

## **Adm. Allen's speech**

Introduction

(Applause)

Thank you, your workout is almost done

Mr. President, you honor the men and women of the United States Coast Guard by your presence here today. We thank you, sir

Secretary Chertoff, thank you for your enduring support for our Service and your service to the country

General Pace -- sir, I was proud to serve with you in Miami, and I am proud to be on the team again, sir.

Custom dictates that the incoming commander limit his remarks, so, with few exceptions, all previous greetings and salutations remain in effect

Adm. Collins and Nancy, thank you for the courtesies you have extended to Pam and me. Thank you for your distinguished service to our Coast Guard and the nation. But most of all, thank you for your role as the Coast Guard's "First Fan" in breaking the "Curse of the Bambino" for the Boston Red Sox.

To the Class of '71 – you guys are awesome.

I am glad to see my Capstone classmates are here today too – Buzz, great to have you here. John, thank you—and everyone else I can't see.

And to my family, the in-laws and the out-laws, to the Allens, Baileys, Hess and the Sebens, I want to thank you for venturing into Washington -- Our great city, surrounded by a cement moat-full of cars.

And to my wife Pam, who is playing hooky from her deanship at George Mason University today, you displayed great wisdom in bringing your boss with you.

Thanks for 31 years. I love you.

To our children, Amanda, Meghan, their husbands John and Vinne, and our son Lucas, we are proud of you and what you have become.

Finally, to my parents Bill and Wilma Allen, my mother-in-law Helen Hess and my late father-in-law Ed Hess – Army, Calvary, France, WWII... you are the greatest generation ... the circle is unbroken.

We in the Coast Guard do our work on the world's last global commons. We execute our mission at the confluence of great waters and often at the intersection of political and ideological passions.

But whether it be among the oil platforms of the Persian Gulf or the rooftops of New Orleans, we strive for mission excellence to provide this country the security, the safety, and the stewardship of our oceans demanded in an uncertain time and an often dangerous world.

We cannot, nor will we, retreat from that commitment to mission execution. Adm. Collins' commitment is my commitment.

Our shore-based operations, maritime patrol and presence, together with our extensive deployable forces create a strategic trident and layered security for the nation. But those forces must be adequately supported. To that end, I pledge to the men and women of the United States Coast Guard, who secure our ports and protect our maritime border, the best cutters, aircraft and equipment we can procure.

We are nothing without our people, and our people cannot be effective without the right tools.

We must also ensure our mission support structures for command and control, maintenance and logistics be focused on supporting those who execute our missions.

Together, we will sustain the high level of performance that America has come to expect from their Coast Guard.

And as full partners in the Department of Homeland Security, we will continue to coordinate and integrate our efforts with our fellow operating components.

As we stand here today, Coast Guard and FEMA leaders are deployed to the Gulf to ensure the highest level of preparedness for the next hurricane season, which as was noted earlier, begins next week. We are on watch together.

We will continue to support our strong relationship with the United States Navy by operationalizing the National Fleet concept, and we will continue to work with and support our combatant commanders.

In support of the National Strategy for Maritime Security, we will support Ambassador Negroponte's team through Global Maritime Intelligence Integration.

And finally, our deployable forces will work seamlessly with our partners in the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

To our shipmates in the Department of Homeland Security, we are proud to serve with you.

The Homeland Security Act provided our legal mandate – it required 22 agencies to be organized into a single department – but we know from our experience since March 2003 that the kind of performance this country expects from us is not a function of statutes.

It is a function of the effective, integrated employment of our collective capabilities and competencies to reduce risks and mitigate threats to our Homeland and to respond to all hazards and all threats.

Our challenge is to attack each day and each task with a purpose grounded in who we are, what we have been, and what we must become.

The Homeland Security Act created the promise. We must keep it.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary, I have reported for duty, and the Coast Guard is mustered. We are on watch. Semper Paratus – Always Ready.

