



**TESTIMONY OF  
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**ON  
“PREVENTION OF SMUGGLING AT U.S. PORTS”**

**BEFORE THE  
HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD & MARITIME TRANSPORTATION  
AND THE  
HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER & MARTIME SECURITY**

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**Introduction**

Good morning Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Committee. It is my pleasure to be here today to discuss layered border security and smuggling in U.S. ports.

The U.S. Coast Guard is the world’s premier, multi-mission, maritime service responsible for the safety, security and stewardship of U.S. waters. At all times a military service and branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, a federal law enforcement agency, a regulatory body, a first responder, and a member of the U.S. Intelligence Community, the Coast Guard operates on all seven continents and throughout the homeland, serving a nation whose economic prosperity and national security are inextricably linked to broad maritime interests.

The Coast Guard protects and defends more than 100,000 miles of U.S. coastline and inland waterways, saves thousands of lives per year, and safeguards the world’s largest Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), encompassing 4.5 million square miles of ocean. Indeed, the Coast Guard is fully engaged answering the call and balancing a multitude of dynamic maritime risks facing our nation.

The Coast Guard is also in high demand globally. Many nations model their maritime forces after the U.S. Coast Guard to address transnational crime, human smuggling, maritime safety and security, and foreign incursions into their respective waters.

**A Layered Approach**

Securing our maritime borders requires a layered, multi-faceted approach. Because of its unique authorities, capabilities, competencies, and partnerships, the Coast Guard is well positioned to undertake such an approach and meet a broad range of maritime border security requirements.

This layered approach allows the Coast Guard to detect, deter, and counter threats as early and as far from U.S. shores as possible.

## **Countering Threats in the Western Hemisphere**

The Coast Guard, along with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), plays a pivotal role in securing our nation's maritime domain. Persistent threats include illegal migration, human trafficking and illicit flows of drugs. The prevalence of Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) networks exacerbates these threats. TOC networks are driven by immense profits from drug trafficking and other illicit activity, and their indiscriminate use of violence weakens regional governments in Central America, stymies legitimate economic activity and development, terrorizes peaceful citizens, and fuels migrant flows.

Coverage by Coast Guard assets in the maritime approaches pays significant dividends by employing timely intelligence from an expanding network of partners. The Service's new National Security Cutters (NSCs), Fast Response Cutters (FRCs) and our legacy cutter and aircraft fleets achieved impressive operational successes in Fiscal Year 2015, and are on track to surpass these successes in Fiscal Year 2016. Critical acquisitions like the Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC), a more capable and reliable replacement for our outdated Medium Endurance Cutters (MEC), are essential to our long-term success.

In Fiscal Year 2015, the Coast Guard worked with interagency partners to help remove 191.8 metric tons of cocaine and detain over 700 smugglers for prosecution; 144 metric tons and 500 smugglers were removed by Coast Guard assets alone.. We also repatriated 2,700 Cuban and 425 Haitian migrants; we continue to closely monitor maritime migration patterns as our relationship with Cuba continues to evolve. Thus far in Fiscal Year 2016, three NSCs alone have made over 25 drug interdictions in the Eastern Pacific, including two cases involving Self-Propelled Semi-Submersible vessels, stopping 28 metric tons of cocaine from reaching our streets. In fact, the Coast Guard is on track to have a record breaking year for drug removals, having already nearly eclipsed Fiscal Year 2015 numbers.

## **International Partnerships**

The Coast Guard's success in maritime border security relies on robust joint, interagency, and international partnerships to conduct operations throughout the Western Hemisphere. To more effectively counter maritime threats in the offshore region and throughout the Western Hemisphere, the Coast Guard maintains more than 40 maritime bilateral law enforcement agreements and arrangements with partner nations. These agreements and arrangements facilitate 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, and enable real time communications between Coast Guard and partner nation operations centers.

To foster international cooperation and build partner capacity, Coast Guard personnel are posted at several embassies throughout the world. These individuals develop strategic relationships with partner nation maritime forces that facilitate real-time operations coordination, maritime security cooperation, confirmation of vessel registry, waivers of jurisdiction, repatriation of undocumented migrants, and disposition of seized vessels, contraband, and detained crews.

Equally important, they provide subject matter expertise and advice for Country Teams to assist U.S. Ambassadors in carrying out comprehensive and coherent U.S. Government foreign policy, and in addressing maritime threats at their source.

### **International Port Assessments and Vessel Screening**

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. Through the ISPS 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 ISPS in 2004, Coast Guard personnel have visited more than 150 countries and approximately 1,200 port facilities. These countries generally receive biennial assessments to verify compliance with the ISPS Code and U.S. maritime security regulations, as appropriate. Vessels arriving in foreign ports that are not compliant with ISPS Code standards are required to take additional security precautions while in those ports. They may also be boarded by the Coast Guard before being allowed entry to U.S. ports, and in some cases may be refused entry to the United States. In FY15, the ISPS Program assessed the effectiveness of anti-terrorism measures in nearly 200 port facilities of 60 of our maritime trading partners, as well as conducted 25 capacity building activities in 23 countries with marginal port security to prevent them from falling into non-compliance with the ISPS Code.

In U.S. ports, the Coast Guard Captain of the Port (COTP) is designated as the Federal Maritime Security Coordinator (FMSC). In this role, COTPs lead the nation's 43 Area Maritime Security Committees (AMSCs) and oversee the development, regular review, and annual exercise of their respective Area Maritime Security Plans. AMSCs assist and advise the FMSC in the development, review, and implementation of a coordination and communication framework to identify risks and vulnerabilities in and around ports. Additionally, AMSCs coordinate resources to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from Transportation Security Incidents. AMSCs have developed strong working partnerships between all levels of government and private industry stakeholders. The Coast Guard screens ships, crews, and passengers for all vessels required to submit an Advance Notice of Arrival (ANOVA) prior to entering a U.S. port.

### **Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Detection and Interdiction**

The evolution and proliferation of advanced commercial, military, and dual-use technology, combined with increased availability and sophistication of transportation and delivery systems, creates new opportunities for transnational and domestic terrorist groups to employ WMD to conduct catastrophic attacks against the United States. The Coast Guard, in coordination with joint, interagency, and international partners, prepares for a range of contingencies that would accompany a WMD threat or event. Coast Guard forces contribute to a layered defense around the homeland. They help provide early detection of a WMD threat in the maritime domain, and assist response to maritime terrorist events that may involve a WMD threat aboard a vessel approaching the United States. Coast Guard's major cutters are designed to protect on-board personnel from the chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) materials and agents and conduct critical post-attack operations in a CBRN environment.

The Coast Guard conducts over 400 routine inspections and general law enforcement boardings every day to ensure that vessels comply with international maritime law and safety standards, applicable U.S. law and regulations, and any control procedures required to access the Nation's ports. Every Coast Guard member who visits a boat, vessel, or regulated facility carries a basic detection device designed to alert the user to the presence of radiation.

In 2004, the Coast Guard developed and implemented a Coast Guard-wide Maritime Radiation Detection program and has since maintained a close relationship with Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) to standardize equipment. The Coast Guard participates in DNDO strategic joint radiation detection acquisition programs that seek to standardize or increase compatibility of radiation detection platforms among the key components, including the Coast Guard, CBP, and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). The Coast Guard also participates in inter-component training sponsored by DNDO. The result of joint acquisitions and training is robust, ongoing Coast Guard support to CBP seaport inspections as well as to TSA Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) Teams at major intermodal and passenger ports.

All operational units - such as Sectors, Deployable Specialized Forces, Cutters, and Boat Stations - possess radiological detection capabilities that can identify specific isotopes, distinguish between man-made and natural sources, and can "reach back" to interagency experts for technical assistance. Additionally, Coast Guard Deployable Specialized forces are equipped to survive and carry out limited operations in a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear-contaminated environment.

Coast Guard Maritime Security Response Team (MSRT), located in Chesapeake, VA provide the nation with specialized maritime capability for nuclear and radiological detection and identification, in either routine or hostile situations. MSRT is trained and equipped to interdict, board, and control a vessel of interest either known or suspected of posing a terrorist threat to the United States out to 200 nautical miles from either U.S. coast. MSRT capabilities are specifically designed to integrate with other interagency and DOD response forces.

## **Conclusion**

The Coast Guard's layered maritime border security strategy addresses the broad range of offshore and coastal threats that have the potential to impact our national security and economic prosperity. From efforts to strengthen international and domestic partnerships, to investments in cutter, boat and aircraft recapitalization, the Coast Guard continues to improve maritime border security while facilitating 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.