessel use-of-force endgame capabilities from our shore based boats; and enhanced intelligence collection, analysis, and dissemination. In FY 2013, this interagency effort has led to the removal of more than 90,900 pounds of marijuana and the apprehension of 400 illegal migrants.

On the high seas and throughout the six million square mile drug Transit Zone, joint interdiction operations with federal partners are coordinated through Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) and Joint Interagency Task Force West (JIATF-W). To support detection, monitoring, interdiction, and apprehension operations in the Transit Zone, the Coast Guard leverages maritime assets by forward deploying cutters, patrol aircraft, and Law Enforcement Detachments embarked on U.S. Navy and Allied (British, Dutch, and Canadian) assets. The Coast Guard also works closely with the State and Justice Departments to bring suspected illicit traffickers to the United States for prosecution.

In Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard is part of a broad federal effort to strengthen current joint operations. As the lead federal maritime agency within DHS, the Coast Guard is conducting targeted surge operations in the maritime domain and is collaborating with international stakeholders to stem the flow of illicit drugs into Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. As a result of these joint efforts, 7,165 kilograms of cocaine and 200 pounds of marijuana were removed in FY 2012 and 24,000 kilograms of cocaine and 9,500 pounds of marijuana were removed in FY 2013.

### **Conclusion**

The Coast Guard's layered maritime border security strategy addresses the broad range of offshore and coastal threats that have the potential to impact our national security and economic prosperity. From our efforts to expand maritime domain awareness to our international and domestic partnerships, and investments in cutter, boat and aircraft recapitalization, the Coast Guard continues to improve maritime border security while facilitating the safe flow of legitimate commerce.

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