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**The Coast Guard's
Deepwater Nightmare**

NEW Threats, NEW Challenges:

The Coast Guard's New Strategy

Admiral Thad Allen, U.S. Coast Guard

The United States faces very different threats from those that shaped our modern history, even as recently as the Cold War. The expansive growth and convergence of maritime activities is accompanied by ever-increasing vulnerabilities. Though many factors influence U.S. maritime interests, five broad challenges are shaping the strategic direction of the Coast Guard and the nation:

- **The U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is increasingly complex.** The U.S. EEZ covers more than 3.4 million square nautical miles of ocean territory, with overall coastal economic activity exceeding \$1 trillion, one-tenth of the nation's gross domestic product. Scientific evidence indicates the Arctic ice cap has shrunk by nearly half since the early 1950s, creating the potential for new oceanic trade routes. At least one-quarter of the world's oil and natural gas resources lie in the Arctic. The potential for major expansion in-

A 25-foot Coast Guard boat patrols New York Harbor with a Police Department Harbor Unit boat. Interagency cooperation is fundamental to Operation Liberty Shield, the DHS national safety plan for ports, waterways, and facilities.



creases risks to both people and ecosystems. It also challenges traditional governance of the maritime domain.

• ***The global maritime supply system is growing.*** In 2001, merchant vessels carried approximately 80 percent of world trade by volume. The United States is the leading maritime trading nation, accounting for nearly 20 percent of ocean-borne overseas trade annually. While globalization has transformed maritime trade into the key supply-chain link, at the same time sea routes and ports have become increasingly vulnerable to disruption.

• ***Transnational threats continue to emerge.*** In the maritime domain, weapons of mass destruction, contraband smuggling, and small vessel threats (such as waterborne improvised explosive devices) represent the greatest risks of terrorism. Converging with international terrorism are longstanding criminal networks of drug and migrant traffickers—which could represent the next great threat to peaceful nations. Illegal exploitation of the maritime environment and its resources also challenges the sustainability of our oceans.

• ***The scale of and potential for catastrophic incidents is increasing.*** U.S. coastal regions and ports are heavily developed and densely populated, five times more so than the country as a whole. And by 2015, the number of coastal residents could increase by another 21 million. Whether from terrorists or nature, catastrophic incidents have enormous consequences to regional and global commerce.

• ***Vastness, anonymity, and limited governance are constants.*** With 95,000 miles of coastline and close to 360 ports of entry, The United States is challenged daily with monitoring maritime safety, securing national borders and the global supply chain, and protecting natural resources. The maritime domain is, arguably, the least governed region re-


maintaining on earth. Millions of square miles of ocean are a global commons under no nation's exclusive jurisdiction, freely accessible without mechanisms for detection and investigation.

The Coast Guard's Complex Mission

As a nation with 95,000 miles of coastline, we depend upon our oceans for the safety and security of our population and economy. Globalization has transformed maritime trade into the linchpin that connects a worldwide network of interdependent economies through the supply chain. Maritime trade and commerce account for nearly 95 percent of all exports, contributing roughly \$9 trillion to the global economy. Beyond our ports, advances in technology and changing environmental conditions continually revolutionize the world's use of and access to the outer continental shelf, the Arctic, and the high seas. Demands continue to grow for needs such as commerce, energy, transportation, fisheries, research, and recreation.

Longstanding maritime law and practice, as well as the oceans' vastness, add to the complexity of protecting our national security. Unlike on land, maritime borders cannot be fenced off or defended along bright lines delineated on a map. Global maritime borders are not only permeable but are also legal constructs. They are the product of international agreements and comity and may be fixed at different times by purpose and use rather than geography.

For more than two centuries, the U.S. Coast Guard has made this complex rubric our world of work. From the early days of the Revenue Cutter Marine to the protection of U.S. maritime interests following 9/11, we continually confront asymmetrical, transnational threats. We protect the marine environment and guard its natural resources. We defend our nation at home and abroad. And we save those who cannot save themselves, both at sea and ashore.



Beyond our ports, advances in technology and changing environmental conditions continually revolutionize the world's use of the high seas.

Our New Strategy

Today the Coast Guard is at a crossroads. We can look back on our successes and hope to be ready for the future—or we can adapt to the evolving demands of the 21st century. We choose the latter. On 13 February, during my first State of the Coast Guard address I unveiled the Coast Guard Strategy for Maritime Safety, Security, and Stewardship (CGS).

The CGS will guide strategic change within our service through my tenure as commandant. It is the U.S. Coast Guard's commitment to the American people to remain *Semper Paratus* for all hazards and all threats. This strategy, derived from the National Strategy for Maritime Security and other national plans, supports the goals and priorities of the Department of Homeland Security. It lays out the essential enterprise-wide changes that the Coast Guard knows it should make today, without waiting for the further catalyst of national or world events. It also charts our course to build new capabilities that will best serve our maritime interests.

The CGS is an integral part of my ongoing efforts with Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Mike Mullen and Marine Corps Commandant General James Conway to better integrate our services through a common global maritime strategic framework. The strategy lays out necessary changes for the Coast Guard to support, and be supported

by, the Coast Guard is building upon this strong foundation to defeat tomorrow's asymmetrical and transnational threats. To meet this challenge, the CGS focuses on strengthening maritime regimes, achieving domain awareness, and enhancing operational capabilities.

I have identified six crosscutting priorities in the CGS for improving the nation's preparedness and advancing U.S. maritime interests. These draw on the Coast Guard's key strengths: its authorities and partnerships, flexible capabilities and presence, and status within the international community. The result is an integrated, systematic approach to maritime governance.

• **Strengthen regimes.** The nation needs a set of interlocking domestic and international regimes that increase transparency of activity, reduce risk, and balance competing uses within the maritime domain. Strengthened rules, authorities, and agreements enable consistent, coordinated action on threats and provide a framework of standards to facilitate commerce and maritime use. The Coast Guard will continue to work with our interagency partners, U.S. maritime stakeholders, and the international community to update existing regimes and establish new ones as needed.

• **Achieve awareness.** We need greater awareness and understanding of all maritime activity. This requires collection and sharing of data, as well as increased cooperation

in fusing, analyzing, and disseminating information. The Coast Guard, acting for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), will implement the systems necessary to achieve maritime domain awareness as required by the National Strategy for Maritime Security. The Maritime Domain Awareness Implementation Team (MDA-IT), co-led by DoD and DHS, will create a collaborative maritime intelligence and information sharing environment, supported by infrastructure for sensing, collecting, fusing, analyzing, and disseminating information.

Currently the Coast Guard is working on increasing our ability to



During anti-terrorism training with the FBI, a member of Coast Guard Station Lorain, Ohio, conducts a search on board the cutter *Neah Bay* (WTGB-105).

by, the combatant commanders within a joint strategic context. Together, our efforts provide a comprehensive framework for how our maritime services work to meet U.S. national security requirements, both at home and abroad.

Maritime safety, security, and stewardship are enduring roles of the Coast Guard. As a unique multi-mission mili-

monitor maritime activities through Rescue 21 (a greatly improved digital national maritime distress system) along with enhanced sensing capabilities aboard our new deep-water assets. We are using the Nationwide Automatic Identification System to provide continuous, real-time information on the identity, location, speed, and course

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of vessels operating in the U.S. maritime domain. For those beyond our waters, we are working with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to develop a global long-range identification tracking scheme to provide information on ships greater than 300 gross tons operating within 1,000 miles of the United States.

Early warning of evolving conditions and threats requires fusion and analysis in addition to data collection. The Coast Guard supports information sharing at all levels of government through a Common Operating Picture and corresponding Common Intelligence Picture. The combination of situational awareness and real-time intelligence improves decision making in both public and private sectors.

• **Enhance unity of effort in planning and operations:** The complexity of today's environment requires that government integrate operational capabilities and efforts with private

sector partners. To support this the Coast Guard is improving joint planning, as noted above. We are establishing local unified command centers nationwide so that governmental partners can work together on joint mission planning and operations, and to provide fusion of local intelligence and common operating pictures.

Unity of command will be advanced where possible, and unity of effort will be critical at all times. To improve force packaging and scalable response to all threats and hazards, the Coast Guard operational structure will be aligned around three complementary, interoperable forces—multi-mission sectors, maritime patrol and interdiction deepwater, and specially trained deployable. This will support the National Strategy for Maritime Security (NSMS) and its Maritime Operational Threat Response Plan, as well as the National Response Plan.

In support of the Maritime Operational Threat Response Plan, a USCG Maritime Security Response Team trains in advanced interdiction techniques, fast-roping out of an armed Jayhawk.



The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Nunivak (WPB-1306) conducts migrant interdiction operations with the Puerto Rican police unit Forces Unidas for Rapid Action (FURA). Increased international efforts will help to improve global maritime governance.

• **Integrate Coast Guard capabilities for national defense.** Military and law enforcement operations are integral to the Global War on Terror and are particularly critical for homeland security and defense. If a threat to national security is discovered on our waters, it is likely we will be the first maritime force component to respond. Additionally, the Coast Guard's military and civilian authorities and capabilities enable us to provide that key link between DHS and DoD.

To safeguard our national interests, the United States needs naval and Coast Guard capabilities along our coasts, on the high seas, and deployed to foreign water and ports. DoD and DHS can optimize effectiveness through a fully aligned Navy-Coast Guard relationship and the development of a global concept of operations. The National Fleet policy provides an initial construct for this with the forces available. The Coast Guard is fully implementing this policy, and the engagement will facilitate increased domain awareness, integrated maritime defense operations, joint C³ centers, and global maritime partnerships.

Internationally, the Coast Guard provides combatant commanders with presence, access, and influence in nations where humanitarian and constabulary mission skills are most needed. We must strengthen our interoperability and capabilities to meet national security requirements, both at home and abroad.

• **Develop a national capacity for Marine Transportation System recovery.** Any major disruptions in the MTS will require a coordinated approach to ensure uninterrupted access to the global supply chain. This means planning. We will work to build resilience within the MTS

by engaging the private sector, establishing government roles, and developing recovery policies and procedures at all levels. Because of our expertise in maritime recovery and broad legal authority, command and control capability, presence in the ports, and longstanding relationships with maritime stakeholders, the Coast Guard is well positioned in this area.

The marine industry varies from port to port in its complexity and operations. Therefore, the Coast Guard has engaged with the private sector to build regional and national level recovery constructs that integrate public and private entities. By leveraging our authority and capabilities, the Coast Guard will lead the planning agenda for assuring continuity of critical maritime activities.

• **Focus international engagement on improving maritime governance.** The United States benefits from strong maritime relationships around the world, because effective governance and the global commons directly impact worldwide economy and U.S. interests. The Coast Guard will focus its international efforts to assist maritime organizations and partner nations in building the capabilities and authorities necessary to improve this governance.

The Way Ahead

As we adapt to a changing world and the needs of our nation, we have accelerated efforts to improve maritime regimes, awareness, and operational capabilities; we work continually to increase unity of effort at all levels of government and with the private sector.

Yet much remains to be done. The Coast Guard and DHS will work with DoD, the executive branch, Congress and other federal, state, local, private, and international partners to implement the CGS. The way ahead begins with national and international dialogues in which maritime stakeholders help determine actions to improve governance.

We have plotted the course for the future with this new strategy. The U.S. Coast Guard will be the most capable, adaptive, and responsive multi-mission, maritime, and military service in our nation's history. We will remain *Semper Paratus* to answer the call whenever and wherever our country needs us.

Admiral Allen is Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard.