
Shaping America's Joint Maritime Forces:



The Coast Guard in the 21st Century

By JAMES M. LOY

Now is the moment to be farsighted as we chart a path into the new millennium. As borders open and the flow of information, technology, money, trade, and people across borders increases, the line between domestic and foreign policy continues to blur. We can only preserve our security and well-being at home by being actively involved in the world beyond our borders.

—National Security Strategy for a New Century

Admiral James M. Loy is the 21st Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard.

For the Coast Guard three core objectives of national security policy are critical to politico-military plans, programs, and operations: bolstering economic prosperity, promoting democracy abroad, and enhancing security by effective diplomacy and with forces that are ready to fight and win. “To achieve these objectives,” our national security strategy states, “we will remain engaged abroad and work with partners, new and old, to promote peace and prosperity.”

These compelling and enduring objectives will continue to shape the Coast Guard’s vision. They indicate how the multi-mission Coast Guard—as the Nation’s premier maritime agency—will respond to needs at home and abroad even as it prepares for unknown future requirements that will inevitably be thrust upon it.

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U.S. Coast Guard (Dave Santos)

Counter-drug training in Central America.

Challenges to our security today and tomorrow—especially maritime security—will no longer be strictly military threats from other countries. A variety of transnational threats and challenges have much broader effects that envelop the environmental, economic, and social well-being of

the need to control landward borders, territorial seas, and exclusive economic zones will intensify

our citizenry and are thus a critical focus for the Coast Guard of tomorrow.

Maritime forces provide unique, complementary, and much-needed assets to humanitarian, law-enforcement, regulatory, and military operations to meet these challenges head-on. Although the relationship between the Navy and the Coast Guard has never been better—with unprecedented levels of operations, officer exchanges, integrated staffs, interoperability, and planning—we must think in new, mutually supportive ways about maritime forces for the next century.

Responding to Maritime Challenges

The Coast Guard is not a navy but a distinctive force with a separate identity and purpose. Each of its four roles—law enforcement, environmental protection, safety, and national defense—contribute to the economic, social, environmental, maritime, and military security of the Nation. An agency of the Department of Transportation, it is the smallest of the five services. And although the majority of its responsibilities lie close to home, its missions have global implications. It is unique among the Armed Forces in that it has statutory law enforcement authority and is not subject to the limits of the Posse Comitatus Act. Its people, systems, and platforms provide both

national and international capabilities which complement those of the Navy and other services as well as civilian agencies.

The need to control America's landward borders, territorial seas, and exclusive economic zones will intensify in the first decades of the 21st century. Indeed, future threats to U.S. security will be even more varied than today. Our national security strategy acknowledges that:

... the dangers we face are unprecedented in their complexity. Ethnic conflict and outlaw states threaten regional stability; terrorism, drugs, organized crime, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are global concerns that transcend national borders; and environmental damage and rapid population growth undermine economic prosperity and political stability in many countries.

Growing numbers of illegal migrants will seek entry into the United States, creating social, economic, and political problems and generating demands for expanded Coast Guard interdiction along our maritime borders. Similarly, the flow of illegal drugs will become harder to counter as global and regional drug cartels employ more advanced equipment and technology. Capabilities such as radar-evading stealthy boats and aircraft and sophisticated counter-information technology will enable the cartels to challenge law enforcement organizations with greater daring.

Domestic and international terrorism will also continue to proliferate, placing a premium on our ability to detect, deter, and respond to such threats. There will be a critical need to safeguard American ports and waterways from attack and sabotage in peace and war—especially from groups with access to chemical or biological weapons.

Militarily, the United States is facing far different threats today than during the Cold War. While a peer competitor is not expected to emerge until after 2010, the Armed Forces must be able to meet the operational requirements of winning two nearly simultaneous major theater wars. In addition, smaller-scale contingencies of varying size and intensity—as well as non-combat military operations other than war (MOOTW)—will demand effective and flexible U.S. forces that can be forward-deployed and support peacetime diplomacy and crisis-response operations in key areas of the world. Both local and regional crises will continue to proliferate and become more dangerous as sophisticated weapons become more available to nations as well as sub-national groups intent on challenging the United States and its allies and friends.

Patrolling off Cape Canaveral.



U.S. Coast Guard (C.S. Powell)

Maritime Challenges 1997, an assessment by the Office of Naval Intelligence, addressed many of the important maritime security challenges faced by the Coast Guard daily:

- smuggling narcotics, illegal aliens, and technology or importing untaxed cargoes
- growing complexities of multiflagged, multinational maritime corporations
- sanction violations by pariah states of restrictions imposed by the United Nations or other international governing bodies
- destabilizing arms traffic
- illegal transmission of key components or precursors of weapons of mass destruction
- disruptions or discontinuities in maritime trade access, the lifeline of the global economy
- illegal exploitation or contamination of the maritime food supply
- circumvention or violations of environmental protection laws
- piracy, terrorism, and crime and violence at sea
- sudden uncontrolled mass migration
- threats to the sealift support needed to sustain military operations.

That many of these challenges to maritime security are not strictly military underscores the importance, relevance, and vitality of the Coast Guard's law enforcement role—a core competency developed during 200 years of service.

Security Imperatives

As our national military strategy makes clear, the Armed Forces must provide a wide range of options to promote and protect U.S. interests. This includes capabilities to support multifaceted peacetime military engagement initiatives, to conduct and sustain multiple concurrent smaller-scale contingency operations in both peacetime and crisis, and to respond to regional aggression and conflict in the face of weapons of mass destruction and a variety of asymmetric threats.

The unique capabilities of multimission flexibility and organic self-sufficiency inherent in maritime forces generally make them particularly appropriate to a broad spectrum of peacetime and crisis-response operations. The Coast Guard, along with the other sea services, has a long history of peacetime engagement. Active presence in forward areas—including port visits and other show-the-flag operations, training and exercises with regional navies and coast guards, and working with local maritime agencies and organizations—has important benefits:

- demonstrates firm political, military, and economic commitments to allies and friends
- helps underwrite regional stability
- enhances U.S. access to and familiarity with overseas operating areas
- facilitates coalitions in future emergencies

- promotes interoperability between U.S. and foreign maritime forces
- nurtures regional stability and deterrence
- provides timely initial-response capabilities to various crises, humanitarian or military.

A cursory survey of the last few years illuminates the key contributions of the Coast Guard to national maritime and security needs. During the Haitian political crisis of the early 1990s, for example, a Navy amphibious assault ship was turned away from landing at Port-au-Prince by a volatile crowd. Meanwhile, Coast Guard cutters continued to return illegal Haitian migrants to the same port. Such low-visibility visits were an important communications channel to local political and security officials and were indispensable to the overall U.S. diplomatic response and support for the U.N. attempt to restore democracy. The Coast Guard acts as the lead service for the Haiti Multi-Agency Maritime Initiative, an effort to improve maritime infrastructure and security.

Moreover, the Coast Guard has played a major role in supporting U.N. sanctions halfway around the world. Its law enforcement detachments (LEDETs) have conducted tens of thousands of searches of ships suspected of violating U.N. embargoes. During the embargo of the former Yugoslavia, LEDETs served on Navy surface combatants and provided the law-enforcement and search expertise to conduct boardings and detect contraband. Such maritime interdiction operations (MIOs) were also conducted by LEDETs riding Navy warships in the Persian Gulf and Red

Sea. The Coast Guard was so successful in this forward-presence mission that *USCGC Morgenthau* deployed to the Gulf to assist U.S. Central Command in enforcing U.N. embargoes against Iraq. This also was a resounding success and generated a request from that unified command for another cutter deployment in 1998.

Coast Guard deployments to the annual Central/South American UNITAS exercises, Port Security Unit exercise in South Korea, numerous mobile training team (MTT) visits, and hundreds of port calls have demonstrated that a continuous program of forward deployments by its cutters provides nontraditional support to regional and theater engagement strategies of unified commands. Since 1986 the Coast Guard has deployed 5,000 MTTs to 65 countries. It trains 2,000 students in-country and 300 in its schools annually in the United States. Moreover, a dozen countries have cadets enrolled full-time at the Coast Guard Academy.

the Coast Guard has trained forces in the Republic of Georgia, Colombia, Bolivia, and Haiti



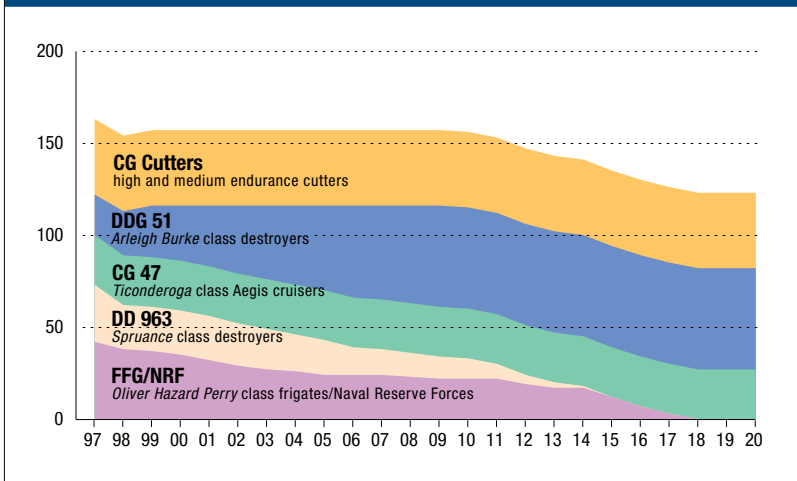
USCGC Mohawk picking up migrants.

U.S. Coast Guard (Robin Plesster)

During the mid-1990s international engagement activities have reaped tremendous benefits. The Coast Guard has enabled and supported ratification of bilateral interdiction treaties with several Caribbean nations, organizing counter-narcotic cooperative patrols. The Commandant also served as the President's senior military advisor at the 1997 Caribbean Summit, which addressed regional counter-narcotic, law enforcement, and humanitarian issues. The Coast Guard has trained forces in emerging democracies: the Republic of Georgia, Colombia, Bolivia, and Haiti. It has deployed cutters to Eastern Europe to share information with ministries and maritime forces and engaged the Russian Federal Border Service to increase maritime cooperation in the north Pacific. All such activities contribute to the security and prosperity of the United States as well as to nations that are key to regional peace and stability.

The Coast Guard has deployed two cutters—*USCGC Dallas* and *USCGC Gallatin*—to the Mediterranean, Black, and Baltic seas. Port security units and aviation squadrons also have been sent to Turkey, the northern Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf. Its assets have taken part in numerous exercises with foreign maritime forces and made hundreds of visits worldwide. The striking aspect of these and other links is the similarity between

Correcting the Shortfall—A National Response



Coast Guard and host-nation forces. As a Navy admiral recognized after the 1995 deployment of *USCGC Dallas*, the Coast Guard is

the right force to reach the majority of these navies, especially the Partnership for Peace navies. What these countries need and can afford is Coast Guard-type missions and associated force structures. The Coast Guard is an excellent example of how to merge together an agency with military and civilian duties.

So valuable were those deployments that *USCGC Legare* spent two months deployed to Baltic and Mediterranean operating areas and conducted numerous port visits and exercises with NATO naval forces and other regional navies.

The Department of State and unified commands focus on several essential attributes that the Coast Guard brings to shaping and responding to maritime security needs. It interacts with a large and diverse number of agencies in host countries. Its forces and missions closely match those of many foreign navies. And the presence of Coast Guard forces is often instantly acceptable because of their worldwide humanitarian reputation.

Deepwater Perspective

Joint Vision 2010 has defined a common direction for all the services—including the Coast Guard—to meet the future. Emerging technologies are to be merged with innovative operational concepts that will greatly improve the Nation's ability to conduct joint operations across the range of peacetime, crisis, and wartime missions. Key to this future is information superiority which, along with operational and technological

innovation, will enable four operational concepts that are to serve as the template for future forces:

- *Dominant maneuver* is the multidimensional application of information, engagement, and mobility capabilities to position and employ widely dispersed joint land, sea, air, and space forces to accomplish operational tasks.

- *Precision engagement* is a system of systems that enables forces to locate the objective or target, provide responsive command and control, generate the desired effect, assess the level of success, and retain the flexibility to reengage with precision when required.

- *Full dimensional protection* is the multilayered offensive and defensive capability to protect our forces at all levels from attack while maintaining freedom of action during deployment, maneuver, and engagement.

- *Focused logistics* is the fusion of information, logistics, and transportation technologies to provide rapid crisis response, track and shift assets even while en route, and deliver tailored logistics packages and sustainment directly on the strategic, operational, and tactical levels.

Within these architectures for today's and tomorrow's forces, the Coast Guard can provide key capabilities for joint and multinational operations:

- port security units
- harbor defense commands
- coastal patrol boats
- major cutters with embarked helicopters
- patrol and logistics support aircraft
- maritime interception/boarding teams
- shipboard helicopter detachments for U.S. Navy and other-country warships
- environment protection teams
- explosive loading teams
- aids to navigation teams
- search and rescue units

While the Coast Guard does not foresee significant changes in its missions and operations, it will carry them out in different ways. This expectation has shaped thinking on recapitalizing for the next century. For example, the *search* portion of the search and rescue mission will likely undergo dramatic changes. Finding mariners in distress will be simplified by new technology. Traditional aids to navigation (such as buoys and lights) will become fewer, replaced by virtual navigation and integrated electronic navigation systems. Safe and efficient use of new megaports for megaships will require efficient vessel traffic systems and partnerships with non-governmental agencies.

Marine pollution incidents should become less frequent but potentially more severe because of the growing volume of traffic and the more hazardous material being shipped. Requirements for drug interdiction will depend on the effectiveness of efforts to reduce demand and possible shifts to synthetic drugs. Moreover, the United States will remain the destination of choice for many illegal immigrants. And, although high-seas fish stocks will decline, consumer demands

Haitians boarding
USCGC Bear at
Guantanamo Bay.



U.S. Air Force (Vince Jones)

for seafood will grow to create an increased need to protect resources in the U.S. exclusive economic zone.

For defense and military missions, Coast Guard capabilities lend themselves best to naval coastal warfare operations in the littorals and to force protection operations at the land-sea interface (protecting ports, over-the-shore logistics sites, and amphibious objective areas). Assets and skills used daily in peacetime will remain valuable for military operations and will be needed especially because littoral operations are likely to increase in importance. Accordingly, the service will work with naval component commanders to provide tailored expeditionary force packages comprised of Coast Guard units teamed with Navy mobile and inshore warfare, mine warfare and explosive ordnance disposal, and mobile diving and salvage units.

Because of the growing sophistication of naval weapons systems, the Coast Guard will not perform high-end warfighting missions. This does not mean it will not have a warfighting role. In a recent letter on the combat capability of future replacement cutters, the Chief of Naval Operations underscored that his service's "policy has been and will continue to be to ensure the Coast Guard is prepared to carry out assigned naval warfare tasks."

In short, the demand for high-profile, visible overseas presence by U.S. forces will almost certainly expand as natural disasters, humanitarian crises, nationbuilding programs, and threats to national interests generate calls for active engagement and involvement. But the Navy and Marine Corps are increasingly challenged to meet all commitments, especially as active and Reserve forces are downsized as the result of fiscal constraints. From its 600 ships at the end of the Cold War, the Navy will have no more than 330 by the year 2002, of which only 116 will be multimission surface combatants—the highest of the Nation's high-mix forces. This fact of life has significant implications for both the Navy and Coast Guard.

The Navy is shaping its future force in response to national military strategy, *JV 2010*, and *Forward . . . From the Sea*. Among other needs, surface combatants must be capable of prevailing in major theater war and must focus on critical technologies and systems to provide theater ballistic missile defense and to counter weapons of mass destruction—high-end and high-tech capabilities. Such ships also must conduct the full array of responses for small-scale contingency operations.

The Navy has identified the way ahead for surface forces. No longer relegated to an escort role, its general-purpose surface forces will possess significant assets to directly influence events



U.S. Coast Guard (Carolyn Chelke)

HH-60J on
USCGC Escabana.

ashore in the future. With regard to surface combatants, two current initiatives involve developing Aegis theater ballistic missile defenses and a precision land-attack capability, again with a focus on more effectively and completely supporting land campaigns.

More to the point of force structure, in 2008 the Navy plans to commission the lead unit of what some term a maritime fire support ship—the DD21 land-attack destroyer—the next generation of surface combatants and a major leap in combatant design and operational concept. Beyond that, moreover, early units of the *USS Ticonderoga* Aegis guided missile cruisers will be replaced by a future concept identified as the air dominance warship in the 2015–20 period.

Meanwhile, the Navy has been actively shedding older cruisers, destroyers, and frigates, recalling a quip made by Admiral Lord Nelson, who

complained bitterly to his captains after the victory over the French at the Battle of the Nile. Prior to the battle, Nelson spent weeks sailing the Mediterranean trying to locate the French, protect his lines of communications, and convoy supply and troop ships. He declared that if he died then and there the surgeon would see carved on his heart “More frigates!” Surely he spoke for all naval commanders, past, present, and future, who know that quantity has a quality all its own.

The Coast Guard has 41 major cutters to safeguard maritime security and support national strategy. In the era of a 600-ship Navy, 40 or so cutters were a virtual afterthought. But today with regional instability and strife around the world and 116 surface combatants in the Navy, cutters and several hundred coastal patrol boats take on a new significance. In this regard the Coast Guard is a force-in-being, capable of many important MOOTW, small-scale contingency operations, and force protection in a major theater war. Fundamentally, the President and unified commanders

the Coast Guard is a force-in-being, capable of many important MOOTW



Port security for
Desert Storm.

U.S. Coast Guard

require a full spectrum of naval capabilities to meet the maritime challenges of tomorrow.

Within a dozen years, two classes of major cutters—12 *Hamilton* class high-endurance and 16 *Reliance* class medium-endurance—almost simultaneously reach the ends of their useful service lives and must be replaced, as will older medium-endurance ships and patrol boats. In response to multiple projections of future requirements, the Coast Guard has initiated the concept exploration stage in the replacement of its deepwater capability. Deepwater means any operation—civilian or military—conducted more than 50 miles from the coast. These assets must meet the full spectrum of maritime challenges, and the Coast Guard stands ready—*semper paratus*—to respond.

Today, the nascent deepwater integrated system envisions a system of systems approach to recapitalizing the Coast Guard in the next 50 to 100 years. We are addressing surface and airborne platforms and systems; command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C⁴ISR) technologies; and systems needed to satisfy and adapt to future mission requirements as an integrated package. There is a real need to solve the cutter platform equation, and we are examining a range of platform design concepts, C⁴ISR systems, and organic/offboard systems. At the same time, we will continue to focus on the C⁴ISR architecture to link surface and airborne systems with shore-based command structures and allow the seamless integration of our assets with those of other services—not just the Navy. Likewise, we will replace shore-based, fixed-wing, and shipboard rotary-wing

aircraft once embarked on the deepwater cutter replacement program. The bottom line is to meet the needs of taxpayers in an effective and efficient manner by using mission needs capabilities and life cycle costs as selection parameters.

Future challenges to our national security will no longer be focused strictly on military threats, and operations at sea will require the capabilities of not only the Navy and Marine Corps, but also of the Coast Guard—and on a scale not seen in the past. In reality, that tomorrow is already here. The Coast Guard and Navy worked hand-in-hand to carry out Haitian and Cuban mass migrations missions in 1994. We conduct counter-drug operations together on a daily basis. Coast Guard law enforcement detachments serve on Navy ships in the northern Persian Gulf.

Referring to the revolution in military affairs at a recent Naval War College symposium, the Chief of Naval Operations noted that “The real revolution will be in thinking not things.” Thus he challenged his audience “to launch another revolution, a revolution of shared purpose, operational integration, and common effort.”

The Coast Guard stands four-square behind the Navy in this effort and has called for a similar revolution between the Navy and Coast Guard. The shortfall in our surface capabilities to meet future threats demands a national response. The collective Navy-Coast Guard responsibility is to prepare adequate maritime forces now. To do that, we must shed our service parochialism and the not-invented-here attitude. Together we must provide the best maritime capabilities at a price Americans are willing to pay. Good stewardship of the public trust demands no less. **JFQ**

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