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Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

U. S. COAST GUARD

STATEMENT OF

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ON

**BORDER SECURITY: INFRASTRUCTURE, TECHNOLOGY,
AND THE HUMAN ELEMENT**

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER, MARITIME, AND GLOBAL
COUNTERTERRORISM**

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Introduction

Good morning Madam Chair, Ranking Member Souder, and distinguished members of the subcommittee. It is a pleasure to be here today to discuss the Coast Guard's role in border security.

When most Americans think of border security, they often think of a line in the desert sand along the Southwest border. There has understandably been much emphasis placed on the need to secure this and other U.S. land borders. There have also been considerable efforts to secure America's air borders. The fact that you have called the Coast Guard to testify at this hearing is a testament to the priority this Subcommittee places on all border security domains – air, land and sea. America's vast maritime borders and approaches must be protected as part of an effective approach to border security efforts.

Effective Border Security Depends on Cooperative Relationships

The U.S. maritime border extends as far as 200 miles offshore, protecting our national sovereignty and resources. Inside this border are relatively open ports and coastlines that present an attractive avenue for entering illegally, conducting terrorist attacks, trafficking contraband, smuggling aliens or conducted other illicit activities. As the United States improves control over its air and land borders, the nation's expansive maritime borders could become a less risky alternative for illegally bringing people and materials into the country. The key to an effective, layered system of border controls, then, is balance and coverage across the air, land and maritime domains. Just as there are controls for the nation's airspace and land crossings, there is an essential "wet" component to securing the nation's borders.

The thick blue line in figure 1 shows the expanse of our maritime borders.



Figure 1

A fundamental responsibility of national government is to protect its citizens and maintain sovereign control of its land, air and sea borders. In the maritime domain, this means exerting and safeguarding sovereignty in the nation's internal waters, ports, waterways and the littorals, as well as protecting vital national interests on the high seas.

The U.S. maritime border, like the land and air borders, is integral to the global system of trade. Securing the maritime border is an *international activity* that requires developing a layered approach to border security -- through U.S. waters, onto a well governed ocean commons, then seamlessly joining the secure maritime domain of foreign partners. It also requires *extensive partnerships* that integrate and build unity of effort among governments, agencies, and private-sector stakeholders around the world.

Coast Guard's Relationship with Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Leveraging its longstanding partnerships and unique maritime authorities and capabilities, the Coast Guard and CBP have significantly enhanced nationwide maritime security. Significant challenges remain and much more work needs to be done, but we're focused on the right priorities.

The Coast Guard and CBP are working closely and collaboratively in areas of shared responsibility. Just this past year, ADM Allen and Commissioner Basham reported to Secretary Chertoff on a number of cooperative ventures undertaken by the two agencies. As a result, numerous Coast Guard/CBP Working Groups were formed to address such issues as:

- Joint boardings;
- Joint operation centers;
- Cooperative development of a Small Vessel Security Strategy;
- Container security;
- International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) code compliance initiatives;
- Information sharing and professional exchange; and
- Maritime recovery.

In addition, the Coast Guard and CBP currently work together daily through the following initiatives:

- **Integrated Border Enforcement Team (IBET)** – The Coast Guard, CBP and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are the core U.S. partners, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Canada Border Services Agency represent the core Canadian partners. This includes eight maritime IBET regions (one on the west coast, one on the east coast, and six on the Great Lakes) where CBP/Office of Border Patrol (OBP) and the Coast Guard conduct joint inter-agency operations. The maritime threats in these regions are many, including migrant smuggling vessels, stowaways, absconders, international vessels arriving from high-risk countries, containers arriving from high-risk countries, ferry services (international and domestic), use of busy marinas and harbors by recreational vessel operators and fishermen to conceal illicit activities, and the use of remote marine locations along coastlines for illicit purposes. Some of the criminal acts prosecuted include human, drug, currency, and weapons smuggling. Drug smuggling continues to be the most prevalent illicit activity in the IBET regions.

- The **Coast Guard Intelligence Coordination Center and CBP's National Targeting Center (NTC)** have exchanged liaison representatives and work closely together to facilitate information exchange on any passenger or crew member of interest aboard commercial vessel to enhance and coordinate enforcement efforts with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) components working at the national level
- In Fiscal Year 2006, the **Coast Guard's Intelligence Coordination Center (ICC) COASTWATCH** processed 270,702 Notice of Arrivals (NOAs), an increase of approximately 140 percent from Fiscal Year 2005, and 41.5 million crew and passenger records, a ten-fold increase from Fiscal Year 2005. One hundred percent (100%) of the crew and passengers onboard foreign and U.S.-flagged merchant vessels over 300 gross tons, are checked by the Coast Guard against intelligence and law enforcement databases. Cruise ships crews are checked by COASTWATCH on law enforcement databases; passengers are checked on law enforcement databases by CBP.
- **USCG/CBP/OBP patrol assets are now co-located** at Station Bellingham, Station Alexandria Bay, Station Washington, DC, Sector New York, Sector Miami, Sector Key West, Sector South Padre Island, Sector San Diego and Sector San Juan. CBP/OBP Massena, NY will soon have space for a Coast Guard detachment and we have new Joint Operations Center for Puget Sound.
- **CBP/OBP is using an existing USCG contract to purchase the 25' safe boat and 33' Special Purpose Craft – Law Enforcement**, enabling them to obtain proven assets, ensures interoperability through use of a common platform while leveraging economies of scale.
- In Florida, the **USCG and CBP have joint standard operating procedures (SOP)** for maritime law enforcement (MLE) operations in Counterdrug and migrant interdiction. In recent years there has been in illegal migrant smuggling across the Caribbean and southern border; USCG/CBP/OBP have worked together to adapt tactics, techniques and procedures to more effectively execute the illegal migrant smuggling interdiction mission.
- In Texas and California the USCG turns over illegal migrants from Mexico to CBP for repatriation via the expedited removal process.
- Joint patrols, boardings and inspections are commonplace. Examples can be found anywhere both agencies operate.
- CBP/OBP supports USCG Search and Rescue (SAR) efforts throughout the U.S. as needed
- CBP/Air and Marine Operations (AMO) and the Coast Guard provide the bulk of the Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) support for JIATF-South in the Transit Zone.
- Joint design and procurement of proof of concept Manned Covert Surveillance Aircraft.

Finally, in the event that a significant incident occurs the USCG and CBP are working extremely close and focused on collaboration on marine transportation system (MTS) recovery, including resumption of commerce. This effort will result in the development of protocols and communications mechanisms to ensure rapid resumption of maritime trade and limit negative economic ramifications to the nation following a significant disruption to the MTS.

Coast Guard's Role in Securing the Maritime Border

The Coast Guard's overarching strategy is to, through a layered security architecture, "*push out our borders.*" The *National Strategy for Maritime Security* emphasizes the need to patrol, monitor and exert control over our maritime borders and maritime approaches. It goes on to emphasize that *at-sea presence* reassures U.S. citizens, *deters* adversaries and lawbreakers, provides better mobile surveillance coverage, adds to the warning time, allows seizing the initiative to influence events at a distance, and facilitates the capability to surprise and engage adversaries well before they can cause harm to the United States. Our unambiguous goal is to meet threats far offshore in order to avoid hostile persons, vessels or cargoes entering our ports or coastal regions. The Coast Guard operates in every maritime layer in anticipation of, or in response to, changing threats, adversary tactics and operational conditions. During the course of routine operations, as well as specified security missions, Coast Guard cutters and aircraft operate in the offshore waters of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and in the Caribbean Sea, to provide Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), command and control and capability to respond to maritime threats.

In the maritime realm, a goal line defense is no defense at all. This principle is exemplified daily as we intercept drug and migrant laden vessels as far away as the Galapagos Islands. Last year, Coast Guard units, working with an interagency team, intercepted a suspect cargo ship over 900 miles east of Cape Hatteras, NC. In this case the threat was determined to be benign, but we demonstrated that our ability to push the borders out is an essential element in protecting our homeland.

Admiral Allen's has directed the establishment of a Deployable Operations Group (DOG) to provide adaptable force packages for a myriad of contingencies, ranging from environmental clean up to counterterrorism events. The DOG will provide organized, equipped, and trained deployable, specialized forces (DSF) to Coast Guard, DHS and interagency operational and tactical commanders. These forces will deploy in support of national requirements as tailored, integrated force packages, throughout the United States and to other high interest areas. Organizing these units into a single command maintains a national focus, enhances inherent unit capabilities for execution of daily Coast Guard missions and rounds out the nation's "tool kit" for maritime disaster and threat response. Under a unified command structure, these units are better positioned to integrate with the Department of Defense (DOD), DHS and other Federal entities. The DOG is not an operational commander, but rather the sole DSF force provider and force manager for operational commanders.

Improving Maritime Security – Coast Guard Equipment

The centerpiece of the Coast Guard's future capability is the Integrated Deepwater System. This 25-year \$24 billion acquisition program reflects post-9/11 mission requirements, Deepwater assets are the first layer in a defense-in-depth strategy to push out our nations borders and intercept threats further from our shores.

For example, figure 2 shows the current gap in Coast Guard patrol boat hours; it is affected most adversely by the difficulties encountered in the 123-foot patrol boats conversion program. This project has not provided the bridge to the future Fast Response Cutter (FRC) that we had hoped. As a result, we have taken steps to advance the design and construction of the Fast Response

Cutter (FRC) in order to restore this critical capacity as quickly as possible and have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the U.S. Navy for use of three 179-foot patrol coastal (WPC) to mitigate this gap in the near term.

Patrol Boat Gap

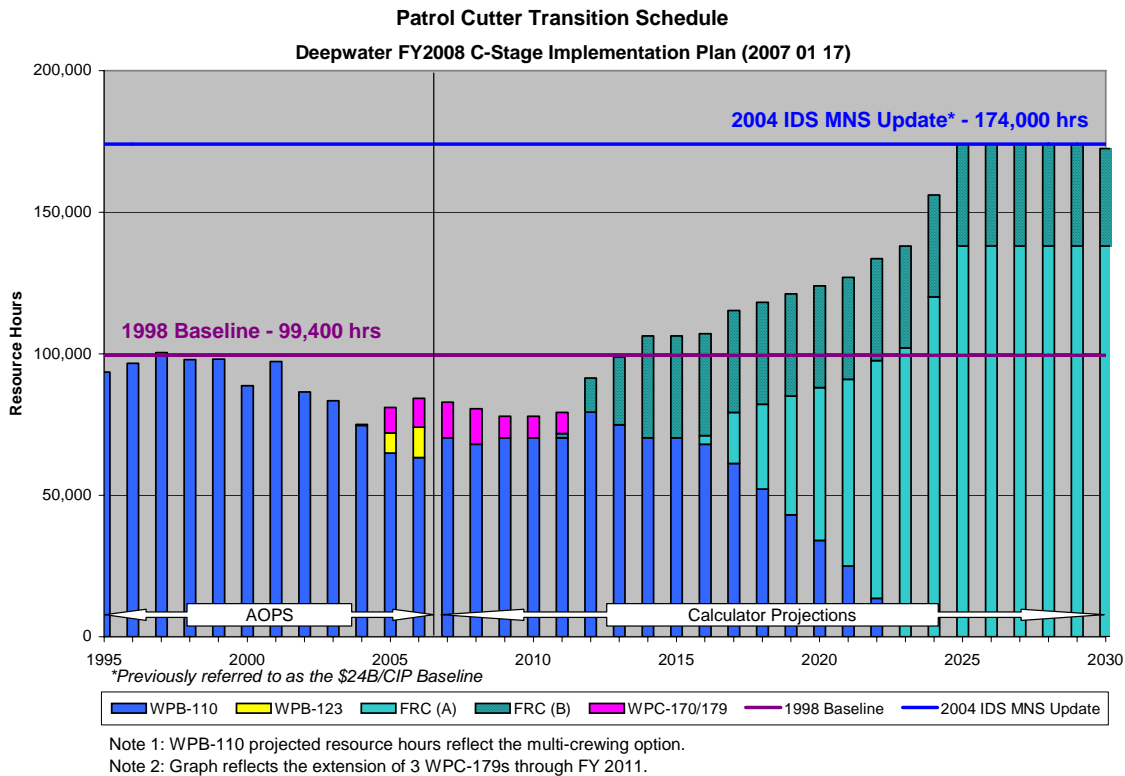


Figure 2

Similarly, figure 3 shows the pre-existing Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) gap. The revised Deepwater implementation plan strives to mitigate this gap by keeping more legacy HC-130H aircraft in service longer, while concurrently adding new HC-144A Maritime Patrol Aircraft (CASA-235's) to the Coast Guard's aviation fleet. Additionally, the USCG and Customs and Border Protection are working together to fill the gap with a Manned Covert Surveillance Aircraft, currently under joint development projected to serve as a surveillance platform in the Caribbean risk vectors.

Maritime Patrol Aircraft Gap

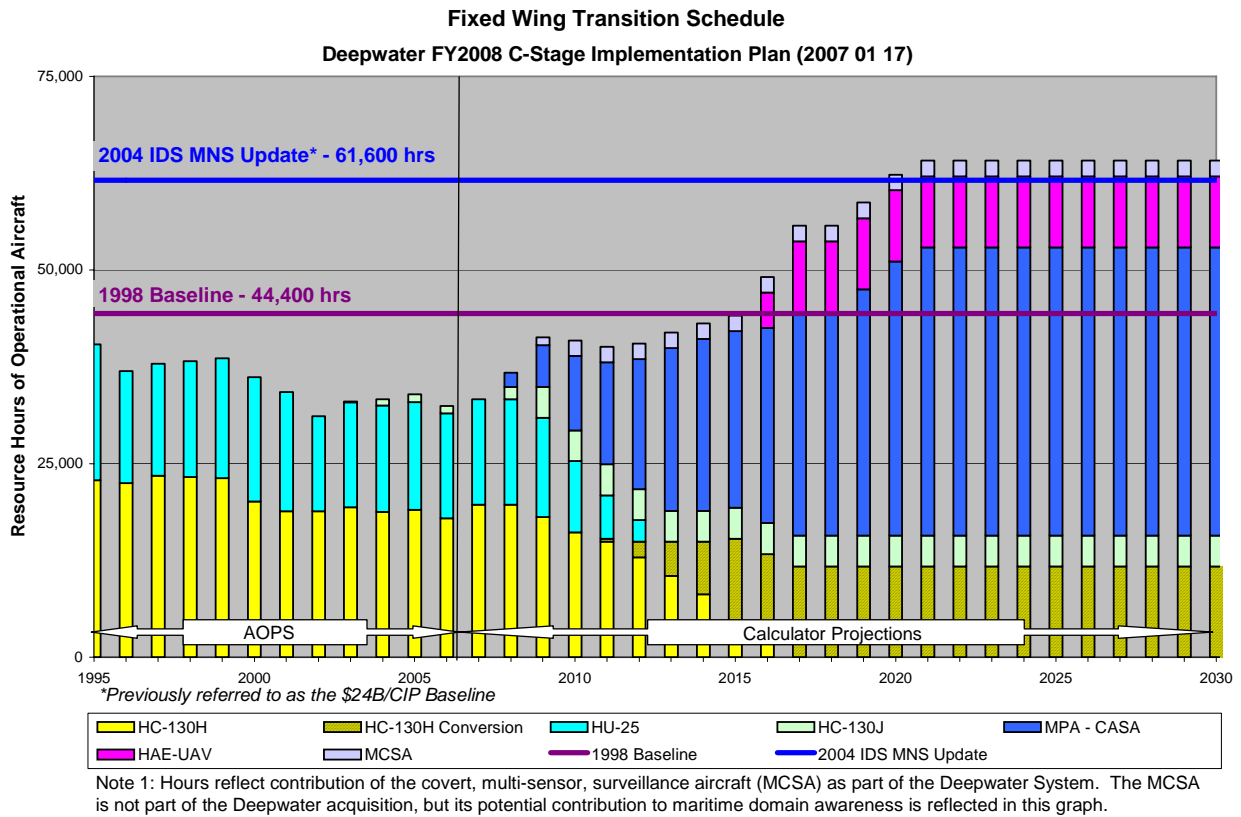


Figure 3

Improving Maritime Security – Coast Guard Technology

Vessel Tracking: Securing our vast maritime borders requires improved awareness of the people, vessels and cargo approaching and moving throughout U.S. ports, coasts and inland waterways. The most pressing challenges we now face involve tracking the vast population of vessels operating in and around the approaches to the United States, and detecting and intercepting the small vessels used for migrant and drug smuggling; such vessels can easily be used by terrorists seeking to do us harm. It is against this threat that we need to continually improve, and we are taking significant steps in the right direction. The Coast Guard needs as much information as possible about vessels operating in the maritime domain, particularly their location and identity, in order to enable effective and timely decisions and identify friend from foe. In support of this requirement, the Coast Guard has:

- Established the Automatic Identification System (AIS) to provide continuous, real-time information on the identity, location, speed and course of vessels in ports that are equipped with AIS receivers. AIS is currently operational in several major U.S. ports for vessels greater than 300 gross tons, and the Coast Guard’s Nationwide Automatic Identification (NAIS) project will expand AIS capabilities to ports nationwide; and

- Initiated development of a long-range vessel tracking system to receive information on vessels beyond the scope of the existing and planned AIS system. Long-range vessel tracking systems are designed to extend tracking capabilities up to 2,000 nautical miles offshore.
- In partnership with US-VISIT, CBP/OBP and the U.S. Attorney in San Juan, the Coast Guard has deployed mobile biometrics collection equipment on our cutters operating in the Mona Passage between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico as a proof of concept. Since implementing this operation in mid-November, we have found that 22 percent (103 of 464) of the interdicted undocumented migrants attempting illegal entry into Puerto Rico, were enrolled in the U.S. VISIT database as prior felons, prior violators of U.S. immigration laws or other persons of interest.

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Detection and Response: The Coast Guard is an active partner and ardent supporter of the Department's Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO). As part of this cooperative arrangement, we have initiated and implemented a Joint Acquisition Strategy Plan with the DNDO for the development, procurement and deployment of next generation radiation detection equipment. This plan includes the development of "stand-off" detection capability and the use of transformational technology to counter the "small vessel" threat. Similarly, we are working diligently with the Department's Science & Technology Directorate and the Interagency Technical Support Working Group (TSWG) to enhance and expand our capabilities in the detection and interdiction of chemical and/or biological agents, specifically with the WMD threat in mind. We are fully aware of the trauma that infiltration of WMD could cause our nation, and remain determined and vigilant in preventing this from ever happening.

Since 9/11, the Coast Guard is outfitting all of its boarding and inspection teams with personal radiation detectors, and we are deploying hand-held isotope detectors and other equipment that can be used to identify illicit radiological material and Special Nuclear Materials, as well as to transmit critical related information to appropriate agencies for action. We have effectively deployed such equipment throughout the Coast Guard to include: 212 Cutters, 189 Boat Stations, 35 Sectors, 12 Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSST), 1 Maritime Security Response Team (MSRT), 2 Tactical Law Enforcement Teams (TACLET), and 3 National Strike Force (NSF) Teams. This effort encompassing the fielding of over 3,000 gamma/neutron radiation pagers; 560 handheld isotope detectors and 140 wide-area search gamma/neutron Backpacks. We have established a resident radiation detection operator course at the Maritime Law Enforcement Academy in Charleston, SC, with a throughput of 510 students annually. We continue to work closely with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), CBP, and the Department of Energy (DOE) to respond immediately to any indications of radiation encountered aboard a vessel at sea or in port.

In the area of WMD response, the Coast Guard continues to train for and equip its NSF, MSST and MSRT personnel with the capabilities they need to respond to all types of WMD incidents. As part of this process, we are developing a "First Responder" capability to address WMD incidents. The purpose of this program is to address the time-gap that exists from the onset of an event until the arrival of fully mission capable units (e.g., MSSTs, MSRT, NSF). Aspects of this program include training; detection equipment; personal protective equipment; and tactics, techniques, and procedures.

Personnel security and credentialing. The Coast Guard has made a number of critical improvements to the security and vetting procedures surrounding the issuance of merchant mariner credentials. This effort has been bolstered with funding provided in fiscal year 2006 to restructure the merchant mariner licensing and documentation program by centralizing security and vetting functions in a new, enhanced National Maritime Center. Future efforts will focus on:

- Working on an accelerated schedule with the Transportation Security Administration to implement the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC). A final rule was published on January 25, 2007, establishing application and enrollment requirements for the credential. TSA and the Coast Guard are currently working on a second rulemaking project regarding the technology requirements for the card readers pursuant to the SAFE Port Act. A contract has been awarded by TSA to Lockheed Martin for TWIC enrollment, which is expected to begin soon.
- Streamlining the credential application process. Simultaneously with the TWIC final rule, the Coast Guard published a Supplementary Notice of Proposed Rulemaking proposing the consolidation of the four current Coast Guard-issued credentials into a single credential called the Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC). This proposed rule works with the TWIC rule, and is intended to streamline the application process, speed application review time and lessen burdens placed on mariners.
- Continuing to explore technologies that will allow Coast Guard boarding teams to access existing databases and information sources such as US VISIT.

Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR): C4ISR systems and operational concepts must be re-oriented and integrated with current and emerging sensor capabilities and applicable procedures. Similar to the nation's air space security regime, the maritime security regime must integrate existing C4ISR systems with new technologies and national command and control systems and processes. For example:

- The Common Operating Picture (COP) and corresponding Command Intelligence Picture (CIP) must continue to grow and expand to federal, state, and local agencies with maritime interests and responsibilities. The COP provides a shared display of friendly, enemy/suspect and neutral tracks on a map with applicable geographically referenced overlays and data enhancements. The COP is also a central element of the Deepwater solution, tying Deepwater assets and operational commanders together with dynamic, real-time maritime domain information. This link is essential to ensure effective command and control of all available Coast Guard assets responding to a myriad of border security threats.
- Our ability to coordinate responses and provide the correct response to the myriad of maritime and border threats has improved greatly. The Coast Guard was instrumental in drafting the Maritime Operational Threat Response plan (MOTR) for use by all government agencies charged with responding to threats within the maritime regions. The plan was signed by the President and ensures threat response is fully coordinated both inside DHS and outside with our partner agencies such as Department of Justice (DOJ) and Department of State (DOS). We use the MOTR coordination process on a daily basis to prosecute illegal migration and drug smuggling cases, as well as the resolution of radiation alarms and response to intelligence reports of suspicious people. It has proven to be a model process to coordinate U.S. government response across all agencies

- An expansive and interoperable communications network is critical for maritime security operations and safety of life at sea. In the coastal environment, the Coast Guard's Rescue 21 system will provide the United States with an advanced maritime distress and response communications system that bridges interoperability gaps, saves lives and improves maritime security.
- Hurricanes Katrina and Rita demonstrated the need for robust and resilient port and coastal command and control. Through test-beds at command centers in Miami, FL, Charleston, SC and elsewhere; and joint harbor operations centers established with the U.S Navy in Hampton Roads, VA, and San Diego, CA; the power of partnership, technology and co-location has been proven. The Coast Guard will continue working to expand on these successes and export them to other ports nationwide.

Conclusion

Madam Chair, we are proud of the great strides we have made to enhance maritime security. I credit the innovation, resourcefulness and devoted service of the American people for much of our progress to date. The United States Coast Guard has a clear strategy with well understood goals and we continue to refine our tactics, techniques and procedures to attain those goals. We are actively pursuing acquisition strategies that will deliver more capable and reliable operational assets and systems to the men and women of the Coast Guard.

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