

U. S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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**TESTIMONY OF
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**ON
“COAST GUARD HOMELAND SECURITY MISSIONS”**

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

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Introduction

Good morning, Chairwoman Miller, Ranking Member Jackson Lee, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. It is a pleasure to be here today to discuss the Coast Guard’s homeland security missions.

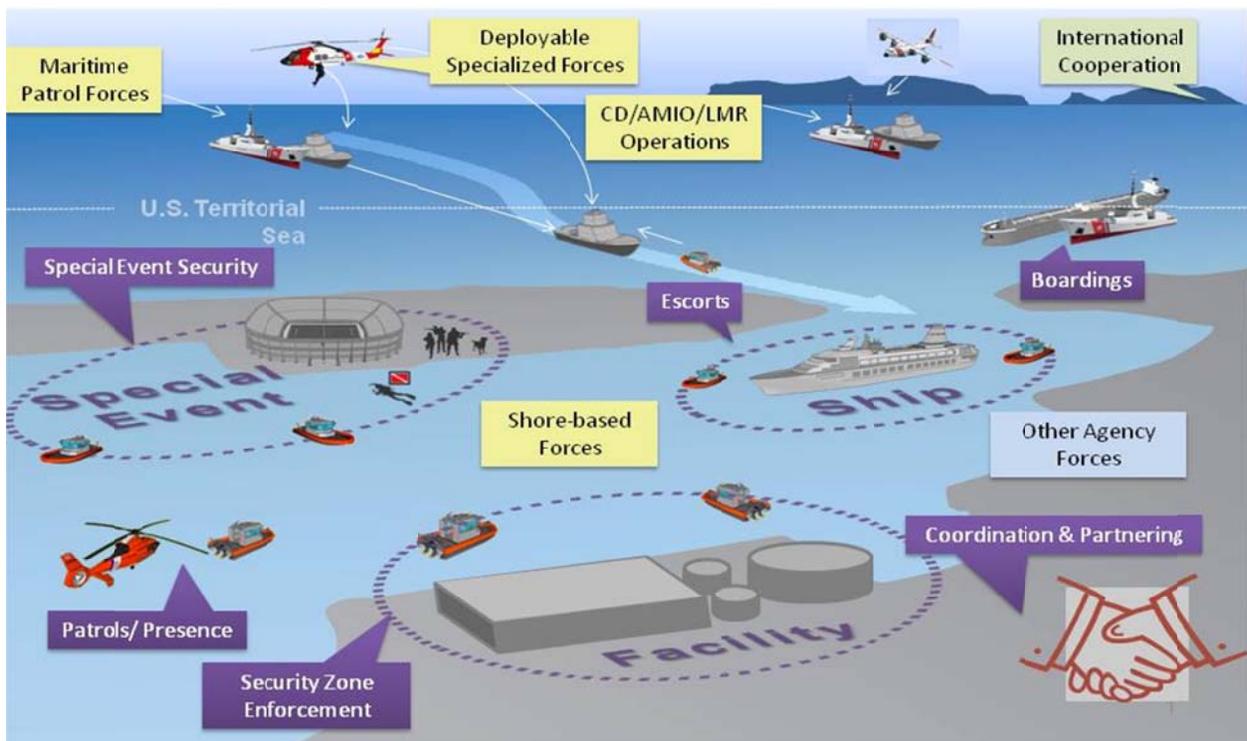
For more than two centuries, the U.S. Coast Guard has safeguarded the Nation’s maritime interests on our rivers and ports, in coastal regions, on the high seas, and around the world. The Coast Guard is at all times an armed service, a federal law enforcement agency, a humanitarian service, and a member of the Intelligence Community charged with significant safety, security, and stewardship responsibilities in the maritime domain. Every day the Coast Guard conducts search and rescue, escorts vessels carrying dangerous cargoes, interdicts drug and migrant smugglers, patrols our ports and waterways, enforces fisheries laws, responds to oil and hazardous material spills, maintains aids to navigation, screens commercial ships and crews entering U.S. ports, inspects U.S. flagged vessels, examines cargo containers, investigates marine accidents, trains international partners, and supports Overseas Contingency Operations. This diverse mission set and authorities are vital to the safety and security of our Nation’s maritime transportation system and essential to our Nation’s economic growth. With 223 years of experience as the nation’s maritime first responder, the Coast Guard provides tremendous value and service to the public.

A Layered System to Counter Maritime Risk

As a maritime nation, the U.S. relies on the safe, secure, and free flow of legitimate global commerce on the high seas, throughout the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) – the largest of any country in the world - and inside America’s ports and waterways.

With more than 4.5 million square miles of territorial seas and EEZ, 95,000 miles of coastline, 12,000 miles of navigable waters, over 350 ports, and significant international maritime border interests with Canada and Mexico, the U.S. maritime domain is broad in its scope and diversity, requiring an integrated and layered system for security.

The strategy of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Coast Guard is to increase maritime security through a layered system that reaches beyond the country’s physical borders. This system begins in foreign ports, spans the high seas, encompasses the U.S. EEZ and territorial seas, and continues into our ports. The Coast Guard’s mix of cutters, aircraft, boats, and deployable specialized forces (DSF), as well as international and domestic partnerships, allow the Coast Guard to leverage its unique maritime security authorities and competencies to reduce risk and improve security throughout the maritime domain.



Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) is one of the most important aspects of the Coast Guard’s layered security system and it supports all levels (strategic, operational, and tactical) of decision-making. Effective MDA requires efficient information sharing and 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. 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;
- Trends: Shipping routes, migration routes and seasonal changes; and
- Threats: Potential or indication of illicit or hostile activity in the maritime environment.

International Cooperation

Layered security begins overseas. The Coast Guard fosters strategic relationships with partner nations to detect, deter, and counter threats as early and as far from U.S. shores as possible. To achieve that end, the Coast Guard conducts foreign port assessments and leverages the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code to assess effectiveness of security and antiterrorism measures in foreign ports. The 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 performs overseas port assessments to determine the effectiveness of security and antiterrorism measures exhibited by 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 1,300 port facilities. These countries generally receive biennial assessments to verify compliance with the ISPS Code and U.S. maritime security regulations. Vessels arriving in non-ISPS Code compliant countries are required to take additional security precautions while in those ports and may be subject to boarding and inspection by the Coast Guard before being granted permission to enter U.S. ports. In specific cases, these vessels may be refused entry. Furthermore, the International Port Security Program conducts targeted capacity building efforts to help countries that fail to meet ISPS Code achieve compliance, and to prevent countries with marginal compliance from falling into non-compliance.

Security and Governance on the High Seas

America's diplomatic strength and economic security depend upon the free flow of global commerce and a proper system of governance in the maritime domain. Coast Guard responsibilities on the high seas include detecting and interdicting contraband and illegal drug traffic, enforcing U.S. immigration laws at sea, and countering threats to maritime and economic security worldwide. A capable fleet of Maritime Patrol Forces (comprised of Coast Guard cutters and aircraft, and their crews) and DSF are critical to the layered security approach.

Within the EEZ, the Coast Guard enforces our Nation's living marine resources (LMR) and marine protected species laws and regulations to ensure the integrity of the EEZ, and to ensure the continued viability of critical fish stocks. This enforcement involves the deterrence, detection, and interdiction of illegal incursions into the EEZ by foreign fishing vessels. As these incursions represent a threat to our nation's renewable natural resources and sovereignty, the protection of the United States EEZ contributes to another fundamental layer of the Coast Guard maritime security system.

Coast Guard at-sea presence ensures compliance with international agreements for the management of LMR through enforcement of conservation and management measures created by Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs). Of the 4.5 million square miles that comprise the EEZ, more than 75% is outside the contiguous zone of the United States.

The Coast Guard maintains a strong at-sea presence to disrupt the maritime flow of illegal drugs and other contraband through the maritime drug transit zone. This presence supports national and international strategies to deter and disrupt the market for illegal drugs, dismantle Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) networks, and prevent transnational threats from reaching the United States. Through 45 established bilateral agreements, the Coast Guard facilitates 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. By extending our law enforcement capabilities into the territorial seas of other countries, the Coast Guard is at the forefront in assisting partner nations' efforts to reduce the production and transportation of illicit drugs within their sovereign boundaries.

The Coast Guard also relies on joint, interagency, and international partnerships to conduct drug interdiction. More specifically, the Coast Guard leverages the availability of U.S. Navy and Allied Nation vessels to enhance presence and expand interdiction opportunities by embarking specially trained Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDET). Coast Guard LEDETs employ their distinctive law enforcement authorities to stop threats and to gather critical information regarding vessels, crew, passengers, and cargo destined for the United States. Over the last five years, Coast Guard Maritime Patrol Forces and LEDETs have removed approximately 500 metric tons of cocaine, with a wholesale value of nearly \$17 billion.

The Coast Guard enforces U.S. immigration laws and international conventions against human smuggling through at-sea interdiction and rapid repatriation of undocumented migrants attempting to reach the United States unlawfully. The Coast Guard maintains a constant law enforcement presence at-sea to deter undocumented migrants and transnational human smugglers from using maritime routes to enter the United States, to detect and interdict undocumented migrants and smugglers far from the U.S. border, and to expand Coast Guard participation in multi-agency and international border security initiatives. The Coast Guard accomplishes this mission in conjunction with other Federal, state, and local agencies, including U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and the Department of State. While the Coast Guard leads the interdiction mission on the high seas, partnerships with CBP and ICE are critical for successful shore-side interdiction operations.

The United States is also an Arctic nation, with significant interests in the future of the region. As oil and natural gas exploration in the Arctic attracts significant interest from the international community, the importance of the Arctic is more critical than ever. The Coast Guard, as the maritime component of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), has specific statutory responsibilities in U.S. Arctic waters. U.S. Coast Guard continues to assess its responsibilities in support of the emerging economic, environmental, and political issues, and will help advance our interests in that region.

In the rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape, the United States must maintain an offshore maritime presence to promote Maritime Governance and to protect America's national and homeland security interests. Moreover, with renewed national focus on the Asia Pacific, emerging international interest in the Arctic, and continuing obligations in the Western Hemisphere, a versatile U.S. Coast Guard offshore capability is an important component of the Coast Guard's layered security strategy.

Security in Coastal Waters

To address potential threats approaching our shores, Coast Guard ships, boats, aircraft and DSF provide the ability to monitor, track, interdict, and board vessels. In addition, interagency partnerships have an increasing role in the layered security approach. Coast Guard Area Commanders receive support from the National Vessel Movement Center and Maritime Intelligence Fusion Centers (MIFCs), which screen commercial vessels operating within their areas of responsibility. 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 (IOC), Sector Command Center, local intelligence staffs, CBP and other interagency partners to evaluate and take action on any potential risks. Additionally, vessel screening develops a manageable set of targets for potential Coast Guard boardings and/or inspections by Maritime Patrol Forces, Shore-Based Forces, or DSF. 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 counterterrorism, law enforcement, and immigration databases, and this integration has led to greater information sharing and more effective security operations. In 2013, Coastwatch screened approximately 126,000 Advance Notice of Arrivals (ANOs) and 30.7 million crew and passenger records of vessels before they entered U.S. Ports.

Security in U.S. Ports and Interagency Partnerships

In the Nation's 361 maritime 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 utilizes data from its Maritime Security Risk Analysis Model (MSRAM) for prioritizing security escorts and patrols. MSRAM is a terrorism risk analysis tool and methodology used at all Coast Guard Sectors to perform detailed risk analysis of the Marine Transportation System (MTS), maritime Critical Infrastructure, and other potential targets, such as large congregations of people in the maritime domain. MSRAM offers an analytical interface capable of generating tailored results to support risk-based decision making at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels.

Coast Guard Captains of the Port (COTPs), in their role as Federal Maritime Security Coordinator (FMSC), significantly enhance domestic maritime transportation security and preparedness through long standing cooperation and coordination with their respective Area Maritime Security Committees.

As the FMSC, the Coast Guard COTP works in partnership with government and private sector AMSC members to manage the Nation's 43 Area Maritime Security (AMS) Plans. These plans provide government and private industry port partners with a coordination and communication framework to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from a Transportation Security Incident or the threat thereof. The COTPs and their respective AMSCs validate their AMS Plan and ensure plan familiarity by conducting annual exercises, as required by the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA). In and around our ports, the Coast Guard also maintains robust multi-mission maritime first responder assets capable of saving lives, protecting property and the environment, and responding to disasters within the maritime domain. The Coast Guard leverages its broad COTP authorities and its role as FMSC and Federal On-Scene Coordinator to coordinate response to disasters such as BP Deepwater Horizon and Hurricane Sandy. The Coast Guard is also working with other components of DHS and with the maritime sector to determine how the critical infrastructure security and resilience guidance of Executive Order 13636 and Presidential Policy Directive 21 should be leveraged by the community.

Coast Guard Maritime Security and Response Operations (MSRO) apply our authorities, competencies, capabilities, capacities, and partnerships to deny the use and exploitation of the maritime domain by criminal or hostile actors. The Coast Guard coordinates the activities of many federal, regional, state, tribal, territorial and local government agencies as well as the maritime industry to prevent, disrupt, protect, respond to, and recover from terror-related risks in the maritime domain. In 2013, Coast Guard forces conducted:

- More than 670 security boardings of high interest vessels;
- Close to 8,500 security boardings of small vessels;
- More than 2,000 escorts of high-capacity passenger vessels, e.g., ferries and cruise ships;
- More than 1,200 escorts of high-value U.S. naval vessels transiting U.S. waterways; and
- More than 690 escorts of vessels carrying certain dangerous cargoes.

Maritime Security Response Operations enhance the resilience of maritime CIKR and the MTS. As such, MSRO plays a critical role in the Coast Guard's Ports, Waterways and Coastal Security mission by deterring adversaries, maximizing the probability of disrupting their pre-operational planning, and providing a response framework to prevent and respond to maritime transportation security incidents.

Maritime Threat Response

When the Coast Guard is alerted to a specific maritime security 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.

Coast Guard DSF are highly-trained, proficient forces that provide field commanders with the ability to rapidly respond to emerging threats throughout the maritime environment, including threats of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. The Coast Guard has also established a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) program and has 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 the maritime domain.

Conclusion

The Coast Guard's layered security regime is vital to the Nation's security. Our authorities, capabilities, competencies, and partnerships provide the President, Secretary of Homeland Security, Secretary of Defense, and other national leaders with a ready force and the capabilities to lead or support a range of operations to ensure safety, security, and stewardship in the maritime domain. Through this interconnected system, the Coast Guard stands ready to meet offshore, coastal, and port threats that have the potential to impact our national security and economic prosperity. From our efforts to improve maritime domain awareness to our international and domestic partnerships, and investments in cutter, boat and aircraft recapitalization, the Coast Guard continues to improve the maritime security system to counter maritime threats and facilitate 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.