

Purpose: Provide remarks Military Order of the Carabao at their monthly lunch.

Audience: 60-70 mostly retired military officers.

Media: Closed. Chatham House Rules.

Strategic Intent: Bolster support and foster understanding of the Coast Guard as an Armed Force that needs proper investment.

Duration: 30 minutes

OPENING

Great to be amongst this incredible group of patriots!

[Extemporaneous Welcome]

The United States has the best military in the world – bar none. Other nations emulate us... foreign coast guards go so far as to paint the same diagonal racing stripe on their ships. Their ships may look eerily similar on the outside, but the inside is what counts. On the inside is the people, and that is the one thing the rest of the world cannot replicate. Our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen! Men and women who, today and throughout history, always put Service before self.

HURRICANES / READINESS

Since you do this lunch monthly, let's talk about the word of the month... Last month it was hurricane. In fact, hurricane after hurricane after hurricane.

Our Nation was pummeled.

I went down to the impacted regions. I saw the Marines with chainsaws clearing streets, Coast Guard and Navy ships off the coast, the skies peppered with helos, the National Guard, Army... the cavalry was there.

That is what the men and women in uniform do. They answer the call. Our military was all in and the task at hand is not close to being complete.

In the Coast Guard, we surged nearly 3,000 active duty, reserve, and civilian personnel from as far away as Alaska and Guam.

I could not be more proud of their herculean efforts.

I had a Senior Chief - BMCS Joshua Martin – who had literally lost everything... his house, the bike he had just paid off... everything. But he showed up to work and still hasn't taken a day off. Nearly 10 percent of our entire active duty workforce was displaced, but these men and women still showed up to work.

But there is no question – our response to these storms came at a cost. It consumed our future readiness – readiness this Nation demands.

Just like the other Armed Forces, over the years the Coast Guard has experienced a deterioration of our readiness, and, now, we add on top these historic response efforts.

For the past 5 years, our annualized appropriation operations and maintenance has been below the BCA floor. As the other armed services lament the prospect of being funded at the BCA water level – but the Coast Guard finds itself underwater in that regard.

We are recapitalizing our platforms (NSC, OPC, FRC) but new assets are replacing 50 and 70 year old vessels. But overall, to do all that our men and women do – day in and day out – we need real and steady investment. I know these are incredibly fiscally constrained times, but we must grow our O&E account 5%, grow our workforce, and buy down our shore infrastructure backlog of \$1.6 billion, to which these hurricanes added at least \$650 million.

So, what do you get with the proper investment?

ARMED FORCE

Well, first and foremost, we are an Armed Force. The Coast Guard brings our broad authorities, versatile competencies, and global partnerships (i.e. access!), to the Joint Force – we are able to address threats to our Nation in ways no other service can.

We provide:

- more than 4,000 hours of MPA support and 2,000+ major cutter days to SOUTHCOM annually;
- law enforcement teams bring authority to Naval Combatants around the globe;
- Six patrol boats and an advanced interdiction team directly support CENTCOM's Theater Security Cooperation, maritime security, and counter-piracy efforts in the Middle East (approximately 240 people total);
- Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR) – coordinated USG response to maritime threats;
- National Capital Region Air Defense Facility – rotary wing assets intercept low-slow air threats to NCR under TACON of NORAD/NORTHCOM; can shift TACON to CG for LE.

We operate off the waters of every continent and obtain national defense objectives, without escalation.

OTHER STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In addition, we are looking where our DoD counterparts are not. And we didn't take the pressure off these areas of strategic importance during our response to the hurricanes... our job to safeguard and secure our Nation is a 24x7x365 responsibility. I am not able to press pause.

- **[ARCTIC] In the Arctic, the Coast Guard is the sole U.S. surface presence critical to exerting our National**

sovereignty and preserving U.S. strategic depth in the face of increasing encroachment by Russia and China.

- **Our National Military Strategy includes NK, Iran, Russia, China and extremism... Well, two of the five are active in the Arctic. If Russia is worth paying attention to, we must not just pay attention to their actions in the Middle East, Europe, and Ukraine; we should pay attention to them globally. Same with China, operating and investing extensively in the region and even in our EEZ.**
- **[WHEM] We are on the front lines combating criminal networks in our hemisphere.**
 - **During our hurricane response efforts, I attended an offload of 50,000 pounds of cocaine and heroin worth an estimated \$6 billion.**
 - **I attended the offload with the Attorney General, Jeff Sessions. Organized crime becomes disorganized when we prosecute and gather information on the network. This problem set that is a National epidemic that is causing people to flee to our shores... it will truly take a whole of government approach.**
- **[CYBER / MTS] And when I talk about our return on investment... just consider that \$4.6 trillion of economic activity annually stems from our waterways. The Coast Guard is the military service that safeguard and secures that incredible National asset.**

We do all that... oh and also, the Coast Guard surged the men and women who saved nearly 12,000 lives during the month of historic hurricanes.

I think that deserves proper investment.

...which, I'll note, in the grand scheme of things, is actually an incredibly modest amount.

ON THE HORIZON / CLOSING

As I look to the horizon, I see the demand for Coast Guard services increasing not decreasing. The world is not exactly breaking out in tranquility... NK... SCS... Arctic...

So, it is my mission to restore our Coast Guard just as our Nation must recover from this hurricane season.

Now, as I look around at this incredible brain trust – I wonder what's on *your* minds?