



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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March 18, 2015

SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER

TO: Members, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
FROM: Staff, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
RE: Hearing on “Naval Cooperative Strategy”

PURPOSE

On Wednesday, March 18, 2015, at 2:00 p.m. in 2118 Rayburn House Office Building, the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation and the Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces will hold a joint hearing to review the latest unified maritime security strategy and examine how the Nation’s three Sea Services intend to implement the updated policy. The subcommittees will hear from the United States Navy, the United States Marine Corps, and the United States Coast Guard.

BACKGROUND

Coast Guard Role in the Sea Services:

The Coast Guard is a unique organization with a distinct blend of authorities and capabilities. Section 1 of title 14, United States Code, stipulates that the Coast Guard is a military service at all times, not just in wartime or when the President directs. Under section 3 of title 14, United States Code, the Coast Guard is required to maintain defense readiness to operate as a specialized service in the Navy upon the declaration of war or when the President directs. At all times, the Service must have the training and capability necessary to immediately integrate with Department of Defense (DoD) forces in both peacetime operations and during times of war. Coast Guard servicemembers have fought in every major U.S. war or conflict since the founding of our Nation.

Today, the Coast Guard is part of the total “maritime force package” that can be leveraged by DoD combatant commanders globally upon request. The Service’s unique skill set and mission profile make it an ideal force provider for maritime security, law enforcement,

humanitarian assistance, capacity building, and certain navigation related DoD operations. Recent examples of the use of Coast Guard forces include the deployment of –

- six cutters to conduct port security operations in the Persian Gulf as part of Operation Enduring Freedom;
- personnel and assets to distribute humanitarian relief and restore maritime navigation service in wake of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti;
- Coast Guard Law Enforcement detachments aboard Navy ships to interdict, detain, or arrest pirates operating off the Horn of Africa (the Coast Guard is the only military service with law enforcement authority); and
- personnel to Vietnam for maritime security capacity building and to assist the nation in the training of its Coast Guard.

2007 Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower

In 2007, the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard (Sea Services) released the first unified naval strategy, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. The 2007 strategy stressed an integrated approach across the Sea Services in an effort to strengthen national defense and counter threats to our national security. The strategy coupled with other implementing and guiding documents require the Sea Services to be able to provide an effective and efficient “maritime force package” anywhere in the world to protect our Nation’s national security interests.

2015 Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower

On March 13, 2015, the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard released a revised *Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. The 2015 strategy updates the 2007 strategy to account for the latest global threats, new fiscal constraints, and changes to other strategic guidance developed in the interim. The 2015 strategy identifies new threats and challenges facing the United States, including terrorist networks such as the Islamic State in the Levant, a more assertive and military capable China, an aggressive Russia, transnational criminal organizations, energy security, and the impacts of climate change. It also highlights challenges the Sea Services face in ensuring our national defense, including proliferation of anti-area/anti-denial technologies, improvements in adversarial weapon systems, and protecting cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum from attack.

To counteract these threats and challenges, the strategy includes the following key concepts:

- Warfighting First: Defending our Nation is the first priority of the sea services. They must always have the capability and capacity to defend the homeland from adversaries new and old.

- Being Where it Matters, When it Matters: The strategy continues to build upon the doctrine of forward presence, which requires the Sea Services to fulfill its naval missions anywhere in the world.
- Continuing to Strengthen Alliances and Partnerships: By forging new partnerships and honoring long standing alliances the Sea Services can leverage the capacity of navies and coast guards worldwide. The collection of alliances, partnerships, and coalitions creates an extensive network to ensure freedom of the seas.
- Assuring Global Access: New components of the strategy include the addition of all domain access as the fifth function to which the Sea Services have traditionally been trained and equipped. The original four essential functions were: deterrence, sea control, power projection, and maritime security. All domain access serves as assurance for appropriate freedom of action in sea, air, land, space, cyber, as well as in the electromagnetic spectrum.
- Rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific: By 2020, 60 percent of Navy ships and aircraft will be assigned to the region to counter China's growing navy and the proliferation of anti-access/area denial technology. The rebalance requires the deployment of the Sea Services forces in a coordinated manner.
- Building the Future Sea Services: Fiscal austerity is the principle driving factor for future force design, including how the naval force is composed, trained, and equipped. Emphasis will be placed on innovation and efficiency when making decisions about directing investments in new capabilities. The strategy also includes the following discussion about the impact of sequester on the Sea Services:

“We would be forced to execute this maritime strategy at increased levels of risk for some missions and functions, decrease forward presence, and reduce our footprint in some geographic regions. Such cuts would also limit our warfighting advantages”.

Impact on the Coast Guard

For the Coast Guard, the 2015 strategy restates the importance of the Service's strategic role as a force provider for DoD. It calls for deploying –

- National Security Cutters and deployable specialized forces in the Indo-Asian-Pacific region to protect the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone;
- cutters and personnel to build partner nation capacity in the Middle East region;
- assets and personnel to counter transnational organized crime, secure maritime borders, and interdict drugs and migrants in the Western Hemisphere; and
- assets and personnel to the Arctic to ensure maritime security and improve maritime domain awareness.

In order to meet these force projection requirements, the 2015 strategy calls for the following investments to be made in Coast Guard assets:

- Build and maintain a fleet of 91 National Security, Offshore Patrol, and Fast Response Cutters. This is consistent with the Coast Guard's current acquisition program of record. Based on current funding levels for Coast Guard acquisitions, the Government Accountability Office estimates that the current acquisition program of record will not be complete until at least the mid 2030's.
- Produce a fleet of highly capable Offshore Patrol Cutters (OPC) and C-27J aircraft. The fiscal year (FY) 2016 budget request for the Coast Guard does not include funding to begin detailed design for the OPC or funding to missionize the C-27Js to make them fully mission capable.
- Design a new heavy icebreaker to support naval operations in the Arctic and Antarctic. The FY 2016 budget request includes \$4 million to continue planning and requirements development for a new polar icebreaker.

WITNESSES

Vice Admiral Charles D. Michel
Deputy Commandant for Operations
United States Coast Guard

Rear Admiral Kevin M. Donegan
Acting Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Operations, Plans, and Strategy
United States Navy

Major General Andrew W. O'Donnell Jr.
Acting Deputy Commandant, Combat Development and Integration
United States Marine Corps