



Admiral James M. Loy

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Introduction:

The terror from the skies last month did not just mar the skyline of New York City, strike an ugly gash in the Pentagon, and kill thousands of innocent people. It changed our perception of security at home and around the world.

No longer can the United States define security mainly as a projection of military might abroad in our national defense.

The terrorists who aimed at our national symbols of economic and military strength struck them with missiles made of the tools of our own prosperity. The battle has come home.

This tragic event has forced us to reassess our definitions of national security, and remake the means of achieving it.

And it has raised a burning question in everyone’s mind. How do we prevent another attack? Of course, the question that concerns us this afternoon is more specific. How do we meet the enormous challenge of providing maritime security against terrorism and other potential threats to the marine transportation system?

I would venture to say that the gathering in this room today manifests the real complexity of the possible answers to that question. Before we consider the answers, however, let’s try to understand the question a little better.

The emergent need for national security closer to home:

Until recently, our view of national security has been projected abroad, rather than within our own borders. However, after the recent attacks on our own cities, we now have good cause to be concerned about the threats right under our own noses. Today, we suffer under the constant threat of terrorism as a means of coercion or retaliation, as much of the world already has. That will likely continue for some time.

And as a nation that depends so heavily on the oceans and sea-lanes as avenues of our prosperity, we know that whatever action we take in response must protect our ports

and waterways and the ships that use them, which are just as important to our commerce with the world as airlines and trade centers, and clearly just as vulnerable.

The insidious nature of terror as a weapon is that even without being used, it can conjure all sorts of mayhem in the minds of the victims. How does a nation go about guarding itself from whatever horrors the mind can imagine?

Terrorism is not the only threat we face, however. It is only one of many modern threats that confront us. Migrant and drug smuggling, for example, compound the threat of terrorism, because they contribute to the illicit movement of people, money, and weapons across borders. These threats have been with us for many years. They have continued to grow in severity each year, and will likely continue into the future.

Common to each of these threats is the use of an asymmetric means of attack on the United States by a state or non-state actor who is either unwilling or unable to confront us directly.

All of these threats bring the problem of national security much closer to home.

Looking at the multitude and complexity of the threats and challenges we now face, it's kind of like preparing to play a game of checkers against a familiar opponent, only to sit down and discover that you are already ten moves into a chess game . . . but, it is three-dimensional chess . . . against multiple opponents . . . whose pieces are unconstrained by your previous understanding of their rules of movement. Such a game would be so unrecognizable that we wouldn't even know what to call it. And that is true of this new era in which we are responsible for national security.

Homeland Security as the primary element of a National Security Strategy:

The President has now responded by establishing a new cabinet-level position, the Director of Homeland Security, whose job it is to coordinate the national effort to protect the homeland against terrorism—and, whether or not he realizes it, the other transnational threats that feed it.

Much has been written on the issue of Homeland Security over the past few years. Much of it has been rather narrow in scope, focusing mainly on “Homeland Defense” as a function of the military. This view is much too restrictive, however, as recent events have proven.

The main exception to this rather narrow view has been the Commission on National Security Strategy/21st Century, aka the Hart-Rudman Commission, which was published earlier this year.

Here is what the Hart-Rudman report said in a nutshell:

“The United States will become increasingly vulnerable to hostile attack on the American homeland, and U.S. military superiority will not entirely protect us...”

And it concluded:

“...the security of the American homeland from the threats of the new century should be *the* primary national security mission of the U.S. government.

The commission finally recommended:

“The President should develop a comprehensive strategy to heighten America’s ability to prevent and protect against all forms of attacks on the homeland, and to respond to such attacks if prevention and protection fail.”

The commission was right. What might such a strategy look like, given that conventional uses of military, diplomatic, or economic power would likely not be effective in countering the threats? Some additional capability is needed.

That capability is civil authority blended with the other forms of state power.

The importance of civil authority to Homeland Security:

Civil authority has usually been linked mainly with domestic security, rather than national security policy. But as the Hart-Rudman Commission observes, “the distinction between national security policy and domestic security is already beginning to blur and in the next quarter century it could altogether disappear.”

When viewed against transnational and asymmetric threats, such blurring tends to make sense. Terrorism, for example, has consistently been defined as a criminal act, and if terrorists are rooted out from among our own population, they will most likely be tried as criminals. Military means will now be used to destroy terrorist organizations who have a global reach, and the nations who give them refuge. But the proper response to a criminal act within our own borders is to enforce the law.

Similarly, inspecting cargo shipments for contraband at the border is an expression of civil authority, whether the contraband is computer technology, financial instruments, drugs, or WMD.

A correct response to these new threats should adhere to the principles of the constitution and the rule of law. We must continue to protect the civil liberties of our citizens while we protect their security.

The maritime dimension of Homeland Security:

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Threats to our security at home are growing, and they will continue to grow in this new century. Separately and collectively they pose dangers to our borders, our economy, our environment, and our safety. All of them have a distinct maritime dimension.

They can be conveyed towards our shores in ways that can’t always be countered by traditional naval forces. We can’t launch cruise missiles or air strikes against them as

they approach: they draw near in civilian vessels that look like and mingle with legitimate commercial and recreational traffic.

The biggest challenge facing our marine transportation system is how to ensure that legitimate cargo is not unnecessarily delayed as we and other nations introduce enhanced security procedures.

Sustained prosperity clearly depends upon our accommodating the global trade that is predicted to double or triple in the next 20 years, so government needs to be attentive to finding ways to minimize the disruptions and delays caused by federal inspections and other requirements. More stuff has to move through faster—so borders need to become looser.

Ensuring homeland security suggests a requirement to tighten down the borders. Government has an obligation to keep illegal immigrants, drugs, weapons, and other contraband from entering and leaving through those same ports whose throughput we want to maximize in the interests of prosperity.

To sustain prosperity we open the gates. To ensure security we close the gates. We clearly need to get beyond the METAphor of an opened-or-closed gate and find a concept that permits both prosperity and security. Prosperity and security should not be competing interests when they serve the transcending national interest.

Maritime Domain Awareness as an element of Homeland Security:

Returning to our original question, how in the world do we protect our nation's maritime security in such a dynamic environment against such elusive threats? This is a question that we had discussed rather academically until last month. It has now become uniquely and vitally important to us as a service and as a nation. I think it requires a unique answer.

We need a systematic approach of complementary security measures to put together the various pieces of the homeland security puzzle. Of course, we need to think more seriously than ever about how to prevent, how to respond, and how to manage the consequences of asymmetric attacks. But we need to think first about awareness. The old paradigm of prevention, response, and consequence management must now become awareness, prevention, response, and consequence management.

Awareness involves recognizing the threats well in advance, and anticipating our vulnerabilities.

It also has to do with having access to detailed intelligence about our adversaries, and sharing that information more effectively among federal agencies and with our international partners.

Without better awareness, we will be forced to take more stringent actions with regard to prevention and response that will close down our economy and threaten our

economic security. I don't know about you, but I don't want to live in a country with militarized borders. That would be a very different America than the one that our founding fathers envisioned.

As I mentioned earlier, the goal of sustaining global economic prosperity implies a loosening of control at the borders. On the other hand, ensuring maritime security to prevent catastrophic events suggests a requirement to tighten down the borders.

The concept I offer to unite these goals is an idea that we call "Maritime Domain Awareness." But it is unique in that it applies specifically to our maritime borders and exclusive economic zones.

Maritime Domain Awareness would be the umbrella that covers all of the information requirements of everybody with any responsibility for homeland security in the maritime domain.

Applied to the government interest of getting more cargo through Customs and Coast Guard inspectors in less time with greater security, its key elements would be an integrated, accessible database of information; one-stop coordinated inspections; high technology sensors, readers, x-rays, and scanners; solid risk based decision-making forums charged with taking on and solving problems.

As we get better at collaborative approaches to maritime security issues, we quickly realize how many agencies and companies have important roles, and how varied and complex their information requirements are.

Imagine for a moment the information requirements associated with a hypothetical 6000 TEU flag-of-convenience container ship with a multi-national crew cobbled together by a hiring agent who works for an Algerian vessel operator who chartered the vessel from a Greek ship owner whose corporate offices are in the Cayman Islands.

How would you begin to manage the information required to prosecute an inter-agency response to any of the various threats that might be aboard such a hypothetical ship—a report of a nuclear device being smuggled, chemical or biological agents, or any of hundreds of other possibilities? Maritime Domain Awareness can become the forum we use to get our arms around that issue.

Its key characteristics would be a system that integrates the many and varied efforts of military civil agencies, and private sector entities; transparency in the domain from "over there" internationally to the U.S. port; collaboration among federal agencies; coordination among international, national, and local interests; sensitivity to customer service; risk-based decision making; and facilitation of the Incident Command System when incidents do arise. "Jointness plus" with an emphasis on the "plus."

Its tools would have to include solid vulnerability assessments with action plan follow-ups; a model port guide with special attention to security guidelines; counter-terrorism and contingency plans and exercises; real-time cargo, people, vessel tracking systems; and rigorous analytic models & simulations capable of producing tactically actionable products.

But perhaps the most important characteristic of MDA is that it is not just a system. It is a state of mind. You can't buy that. It is constant, unyielding vigilance. Its most important assets are the eyes and ears of people in the private industry and in the myriad of federal, state and local law enforcement officials in the ports and waterways of the United States.

Earlier this week, a river pilot onboard a ship inbound to the port of New Orleans noticed a man videotaping the Crescent City Bridge. He reported suspicious activity to the Captain of the Port, who arranged a pier-side boarding to investigate. Subsequently, a crewmember jumped overboard. NOPD later apprehended the man, and found in his possession a large amount of money and a list of telephone numbers, one of which belonged to a person on the FBI's most wanted list of terrorists. Though the man videotaping the bridge was not the man who jumped overboard, it was the vigilance of a river pilot that might have deterred potential terrorist activity.

The National Response Center is ready and waiting to receive telephone reports of suspicious activity that you might see from day to day. They have a toll-free number: 1-800-424-8802. I urge you to use it. You can help us develop the awareness I'm talking about.

My friends, this is an all-hands evolution, and I believe that continuously advanced, integrated information systems offer us our closest point of approach to a sustainable advantage against 21st century threats. They also offer us the best chance of managing the collaboration I spoke of earlier.

Thus armed, we can take a risk management approach to decide which vessels need to be boarded on the high seas, based on the greatest threats represented to us.

As we gradually achieve greater Maritime Domain Awareness, it will enhance homeland security by allowing us to push the maritime borders out from the coastline by sharing information on international arrivals and departures within the United States and among our partners around the world, and that will help prevent future attacks.

It will also help by telling us what is going on daily in our ports and waterways—events that very well could have escaped our attention before, but may be vital to understanding the impending threats against us.

International and domestic cooperation, both civil and military is essential in this regard, because we can't hope to ensure our security by working alone or by waiting until the threats have already crossed the thresholds of our ports.

Awareness is the key to preventing the potential threats from being realized and becoming a consequence to manage.

The Coast Guard's unique qualities as an instrument of homeland security:

The national leaders in the executive and legislative branches of our government have confronted the difficult issue as to whether terrorism is a matter of law or war.

President Bush has declared that our enemies have committed an act of war against us. But he also speaks of bringing Osama bin Laden and the other culprits of terrorism to justice.

As the President said in his address to the joint session of congress, “Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or whether we bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done.”

Even as our Department of Defense girds for war, our Justice Department is hard on the trail of a criminal organization. The fact is that both legal and military battles, as well as diplomatic and economic strategies and tactics, will be necessary to win this war.

That is why the Coast Guard is so well-suited to help fight this war. We can help bring justice to our enemies and bring our enemies to justice.

As both a military service and a federal law enforcement agency, we are uniquely positioned among federal agencies to fight an enemy that crosses boundaries with seeming impunity.

We are a maritime nation. We’ve already discussed how porous our maritime borders can be, especially in comparison to our land and air borders. Ninety-five percent of our trade is shipped by maritime means. Threats can pose as legitimate trading vessels very easily among such a large volume.

Somebody has to engage these vessels one at a time up close and personal. Somebody has to distinguish the suspicious from the obviously innocent. To separate the guilty from the merely suspicious, somebody has to get alongside and put a boarding team aboard, even if the suspect vessels resist or won’t stop.

Somebody has to size up each case and dispose of it based on the complex humanitarian, diplomatic, military, geo-political, environmental, and legal issues at stake.

Somebody has to coordinate proposed enforcement actions with other government departments, flag states, law enforcement agencies, and everybody else who has a legitimate voice in the matter. It must all be done according to the rule of law.

For 211 years, that somebody has been the United States Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard offers scalable command and control frameworks suitable for preventing or responding to nearly any military or civil domestic emergency.

Our Captains of the Port have broad and strong legal authority to secure and manage any situation that arises in our ports or on our waterways. This authority gives them the legal basis for ordering or approving just about any movement of shipping within the port. And our Port Security Units give enforcement teeth to that legal authority.

To that foundation, we offer experience in disaster relief and pollution response—experience that has made us the most proficient agency anywhere in conducting emergency operations through the Incident Command Structure. Our Incident Command Structure, which has been adopted by FEMA, is the most effective way of coordinating inter-agency responses to domestic emergencies.

And if one of those emergencies should require DOD involvement, our status as the nation’s fifth armed service links us to the others in a joint warfare environment.

The sum of these pieces—legal authority, coastal assets, command structure for military and civilian agencies, command and control systems—offers a natural bridge between all the players who have to get involved within the civilian interagency community and the Department of Defense.

Each of these elements has been demonstrated effectively during the past seven weeks in response to the attacks on two of our major cities.

We can’t do it alone, obviously. Though we have already begun, we must continue to cooperate diligently with governments and private industries to build our Maritime Security game plan to meet the level of threat against us today.

The Coast Guard Response:

Better awareness is the key piece of the security puzzle. With regard to the other pieces—prevention, response, and consequence management—the Coast Guard also has answered the call to action. We are in the midst of some dynamic changes that will reshape the future of our service to meet the challenges before us.

Immediately after the attacks on September 11th, the unique multi-mission nature of the Coast Guard allowed us to increase our security posture, using existing active-duty, reserve, civilian, and auxiliary personnel, as well as existing shore units, ships, boats, and aircraft.

To meet the national emergency, however, we were forced to reduce counter-drug, fisheries, and migrant interdiction patrols. Those multi-mission platforms and sailors took a left and went to port security!

Coast Guard men and women everywhere have significantly increased the security of the nation’s ports and waterways, protected people and property, and assisted in

rescue and recovery efforts. We have done these things while doing our very best to keep commerce flowing smoothly.

Our present challenge is to find the “new normal” port security posture, while returning to our other missions. However, this increased level of security is not sustainable with our current inventory of assets...nor is it an efficient or effective use of resources. Our people are working long hours, we are curtailing other important missions, and more than 25% of our reservists are on active duty.

Since September 11th, we have controlled movement of shipping in our ports, increased our presence within the ports, inventoried critical infrastructure, and reached out to others who can help us: OHS, JFCOM, USN, state and local governments, and the private sector.

Our broad outreach to members of the maritime industry is leading to a mutual understanding of ways and means to improve the security of our ports and waterways. It is clear that the Coast Guard does not have adequate resources to guard every piece of our critical infrastructure, even in the Tier-One ports.

Private industry must take primary responsibility for protecting their vital interests. We will help where we can. But we will also be there to ensure that the industries achieve a layered approach to security, including adequate facility, vessel and port security plans—and the exercises that will demonstrate their adequacy.

Conclusion:

Yesterday, Secretary Mineta ordered a new crackdown on security at the nation’s airports. Despite all the emphasis on airport security in recent weeks, the system remains fraught with holes.

He said that agents of the FAA will take drastic actions there—to include shutting down operations—if they see security problems. Of course, his new policy is designed in part to provide an incentive for airlines to improve security.

My friends, there are lessons here for all of us. September 11th was an aviation focused tragedy. There, but for the grace of God, go all of us in this room. The maritime sector is not immune to similar attacks.

I look forward to working with you all to fuse our individual contributions into the collective maritime security plan that will best serve our country.

Thank you. And Semper Paratus.

