

MARITIME SECURITY COUNCIL

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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS, ATMOSPHERE, AND FISHERIES

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. As the Executive Director of the Maritime Security Council, I am pleased to have this opportunity to address the committee today to relate the views and concerns of our membership on the role of the Coast Guard in strengthening U.S. Security against maritime threats.

Background of the MSC

The Maritime Security Council was created in 1988 to address the many security concerns of the U.S. and international maritime community. We are a member-driven organization that works closely with United States government agencies concerned with maritime security and counterterrorism. In fact, the Maritime Security Council is the maritime security advisor to both the U.S. State Department, through its Overseas Security Advisory Council, and INTERPOL, the international police agency.

Our mission is to advance the security interests of the international merchant marine community against criminal and terrorist threats. Our international membership includes over 65% of the world's commercial ocean carrier fleet (by tonnage), cruise lines, numerous maritime service companies, port authorities, P&I clubs, shipping groups, ships' agents, maritime law firms, and technical and engineering firms serving the maritime industry.

The MSC works with many agencies, including the UN's International

Maritime Organization, the U.S. Customs Service, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Navy, U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD), U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, U.S. intelligence agencies, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, U.K. Department of the Environment, Transportation and the Regions, and the U.K. Ministry of Defense.

As a consequence of its role in the maritime community, the MSC is proud to have been called upon to assist in the development of S-1214, the Port and Maritime Security Act of 2001, and the U.S. Sea Carrier Initiative and Super Carrier Programs.

U.S. Coast Guard Response to September 11 Terrorist Attack

The MSC recognizes the U.S. Coast Guard as the leader in U.S. coastal protection, ensuring that the nation's Marine Transportation System is safe, reliable, and secure. The Coast Guard is unique in its ability to fulfill its mission of planning, executing, and sustaining a robust and flexible domestic homeland defense program, and it has performed that mission admirably -- no more so than in the

days since the attack on America on September 11.

The energy and determination with which the Coast Guard implemented and enforced the requirements outlined in 33 CFR Parts 120 and 128, (Security of Passenger Vessels and Passenger Terminals), as an example, enabled the cruise line industry to respond to the September 11 attack in a uniform, controlled, and effective fashion. The Coast Guard immediately directed increased security measures at U.S. ports, and onboard U.S. and foreign-flagged vessels carrying American passengers or visiting U.S. ports. Subsequent to the attack, the Coast Guard worked in partnership with senior maritime industry executives, and organization such as the MSC, to enhance the security of our domestic ports.

Indeed, the Coast Guard has done exemplary work in its multi-mission, maritime, and military service to this nation, all the while being historically underfunded - a fact that is particularly apparent when contrasted with our other military services. It is a tribute to Admiral Loy and his staff, such as Admiral Underwood of the Office of Intelligence and Security, that so

much has been done with so little, and it is the fervent hope of the MSC and its membership that appropriate funding for the Coast Guard be ensured, both for the near term and over the years to come.

Threats and Challenges to US Homeland Security

Unfortunately, something has to fall through the cracks when budgets are stretched to the breaking point. A critical shortcoming in our national security planning has been the failure to fund and support security assessments and audits of foreign ports, particularly those ports of embarkation for cargo and passengers inbound to the United States.

The U.S. Government must recognize that the leading edge of the boundary for our homeland defense is in fact foreign ports. The transnational nature of terrorism requires, by definition, a foreign launching point for attacks upon our country. This requires not only an understanding on our part of the security posture of foreign ports of origin of goods and passenger coming to our country, but also a preparedness for us to help these ports elevate their standards of security to levels we feel are

appropriate and mirror those within our own borders

I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, having audited over 160 ports in over 106 countries, that it is nothing less than frightening to see how little security there is in some foreign ports that see ships depart from their docks and sail directly into Miami or New York. With the potential of weapons of mass destruction finding their way into the hands of terrorists, one can easily deduce the risk we face should we continue to ignore the security of these foreign ports.

And far from being adverse to our presence, most foreign ports would welcome constructive security assessments from the United States, particularly when followed up with guidance and assistance in addressing the vulnerabilities that are identified.

While the performance of foreign port assessments falls within the Coast Guard's charter, historically the lack of financial and manpower resources has prevented the Coast Guard from aggressively pursuing that aspect of

their mission. In some years less than five such assessments were performed -- in some cases the assessments were canceled altogether due to the target ports being deemed 'too hazardous' for military personnel to visit. And yet, these same ports were not too hazardous for cruise lines to visit carrying thousands of American citizens on holiday! As a result, the commercial maritime community has resorted to making critical, often costly operational decisions with minimal, often inconsistent information.

The MSC launched an initiative in 1997 to categorize and evaluate security in foreign ports through the application of a tiered rating scale pegged to cargo/passenger throughput, GNP, etc. The International Maritime Organization, an arm of the UN, has expressed an interest in working with the MSC on this project, which they feel can be used to increase security in Third World countries to acceptable levels.

We feel that it is appropriate for the Coast Guard to continue to manage this essential program. But rather than task its own constrained resources, it should contract with expert civilian companies to perform these foreign

port security audits on its behalf. There is a critical need to see at least 25 ports audited on an annual basis, the cost of which would be a budget of less than \$1 million dollars per year.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, in the wake of the September 11 attack on America, the MSC urges that the resources be given to the Coast Guard to accomplish this and other essential missions that are critical to our homeland defense.

The Maritime Security Council thanks the Committee and its members for this opportunity to comment on this issue. We at the MSC stand prepared, as we always have, to assist this Committee and its staff on its important efforts, and will be dedicating a significant portion of our Spring Conference to the issues raised in this hearing.

I will make a copy of my remarks available to your staff and will remain to answer any of your questions.

Thank you.

