



All Hands Messages

DHS Areas of Responsibility

To the Men and Women of the United States Coast Guard:

On Monday, 08 June, Secretary Napolitano released a video (http://www.dhs.gov/xother/gc_1243952009568.shtm) where she emphasized the Department's five areas of responsibility for achieving its unified security mission: Guarding against terrorism; securing our borders; enforcing our immigration laws in smart, tough and effective ways; improving our readiness for, response to, and recovery from disasters; and unifying DHS.

As the largest operating agency within DHS, an Armed Service, a member of the National Intelligence Community, and a regulatory and law enforcement agency, the U.S. Coast Guard is uniquely situated to help the Department achieve these goals. There is a maritime aspect to each one so we will use the full range of our competencies, capabilities, and authorities to support the Department. Our FY10 budget request continues our critical recapitalization efforts, adds marine inspectors in accordance with our Marine Safety Enhancement Plan, and supports our workforce. These resources will be critical as we address the maritime challenges of the 21st century.

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, the Coast Guard has assumed a significant legislative mandate to protect the Nation from terrorism. The Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA) of 2002 has helped us harden critical infrastructure, mitigate the risks of maritime terrorism, and enhance our national resiliency. We have balanced these efforts with our safety and regulatory roles. The Marine Transportation System is the lifeblood of our national economy so we must facilitate the safe, secure and efficient movement of goods. To do this, our operational commanders are allocating their resources to the most vulnerable areas, buying-down safety and security risks through partnerships, and reaching out to our external stakeholders to solicit support and feedback.

We have extensive responsibilities for border security. The Coast Guard provides for the safety, security, and stewardship of 3.4 million square miles of exclusive economic zone, 95,000 miles of coastline, 361 ports, as well as the Great Lakes and our vital inland waterways. We actively manage a border with both Russia and Cuba. The Coast Guard is the only federal agency capable of projecting law enforcement authority on the high seas. In support of the Department's efforts on the Southwest border, we interdict thousands of pounds of cocaine shipments before they reach Mexico. On the Northern border, we are partnering with Canada and other DHS components to conduct joint law enforcement operations on waterways with shared borders. Within the port environment, the Coast Guard is implementing Interagency Operations Centers (IOCs) to improve situational awareness and leverage the capabilities of our law enforcement, military, and intelligence partners. Unregulated small vessels - such as self propelled semi-submersibles that smuggle contraband, pirate vessels off the Horn of Africa, and those used in the attacks in Mumbai, India - are potential threats to border security. We will continue to

cooperate with our interagency partners, the international community, and our external stakeholders to mitigate maritime threats to our border security.

In terms of smart, tough, and effective enforcement of immigration laws, the safety of life at sea will always be paramount. We continue to interdict thousands of migrants from unseaworthy vessels and work with our DHS partners to properly screen those seeking political asylum. Our innovative use of the Biometrics at Sea program has made a significant impact in illegal migrant smuggling in the Mona Passage and we will look to expand this capability throughout the Coast Guard.

Our actions before and after Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Gustav clearly illustrate the Coast Guard's value in preparedness for and response to disasters. We helped shape the National Response Framework which guides federal crisis management efforts and ensured all of our personnel were trained in the Incident Command System. With the start of hurricane season on 01 June, we have pre-positioned vital supplies to threatened areas, obtained pre-authorization to recall up to 1,500 Reservists, and are ready to deploy trained personnel to support Joint Field Offices. We also strengthened our historical ties with the Department of Transportation to create an adaptable and resilient port system that can readily shift commerce away from disaster impacted regions. Our goal is to prepare for the worst, respond immediately, and recover in close coordination with local authorities.

The Secretary has also emphasized the need to create a unified Department that works and operates as "One DHS". The Coast Guard has always been a team-player. We are a bridge between military and law enforcement operations, we have a bias for action, and we readily partner with other governmental entities to get the job done. We will also contribute administrative savings through the Department's Efficiency Review program. Coast Guard personnel are working closely with the Department on 19 process improvements that will save resources and create more flexibility within the Department. Recognizing that our best ideas come from the field, we have started an internal program to solicit input on how we can save time, money, and staff work. Visit <http://cgportal.uscg.mil/lotus/myquickr/cg-efficiency-blog> to contribute to this ongoing effort.

The Coast Guard is a critical component of DHS and our enduring missions feed naturally into the five major areas of responsibility that the Secretary has identified. As America's Maritime Guardian, we will find new and innovative ways to enhance our operational and administrative performance. We'll continue to protect the Nation, defend the vulnerable, and save those in peril. Our Guardian Ethos will guide our actions as we support the Nation, the Department and each other.

Thank you for your tremendous efforts and tireless work. Semper Paratus.

Admiral Thad W. Allen
Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard

