

**Purpose:** Provide keynote remarks after being presented a Distinguished Service Award during the HSDBC Annual Dinner. Two previous recipients of the award include Admirals James Loy (2013) and Thad Allen (2008). Last year's recipient was former Secretary Jeh Johnson.

**Audience:** ~100 individuals from various areas in the homeland security mission space to include, industry executives from the Homeland Security Industrial Base, senior congressional staff and members of Congress, and representatives from across DHS and DOJ.

**Media:** On the record.

**Strategic Intent:** Foster understanding and bolster support for strategic priorities.

**Duration:** 20 minutes

## OPENING

**Thank you! It's an honor to be here tonight... To be given this prestigious award and join company with the likes of Admiral James Loy – one of my early mentors in the Service... and Secretary Jeh Johnson. I actually spoke to Jeh less than a month ago at the Coast Guard Academy for our Officer Candidate School graduation ceremony. Jeh was there cheering on his son, now, ENS Johnson...**

**Despite all dad's accomplishments, he told me watching his son cross that stage and get his commission was one of his proudest moments.**

**He has good reason to be proud. His son just joined the world's greatest Coast Guard.**

**Truly, it's been my privilege to serve these 40 years in the United States Coast Guard. On a daily basis, I get to be inspired by all that our men and women accomplish. I have to say, I'm a little envious of ENS Johnson... just starting his journey. It's definitely an exciting time to join... plenty of opportunities and challenges on the horizon.**

## **CYBER / DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION**

**Just take the world of cyber, for example. It's a word that was certainly not in our vernacular when I joined the Service. Our digital landscape is shifting right underfoot.**

**Technological advances are accelerating at incredible rates and operating in this evolving world is one of the most difficult economic and national security challenges we face today.**

**It should be of no surprise to anyone that the new Secretary of DHS – Kirsten Nielsen – is not only well versed in, but passionate about securing our homeland from cyber threats.**

**The Coast Guard is ideally situated in this area... to not just secure against threats, but also harness the power of cyber to enhance our operations...**

- We are the only military agency in DHS.**
- A CG Admiral is the Director of J6 on the Joint Staff.**
- We have members at the U.S. Cyber Command.**
- We are leading the International Maritime Organization.**

- **And we are a member of the National Intelligence Community.**

**And we are building a culture that embraces innovative solutions and new technologies in order to stay one step ahead of our adversaries.**

## **WHEM**

**We know our adversaries are innovating.**

**Our hemisphere continues to be under attack by organized networks that prosper off weakened governance, instability, and violence. The terror these criminal networks inflict in South and Central America causes desperate people to place their children in the hands of human smugglers, in hopes they can make it across our borders and maybe to a better life.**

**And all because these people are stuck between the number one producer of cocaine – Colombia, and the number one consumer – us.**

**Drug use in this country is an epidemic. Drug overdoses are now the leading cause of death among Americans under 50. Drug overdoses killed more Americans last year than the Vietnam War... 142 deaths each day from drug overdoses means the death toll is equal to September 11th every three weeks.**

**And it's expensive. The White House Council of Economic Advisers just raised its estimate of the epidemic's annual cost to \$504 billion. It's not just an epidemic, it's a national emergency.**

**In calendar year 2017 – so far – the Coast Guard, in conjunction with our interagency and international partners, removed over 250 metric tons of cocaine and detained nearly 800 suspected smugglers for further investigation and prosecution. And those figures are UP from our last record breaking year.**

**We cannot let up on the pedal in this campaign. It's a national security imperative. I will say, our new platforms are game changers for us.**

**We are recapitalizing like never before. Our founding father – Alexander Hamilton – would be amazed at how far we've come from those “few armed vessels, judiciously stationed at the entrances of our ports, [that] at a small expense [were] made useful sentinels of the laws.”**

**Those 10 revenue cutters were budgeted at \$1000 each... not one came in on budget. Today, our platforms are coming in on budget and they pay for themselves in one patrol! Really, our cutters take so much cocaine off the water on their maiden patrol, the value of it is more than the entire acquisition cost of the National Security Cutter. To be fair, I**

**can't exactly cash in that cocaine... but it's money that doesn't pad the pockets of violent criminals... and it's poison that doesn't hit our streets.**

## **ARCTIC**

**But one recapitalization effort that is behind the curve is with our Nation's polar icebreaker fleet... if you can even call our fleet of two – one medium and one heavy – a fleet.**

**Secretary Tillerson offended the CO of the POLAR STAR (CAPT Mike Davanso) when he called the ship “crummy.” But it is! This ship has been in the Coast Guard longer than I have... and ships just don't hold up the same... if I do say so myself...**

**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 in the Arctic. And recapitalization of our fleet to 3 heavy and 3 medium icebreakers continues to be one of my highest priorities.**

## **MTS**

**Another recapitalization effort that we need to get moving on is replacing our fleet of 35 inland tenders. The average age of this fleet is 52 years old – some are over 70! These are pretty basic designs that will only take a modest investment. We really can't afford not to recapitalize these assets**

because they are at the heart of safeguarding the \$4.6 trillion of economic activity that is generated on our waterways annually.

### ARMED FORCE / WORKFORCE / CLOSING

So yes, sitting where I sit, I truly can't help but be inspired by all that the men and women of the Coast Guard accomplish. There are Coast Guard members operating off every continent to secure and defend our Nation... plugged into every COCOM... exerting our sovereign rights at the poles... and safeguarding our heartland as well.

Underpinning it all is our people. Incredible people like ENS Johnson who will lead our Coast Guard into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

So, truly, I accept this award on behalf of them. On behalf of the men and women who have inspired me for 40 years and who will continue to inspire me after I pass the torch in May.

On behalf of them... God Bless and *Semper Paratus!*