

As delivered

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
STATEMENT OF
ADMIRAL THOMAS H. COLLINS
ON THE
FISCAL YEAR 2005 BUDGET
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MARCH 4, 2003

Introduction

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Coast Guard's fiscal year 2005 budget request and its impact on the essential services we provide to the American public.

The Coast Guard's FY05 budget proposes budget authority of \$7.46 billion, a 9% increase over FY04, funding both our safety and security missions. From FY03-05, our OE budget will have grown 51%. This growth supports the President's National Strategy for Homeland Security ... and it supports the full range of Coast Guard missions.

"Past 10 days"

From my perspective, this budget growth is more than justified ... we continue to apply our budget both effectively and efficiently and often achieve extraordinary operational outcomes for the American people. I've been a part of the Coast Guard for 40 years and I continue to be amazed at the performance of our men and women every day. In fact, our operations in the last 10 days paint a clear and vivid picture of the scope and national importance of the services we provide to the American public:

- On Sunday, February 29, we responded to distress calls from the burning and sinking tanker, BOW MARINER, 50 miles offshore. Our rescue swimmer deployed in the 44-degree, oil-covered water to save six crewmen. That rescue swimmer and our air crewman were hospitalized overnight because of their exposure to the ethanol fumes and oil.
- Our search-and-rescue response capability was sustained, even though 18 cutters, 8 aircraft, and almost 1400 personnel deployed between the coast of Haiti and South

As delivered

Florida. As conditions deteriorated in Haiti, Coast Guard cutters intercepted 905 Haitians and safely repatriated them via the only functioning element of the Haitian government, the Haitian Coast Guard base, thus fulfilling our President's mandate to repatriate Haitian migrants and present a deterrent to mass migration.

- Our maritime homeland security mission requires attention, vigilance, and presence where the risks are greatest, wherever that may be. This week, Cutter MIDGETT, deployed in counter-drug operations off South America in the Pacific, boarded a Columbian fishing vessel, seized close to 10,000 pounds of cocaine on board, and turned the crew over to the U.S. Attorney for prosecution.
- Today, four 110-foot cutters, two Port Security Units, and 477 people are currently providing critical support to operations in Iraq.
- Today, we have two Polar Icebreakers returning home after the most successful resupply of McMurdo Station in recent years.
- We had 28 cutter patrols and 65 aircraft overflights patrolling our fishing grounds, enforcing fisheries laws.

And these are just the "highlights" of our service to the nation over the past 10 days.

Four Priorities

The FY05 budget request provides the resources necessary for the Coast Guard to continue to fulfill its responsibilities to the American public. For fiscal year 2005, I have four priorities. They are:

Number 1, to recapitalize our operational assets:

- Our greatest threat to mission performance continues to be that our aircraft, boats and cutters are aging, technologically obsolete, and require replacement and modernization. The Integrated Deepwater System – or Deepwater -- is the answer to these concerns.
- The FY 2005 budget also requests resources for the Rescue 21 project ... already responsible for saving seven lives ... and provides for the continuation of our Medium Response Boat project.

As delivered

My second priority is to ensure consistent performance across all missions by leveraging Coast Guard authorities, capabilities, competencies, and partnerships. The FY05 budget adds capability and capacity to enable across-the-board mission performance, including:

- Operational funding for eleven 87-foot cutters built in 2004 and for five 179-foot ships transferring from the Navy; and
- Safety changes to the 47-foot Motor Life Boat.

My third priority is to aggressively implement the comprehensive requirements of the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 – or MTSA. Over \$100 million and 791 new personnel support this critical security initiative.

My 4th priority reflected in the FY05 budget is to expand Maritime Domain Awareness:

- Expanding awareness of activities occurring in the maritime domain is critical to enhancing our performance across all mission areas. We must identify and understand threats, and disseminate timely information to our operational commanders and our homeland security partners in order to respond to terrorist attacks, drug smuggling, illegal migration, distressed boaters, or illegal fishing.

Of course, Coast Guard people make our operational excellence possible. The successful operational tempo demonstrated over the last 10 days is testimony to the skills and commitment of Coast Guard personnel. They routinely put service to our nation above all else and they are my highest priority and most valuable resource. This budget request improves the quality of life for Coast Guard men, women, and families by providing a pay raise and improving Basic Allowance for Housing. And most importantly, through Deepwater, Rescue 21, and other initiatives, they will be provided with the quality equipment they deserve to do their job.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.