

THE INTERNATIONAL ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

(116-58)

HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION
OF THE
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TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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MARCH 5, 2020

SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER

TO: Members, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
FROM: Staff, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
RE: Subcommittee Hearing on “The International Role of the United States Coast Guard”

PURPOSE

The Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation will hold a hearing entitled “The International Role of the United States Coast Guard” on Tuesday, March 10, 2020, at 10:00 a.m., in 2167 Rayburn House Office Building to examine the worldwide presence of the Coast Guard. The Subcommittee will hear testimony from the U.S. Coast Guard (Coast Guard or Service) and experts on international relations.

BACKGROUND

On August 4, 1790, President George Washington signed the Tariff Act authorizing the Revenue Cutter Service and the construction of ten vessels, referred to as “cutters.” Those cutters were intended to enforce the federal tariff and trade laws and to prevent smuggling.¹ In 1915, the Revenue Cutter Service merged with the U.S. Life-Saving Service and was renamed the Coast Guard, making it the only maritime service dedicated to saving life at sea and enforcing the Nation’s maritime laws. In 1939, President Franklin Roosevelt ordered the transfer of the Lighthouse Service to the Coast Guard and officially assigned it the responsibility of maritime navigation. In 1946, the Commerce Department transferred the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation, which oversaw merchant marine licensing and merchant vessel safety, to the Coast Guard. In 1967, the Coast Guard was transferred to the Department of Transportation (DOT) where it resided until 2003 when it was transferred to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Under Section 102 of Title 14, United States Code, the Coast Guard has primary responsibility to enforce or assist in the enforcement of all applicable federal laws on, under, and over the high seas and waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States; to ensure safety of life and property at sea; to carry out domestic and international icebreaking activities; and, as one of the five armed forces of the United States, to maintain defense readiness to operate as a specialized service in the Navy upon the declaration of war or when the President directs.

The law enforcement and peacetime duties of the Coast Guard include the inspection of commercial vessels, the direction and maintenance of aids to navigation, the maintenance of an extensive network of search-and-rescue stations, international ice

¹United States Coast Guard. “The Coast Guard: America’s Oldest Maritime Defenders.”

patrol, collecting data for the National Weather Service, the protection of marine life and the ocean environment, and the interdiction of illegal drugs and migrants.

As one of the Nation's five armed forces, the Coast Guard has assisted in the defense of our nation during times of war and has played a crucial international role in every major American military conflict. During the War of 1812, the Revenue Cutter Service executed the first capture of a British vessel. In World War I, while the Service protected domestic shipping and safeguarded the waterfront, six Coast Guard cutters escorted hundreds of naval vessels between Gibraltar and the British Isles as well as patrolled the Mediterranean Sea. During the Vietnam War, the Service sent 26 cutters and some 8,000 servicemembers that inspected vessels for contraband, destroyed enemy craft, set up and operated a long-range navigation system, and installed and maintained buoys.

THE INTERNATIONAL ROLE OF THE COAST GUARD

Today's Coast Guard actively supports military commitments on all seven continents. While previous foreign missions were typically related to specific wars or military engagements, the Coast Guard's international presence is primarily focused on non-military capacity building and strategic partnerships. Since the Service is involved in numerous missions that do not have a direct defense link, the Coast Guard is uniquely situated to advance American interests internationally. More than 2,000 servicemembers are deployed annually around the globe to support Department of Defense Combatant Commanders, to promote peace, fortify alliances, uphold customary maritime norms and the rule of law, and challenge threats far from U.S. soil. In addition, the Coast Guard has 11 cutters, two maritime patrol aircraft, five helicopters, two specialized boarding teams, and a Port Security Team supporting international defense operations daily.²

Arctic

The Arctic provides a prime example of the importance of an international Coast Guard presence, its operational limitations, as well as underscores the indelible role the Coast Guard fills in facilitating international cooperation and partnerships among Arctic states.

With the ongoing melting of sea ice and the opening of new sea passages in the Arctic, the Coast Guard recognized the strategic importance of the region by implementing Operation Arctic Shield in 2012. The goal of Arctic Shield is to perform Coast Guard missions and activities, broaden partnerships, and enhance and improve preparedness, prevention, and response capabilities. The Coast Guard's capabilities, though, pale in comparison to those of Russia. Specifically, Russia has 46 icebreaking vessels with 12 more under construction in comparison to the Coast Guard's two operating icebreakers (one heavy and one medium) in the polar regions.³ While the Coast Guard has awarded the construction contract for the first three new Polar Security Cutters, at present it is forced to stretch its other assets and capabilities to secure a wide mission set at each pole with limited resources until delivery of the first ice breaker in 2024.⁴

Due to constraints on Coast Guard resources, international cooperation is integral to ensuring the United States retains a presence in the Arctic. Established in 1996, the Arctic Council is made up of eight Arctic nations (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States as well as 13 non-Arctic Nations with observer status.⁵ In 2009, the Arctic Council called upon the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to formulate and adopt the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters, referred to as the Polar Code.⁶ The Polar Code went into effect on January 1, 2017, and enacts mandatory requirements intended to improve vessel safety and prevent pollution from vessels transiting in the Arctic, including standards for ship construction, navigation, crew training, and ship operation.⁷ As a key participant in the IMO, the Coast Guard will continue to help shape Arctic policy through implementation of the Polar Code.

²Admiral Karl L. Schultz. "Testimony of Admiral Karl L. Schultz, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard on "The Coast Guard's Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Request" Before the House Homeland Security Committee Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security." *House Committee on Homeland Security*. April 9, 2019.

³Ronald O'Rourke. "Coast Guard Polar Security Cutter (Polar Icebreaker) Program: Background and Issues for Congress." *Congressional Research Service*. Updated March 1, 2019.

⁴*Id.*

⁵Arctic Council. "The Arctic Council: A background."

⁶International Maritime Organization. "Polar Code."

⁷*Id.*

Antarctica

While United States presence in the Arctic is important, the Coast Guard is also vital in maintaining United States presence in the Antarctic as well. This year marked the 23rd journey that the Coast Guard's heavy icebreaker, POLAR STAR, made to Antarctica in support of Operation Deep Freeze.⁸ Operation Deep Freeze is an annual joint military service mission to resupply the United States' Antarctic research stations. In accordance with the Antarctic Treaty of 1959, the Coast Guard, in coordination with the Department of State, National Science Foundation, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, also conduct inspections of foreign research stations, installations, and equipment. The inspections serve to verify compliance with the Antarctic Treaty and its Environmental Protocol, including provisions prohibiting military measures and mining, as well as provisions promoting safe station operation and sound environmental practices. Inspections emphasize that all of Antarctica is accessible to interested countries despite territorial claims and reinforce the importance of compliance with the Antarctic Treaty's arms control provisions.⁹ The Coast Guard's presence in Antarctica also reinforces compliance with and enforcement of marine resource conservation and protection measures established under the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR).¹⁰

Asia

Originally established in 2002 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the U.S. Coast Guard Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA) remains the Coast Guard's largest unit outside of the United States.¹¹ PATFORSWA is currently supporting Operation Enduring Freedom by providing a continued maritime humanitarian presence on the seas, assisting the Navy's Fifth Fleet with combat-ready assets, utilizing unique access to foreign territorial seas and ports, formulating strong and independent relationships throughout the Arabian Gulf, conducting vessel boardings, and developing maritime country engagements on shore. PATFORSWA is comprised of six 110-foot cutters, shore side support personnel, Advanced Interdiction Teams, Maritime Engagement Teams, and other deployable specialized forces operating throughout the U.S. Central Command Area of Operation.

In 2016, the United States initiated the Southeast Asia Maritime Security Initiative (MSI) which includes Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Brunei, and Taiwan. The MSI aims to improve the ability of these countries to address a range of maritime challenges including China's growing assertiveness in the South China Sea. Specifically, the Coast Guard assists those nations by providing training for each host nation's coast guard, organizational development, human resource capacity building, technical skills, and educational and training partnerships. In the Philippines, the Coast Guard transferred the high-endurance cutter (HEC) BOUTWELL to the Philippine Navy in order to maintain a greater maritime presence and patrols throughout its Exclusive Economic Zone. More recently in May of 2019, the Coast Guard conducted a joint search-and-rescue exercise with the Philippine Coast Guard and then made a port call to Manila which was the first visit of its kind in seven years.¹² Of interest, the Coast Guard intends to decommission the last two High Endurance Cutters (HECs) in Fiscal Year 2021¹³ providing two additional hulls that could be transferred to partner states to improve the readiness and capabilities of their respective coast guards.

Through the Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Initiative, the Coast Guard has partnered with Indonesia's Maritime Security Agency to help train coast guards from the region.¹⁴ In June of 2019, the Coast Guard supported a Technical Experts Workshop which featured participants from Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam.¹⁵ The purpose of the event was to share expertise in dealing with nontraditional transnational and regional maritime threats. At that particular event, the focus was on drugs and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU)

⁸United States Coast Guard. "United States' only heavy icebreaker completes Antarctic Treaty inspections and resupply mission." *United States Coast Guard*. News Release.

⁹*Id.*

¹⁰Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. "CAMLR Convention."

¹¹United States Coast Guard Atlantic Area. "Patrol Forces Southwest Asia."

¹²Prashanth Parameswaren. August 27, 2019. "What's Behind the Rising U.S.-Southeast Asia Coast Guard Cooperation?" *The Diplomat*.

¹³Department of Homeland Security. "U.S. Coast Guard Budget Overview Fiscal Year 2021 Congressional Justification."

¹⁴Ni Komang Erviani. June 30, 2019. "Southwest Asian countries complete maritime law enforcement exercise." *The Jakarta Post*.

¹⁵*Id.*

high seas fishing, but the annual workshop seeks to explore different issues aimed at strengthening the capacity of partner countries.¹⁶

Africa

The African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership (AMLEP) program enables African partner nations to build maritime security capacity and improve management of their maritime environment through real world combined maritime law enforcement operations.¹⁷ Typically, a Coast Guard law enforcement boarding team will accompany the host nations while conducting at-sea vessel boardings. These boardings consist of identifying a target of interest, employing small boats with teams aboard, directing the suspect vessel to stop, and embarking on the vessel to investigate. AMLEP directly supports U.S. Africa Command's (AFRICOM) efforts to counter human, weapon, and drug trafficking, maritime pollution, piracy/kidnapping, and IUU fishing.

South America

Illegal drug trafficking continues to threaten the safety, security, and public health of U.S. citizens and destabilize foreign governments. The ability to intercept these drugs before they enter the U.S. enables agencies responsible for interdiction, like the Coast Guard, to leverage assets and seize drugs in bulk before they are broken into smaller packages inside the United States. In his May 1, 2019 testimony to the U.S. House Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) Commander Admiral Craig Faller stated that last year Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South) was only able to disrupt about 6% of known drug movements.¹⁸ He also stated that "doing more would require additional ships and maritime patrol aircraft and greater participation by interagency and international partners . . ." ¹⁹

Operation Martillo (Hammer) is the current JIATF-South counter-drug operation seeking to optimize those international partnerships. Operation Martillo brings together 14 countries to disrupt drug smuggling in the Transit Zone, including Belize, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Honduras, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States.²⁰ Chile has also assisted Operation Martillo. Since its launch on January 15, 2012, Operation Martillo has supported the seizure of 693 metric tons of cocaine, \$25 million in bulk cash, detainment of 581 vessels and aircraft, and the arrest of 1,863 detainees.²¹

The Coast Guard will not be successful in their drug interdiction efforts without a robust ability to discover, analyze, and disseminate intelligence. This includes access to U.S. Maritime Domain Awareness data as well as strong relationships with partner nations.

Europe

As stated earlier, the Coast Guard strengthens international partnerships through the transfer of decommissioned and excess maritime assets. In October of 2019, the Service provided two former 110-foot Island-class patrol boats to Ukraine through the Excess Defense Articles Program of the Coast Guard's Office of International Acquisition.²² The transfer also allows for the outfitting and training of Ukraine navy crews at U.S. Coast Guard facilities. Those vessels were the seventh and eighth 110-foot patrol boats transferred to a foreign nation. Other patrol boats have been transferred to Pakistan, Georgia, and Costa Rica. While originally initiated shortly after the Russian annexation of Crimea, the delivery of the vessels came at a time of increased tensions between the two countries. In addition to the two HECs mentioned earlier, the Coast Guard intends to decommission two additional Island Class Patrol Boats and eight Marine Protector Class Coastal Patrol Boats providing additional opportunities for partner state capacity building.

As a member of the International Port Security Program, the Service seeks to reduce risk to U.S. maritime interests, including ports and ships, and to facilitate

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ United States Africa Command. "Africa Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership (AMLEP) Program."

¹⁸ Admiral Craig S. Faller. "Posture Statement of Admiral Craig S. Faller Commander, United States Southern Command Before the 116th Congress. House Armed Services Committee." *United States Southern Command*. May 1, 2019.

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ U.S. Southern Command. "Campaign Martillo."

²¹ *Id.*

²² Lt. Bobby Dixon. "U.S. 6th Fleet Turns over Former Coast Guard Cutters to Ukrainian Navy." *Washington Headquarters Services*. News Release.

trade globally.²³ Through port inspections, the Coast Guard can ensure that foreign ports and vessels are taking the necessary steps to minimize maritime threats. With over 150 partnerships, International Port Security Liaison Officers can share information, offer recommendations, review improvements, and otherwise collaborate to advance mutual goals.

THE FUTURE OF THE COAST GUARD

In order to safely and effectively execute its broad portfolio of missions, the Coast Guard must carefully balance and re-balance its resources. While the Coast Guard can and does play a valuable international role, it is not without a strain on resources across its domestic missions. There are a finite number of Coast Guard assets and personnel. In order to be most effective, the Coast Guard relies on cooperative relationships with the Department of Defense, partner nations, and transnational organizations.

In his 2020 State of the Coast Guard address and in reference to the Service's international operations, Admiral Schultz stated, "The aforementioned programs are funded by the Department of Defense, but many of our contributions are not, leaving the Coast Guard on an unsustainable path to support our growing operational requirements ... The long-term solution is to recognize the Coast Guard's crucial role in maintaining our national security."²⁴

As the Department of Defense and the Department of State continue to seek the assistance of the Service to advance American interests abroad, it is important to ensure that those activities are funded appropriately and the effect on the remaining Coast Guard missions is considered.

WITNESS LIST

PANEL I

- Vice Admiral Daniel B. Abel, Deputy Commandant for Operations, United States Coast Guard

PANEL II

- The Honorable David Balton, Senior Fellow, Polar Institute, The Wilson Center
- Dr. Stephen E. Flynn, Founding Director, Global Resilience Institute, Northeastern University
- Dr. Amy E. Searight, Senior Adviser and Director, Southeast Asia Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies

²³United States Coast Guard Atlantic Area. "International Port Security Frequently Asked Questions."

²⁴Admiral Karl Schultz, Commandant. "2020 State of the United States Coast Guard "Why I Serve"" February 20, 2020. Charleston, SC.

THE INTERNATIONAL ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2020

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND MARITIME
TRANSPORTATION,
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m. in room 2167, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Sean Patrick Maloney (Chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. MALONEY. I would ask unanimous consent that the chair be authorized to declare recess during today's hearing.

Without objection, so ordered.

Good morning. Welcome to today's hearing on the international role of the United States Coast Guard.

I wear another hat around here as a member of the Intelligence Committee, and I am keenly aware of the international moves being made by competitor nations to gain influence by exploiting opportunities and weak governance under the guise of building mutually beneficial partnerships.

For example, China's Belt and Road Initiative allows them to shape international norms and forcefully assert their global presence through more than \$1 trillion of trade and infrastructure investments. Given the state of our crumbling domestic infrastructure, it is unlikely that the United States is going to match that level of spending on international projects.

So instead, we must make strategic investments that allow us to maintain and develop relationships with key partner nations by increasing their capacity, improving their Maritime Domain Awareness, and enhancing enforcement activities that uphold the rule of law. So I agree with the Commandant of the Coast Guard's assertion characterizing the financial entrapment of vulnerable countries as more than just a conservation and sustainability issue, but rather a national security challenge warranting a clear and decisive response from the United States.

The Coast Guard has a longstanding history of international involvement, and has played a crucial role in every American military conflict since its inception in 1790. While its military service is obvious, the Coast Guard's diverse mission set also makes it distinctively qualified to advance America's global interests and exert international influence.

In fact, the Coast Guard's current international presence is focused on nonmilitary capacity building and strategic partnerships.

For example, the Coast Guard has bilateral agreements with over 60 partner nations, uniquely leveraging partnerships across domestic and international arenas on a variety of maritime missions, including search and rescue, counterdrug, migration, fisheries, and proliferation security initiatives, bringing trusted access, capacity building, and seamlessly operating under title 10 and 14 authorities.

While the Coast Guard's international missions have proven successful, I am keenly aware of the delicate balance that must be struck when allocating resources. Every cutter sent abroad results in one fewer cutter performing drug interdiction or search-and-rescue missions closer to home. For this reason we must ensure that the Coast Guard's increasing international role is met with additional resources.

It is unacceptable that the Department of Defense fails to fully reimburse the Coast Guard for the direct international assistance it provides. Further, Congress must consider whether current funding levels are sufficient to support the Coast Guard's vast array of missions.

In particular—and I am interested in what our witnesses have to say on this front—I am—we have to right-size our resource allocation with respect to emerging responsibilities of the Coast Guard, growing responsibilities, particularly in the Arctic, where the race is on for influence and for position. And I would be particularly interested in our positioning in that region.

But, of course, it is not just the Arctic. It would include the South China Sea, it would include nearly every corner of the globe.

So I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses on the international role of the Coast Guard, where there should be a larger presence, and the ways in which Congress can best support that mission.

[Mr. Maloney's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Sean Patrick Maloney, a Representative in Congress from the State of New York, and Chairman, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation

Good morning and welcome to today's hearing on "The International Role of the United States Coast Guard." In my other role, as a member of the House Intelligence Committee, I am keenly aware of the international moves being made by competitor nations to gain influence by exploiting opportunities and weak governance under the guise of building mutually beneficial partnerships.

China's Belt and Road Initiative for example, allows China to shape international norms and forcefully assert its global presence through more than \$1 trillion of trade and infrastructure investments. Given the state of our crumbling domestic infrastructure, it is unlikely that the United States is going to match that level of spending. Instead we must make strategic investments that allow us to maintain and develop relationships with key partner nations by increasing their capacity, improving their maritime domain awareness, and enhancing enforcement activities that uphold the rule of law. I agree with the Commandant of the Coast Guard's assertion characterizing the financial entrapment of vulnerable countries as more than just a conservation and sustainability issue; but rather a natural security challenge warranting a clear and decisive response from the United States.

The Coast Guard has a longstanding history of international involvement and has played a crucial role in every major American military conflict since its inception in 1790. While its military service is obvious, the Coast Guard's diverse mission set also makes it distinctively qualified to advance America's global interests and exert international influence. In fact, the Coast Guard's current international presence is

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While the Coast Guard's international missions have proven successful, I am keenly aware of the delicate balance that must be struck when allocating resources. Every cutter sent abroad results in one fewer cutter performing drug interdictions or search and rescue missions.

For this reason, we must ensure that the Coast Guard's increasing international role is met with additional resources. It is unacceptable that the Department of Defense fails to fully reimburse the Coast Guard for the direct international assistance it provides. Further, Congress must consider whether current funding levels are sufficient to support the Coast Guard's vast array of missions.

I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses on the international role of the Coast Guard, where there should be a larger presence, and the ways in which Congress can best support that mission.

Mr. MALONEY. I now call on the ranking member, Mr. Gibbs, for any remarks he may have.

Mr. GIBBS. Thank you, Chairman Maloney. And good morning, Admiral.

The United States Coast Guard's unique authorities, international relationships, and service culture make it a crucial part of our national security system.

Many may not know the wide range of capabilities and responsibilities that the Coast Guard has while it defends our homeland from foreign threats. As the only branch of the armed services with law enforcement authority, it plays a unique role in the Nation's international engagement in crucial hotspots, from the Persian Gulf to the South China Sea. Most notably, the Coast Guard uses its unique access and capabilities to strengthen partner nations' capabilities, all in support of our national interests.

In other words, presence equals influence.

Unfortunately, increasing DoD requests for Coast Guard resources places more stress on a limited budget and other critical mission areas.

The fiscal year 2020 operations and support budget increased 4.4 percent from fiscal year 2019. Legislation passed by the House that authorizes a further 6.4-percent increase in O&S funding for fiscal year 2021 continues to languish in the Senate. Despite these increases in funding, I remain concerned about how these increased demands will affect the Coast Guard's funding needs, especially in light of the increased competition from other nations.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses on how the Coast Guard's international role supports our national interests, and how the Service will support this work alongside its domestic maritime missions.

[Mr. Gibbs' prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Bob Gibbs, a Representative in Congress from the State of Ohio, and Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation

The United States Coast Guard has unique authorities, international relationships, and service culture that make it a crucial part of our national security system.

Many may not know the wide range of capabilities and responsibilities that the Coast Guard has while it defends our homeland from foreign threats. As the only branch of the Armed Services with law enforcement authority, it plays a unique role in the Nation's international engagement in crucial hotspots, from the Persian Gulf to the South China Sea. Most notably, the Coast Guard uses its unique access and capabilities to strengthen partner nations' capabilities, all in support of our national interests. In other words, "presence equals influence."

Unfortunately, increasing DOD requests for Coast Guard resources places more stress on a limited budget and other critical mission areas. The FY 2020 Operations & Support budget increased 4.4 percent from FY 2019. Legislation passed by the House that authorizes a further 6.4 percent increase in O&S funding for Fiscal Year 2021 continues to languish in the Senate. Despite these increases in funding, I remain concerned about how these increased demands will affect the Coast Guard's funding needs, especially in light of increased competition from other nations.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses how the Coast Guard's international role supports our national interests, and how the Service will support this work alongside its domestic maritime missions.

Mr. GIBBS. And I yield back.

Mr. MALONEY. I thank the gentleman. I would now like to welcome our witness for our first panel.

Today we are joined by Vice Admiral Daniel B. Abel, Deputy Commandant for Operations for the United States Coast Guard.

I appreciate you being here today, sir, and we look forward to your testimony.

Without objection, our witness' full statement will be included in the record.

Since your written testimony has been made part of the record, the subcommittee would request that you limit your oral testimony to about 5 minutes.

With that, Admiral Abel, you may proceed.

**TESTIMONY OF VICE ADMIRAL DANIEL B. ABEL, DEPUTY
COMMANDANT FOR OPERATIONS, U.S. COAST GUARD**

Admiral ABEL. Good morning, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the subcommittee. It is an honor to discuss the Coast Guard's overseas operations, our work alongside our shipmates, with the Department of State, and the Department of Defense, and our combatant commanders. And I know you have got my written statement, sir.

In 1978, as a high schooler, I knew I wanted to serve our country in uniform. The question was what uniform. Inside my locker, as a high school senior, was a bumper sticker from the United States Coast Guard. It said, "U.S. Coast Guard: Small Service, Big Job." Clearly, that bumper sticker was compelling, but also could serve as a title for today's testimony. We are small in numbers. But our impact, domestically and internationally for our Nation, is huge.

At all times we are members of the Armed Forces. At all times we are law enforcers. At all times we are marine regulators. And at all times we are members of the intel community. And we serve

a Nation whose economic interests and national security are vastly linked to the sea.

At home we patrol miles and miles of coastlines and in the waterways, save thousands of lives, protect the world's largest exclusive economic zone. But across the globe we are a highly demanded instrument of international diplomacy, recognized as the U.S. maritime service that is most relatable to partner nations. And these partner nations model their organization after us and our actions as they seek to address universal challenges posed by transnational organized crime, maritime threats, and their sovereign rights.

And we are uniquely suited overseas, permanently or expeditionary, to protect our sovereign rights by expanding the borders out, enhancing partner capacity, and disrupting threats far away from our shore.

As the chairman noted, we have 60 binational and multinational agreements and roles in international forums, unlike any other branch of the Armed Forces, or any other interagency partner. And these trusted partnerships provide unique access and capabilities across the competition continuum vital to our national success.

And we are uniquely qualified to operate in ambiguous or gray areas requiring that flexible blend of law enforcement and military, title 10 and title 14. We set and enforce the behavior in the maritime domain, make sure that the rules-based order of nations is maintained.

Candidly, we offer white hulls for gray times. And, as one of the five branches of the Armed Forces, we are a force multiplier for DoD in their worldwide deployment to execute defense ops, and supporting security defense priorities. We never replace DoD or duplicate DoD capabilities. We apply our unique authorities, capabilities, and partnerships to bridge a gap, expanding the Nation's military toolbox like no other Armed Force can.

And in great power competition, we offer transparent engagement and partnerships at the professional and personal level. A free and open Indo-Pac is challenged by coercive and antagonistic activities, debt-trapping, the economic and subsistence impacts of illegal fishing, transnational crime, and corruption.

As a Nation, we have direct interest in the Western Pacific, as well. Our U.S. Territories comprise 1.3 million square miles, or 43 percent of our EEZ. In my 41 years in this Coast Guard uniform, I have watched our Coast Guard increasingly bridge the gap from the diplomacy of State Department to DoD's lethality through international agreements, partnerships, and presence. The Service is well positioned and comfortable operating in that competitive space below the level of armed conflict, providing capabilities and decision space.

Your Coast Guard is, indeed, a small Service with a big job.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. And on behalf of the men and women who stand the watch right now, and their families that wait for a safe return, thank you for your support.

I stand ready for your questions.

[Admiral Abel's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Vice Admiral Daniel B. Abel, Deputy Commandant
for Operations, U.S. Coast Guard**

INTRODUCTION

Good morning Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. It is my pleasure to be here today to discuss the U.S. Coast Guard's global operations, our support to the Department of State (DOS), and the Department of Defense (DoD) Geographic Combatant Commanders, as well as the role we play in the execution of the National Security and National Defense Strategy amidst the resumption of great power competition.

The U.S. Coast Guard is a multi-mission, maritime service responsible for the safety, security, and stewardship of the high seas and waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. At all times a military service and branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, a federal law enforcement agency, a regulatory body, a first responder, and a member of the U.S. Intelligence Community, the U.S. Coast Guard operates on all seven continents and throughout the homeland, serving a nation whose national security and economic prosperity are inextricably linked to vast maritime interests.

The U.S. Coast Guard protects and defends more than 100,000 miles of U.S. coastline and inland waterways, saves thousands of lives per year, and safeguards the world's largest Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), encompassing 4.5 million square miles of ocean. Indeed, the U.S. Coast Guard is fully engaged answering the call and balancing a multitude of dynamic maritime risks facing our nation.

Across the globe, the U.S. Coast Guard is in high demand as an instrument of international diplomacy, recognized as the U.S. maritime service with the most reputable mission profile to many nations' maritime forces. Our partner nations model their actions after the U.S. Coast Guard, often with our assistance, in their efforts to address the universal challenges posed by transnational crime, human smuggling, maritime safety and security, environmental stewardship, illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU), and foreign provocations in their sovereign waters.

OVERSEAS OPERATIONS

The U.S. Coast Guard maintains a robust permanent and expeditionary global footprint in the execution of its statutory missions. Our operations overseas protect our national interests by expanding operations beyond our physical borders, enhancing partner nation capability, and disrupting threats away from our shores. Within the scope of our resources, we respond to demand signals from the Department of State (DOS) and the Department of Defense (DoD) to conduct missions for which we are uniquely suited in support of national security and national defense priorities.

Cooperation

The U.S. Coast Guard's network of over 60 multi and bi-lateral agreements and participation in international fora are unlike those of any other military force or government agency. This network provides access to partners in key regions on issues ranging from fisheries enforcement, to counter narcotics, to joint contingency plans for pollution in the Arctic, to anti-terror missions. These partnerships are vital to the Nation's success in the broader context of geostrategic competition and will only become more relevant in the decades to come.

- i) As a result of the U.S. Coast Guard's law enforcement, regulatory, and humanitarian missions, the Coast Guard maintains professional service-to-service relationships and cooperates on maritime economic and national security challenges such as high-seas driftnet fishing with China, dangerous maritime migration with Cuba, and safe navigation of the Bering Sea and Arctic with our counterpart agencies in Russia, while serving as a role model for behavior in the maritime domain.
- ii) As the model example of international cooperation within the marine transportation system (MTS), the U.S. Coast Guard's International Port Security Program, with a permanent overseas presence in the Netherlands, Japan, and Singapore, conducts port security assessments and capacity building under the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code) in over 150 coastal states. This program reduces risk to U.S. maritime interests, including U.S. ports and ships, and facilitates secure maritime trade across the globe.

Competition Below the Level of Armed Conflict

In addition to building and reinforcing partnerships, the U.S. Coast Guard provides specialized operational capabilities in support of national security objectives. The U.S. Coast Guard is uniquely qualified to operate in ambiguous environments requiring a flexible blend of diplomatic, military, economic, and law enforcement tools. By setting and enforcing standards of behavior in the maritime domain, the U.S. Coast Guard upholds a rules-based order in the face of geostrategic competition and leads like-minded nations to counter malign actors below the level of armed conflict. Examples include shaping international norms as a U.S. representative at bodies such as the Arctic Council or the International Maritime Organization (IMO), supporting Combatant Commanders through Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) missions, and United Nation's member states through sanctions enforcement in the South China Sea. The U.S. Coast Guard offers white hulls for gray geopolitical times.

Armed Conflict

The U.S. Coast Guard has served in a combat role during every major armed conflict involving the United States since 1790. The Service remains committed to interoperability with our DoD partners and is ready to fulfill its complementary role in the event of armed conflict or contingency operations as an active member of the Joint Force. Whether we are supporting military mobility through our management of the marine transportation system or operating jointly with other services, the U.S. Coast Guard remains *Semper Paratus* (Always Ready) when the Nation calls.

SUPPORT TO DOD GEOGRAPHIC COMBATANT COMMANDERS

As one of the five Armed Forces, and the only service with both Title 10 and Title 14 authorities, the U.S. Coast Guard serves as a force multiplier for the Joint Force and deploys world-wide to execute our statutory defense operation missions in support of national security and defense priorities. Our enduring role is not, and never has been, to replace or duplicate DoD assets or capabilities, but rather to apply our unique authorities and capabilities to bridge gaps and create opportunities, enabling the Service to augment DoD's "tool kit" in ways no other Armed Force can. While the DoD is rightly focused on hard power lethality, the U.S. Coast Guard provides the full spectrum of smart power multi-mission flexibility, including trusted access, with both kinetic and non-kinetic options to advance U.S. interests, preserve U.S. security and prosperity, and address wide-ranging threats and challenges.

Around the world, on any given day, more than 2,000 U.S. Coast Guard members are deployed in direct support of Geographic Combatant Commander priorities. In the Middle East, the U.S. Coast Guard has over 240 personnel assigned in Manama, Bahrain, including six patrol boats, a maritime engagement team, and an advanced interdiction team which support U.S. Central Command's maritime security, theater security cooperation (TSC), and counter-piracy initiatives. Likewise, the U.S. Coast Guard regularly supports U.S. Africa Command's African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership program with cutter deployments and deployable specialized forces to stem maritime security threats that destabilize the region and our partners. The Coast Guard supports TSC in Africa through the provision of a maritime advisor to the Liberian Coast Guard. Coast Guard security cooperation with littoral-focused navies fill a crucial skills and capability gap that our partners need in order to better control their maritime zones, counter illegal trafficking, and to counter power projection by global adversaries that is often justified by the lack of safe shipping lanes for commercial use.

In the Indo-Pacific theater, U.S. Coast Guard capabilities and authorities are leveraged to advance important strategic National Security objectives. National Security Cutter deployments in support of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) enforce United Nations sanctions enforcement while building partner nations' security capabilities. The U.S. Coast Guard also supports INDOPACOM through cutter deployments and professional engagements in Oceania, and by deploying the nation's only heavy icebreaker in support of both Joint Task Force-Support Forces Antarctica and in ensuring Antarctica Treaty compliance.

Closer to home, the U.S. Coast Guard is a key federal agency and force provider performing counter-maritime illicit trafficking operations as well as Detection and Monitoring in the Western Hemisphere Transit Zone; providing more than 4,000 hours of Maritime Patrol Aircraft and over 2,000 major cutter days to U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) annually. Coast Guard law enforcement teams are also deployed aboard DoD, and Allied, assets to bring specialized law enforcement authorities that other military services lack. Spanning a maritime operating area roughly the size of the continental United States, the Coast Guard deploys aircraft,

cutters, intelligence teams, and specialized law enforcement personnel to defend maritime approaches to the Homeland.

Interdicting illicit cargoes at sea creates space and opportunity for our Central American partners to thwart the rampant violence and corruption that illegal drugs induce in fragile democracies, and bolster the rule of law within their own countries. With the Service's unique authorities and capabilities, the U.S. Coast Guard continues to yield large-scale successes in its counter-drug mission in USSOUTHCOM's area of responsibility. Over the past four years, the U.S. Coast Guard removed more than 1.8 million pounds of pure cocaine from the transit zone, resulting in 24 billion dollars in drug proceeds denied to Transnational Criminal Organizations. Exercising expeditionary maritime law enforcement capabilities, Port Security Unit detachments provide USSOUTHCOM 24 hour/7 day a week anti-terrorism and force protection presence in the Naval Defensive Sea Area of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The U.S. Coast Guard supports the Defense Security Cooperation Agency via mobile training teams, developing partner nation capacity all over the world, including Georgia, Honduras, Jordan, and Tunisia. The service also supports Foreign Military Sales and Foreign Military Financing; fundamental tools of U.S. foreign policy that advance national security priorities. The Coast Guard fills several critical Senior Defense Official positions in U.S. embassies in the Western Hemisphere, and Coast Guard attaché billets in other embassies globally.

While not internationally based, the U.S. Coast Guard also provides domestic operational support to DoD, specifically with our 15 years of aircraft and air intercept crew support for low/slow air threats to the National Capital Region as part of Operation NOBLE EAGLE, as well as deployable Rotary Wing Air Intercept capabilities in support of U.S. Northern Command. The U.S. Coast Guard also provides Maritime Force Protection Units (MFPUs) to defense bases in Bangor, WA, and Kings Bay, GA, where Coast Guard units protect strategic DoD assets on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts.

At U.S. Cyber Command, U.S. Coast Guard personnel serve in critical technical and intelligence capacities to defeat our adversaries in cyberspace. The U.S. Coast Guard recognizes the cyberspace operating environment as key terrain that can impact and drive mission and economic success in all domains. Partnering with other like-minded nations, the U.S. Coast Guard is building information sharing relationships between major ports to provide resiliency for the free flow of commerce during cyberattacks that may attempt to corrupt or slow U.S. supply lines. The Service is building our cyber workforce to assist in protecting America's maritime commerce and economy. Our first Cyber Protection Team is building capacity while integrating with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to deploy and protect critical infrastructure and U.S. economic stability.

GLOBAL POWER COMPETITION IN ARCTIC AND INDO-PACIFIC

Arctic

The United States is an Arctic nation with extensive sovereign rights and responsibilities, and our national security interests in the Arctic are significant, in part due to the reemergence of global power competition in the region. Actions and intentions of Arctic and non-Arctic states shape the security environment and geopolitical stability of the region. In particular, our two near-peer competitors, Russia and China, are demonstrably intent on exploiting the maritime domain to advance their interests.

From a military perspective, Russia's long Arctic coastline, in a future stripped of sea ice, will be open to support naval fleets readily deployable between the Atlantic and Pacific. The Russian government is currently rebuilding and expanding military bases that had previously fallen into disuse. These renewed capabilities include air bases, ports, weapons systems, troop deployments, domain awareness tools, and search-and-rescue response. Additionally, Russia has the world's largest number of icebreakers. With over 50 icebreakers that include four operational, nuclear-powered heavy icebreakers, and plans to build an additional seven nuclear powered icebreakers, Russia maintains the capabilities, capacities, experienced crews, and infrastructure necessary to operate and surge into the Arctic year-round.

Likewise, with the release of their Arctic Policy paper in January 2018, the People's Republic of China (PRC) declared itself a nation intrinsically tied to the Arctic, and signaled its intent to play a security and governance role in the region. In 2019, the PRC launched its first domestically-built icebreaker and has begun designing an even more powerful and potentially nuclear-powered polar icebreaker expected to have twice the icebreaking capability of its newest vessel. With three icebreakers, the PRC will have greater Arctic access and capacity than the United States. PRC activities, and the manner in which they seek support for their Arctic ambitions

may potentially disrupt the longstanding cooperation and stability in the region. Around the globe, the PRC uses coercion, influence-operations, debt-trap diplomacy, and implied military threats to persuade other states to acquiesce to its global agenda. The PRC incorporated the Arctic as a component of its One Belt, One Road initiative, recently dubbed the Polar Silk Road and continues to emphasize its self-proclaimed status as a “near Arctic state”. The PRC’s ambitions and outreach are fraught with risk, often times diminishing the sovereignty of states and fracturing the rules-based governance in the region.

The ability for the United States to lead in the Arctic, both strategically and operationally, hinges on having the capabilities and capacity (presence) to protect our sovereign rights, and homeland security interests. The foundation of the U.S. Coast Guard’s operational presence and influence is U.S. icebreakers, whose purpose is to provide assured, year-round access to the Polar Regions for the execution of national security missions within existing Coast Guard authorities.

The U.S. Coast Guard’s icebreaker capacity lies in one heavy-class polar icebreaker, USCGC POLAR STAR—commissioned in 1976, and one medium-class icebreaker, USCGC HEALY—commissioned in 2000. However, due to the strong support of the Administration and Congress, in April of 2019, the joint U.S. Coast Guard and Navy Integrated Program Office (IPO) awarded VT Halter Marine Inc., of Pascagoula, Mississippi, a fixed price incentive (firm) contract for the detail design and construction of one Polar Security Cutter (PSC). We are as close as we have ever been in over 40 years to recapitalizing our icebreaking fleet, and continued investment to grow the fleet will ensure we meet our Nation’s national security objectives in the Polar Regions.

Indo-Pacific

The U.S. Coast Guard has a specific and irreplaceable national security role to advance the rules-based maritime governance of the Indo-Pacific region. The maritime domain is the lifeblood of the Indo-Pacific, and the U.S. has direct sovereign interests in the region, including the Territories of Guam, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa; this includes the 1.3 million square miles, or 43 percent, of the U.S. EEZ located in the Western and Central Pacific. Expanding commitments to meet security and defense needs of the sovereign states of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands under the Compacts of Free Association further cement the need for U.S. Coast Guard engagement in the region.

The concept of a free and open Indo-Pacific is challenged by China’s coercive and antagonistic activities across the region, while the Pacific Island Countries and Territories specifically face inter-related threats of debt-trapping, economic and societal impacts of IUU fishing, and transnational crime and corruption.

As part of a whole of government approach to addressing challenges in Oceania and the broader Indo-Pacific region, the U.S. Coast Guard offers transparent, persistent engagement and partnership at both professional and personal levels that challenge the PRC’s approach in the region. The U.S. Coast Guard is expanding our engagement in the Indo-Pacific by establishing additional permanent presence through diplomatic missions (e.g. Australia, Malaysia) to strengthen regional engagement, working to build the capacity of the Philippines and Vietnamese Coast Guards, and executing new operational concepts, either organically, or in conjunction with the DoD, by providing specialized capabilities and expanding information sharing efforts with our partners.

Beyond regular multi-mission patrols across the Indo-Pacific by our National Security Cutters, the U.S. Coast Guard is demonstrating our enduring commitment to the region by homeporting three of our newest Fast Response Cutters (FRC) in Guam over the next three years. Recently, FRCs and a U.S. Coast Guard buoy tender conducted ports visits to the Pacific Islands and discussed partner nation capacity building opportunities in an effort to strengthen operational partnerships. We anticipate these cutters will significantly increase U.S. Coast Guard operational presence throughout the region, and protect our EEZ from threats of IUU fishing and transnational crime.

CONCLUSION

Through international engagement, partnership, and presence, the U.S. Coast Guard’s international role and multi-mission flexibility serves as an important bridge between diplomacy and DoD’s lethality. The Service is well-positioned and comfortable operating in the gray zone (the competitive space below the level of armed conflict) which provides time and decision space along the competition continuum. The U.S. Coast Guard anticipates an increasingly dynamic future of global

competition, where the Service will be asked to move between cooperation, competition, and even conflict at a moment's notice.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and for all you do for the men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard. I look forward to answering your questions.

Mr. MALONEY. I thank the gentleman. We will now proceed to Members' questions. Each Member will be recognized for 5 minutes, and I will begin by recognizing myself.

Admiral, you talk about the role that intelligence plays in the Coast Guard missions. I have a friend who is a senior executive at Goldman Sachs—he made better career choices than I did—and he likes to say that Goldman Sachs isn't a bank, it is a technology company. And the insight is that all of their functions are being translated increasingly into technology challenges.

I have a view that most of the missions of the Coast Guard are going to be intelligence missions in the coming years. Can you say a word about that?

Admiral ABEL. Well, first of all, we pride ourselves on being an intel-driven organization, because, if you don't know what you are seeking to do, and what the adversary is doing, you are pretty much out of luck, particularly on the counterdrug business. When you have got an area of responsibility twice the size of the continent of the United States, it has got to be intel-based. So you have to know the load is moving, where the load is going to.

In a broader role with DoD or other agencies, the fact that we are members of the intel community means we are those links that can link military to other agencies, sir.

Mr. MALONEY. Can you talk about the role that intelligence plays in missions, say, in the Arctic, or in the South China Sea?

Can you also maybe specifically mention the need for secure communications on Coast Guard vessels?

Admiral ABEL. Yes, sir. So there is a strong draw to the Arctic. Whether it is 30 percent of the undiscovered natural gas, 13 percent of the undiscovered oil, \$1 trillion worth of minerals, or just faster transit from Asia to Europe, the Coast Guard needs to be there.

Every Coast Guard cutter should be a collector. And with the National Security Cutters—and we appreciate the support of Congress in fielding those—we have become very accustomed to having some very exquisite—

Mr. MALONEY. Admiral, excuse me, if I could just interrupt you right there, I know we are going to put those collection facilities on the Polar—

Admiral ABEL. Yes, sir.

Mr. MALONEY [continuing]. Security Cutters. And, of course, on the National Security Cutters.

So what about the HPCs?

Admiral ABEL. The what?

Mr. MALONEY. What about the high-performance cutters?

Admiral ABEL. The Offshore Patrol Cutters?

Mr. MALONEY. Yes, excuse me, offshore—

Admiral ABEL. Yes, sir. Right now we are looking at the capability that is best suited for that vessel. We are doing an alternative analysis to see the best way that she can fit the niche. We

still maintain that those vessels should all be collectors. There are different ways we could do it. We are working with the Navy, particularly. They are right now designing what the skiff will be like for FFG(X) to——

Mr. MALONEY. What would it cost to put a skiff on every OPC?

Admiral ABEL. Sir?

Mr. MALONEY. What would it cost to put a skiff on every——

Admiral ABEL. We are looking at the cost right now. I am—I can get the number back to you, but I would say around \$25 million, sir.

Mr. MALONEY. And how many are we talking about? Times what to outfit them all? Are we are talking about 20?

Admiral ABEL. The 25 Offshore Patrol Cutters in the fleet. Yes, sir.

Mr. MALONEY. Right. So a total number of \$500 million?

Admiral ABEL. But, sir, that is the equipment alone. We need to, obviously——

Mr. MALONEY. Oh, I understand.

Admiral ABEL [continuing]. Have maintenance and crew——

Mr. MALONEY. But I understand that they are being outfitted for that equipment already, isn't that right?

Admiral ABEL. Sir?

Mr. MALONEY. Aren't they already being built with the capacity to add that equipment and add those facilities?

Admiral ABEL. Sir, the threshold requirement is space, weight, and power. Basically, an empty space with T1 drops, to then install the gear that we determine is best for the space. So——

Mr. MALONEY. And that is the \$25 million.

Admiral ABEL. Yes, sir.

Mr. MALONEY. But that is the incremental cost we would need to incur to outfit every OPC with a——

Admiral ABEL. Current estimate, yes, sir. And we are looking at——

Mr. MALONEY. \$500 million over 10 years, 8 years?

Admiral ABEL. Over—well, that would be the initial cost.

Mr. MALONEY. For the life of the program.

Admiral ABEL. Of the program. Yes, sir. Then IT you recap fairly quickly.

Mr. MALONEY. Right. What is that, 8 years? What is the time-frame on that program, 8 years, 10 years to——

Admiral ABEL. For the OPCs?

Mr. MALONEY. For all the OPCs, yes.

Admiral ABEL. The first one gets delivered in 2024. We have got the recompetes for vessel 5 and beyond. So I can get back with you on the actual rollout of——

Mr. MALONEY. Right. But I guess my point would be that, in a period where we are going to spend \$8 to \$10 trillion on defense, we are talking about a \$500 million expense to put a skiff on every OPC, which would allow the kind of collection intelligence-driven activities for all Coast Guard missions in all corners of the globe. Isn't that right?

Admiral ABEL. Yes, sir. And we agree that our white hulls can get places gray hulls can't, and we can collect on things that folks are suspect——

Mr. MALONEY. You read my mind, and it is a good segue to talk about the missions in the South China Sea or in Taiwan. What are we currently doing, and how are we resourcing those missions?

Admiral ABEL. Yes, sir. Well, this last year, I think you know, we pretty much committed a 1.0—basically a 365 presence of our National Security Cutter—two different cutters, they swapped out about mid-year. And they did a number of things over there, enforced U.N. security sanctions, they actually ran the Straits of Taiwan to test the Chinese to see how are you going to handle a Coast Guard cutter that is in a different place. We did the intel collection that I can certainly talk about on a classified level.

But we showed China a different face of the United States that they had not seen.

Mr. MALONEY. What is the last time we did a freedom of navigation exercise in the Arctic?

Admiral ABEL. In the Arctic, sir? I will have to get back with you on that one. I mean, we send National Security Cutters—

Mr. MALONEY. It has been a while?

Admiral ABEL. Well—

Mr. MALONEY. It has been a while, hasn't it?

Admiral ABEL. Well, we are up there in the National Security Cutters, but we maintain in our own waters, sir.

Mr. MALONEY. What is farthest north? I am out of time, but what is the farthest north we have a port or a facility, a Coast Guard facility, in the Arctic? It is south of the Bering Strait, is it not?

Admiral ABEL. Sir, Kodiak is the farthest north we have.

Mr. MALONEY. Would it make sense to have a port north of the Bering Strait?

Admiral ABEL. Right now, the size of the ships that go up there are well supported with a brief stop for supplies in Dutch Harbor. So right—if we were there, we would use it. Is it a requirement? No.

Mr. MALONEY. I appreciate that.

Mr. Gibbs?

Mr. GIBBS. Yes, thank you.

Admiral, last week the Commandant was quoted as saying there are about 750 monthly ship calls at our ports on the Pacific side, and that passenger vessels have at least 14 days subject to—haven't been out at sea for 14 days are detained and tested.

As the Coast Guard, are you receiving the notices of arrival?

And also, are you provided passenger data from the CDC?

Admiral ABEL. Sir, so what we are doing on that is, first of all, we are tracking all global maritime traffic. Any given day we are tracking 3,000 targets. Looking at just cruise lines alone, for the next 10 days we are talking 76 vessels, around 270,000 passengers and crew. As they make their 96-hour notification, we work with Customs and Border Protection at a vetting center. We vet last five ports of call. The crew composition, the cargo on the vessel, and then, if there is anything suspect, we certainly work with CDC.

I would also say there is a mandatory requirement if a sea captain has anyone sick on their vessel, crew or passenger, they have got to notify the Coast Guard. If we get one of those notifications, then we work with CDC for the best option.

Candidly, you have seen a few times where CDC said the best option is to have the ship anchor offshore and work the case. And that is what we have been doing.

Mr. GIBBS. So do you think the Coast Guard has enough resources right now? You feel comfortable, or—the position we are in right now?

Admiral ABEL. Sir, it is a challenge right now with the cruise industry. I think you know that the Vice President and our Secretary were with the cruise industry Saturday, down in south Florida. And they have been told to come back with a plan that mitigates the risks that we have been seeing in the cruise industry.

Mr. GIBBS. How about the containerships, the crews from the containerships, how do we handle them?

Admiral ABEL. Yes, sir. So the proclamation that said that China had to wait 14 days, there was a cut-out for sea crews. And what we have done with them is, first all, if anyone is sick, we need to be notified, we will handle that. If no one is symptomatic, if that ship comes in, and they just stay with the vessel, turn the ship around, and get back underway, which is what the ship wants them to do—they don't make money sitting at the pier—off they go.

We have not had widespread problems with the cargo industry. That \$5.6 trillion of economic impact is moving with the containers coming.

Mr. GIBBS. On resilience, both the DoD and the Coast Guard—you cite defense rules-based world order, central objective, foreign policy, and—what roles would resilience play in the current rules-based order?

Admiral ABEL. Resiliency, sir, for?

Mr. GIBBS. Well, I guess I will go a little farther. Just—Coast Guard's engagement with international military, civilian, and law enforcement partners affects the resilience of our ports and our maritime transportation system.

Admiral ABEL. Yes, sir. Well, you know, the maritime transportation system is an endowment that we got from Mother Nature. I mean, it is phenomenal. The deepwater ports, the rivers, that is what fuels the \$5.4 trillion of commerce.

What we do is, with the international inspections overseas, we push the threat over there. And if you don't meet the Coast Guard standards, you are going to have a condition of entry, which, at times, could say you need to anchor out until the Coast Guard visits your vessel. So it pays for those foreign ports to be Coast Guard approved, meet international standards, so when the ships show up it is quickly moving and they can turn around, get their cargo, and make money.

Mr. GIBBS. I will move quickly to the Great Lakes. My understanding is, on the icebreaking capacity, the U.S. has shrunk down to six vessels, and the Canadians have stripped down to two in the last 7 years. Where are we in relation with our partnership, our agreement with the Canadians on icebreaking?

And are we able to maintain our commitment? Or are they maintaining their commitment to us? What is the status?

Admiral ABEL. Yes, sir. So, you know, among those that ring the Great Lakes, it takes a village to keep the lakes going through the winter time.

Mr. GIBBS. Yes.

Admiral ABEL. We have got a number of vessels, the 140s that we are putting through service-life extension right now, we are buying them 14 more years. We also have the buoy tenders that do sustainment breaking. If you can break it every couple of days, you don't need the big icebreaker. And, of course, we have got the *Mackinaw*.

We have a good cooperative agreement with the Canadians. If we need help, they come help us, and the opposite.

We also do appreciate the money from this committee, and we are studying what the future requirements are within the Great Lakes for icebreaking.

Mr. GIBBS. Do U.S. Coast Guard icebreakers spend more time in the Canadian ports than the Canadian icebreakers spend in U.S. ports? What is that relationship?

Admiral ABEL. So I will get back with you. I don't have the statistics on which side of the border they are spending their time.

Mr. GIBBS. OK. OK, I yield back.

Mr. MALONEY. Mr. Lowenthal?

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you, Vice Admiral Abel.

My community is very interesting. It is both the home of the Port of Long Beach—and the Coast Guard plays an immense role there—and it is also the home of the large Vietnamese expatriate community in southern California. And so we rely, in our district, as does the country, on free and open trade in the Indo-Pacific.

And my constituents also have a very strong interest in checking China's influence in the south, especially in their dominance in the South China Sea, and what is going on. And you have addressed this issue now, that the Coast Guard is also very involved in these issues, and the importance of cultivating relationships with our allies and what you have done.

So, my question is, given China's considerable ability to project a large presence in this region, and we know that that is what they are doing, and they have that ability, how can we best leverage the Coast Guard's resources to ensure that we are getting our biggest strategic bang for the buck?

What are we going to do? How can we leverage your—and do it—a better job, knowing the role of China?

Admiral ABEL. Yes, sir. That really is part of our authorities, our capabilities, and our partnerships, which are different from DoD. And, as I mentioned, many of these countries, their navies or their coast guard really look like ours.

And a simple element of national power could be a team of five Coast Guard petty officers that show up at a country that is struggling to help them maintain their outboard motors, say, "This is how we do it in the Coast Guard, here's some computerized maintenance records, and why don't we get dinner after we get done today working on your boat, and then maybe can we sell you some boats? Can we give you some boats? Can we maintain some boats?"

That enduring sustainment of military-to-military, coast guard-to-coast guard, those small military training teams go far, as well as a Coast Guard cutter that can pull in. We could do strategic

buoys. We could put buoys in a port that maybe is hindered with its amount of trade because they are lacking buoys.

Those types of soft power is where you can turn to the United States Coast Guard. And that is the niche that we fill, sir.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. I want to follow up on that, on these security relationships, and I think that is very positive. But on the flip side of that, that many of these countries in the Asia-Pacific region that face pressure from China are governed by regimes with mixed or even more concerning records on human rights. We are talking about, you know, I mentioned already the Vietnamese expatriate community.

Well, there is a real strong concern about our relationship—or their human rights violations and their pressure from China, but yet engaging in the same kinds of human rights violations that China does. So it is very, very difficult to speak out.

So, my question is, does—in dealing with that, does the Coast Guard training and educational programs include training on human rights issues? Because you are out there dealing with the Vietnamese Coast Guard, forming relationships, while we have—and while, on one hand, that is very positive, we have—on the other hand, we have very strong concerns about their human rights issues. So maybe you could explain that to me also.

Admiral ABEL. Well, first of all, all our crews are trained, if they see any abuses while they are conducting the training, there are protocols for them to report back.

Also, we work—

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Has it ever happened?

Admiral ABEL. Pardon, sir? I can get back with you. I mean, there—they are keyed to say, you know, if you see this, this, or this, these are the things you need to do.

Also, we work with the Department of State to make sure that the partners we are working with are partners we should be working with, to make sure that we are not working with nations that we can't trust or that abuse their public. It should be the public goes to those we are working with, not away from those we are working with. That would be the goal.

And I would say, too, that, internationally, by pushing back on China and the things that they are trying to make new norms, they will continue to push unless we push back. So pushing back on illegal fisheries, poaching in someone else's waters, those are the things that will stop China from their spread across the Pacific.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. MALONEY. Mr. Mast?

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Chairman.

Admiral, thank you for being here today. I want to switch gears a little bit, speak a little bit about the Marine Environmental Protection mission, and just start—number one, obviously, the Coast Guard needs more resources across the board.

Can you discuss a little bit how is budgeting going for the Marine Environmental Protection mission? Where are there shortfalls there? Do you need more? Do you need less? Just give me a little bit of an overview on that to begin with.

Admiral ABEL. Well, as far as Marine Environmental Protection, I mean, we put the onus on the operator to make sure they have

the initial supplies to react to a spill, or—of national significance, anything like that. But we do need to be prepared, as a Coast Guard, to respond if we need to.

Could we use more resources? Absolutely, to make sure that we are ready at a moment's notice.

Also, we make sure, again, that we inspect their plan, make sure their plan is viable, they have the resources on the short tether that is needed to then respond in a timely fashion, as far as their spill response plan, whether a facility or vessel.

Mr. MAST. So I want to switch gears a little bit away from spill and emergency response in that way, and thinking a little bit more about the issue of ocean plastics, debris, garbage. Is it documented in Coast Guard logs on these vessels what they are seeing? Certainly around the U.S. or internationally, what they come across in the waters, in terms of debris in the water? Is that something that is documented within the logs?

Admiral ABEL. Sir, I don't know of any requirement that we place on them. We are not the lead on marine debris, that is NOAA. And we certainly team with them on a lot of activities.

We do participate in the International Maritime Organization conventions on what you can throw overboard, what you can't, what you can pump overboard. So, in a way, we are there, making sure that what leaves a vessel is carefully sanctioned, and it is legal or not legal, and folks know what you need to retain onboard with incinerators or trash compactors.

Mr. MAST. But to your point, what you—you don't know for a fact that—or, rather, you don't believe that the Coast Guard is documenting what they are seeing as they are navigating around the world, in terms of—

Admiral ABEL. I don't believe there is a requirement for a commanding officer to report such. No, sir.

Mr. MAST. OK. Very good. Thank you. That is the extent of my questions. I appreciate your time today, sir.

Mr. MALONEY. Mr. Lamb?

Mr. LAMB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Admiral, for coming to be with us here today. I wanted to talk a little bit about the drug threat and the interdiction work that you all are doing. And I know that you emphasized in your testimony the amount of cocaine seized in the last couple of years, which is helpful.

But in a lot of our country, especially western Pennsylvania, where I represent, opioids, heroin, and more so fentanyl now, are the bigger threat. Are your troops interdicting heroin and fentanyl and opioid products at sea, as well?

Admiral ABEL. So right now we are not seeing a large maritime vector, but I would say the same organizations and funds could fund the cartels that are running that.

So in a way, yes, we are affecting it—is the fact that these large transnational criminal organizations, if they are making money on cocaine. We have seen some mixed loads. We did see some fentanyl that went from—it was Dominican Republic, it was going to Puerto Rico. We did interdict that. But again, the load may be mostly cocaine, and maybe some other stuff sprinkled in there.

Mr. LAMB. But you have seen some mixed amounts? That was kind of what I was—

Admiral ABEL. Not on par with what we have seen on cocaine coming from the maritime vector.

Mr. LAMB. OK. And is it roughly equivalent on the west coast, Pacific as in the Caribbean, or are you seeing more in one area than the other?

Admiral ABEL. You are saying the fentanyl opioid?

Mr. LAMB. No, just overall, your interdiction—

Admiral ABEL. Oh, cocaine.

Mr. LAMB [continuing]. Work, yes.

Admiral ABEL. Eighty percent of our work is in the Pacific, the Eastern Pacific.

Mr. LAMB. OK.

Admiral ABEL. And huge AOR. And the way we get after that, candidly, is—it is three sides of a triangle. One, you have got to have intel. You have got to know the loads on the water. That gets you in the right zip code. You have to have a Maritime Patrol Aircraft. That gets you the street address. And you need a Coast Guard cutter with a helicopter that can shoot, and a small boat that can shoot, because they are not going to stop for you. If you can get those three ingredients, the effectiveness of that Coast Guard force package is much higher.

Mr. LAMB. And the maritime aircraft, you are saying separate from the helicopter?

Admiral ABEL. Yes, sir. That would be a long-range search aircraft.

Mr. LAMB. Yes.

Admiral ABEL. Our brothers and sisters from Customs and Border Protection do a phenomenal job. The Department of Defense always has an aircraft down there, as well. And sometimes it is a contract aircraft the Department of State pays for. So there is a number of aircraft, but we could use more.

Mr. LAMB. OK. And just shifting gears for a second, do you see a growing presence for the Coast Guard in Southeast Asia doing some of this kind of direct enforcement against China that you talked about, as far as personnel? Do you have any way of forecasting that in the next 5 or 10 years? Do you see a big growth in kind of permanently stationing Coast Guard members out there?

Admiral ABEL. Right now we don't have any plans to permanently station folks there. The beauty of the maritime force is, we can adapt year to year with where the business is.

A good example of what we did was we saw an urgent need. We sent one of our buoy tenders with a Fast Response Cutter, not two particularly large vessels, and they went island to island and did some nation building. We called it a strategic action group, which the Navy would snicker at.

But for those islands, it was huge, the fact that the Coast Guard came in. They did some nation building, they did some law enforcement training, talked about search and rescue, marine environmental response, and they said, "We will be back in a little bit," and that constant, you know, episodic visits that you can get from the Coast Guard goes far with these nations.

Mr. LAMB. That is good. So when you talk about, like, trying to crack down on illegal fishing by China, are you talking more about training the local nations to do that themselves, as opposed to, like, a Coast Guard cutter going out there, enforcing it? Or are you talking about both?

Admiral ABEL. The ideal is that the Nation enforces their own sovereignty over their own waters. But these nations, there is a reason the Chinese are going after them. They are the most vulnerable. They have weak legal authorities. Their forces are not well positioned.

But there also are ways—we teamed North Pacific Guard with the Chinese, the Russians, the Japanese, the South Koreans, the Canadians, and the United States. We all work together once a year, and it is a strange collection of people, but we all say we have got to stop this illegal fishing. And when you get a Chinese-owned, Panamanian-flagged transshipment vessel that the fish is already cut and palletized and frozen, and you can't trace it anywhere, there is a reason one in four fish bought in the United States could be illegal, because we just don't know.

Mr. LAMB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. MALONEY. Mr. Gallagher?

Excuse me, Mrs. Miller?

Mrs. MILLER. Thank you, Chairman Maloney and Ranking Member Gibbs.

And thank you for being here today to discuss the important work that the brave men and women continue to do in the Coast Guard every single day. You have been invaluable to my district in West Virginia, performing the dangerous search-and-rescue missions and saving lives.

While the Coast Guard is both visible and present in my district, the important role that you all play in international waters is just as essential. I believe that it is essential that the Coast Guard has the resources to effectively and efficiently continue to perform their military and law enforcement duties here at home, as well as abroad.

Along with my colleague from southwestern Pennsylvania, I have a couple questions that have to do with drugs. Last year I asked the Coast Guard Commandant, Admiral Schultz, about the role that the Coast Guard plays in seizing those illegal drugs in the Gulf of Mexico. Has anything changed in the last year when it comes to stopping the flow of the dangerous illegal drugs that are coming into our communities from the foreign countries?

Admiral ABEL. Well, ma'am, we are constantly adapting, because the enemy gets a vote. And we find these drug organizations to be highly adaptive, and wherever we put a Coast Guard package, they quickly move.

Now flows are going outside the Galapagos. I mean, we are talking 500, 600 miles offshore in small vessels with a crew of three, open fishing boats. That is why it makes it a challenge to find it.

The Caribbean, 20 percent of the flow, not as much, but a lot of that flow is faster. You can get from Central—you know, South America up to Jamaica, Dominican Republic, much faster than these long routes. But the bulk of the flow we are seeing in the Eastern Pacific goes up to Mexico. And the goal is, if we can catch

it in bulk, we catch more than every Federal agency combined. And we would much rather catch it in tons than police departments trying to find a kilo here or a kilo there on the streets, much more efficient, much more impactful against those drug organizations when we catch it in bulk.

Mrs. MILLER. Thank you. Has the Coast Guard seen any changes in the types of drugs that you are intercepting?

Admiral ABEL. Well, I mentioned earlier that we are seeing—sometimes it is a combination load that might have something else mixed in it, but the bulk that we are looking at right now and capturing is cocaine.

Mrs. MILLER. What more can Congress do to ensure that more drugs are stopped from making their way into our country?

Admiral ABEL. Well, I mentioned the fact that—that triangle of things we need. So we need good, robust intelligence, and a lot of that relies on our interagency partners and, candidly, partner nations. Many times it is a partner nation that gives us a critical movement alert, which means drugs are moving, we think it is going there.

So more intel, Maritime Patrol Aircraft—there is just not enough aircraft to be out there spotting what intel has indicated. And then finally, the last part of it is offshore presence. Seventy percent of our major cutters are the Medium Endurance Cutters that are my age. They were born in the sixties. We have got to recap that.

So the goal would be, if we can recapitalize that fleet, and also the helicopters that serve on the back of them, they are due for replacement, as well. All three of those could grow with additional funding.

Mrs. MILLER. Thank you. Now I will switch gears. Last week the Commandant was quoted as saying that there are about 750 monthly ship calls at U.S. ports in the Pacific, and that passenger vessels that had been at sea for less than 14 days are being detained at sea until the test period has passed.

Is the Coast Guard receiving the data it needs to do its job through the notices of arrival, and from the passenger data being provided to the Centers for Disease Control?

Admiral ABEL. So we proactively track, anyway. So even before we get an advance notice of arrival, which is 96 hours out, we have got 3,000 vessels right now that we are tracking, where we think they are going. We are already geotracking—if it is coming from a country that may become hotter, let's say South Korea, we already know which vessel just came from South Korea. So that is the first line of defense, is keep that threat as far away as possible.

Then the 96-hour advance notification. We vet the crew, the cargo, the ship's last five ports of call, and then we decide if there is any risk, and any ship has to report any sickness on the vessel to us, regardless of if they have been to China or not been to China or a hot country.

Then we work with CDC, and we have robust captain-of-the-port authorities, like you mentioned, to have them stay offshore if we need to.

On the cargo side, we have not seen substantial risk. Those ships come in, we restrict the crew to whatever it takes on the pier to turn the ship around, put the lines over, get the cargo loaded, get

back to sea. And they are happy with that, because that is how they make money.

So we have not seen a huge threat vector, disease-wise, from cargo.

Mrs. MILLER. Thank you. I yield back my time.

Mr. MALONEY. The gentlewoman, Ms. Plaskett.

Ms. PLASKETT. Thank you. Thank you so much for being here. The information you provide is really invaluable to us, as we work on the needs of the Coast Guard.

One of the things you had talked about, and I noticed my colleagues have all brought them up, is the interdiction of drugs—and particularly in the Caribbean would be my concern. Can you talk about the collaborative efforts, or any that you have had with foreign governments, particularly those island nations within the Caribbean in combating this?

Admiral ABEL. Yes, Congresswoman, thanks for the question.

So, through the bilateral and multinational agreements we have with almost all of those islands, as our patrols come across a vessel, if they claim, “I am a Jamaican vessel,” that is not a hindrance to us, because we have an agreement with Jamaica and we say, “Would you mind if we board your boat and look for safety and security violations?” Jamaica is fine with that. If we stumble across drugs, then, obviously, it is a whole different story.

So, number one, we don’t let the nationality of the vessel, even if it is fabricated, to slow us down, because we have those relationships.

The other thing we can do, too, is build the capacity of those partner nations. Meet them where they are. It could be just forming their own coast guard is where they need to be. It could be a few small vessels is what they need, outboard maintenance, maybe some rule-of-law training with Department of Justice to find how you work a case package, maybe building their own maritime academies so they can teach their own. The goal is let them patrol their waters and quell this as a team project in the Caribbean.

Ms. PLASKETT. So the mutual assistance programs that you have are probably really working well at this time?

Admiral ABEL. Yes, ma’am. Absolutely.

Ms. PLASKETT. And would you say, of the other Federal agencies that are operating within the Caribbean, what is your role, and where do you see yourself?

Would you think you are leading the charge, in terms of how this is done, or are you working collaboratively?

Are there other agencies you think that may be better suited to take the charge in this?

Admiral ABEL. There are a number of different task forces that do pull people together in various parts of the Caribbean—

Ms. PLASKETT. Like I know HIDTA is one.

Admiral ABEL. Yes, ma’am.

Ms. PLASKETT. Quite a bit—

Admiral ABEL. Yes, and there are a couple that are international, as well.

I will say that we—the status we have, it is almost like the secret sauce we have is people like working with the U.S. Coast Guard, so we can pull together DEA, or Department of the Treas-

ury, or Department of Justice folks, FBI, with their peers and partner nations, and make those connections.

Ms. PLASKETT. You are doing an amazing job with what resources you have. And we know that the Coast Guard is a resource-strapped agency. That does come into the cost—the work that you are doing internationally comes at a cost, domestically.

And seeing that tradeoff, is it important for Congress to consider whether this is an aspect that warrants additional resources? Because so much of your work is handling internationally, in terms of your domestic front.

Admiral ABEL. Well, particularly the work that we do for DoD, it is interesting, the President's national security Presidential directive, or Memo No. 1, was rebuild the military. And the fact that we do not get our funding through DoD—DoD has seen about a 12-percent increase recently. We have held 2.5 to 3 percent in operating funds. Inflation is about 1.9 percent. In essence, flat for operating funds.

So we certainly could use some relief. We certainly like the new assets we are getting at the capital acquisition account. But certainly operating funds would help the Coast Guard.

And also, any given day, 2,000 Coasties, 11 ships, 5 helicopters, a port security unit are all working for DoD, about \$340 million is what we get for that work. We give \$1 billion worth of work to DoD. The last time that was adjusted was 2002.

Ms. PLASKETT. So when you talk about the operating expenses, would that also include your equipment? Is that in there, as well?

Admiral ABEL. Yes and no, ma'am. If it is maintenance of the equipment, you know, you got to buy spare parts.

Ms. PLASKETT. Right.

Admiral ABEL. That would be operating funds. If it is buying new cutters, that is the acquisition side. And candidly, as we limp old cutters along, that sucks operating money for spare parts that we should be putting into the new acquisitions.

Ms. PLASKETT. And so, in the acquisition—you talked about the basic flat line of the operational expenses. What about your acquisition expenses? Have those increased proportional to the Department of Defense, or are they still lagging behind?

Admiral ABEL. I can get you more data. I don't have a comparison of DoD acquisition to Coast Guard acquisition. I will say that we get peaks and valleys. Certainly, we appreciate the generosity of the Congress as far as National Security Cutters, Offshore Patrol Cutters. In fact, we stepped up—

Ms. PLASKETT. No, don't appreciate, because I need you to have more, particularly in my area. We would rather you have more cutters. I mean, you—they are doing a great job with the fast boats that they have, but that is absolutely insufficient for the speed at which some of these drug boats and, you know, human trafficking going on in the Caribbean.

Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. MALONEY. I thank the gentlewoman.

Mr. Gallagher?

Mr. GALLAGHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral, I want to follow up on a line of questioning from the ranking member, and turn our attention to an underappreciated

international role of the Coast Guard that people sometimes forget is international, which is the Great Lakes. Across the lakes you are in Canada. It is a foreign country. They say things differently there.

And just as there is a national security rationale for new icebreakers in the Arctic, there is a national security rationale for the Great Lakes, as well. Nearly all of the iron ore used in the American steel industry comes from Minnesota and Michigan and ships on the Great Lakes. And the lack of adequate icebreaking causes iron ore shipments to be stuck in port, instead of getting to steel mills, driving up pricing, and making American steel less viable in a free market.

In the 2018–2019 winter season alone, inadequate icebreaking cost the region the equivalent of 860 shiploads of iron ore. And so I know we touched on this a little bit, but just to foot-stomp it, when you are making vessel acquisition requests of Congress, how does the Coast Guard factor the importance of Great Lakes icebreaking and connect it to national security?

Admiral ABEL. So we have set up a separate acquisition office that is looking at the unique icebreaking capabilities of the Great Lakes, which are different than what the North Pole and the South Pole require, sir. So we are looking at what is there.

As I mentioned, it is a collection of assets that break on the lakes. The buoy tenders, the 140s, our Canadian partners, as well as the *Mackinaw* that is there. So all of those work together.

We are taking a look at the trends of the industry. I fully agree with you, that trade is vital to the economic interests of our Nation. The economic interest of our Nation is the security of our Nation.

Mr. GALLAGHER. And then I was pleased to see the fiscal year 2021 request includes a Polar Security Cutter, which I agree is important. Does the Coast Guard intend to request a new Great Lakes icebreaker, just so I understand this, after Congress has adequately funded the new polar icebreaker?

Admiral ABEL. Sir, I don't think we can say one or the other.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Yes.

Admiral ABEL. Right now we are looking at the requirements for what the Great Lakes require. I think, once we get requirements scoped, then we will look at where we drop it in, based on the age of the *Mackinaw* and what the requirements are.

But we certainly appreciate the fact that the polar security breaker, number 1, is paid for. Number 2 is in the 2021 budget.

Mr. GALLAGHER. And then I wanted to follow up, switching topics, on a question that Mr. Mast asked. And I didn't fully understand the response.

Doesn't the Coast Guard have responsibility for the implementation of MARPOL, annex V specifically, and the legislation we have to implement it, the act to prevent pollution from ships, with respect to plastic pollution from ships?

Admiral ABEL. Absolutely, sir. And when our marine inspectors go aboard and we do boardings, we find out how do you handle your overboard discharge, whether it is solids, whether it is liquid, all of that is inspected.

The question was, if we see something plastic in the water, do we report it. The answer is no, sir.

But certainly we make sure, internationally, vessels are living to the international standards for the benefit of the whole globe.

Mr. GALLAGHER. And then, to switch topics yet again, on the HASC side, when we talk to the Navy, we are having this very interesting debate about the role that unmanned ships are going to play in the future fleet.

Now, I know there are different equities—Navy, Coast Guard—but, theoretically, unmanned surface vessels open up similar opportunities for the Coast Guard, as they do for the Navy. Can you talk a little bit about how the Coast Guard is thinking about unmanned technology?

Admiral ABEL. So we have pushed the envelope a little bit. I know we have done some unmanned aerial systems up in the Arctic doing search and rescue, using thermals, because it is easier to find a body, you know, in the cold Arctic. We have—every National Security Cutter has unmanned system on the back of that. We have awarded the national contract—every one of those will get a UAS that is running whenever they are underway, a huge game-changer for on-scene presence, persistent presence in the drug fight.

But we are finding those systems are used across the missions of the Coast Guard.

Mr. GALLAGHER. But what about—so you are talking about unmanned aerial sensors, right?

Admiral ABEL. Yes, sir.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Any unmanned—

Admiral ABEL. We are looking at some of those. Candidly, I don't think we would be the lead on that.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Yes.

Admiral ABEL. You mentioned the Navy. We are really interested in what their research and development comes up with. We have an R&D center up in Groton, Connecticut, that works with their peers in DoD to find out who has got the best of the best, so that we can then work off of that to apply it to the Coast Guard.

Mr. GALLAGHER. I have 15 seconds. Are you able to retain the cyber talent you need in the Coast Guard?

Admiral ABEL. No, sir. And we are looking to actually grow the cyber talent in the Coast Guard.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Thank you for a succinct response.

I yield the remaining 4 seconds.

Mr. MALONEY. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Brown?

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral Abel, thank you for your service. Thank you for being here today.

The Coast Guard, you execute a lot of missions, a lot of diverse missions, from drug interdiction, search and rescue, ICE operations, law enforcement. And you are also a very valuable partner to the DoD, particularly the Department of the Navy.

In response to Representative Plaskett's question, you mentioned that you provide roughly \$1 billion of defense readiness mission—\$1 billion? Yes, \$1 billion, and are reimbursed \$340 million. That is of great concern to me, and I think it is of great concern to members of this committee. We invest a great deal in defense. I sit on

the House Armed Services Committee, and the annual increase in defense is probably multiples more than your total budget.

I want to just give you an opportunity perhaps to flesh out a little bit more your response to Representative Plaskett. Can you talk about what resources the Coast Guard is dedicating towards its defense readiness mission, and at the expense of what nondefense readiness missions, or the other missions that you are asked to execute?

Admiral ABEL. Well, first of all, sir, it is a tradeoff. We have got work we do on behalf of the Department of Defense. We have work we do on behalf of the Department of Homeland Security, and the Coast Guard on our own.

Every single year we work with the Department of Defense. They do a request for resources, just like any other branch of the armed services. They come to us and say, "We would like X, Y, and Z. Can you provide it?"

We balance that with our domestic missions to see what we can afford to do as a resource constraint. We do the best to optimize that mix right there.

The one thing we try to do with DoD is we try to make sure that whatever they are asking for is unique within the Coast Guard, not just another large hull. It should be a large hull that, because it is white, it provides this, the capability we bring is this, the legal authorities are different, to make sure that, if we do commit a resource to a combatant commander, it is unique to the Coast Guard, and we are the ones that can fill that niche.

Mr. BROWN. Now, with the publication of, about 2 or 3 years ago, under the current administration of the most recent National Defense Strategy, as we sort of, you know, turn our attention to refocus again on great power competition, Russia and China, have you—how has that impacted the trend line, in terms of the requests for you to execute defense readiness missions?

Admiral ABEL. Well, if you look at the spectrum of, you know, competition to conflict, we are much more over towards the competition side. And that is a good role for the Coast Guard—like I mentioned, small vessels, frequent visits. These countries are going to make choices of who the partner of choice is. We would like that to be the United States.

So if we can play that role for DoD—we have the large ships, we can plug and play. We are interoperable with the Navy and the Marines. There is no question we could do that if time of war comes. But our role really is more towards the—it is the cooperation and the compete side, instead of the conflict side.

Mr. BROWN. Let me ask it this way. Again, today you testified \$1 billion of services, \$340 million reimbursement, you know, roughly \$760 million delta. What was the delta 4 years ago?

Admiral ABEL. Sir, I can get that number back for you. Like I said, the last time, the \$340 million that we get reimbursed, was adjusted, it was 2002.

Mr. BROWN. Yes, and that is my concern. I believe the delta is actually growing. You are becoming a billpayer for a very important mission, defense readiness, but it is my understanding from previous hearings before this committee that—and perhaps you have this data, and you can either correct me or confirm—that the

Coast Guard has got about a \$2 billion backlog. Is that about accurate?

Admiral ABEL. That would be on shore facilities alone, sir.

Mr. BROWN. Yes—

Admiral ABEL. That is without even talking helicopters and airplanes and ships. Every Coast Guard mission starts from the shore, and it is crumbling. And that includes housing for our families, that includes the command centers, the piers they come into. We need to recap the shoreside.

And I would also say C5I. Everything is connected with a spinal cord, which is IT. We have got to invest in that, as well.

Mr. BROWN. And perhaps it is an oversimplification, but, you know, rough numbers, back of the envelope, if you were fully reimbursed in about 2—less than 3 years, you could meet all of your facilities' backlog requirements.

So that is of just concern to me, I think members of the committee, and I really hope that we can address that in the combination work that we are doing on this committee and the House Armed Services Committee.

And I will yield back the balance of my time, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MALONEY. I thank the gentleman. And that concludes the Members' questions.

We have a second panel today, so I am going to thank Vice Admiral Abel, and ask that we move to our second panel.

Thank you, sir, for being here. We appreciate your service, and all you do.

[Pause.]

Mr. MALONEY. I would like to welcome our next panel.

Thank you all for being here. We are joined by Ambassador David Balton, senior fellow for the Polar Institute at the Wilson Center; Dr. Stephen E. Flynn, founding director of the Global Resilience Institute at Northeastern University; and Dr. Amy E. Searight, senior adviser and director of the Southeast Asia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

I appreciate you all being here today. We look forward to your testimony.

Without objection, our witnesses' full statements will be included in the record.

And, as with the previous panel, since your written testimony has been made part of that record, we ask that you limit your oral testimony to approximately 5 minutes.

With that, Mr. Balton, you may proceed.

TESTIMONY OF HON. DAVID BALTON, SENIOR FELLOW, POLAR INSTITUTE, WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOLARS; STEPHEN E. FLYNN, PH.D., FOUNDING DIRECTOR, GLOBAL RESILIENCE INSTITUTE, NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY; AND AMY E. SEARIGHT, PH.D., SENIOR ADVISER AND DIRECTOR, SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Mr. BALTON. Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to testify.

I spent 32 years at the Department of State. I worked very closely with the Coast Guard. Much of what I will tell you this morning is based on those experiences.

We face considerable challenges relating to the oceans, challenges the United States cannot solve on its own. We need to engage other nations, international institutions, other actors. We also need to make the best use of the assets at our disposal. The Coast Guard is one such asset.

I know, from personal experience, that the Coast Guard can and does engage successfully at the international level on a wide range of ocean issues. We should put this capability to even better use, particularly with nations with whom we have difficult relationships. For example, the United States and Russia both border the Bering Sea, home to valuable stocks of fish. Both nations harvest those fish. At the moment, the United States and Russia have difficulty working together in many settings.

This is not a new phenomenon. For many years, when I led the U.S. side in annual fisheries meetings with Russia, the bilateral relationship problems eroded trust and made our work difficult.

The Coast Guard, through its ability to work with its counterparts in the Russian Federal Border Service, often provided the best available means of maintaining needed cooperation in challenging times. The Coast Guard has developed a professional and dependable working relationship with Russia, a relationship that has survived intact, for the most part, even now.

Thanks to that, we have seen very few incidents in the past two decades in which Russian trawlers have crossed the maritime boundary line to fish illegally in U.S. waters. Indeed, with support of the Coast Guard and other law enforcement agencies in the United States, we were able to sign a bilateral agreement with Russia in 2015 to combat illegal fishing.

The Coast Guard also works successfully with China. Yes, with China. As long ago as 1993 the Coast Guard entered into a formal arrangement with China on joint fisheries enforcement operations, based on a memorandum of understanding. That MOU allowed Chinese fisheries enforcement officials to ride aboard U.S. Coast Guard cutters operating in the North Pacific Ocean. If a cutter came upon a Chinese fishing vessel on the high seas fishing illegally—for example, using a large-scale drift net—the Chinese official could take law enforcement action against the Chinese vessel using the platform of the U.S. cutter.

Due in part to initiatives such as this, large-scale drift net fishing in the North Pacific Ocean has subsided, and the need for that MOU has, accordingly, diminished. I understand that the Coast

Guard and their Chinese counterparts are now considering a more comprehensive agreement to promote joint efforts.

In the Arctic, the Coast Guard has played a large role, and could play an even larger one. The Coast Guard leads efforts to implement the 2011 Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement, the 2013 Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Agreement. Both of these treaties commit the Arctic states to work together in responding to problems that are rising in greater number because of increasing human activity in the Arctic Ocean.

As came up earlier, the Coast Guard also leads our participation in the International Maritime Organization, was instrumental in developing the 2017 Polar Code, a set of rules designed to strengthen safety and environmental security in the Arctic.

In 2018 the IMO also approved a proposal developed by the Coast Guard with Russia to manage increasing vessel traffic in the Bering Strait.

These are examples that show how the Coast Guard can advance our Nation's interests in a safe and secure Arctic Ocean.

That said, all signs point to the need to expand this capacity, as the Arctic Ocean grows more accessible, and the need to protect U.S. interests there also increases.

The Caribbean region presents a final illustration of the Coast Guard's capacity to carry out multiple missions in difficult diplomatic environments. The Coast Guard has responsibility for dealing with migrants who are trying to enter the United States illegally by sea. Over many years I saw the Coast Guard perform admirably in rescuing people attempting perilous ocean journeys in vessels of dubious integrity. The mission required Coast Guard officers to understand and implement the nuances of changing U.S. immigration and refugee policies.

The Coast Guard can also help us address growing concerns about oil pollution in the Caribbean, including from Cuba. Given the proximity of the United States and Cuba, a major oil spill in the waters of either country could have serious consequences for the other. In the past decade the Coast Guard has helped to improve communication and oil spill preparedness and response for their Caribbean neighbors, including Cuba. Once again, we will need more of this in the future.

I urge the subcommittee to support efforts of the Coast Guard in the international sphere. Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I would be pleased to answer any questions.

[Mr. Balton's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. David Balton, Senior Fellow, Polar Institute,
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to testify in today's hearing focusing on the international role of the U.S. Coast Guard. My name is David Balton and I am currently a Senior Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

As you may know, Congress created the Wilson Center fifty years ago as the official memorial to President Wilson. We serve as the nation's key non-partisan policy forum, fostering independent research and open dialogue to help guide the policy community.

Before I joined the Wilson Center in 2018, I worked for 32 years at the U.S. Department of State, the last fifteen years serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary for

Oceans and Fisheries. In that capacity, I participated in numerous efforts to advance our nation's interests relating to the oceans and the Polar Regions. During that time, I had very considerable interaction with colleagues in the U.S. Coast Guard. My testimony today draws largely on my experiences in that regard.

STRENGTHENING OCEAN DIPLOMACY

While the world's ocean has received increasing attention in many quarters, the challenges we face on ocean issues are growing more acute. We have a responsibility to address these challenges, as the United States remains a critical player on ocean issues worldwide. We have the largest navy, extraordinary commercial and scientific capacity related to the ocean, and a highly developed regulatory system for managing the part of the ocean under our jurisdiction.

The United States certainly cannot solve the problems of the ocean on our own. We need to engage other nations, international institutions, and other actors and stakeholders (scientists, the private sector, civil society, etc.). We also need to make best use of the assets at our disposal.

I know from long personal experience that the U.S. Coast Guard serves as a valuable tool in engaging with other governments on a wide range of ocean issues, a tool that we should put to even better use, particularly with nations such as Russia, China, Cuba and others with whom we are experiencing significant friction in our bilateral relationships. I used to tell my Coast Guard colleagues that they should add to their 11 statutorily mandated missions a 12th mission: diplomacy.

To illustrate this, here are some examples showing the Coast Guard's ability—and potential—to work constructively at the international level.

NORTH PACIFIC AND BERING SEA

The North Pacific Ocean and the Bering Sea represent two of the most productive fishing grounds in the world. Many of the fish stocks harvested in those waters have ranges and distributions that cross jurisdictional lines. That is, the range of a given stock often includes areas under the fisheries jurisdiction of more than one country, or areas under national jurisdiction and the high seas, or both.

Managing fisheries for such shared stocks presents numerous problems and requires a high degree of international cooperation, an often elusive commodity. Even when nations agree on measures to manage those fisheries, fishing vessels do not always observe the agreed rules. The resulting illegal, unreported, and unregulated (“IUU”) fishing poses a significant threat to fisheries management regimes, to the livelihoods of those who fish in accordance with the rules, and to marine ecosystems.

We can reduce those threats by promoting international cooperation in fisheries law enforcement, including by strengthening the Coast Guard's role in this field. In the North Pacific and the Bering Sea, I have seen the value of Coast Guard engagement with other governments in cooperative efforts to do this.

Few if any other nations have the capacity to undertake effective fisheries enforcement on par with ours. Developing countries, including the Pacific Island States that depend heavily on revenue from fisheries taking place within their exclusive economic zones (EEZs), certainly need our assistance in fisheries management and enforcement. The Coast Guard provides some of that assistance, including through training and data sharing, and could do more in this regard. Increasing such assistance would also benefit the United States, both directly, by increasing the likelihood that shared fisheries in which the U.S. fishing industry participates remain sustainable, and indirectly, by enhancing U.S. relations with the Pacific Island nations in question.

An extraordinary percentage of U.S. fisheries exist in our EEZ off Alaska, much of it in the Bering Sea, a body of water that the Russian Federation also borders. Some of the most valuable fish stocks in that area, including the Eastern Bering Sea Pollock stock, have ranges that cross the U.S.-Russia maritime boundary line. Successful management of such stocks requires collaboration with Russia, including in the field of fisheries law enforcement.

At the moment, the United States and Russia find themselves at odds over any number of difficulties in their bilateral relationship, resulting from such contentious issues as Ukraine, Syria, and election interference. This is not a new phenomenon, however. I have seen significant friction in the U.S.-Russian relationship over several decades. For many years, when I led the U.S. side in annual fisheries meetings with Russia, such friction eroded trust across the table and otherwise made our work difficult.

The Coast Guard, through its ability to work with its counterparts in the Russian Federal Border Service, often provided the best available means of maintaining needed cooperation in challenging times. Over the years, Coast Guard District 17

has developed a professional and dependable working relationship with Russia, a relationship that for the most part has survived intact despite the problems alluded to above.

For example, a spate of fisheries violations about 20 years ago in the vicinity of the U.S.-Russia maritime boundary line in the Bering Sea threatened to undo our ability to work cooperatively with Russia on managing shared stocks. Large factory trawlers repeatedly crossed from the Russian EEZ into the U.S. EEZ to fish illegally. Tensions mounted, as did the prospect of a potentially dangerous confrontation at sea.

Thanks largely to the Coast Guard and its ability to engage professionally with its Russian counterparts, the United States and Russia dealt constructively with each other to minimize such incursions. I am pleased to report that, since the time of the incidents in the 1990s until my retirement from the State Department at the end of 2017, those incidents subsided almost entirely and never again threatened U.S.-Russian cooperation in fisheries management. Indeed, the United States and Russia signed a bilateral agreement to combat IUU fishing in 2015.

We also have the Coast Guard to thank for its ability to work with China, another nation with whom the United States has had a difficult relationship at times. As long ago as 1993, the Coast Guard entered into a formal working arrangement with China on joint fisheries enforcement operations, based on a memorandum of understanding (MOU). Among other things, that MOU allowed Chinese fisheries enforcement officials to ride aboard U.S. Coast Guard cutters operating in the North Pacific Ocean. If the cutter came upon a Chinese fishing vessel on the high seas fishing illegally, for example with a largescale driftnet (a significant problem at the time), the Chinese official could take law enforcement action against the fishing vessel from the platform of the U.S. cutter.

Due in part to initiatives such as this, largescale driftnet fishing in the North Pacific Ocean has also subsided. The need for that specific MOU accordingly diminished, such that the two sides agreed to allow it to lapse at the end of 2019. I understand that the Coast Guard and their Chinese counterparts are now discussing a more comprehensive agreement to promote joint efforts in combatting IUU fishing, which sounds like a good idea to me.

ARCTIC

The Arctic region has received increasing attention in recent years, due largely (though not exclusively) to the warming climate. As the Arctic Ocean becomes more accessible, the United States and other nations have scrambled to keep pace with developments and to manage the growth in human activity there.

The Coast Guard has played a remarkable role in this connection over the past decade. Highlights include:

- The Coast Guard participated actively in the development of the 2011 Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement, a treaty negotiated under the auspices of the Arctic Council. This Agreement commits the eight Arctic States to work together to address potential search-and-rescue incidents throughout the Arctic, incidents that have become much more likely as more people are venturing to that area. The Coast Guard also leads our efforts to implement this Agreement through joint training and exercises with the other Arctic States.
- The Coast Guard played an even more significant role in shaping the 2013 Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Agreement, another treaty negotiated under Arctic Council auspices. In some ways similar to the Search and Rescue Agreement, this pact commits the eight Arctic States to work together in the event of an oil pollution incident anywhere in the Arctic Ocean, another phenomenon that has grown more likely in recent years. Once again, the Coast Guard has a leading role in the implementation of this Agreement.
- The Coast Guard leads U.S. participation in the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and played a central role in developing a set of amendments to existing IMO regulations, known collectively as the Polar Code, designed to strengthen the safety and environmental security of vessels operating in the Arctic and Antarctic regions. The Polar Code entered into force in 2017.
- In 2018, the Coast Guard and its Russian counterparts developed and submitted to the IMO joint proposals for managing increasing traffic through the Bering Strait, proposals that the IMO as a whole have now accepted. In my view, this represents a highly useful first step in ensuring that vessel traffic in this area remains safe and secure. A large-scale shipping accident there could have disastrous consequences for people aboard the vessel(s) in question and for the productivity of the marine environment on which many people depend.

- The Coast Guard served as the first chair of, and remains our government's point agency for, the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, established in 2015. The forum provides a means for Arctic nations to collaborate on such issues as search and rescue, emergency response, and icebreaking. Last year, the forum successfully executed two large-scale live exercises to enhance preparedness and circumpolar cooperation in the event of an incident requiring a mass rescue operation.

These examples illustrate the extraordinary capacity of the Coast Guard to advance our nation's interests in a safe and secure Arctic Ocean. That said, all signs point to the need to expand this capacity in the future, as the Arctic Ocean continues to grow more accessible and the need to protect U.S. interests there grows accordingly.

The opening of the Arctic Ocean has highlighted the need for our nation to have greater icebreaking capacity. I am heartened that we are building another large icebreaker and encourage efforts to create yet more U.S. icebreaking capacity in the future. I do not see these efforts solely as a means of "keeping up" with Russia and other nations that have more icebreaking capacity than we do. Rather, we simply will need more icebreaking capacity to advance our own interests and to fulfill our own needs in both Polar Regions, particularly in the Arctic.

CARIBBEAN

Although I had more limited experiences working with the Coast Guard on issues concerning other ocean regions, I nevertheless came away from those experiences with a deep appreciation of the capacity of the Coast Guard to carry out its multiple missions against the backdrop of difficult and sensitive diplomatic environments. Two examples from the Caribbean region demonstrate this point.

First, the Coast Guard serves on the front line in interdicting migrants who are trying to reach the United States by sea, typically without documentation. Over the decades, I saw the Coast Guard perform admirably in handling the human drama of rescuing thousands of people from the Caribbean region attempting perilous ocean journeys in vessels of dubious integrity. To do so successfully also required Coast Guard officials to understand and implement the nuances of changing U.S. immigration and refugee policies.

Second, the Coast Guard found ways, even prior to the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba, to work with Cuban authorities to address mutual concerns about oil pollution. Given the proximity of the United States and Cuba, a major oil spill in waters under the jurisdiction of either country could have serious consequences for the other. Working through a regional IMO arrangement for the Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard played a significant and largely unheralded role in improving communication and oil spill preparedness and response capacities with our Caribbean neighbors, particularly Cuba.

IUU FISHING

Finally, I believe we can make greater use of Coast Guard expertise and capabilities as the United States works with other nations to fight IUU fishing in all parts of the ocean. I note that the Coast Guard Commandant, Admiral Schultz, outlined some steps to do just that in his recent State of the Coast Guard address:

Fish is an essential protein source for over 40 percent of the global population, and fish stocks around the world are critical to many nations' sovereignty and economic security . . . The United States Coast Guard can be a global leader combatting IUU fisheries by increasing partner-nation capacity, international cooperation, and targeted operations.

And, to enhance maritime domain awareness across the Pacific Ocean we are fostering a partnership with Global Fishing Watch, which uses cutting-edge machine learning and artificial intelligence to visualize, track, and share data about fishing activity in near real-time. If successful, this initiative may be scaled to our fisheries enforcement efforts worldwide.

Today, the United States holds sixteen counter-IUU fishing bilateral agreements in the Pacific and West Africa. And we are pursuing additional agreements to help us push back against the destructive fishing practices that are leaving vast expanses of the ocean and seabed in ruins . . .

We call upon like-minded nations across the globe to join us, in publicly denouncing countries and corporations that engage in IUU fishing, and enhance enforcement activities that thwart this threat.

I urge the Subcommittee to support these efforts.

CONCLUSION

Thank you once again for this opportunity to testify. I would be pleased to answer any questions.

Mr. MALONEY. Thank you, Ambassador Balton.

Dr. Flynn?

Mr. FLYNN. Thank you. Good morning, Chairman Maloney and Ranking Member Gibbs. It is an honor to be here today.

This turns out to be my 30th time that I have appeared as an expert witness before a House or Senate hearing since the attacks of September 11, 2001, and at virtually all those hearings I have testified about how we manage transnational threats that have animated the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. And certainly the transnational threats remain clear and present, as the current global outbreak of COVID-19 is highlighting.

At the outset I just want to say that I think the Coast Guard is the Nation's most underleveraged and most underinvested national security, foreign policy, economic policy, and homeland security asset.

We talk sometimes about tradeoffs between the Coast Guard's domestic capabilities and resources versus its foreign policy or its international role. The real questions about tradeoff should be between what other instruments we use to advance national security goals, homeland security goals, economic security goals, and foreign policy goals. We highlighted already the discussion about the amount of benefit the Department of Defense gets from leveraging the Coast Guard, or the intelligence community can get from the Coast Guard, and yet the investments are nowhere equal.

And so it is so, I think, critical for the debate about investment in the Coast Guard be put in the larger context of those key policy goals of America. And we are underleveraging and underinvesting in the Coast Guard.

My testimony provides a bit of a sort of tour de force about why the Coast Guard's role is so critical in advancing the homeland security and national security and foreign policy goals, all at the same time. I particularly wanted just to drive home a couple of points that I tried to make.

It is very clear that, when we are dealing with transnational risk, they don't pay much attention to borders. And so our organization of national security as water's edge out, and domestic security as border in doesn't work so well when you are trying to deal with things particularly like coronavirus, but also organized crime, other nefarious things that are working in a transnational realm.

And so this ability that the Coast Guard has to be able to operate in the international, in the space in between, in the maritime realm, and, ultimately, in the domestic, is important. But it is the relationships that the Coast Guard has built at the State, local, Federal level with Territories, with the means to be able to interact with their foreign counterparts overseas. It is the relationships with the private sector in the global maritime industry that its authorities and its capabilities provide. There is no other national asset that we have that can essentially move across jurisdictions, move across functions.

As Admiral Abel laid out at the outset, it is an Armed Force, it is a law enforcement agency, it is a humanitarian agency, and it is a regulatory agency. Find something else in the U.S. Government that is all of that. And in the effort of undertaking those missions, women and men of the Coast Guard know they can't get any of it done without working well with others. And so it is one of the unique national assets we have that plays well with others, that actually collaborates and cooperates.

So when we look at what we ask it to do, and the resources we provide it, that delta is just, frankly, reckless and negligent on the part, I think, of the American people. They are not getting the benefit they could. And Congress I urge, and the administration I urge, to make the investment that the Service could provide.

I want to also sort of provide particular emphasis on the Caribbean in the Arctic region. As we know, China is making a significant investment in the Caribbean. And the U.S. investment has gone down significantly, and that is especially true of the Defense Department's presence in the Caribbean.

The Caribbean is—of course, still remains a challenging area from transnational crime. But when you look at what has happened with Venezuela, and the migrants that have flown out of Venezuela, and ability to absorb that, let's also imagine what is likely to happen when the cruise industry essentially goes dark and COVID-19 shows up in the Caribbean islands, a region where 40 percent of the island's GDP is tied tourism. What kind of disruption that will be.

And it turns out the singular agency that actually has operational presence across the Caribbean is the United States Coast Guard.

And it also deals with this crazy thing that we have in the Caribbean, which is, of course, that Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as Territories, are viewed as a domestic entity, and often are not included in our Caribbean-based efforts and strategy. But again, the Coast Guard straddles those two worlds, so it is able to, essentially, manage and have a Caribbean-wide approach.

And in terms of the Arctic, while the Department of Defense has now woken up a bit, and realizes that is a strategic area to play, they really can't play up there. And the Coast Guard has the presence, has the authorities, has the relationships with most of the Arctic nations. We should be investing in the Coast Guard.

I make a final pitch here about managing the transnational risk of terrorism in the global trade and transportation system has to be done in a global way. And again, the Coast Guard has unique authorities, unique reach, but especially its relationships and ability to work with the global maritime industry is so critical to getting us ahead of those challenges. And we have still, again, underinvested in that effort. Thank you.

[Mr. Flynn's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Stephen E. Flynn, Ph.D., Founding Director, Global Resilience Institute, Northeastern University

Chairman Maloney, Ranking Member Gibbs, and distinguished members of the House Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee. Thank you for inviting me to provide testimony on the international role of the U.S. Coast Guard. This marks the 30th time I have appeared as an expert witness before a House or Senate hearing since the attacks of September 11, 2001. Virtually all the hearings that I have testified before have dealt with the challenge of managing the transnational threats that animated the creation of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Those transnational threats remain clear and present as the current global outbreak of COVID-19 is highlighting.

Terrorists, organized criminal syndicates, pandemics, invasive species, and extreme weather events pay little heed to national borders. Yet, our national security establishment is set up to manage these threats beyond our borders while domestic agencies are charged with managing them at and within our borders. Inevitably, this division of labor creates suboptimal responses to transnational threats and challenges. This is playing out in real-time with the challenge of aligning protocols for managing the quarantining of passengers infected by the COVID-19 in the international cruise industry that carries 30 million passengers a year.

In my testimony today, I will contend that the authorities and capabilities that allow the U.S. Coast Guard to perform both domestic and international roles translate into a unique national asset for bridging homeland security and national security. The Coast Guard is a uniformed service of the U.S. Armed Forces, a law enforcement agency, a humanitarian agency, and a regulatory agency. There is no other entity within the U.S. government that is like it. It is also woefully underfunded to carry out its many missions, limiting the Coast Guard's ability to contribute to the safety and well-being of the American people. I hope this hearing will help to shine a light on the shortsightedness of inadequately investing in the Coast Guard and energize an effort by Congress and the Administration to reverse this neglect.

As one of nation's six uniformed services that make up the U.S. Armed Forces, the Coast Guard is closely connected with the Department of Defense to include being integrated into the leadership of U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Southern Command, and conducting operations under U.S. Central Command in the Persian Gulf. Along with the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, the Coast Guard is integral to the U.S. maritime strategy outlined in the 2007 release of *A Collaborative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. Coast Guard Intelligence is one of the 16 members of the U.S. intelligence community.

Coast Guard law enforcement activities involve counter-narcotics, migrant control, combatting human-trafficking, fisheries enforcement, and port security on a global scale. The Coast Guard is the world's premiere maritime search and rescue organization and responder to oil spills. The agency also oversees the management of U.S. waterways to include icebreaking and maintaining the aids to navigation system. Additionally, it is responsible for regulating the U.S. maritime industry and recreational boating to include the licensing and documentation of mariners, inspections of vessels, and the teaching of boating safety courses. The U.S. Coast Guard is a key participant at the International Maritime Organization where the service plays a leadership role in developing and maintaining a comprehensive regulatory framework for worldwide shipping.

The breadth of the Coast Guard's missions highlights what makes it such a distinctive organization. Its responsibility for such a diverse set of missions has been as a result of a 230-year evolution since the nation's first Secretary of Treasury Alexander Hamilton led to its founding as the Revenue Marine in 1790. As national needs connected to the maritime realm evolved, Congress consistently looked to the Coast Guard to address them. While the service is best known for its operational prowess and "can-do" spirit highlighted in its heroic rescues, drug seizures, and response to major oil spills, an underappreciated but arguably equally important asset is the Coast Guard's ability to collaborate with a diverse group of local, state, regional, state, and international players, both private and public, and with civil society and non-profit organizations. Coast Guard women and men understand that prosecuting their missions requires collaborating with other uniform service members, their international counterparts, law enforcement agents, local and state public officials, regulators, and the general public.

This mix of diverse missions, operational nimbleness, and organizational culture that embraces collaborations translate into the Coast Guard serving as the ideal

agency for wrestling with the complexity of 21st Century transnational challenges. Importantly, it not just *what* the Coast Guard does each day, but *how* it goes about doing it that makes the service a unique national asset.

In making the case to Congress and the Administration for increased levels of funding and support for the Coast Guard's international role, I will outline three examples of where the service has distinctive capabilities that can directly contribute to the safety and well-being of the American people that have not been sufficiently leveraged. First, is the service's ability to deal with threats before they arrive at our borders. Second, is the Coast Guard's ability to support U.S. foreign policy and national security priorities in the Caribbean and Arctic regions. Third, is its ability to engage the global maritime industry to manage the ongoing terrorism risk to the global maritime transportation system.

MANAGING TRANSNATIONAL RISKS REQUIRES PUSHING BORDERS OUTWARD

Border control efforts involve managing risk associated with two distinct activities. First, there are efforts to police the flow of goods, people, and conveyances into the 328 authorized land and maritime ports-of-entry throughout the United States. Second, there are efforts to police America's vast maritime and land frontiers between those ports-of-entry. Lately, the 1,933 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border is commanding much of the public's attention. But the length of that border is 1/50th of the size of 95,471 miles of U.S. shoreline where there are ample opportunities to gain illicit entry into the United States. Importantly, one-third of 3,987 miles of the International Boundary line of the U.S.-Canadian border, excluding Alaska, lies on the waterways of the Great Lakes and Saint Lawrence Seaway.

If you spend time at U.S. borders and ports-of-entry as I have, you will find ample evidence of illicit activities from the smuggling of narcotics and migrants, to trade fraud and shipments of counterfeit goods. However, making the border the locus for dealing with these risks is a recipe for failure. This is because transnational threats do not originate at America's national borders. Instead, much like we are witnessing with COVID-19, they infiltrate global trade and travel networks. Limiting these risks is accomplished best by the combination of embedding controls into those networks, and putting in place a layered-defense strategy that starts as close to the point of origin as possible, and then engages in detection and interception efforts prior to arrival at U.S. borders. Ideally this is done in partnership with other jurisdictions. For instance, port security measures at overseas ports-of-loading can mitigate the risk of a security breach involving vessels destined for the United States. For obvious reasons, it is much more desirable to manage a risk that could endanger the U.S. population before it arrives in U.S. waters that after it has arrived in a U.S. port. The COVID-19 situation involving the cruise ship *Grand Princess* and the Port of San Francisco and Oakland proves this rule.

Another central challenge for border control efforts is how to deal with what is commonly known as the "balloon effect." As the United States' nearly half-century of combatting illicit drugs from Latin America has highlighted, if interdiction efforts at the land border are not balanced with similar efforts in the maritime domain, organized criminal networks will travel the path of least resistance and shift their efforts to maritime smuggling. This clearly has implications for the border control outcomes associated with building a physical barrier along the U.S.-Mexican border. If that investment is made at the expense of a commensurate effort to adequately patrol the U.S. maritime domain, drug and migrant smugglers will go around the wall by exploiting the diminished capacity to safeguard America's long maritime borders.

As the nation's lead maritime border agency, the Coast Guard's international reach helps in advancing border control in important ways. By working closely with their international counterparts, the Coast Guard is able to help improve the capacity of other nations to better secure their own ports and waterways. In addition, these international collaborations facilitate intelligence sharing which is key to successful interdiction efforts. At the tactical level, by patrolling the Caribbean Sea and along the Latin American Pacific coast, the Coast Guard is in a position to detect and intercept illicit shipments long before smugglers can take advantage of America's long and largely unprotected coastal shorelines to land their contraband.

ADVANCING A REGIONAL APPROACH TO MANAGING TRANSNATIONAL RISKS IN THE CARIBBEAN AND ARCTIC WILL BENEFIT FROM INVESTING IN THE COAST GUARD PLAYING A LEADERSHIP ROLE

Managing risks that arrive in America's front yard—the Caribbean—and in the Arctic involves multilateral coordination and operations in regions that include the U.S. domestic territories of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands and the state

of Alaska. This poses a special challenge for the U.S. foreign policy community since the U.S. Department of State only works with foreign nations and domestic agencies have limited roles and presence outside U.S. borders. For the Department of Defense, the Caribbean Area of Responsibility is split between the U.S. Northern Command and the U.S. Southern Command. The one U.S. entity that has the authorities and operational presence for seamlessly operating in both these regions, both domestically and internationally, is the U.S. Coast Guard. Given the growing array of risks with primarily a maritime nexus in the Caribbean and the Arctic, the U.S. government should be looking to invest in expanding and leveraging the Coast Guard's presence to play a leadership role in executing U.S. foreign policy and national security goals in these two regions.

The Role of the Coast Guard in the Caribbean Region

There is a critical need for a collaborative effort to build Caribbean regional capacity to promote resilience in the face of mounting security, economic, and ecological risks. Hurricane Dorian in 2019 and Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 highlighted the growing vulnerability of the Caribbean island nations to extreme weather. The high dependency on tourism (40 percent GDP regionwide) makes Caribbean economies particularly vulnerable when disasters strike. In the months ahead, this is likely to include the disruptions associated with the COVID-19 outbreak. The outflow of refugees from Venezuela have highlighted the limited capacity of the region to absorb displaced populations. The ongoing exploitation of the region by drug traffickers, organized criminal networks, and for money laundering exacerbates the risks of violence, corruption, terrorism, and governmental and societal instability. The stepped-up investment from China throughout the region reflects its ongoing geo-strategic value. Benign neglect of the Caribbean region risks increasingly malignant consequences for the United States.

The Caribbean region is made up of 13 sovereign states and 17 dependent territories. For the United States, managing the transnational risks across this vast region is a multijurisdictional challenge highlighted by the fact that the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are outside the writ of the U.S. State Department. Yet, it clearly makes sense to include them in regional initiatives that aim to strengthen U.S. standing in the Caribbean vis-a-vis China, and improve the region's capacity to be more self-sufficient in managing their shared risks. One particularly promising initiative to which the U.S. Coast Guard should be assigned a prominent leadership role is the recently launched U.S.-Caribbean Resilience Partnership.

Formally inaugurated on April 12, 2019 at U.S. Southern Command headquarters in Miami, the U.S.-Caribbean Resilience Partnership (USCRP) is a collaborative effort involving 18 Caribbean countries to build regional capacity to better manage disaster response and recovery and to promote resilience. The inaugural working group meeting of USCRP took place in Bridgetown, Barbados on Oct 23-24, 2019 with a focus on four areas of shared interest: (a) improving "whole of community" risk awareness, (b) strengthening hazard mitigation and climate adaptation efforts, (c) bolstering coordination in regional disaster response, and (d) enhancing planning for post-disaster recovery including economic recovery.

Current U.S. and international regional engagement, to include security assistance, economic development, humanitarian assistance and disaster response, can potentially be tied directly to supporting the shared goals of the U.S.-Caribbean Resilience Partnership. The result would be to provide these efforts with greater strategic coherence while enhancing their security and diplomatic impact. This is because the emphasis on building greater resilience unites and catalyzes the engagement of the public and private sectors, NGOs, and key elements of civil society across the Caribbean region. This initiative also aligns extremely well with the Coast Guard's missions and would benefit from leveraging the good relations the service enjoys with the island nations throughout the region. Congress and the Administration should provide dedicated funding to the U.S. Coast Guard to partner with the U.S. State Department in advancing the goals of the U.S. Caribbean Resilience Partnership.

The Role of the Coast Guard in the Arctic Region

While the state of Alaska makes the United States a major Arctic nation, for too long the region has been treated as a minor national security priority. In recent years, Russia and China have been dramatically out-investing the United States in enhancing their capabilities to operate in the Arctic environment. At stake is the Arctic's rich natural resources that climate change is making increasingly accessible. The major transpacific and transatlantic maritime shipping routes to the west and east coasts of the United States transit the approaches to the Arctic Ocean

making this area strategic to the U.S. economy. A warming climate is also elevating the likelihood of seasonal Arctic sea routes for maritime traffic.

In the face of the growing competition with China and Russia, the U.S. Department of Defense has developed an Arctic Strategy most recently updated in June 2019 that outlines “three strategic ways in support of the desired Arctic end-state:” (1) Building Arctic awareness, (2) enhancing Arctic operations, and (3) strengthening the rules-based order in the Arctic. The U.S. Coast Guard has a longstanding multi-mission presence in Alaska and the Arctic. Additionally, the service has played a leadership role in the international organizations that are responsible for setting the rules for the Arctic maritime. The Coast Guard has close working relationships with six of the seven other Arctic nations: Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Finland, and Sweden. Investing in the Coast Guard’s capacity to expand its role in the Arctic, to include the rapid construction of new icebreakers, should be the cornerstone of the nation’s strategy for the region.

MANAGING TRANSNATIONAL RISKS WITHIN THE MARITIME TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
REQUIRES CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH GLOBAL PRIVATE INDUSTRY THAT THE
COAST GUARD IS IDEALLY POSITIONED TO LEAD

The United States is a maritime nation whose economy relies on the smooth operation of a global maritime transportation system that moves 90 percent of the world’s cargo by volume. The maritime transportation system is not only overwhelmingly owned and operated by private industry, but virtually all the major companies that move cargo and operate port facilities are non-U.S. companies. Indeed, among all the critical infrastructure sectors upon which Americans depend for their safety, security, and prosperity—energy, telecommunications, finance, etc.—the maritime transportation system is the only one where foreign-owned companies play the dominant role.

I believe that the most significant risk to the maritime transportation system is its continued vulnerability to being exploited or targeted by terrorists armed with a nuclear device such as a dirty bomb. This assessment is based on my 30 years of operational and research experiences in and around the port, transportation, and trade community. This includes my service as a Coast Guard officer from 1982–2002, as the Principal Advisor for the Bi-partisan Congressional Port Security Caucus from 2003–2004, as a member of the National Research Council’s Marine Board from 2003–2010, as an independent consultant to major ports and the maritime industry, and currently as a professor and director for the Global Resilience Institute at Northeastern University.

My assessment holds despite the post-9/11 efforts applied to this risk. As we have witnessed with the COVID–19 outbreaks aboard the Diamond Princess and Grand Princess and the impact that is having on the global cruise industry, what on its face is a localized threat, can quickly translate into far-reaching and cascading consequences for the trade and transportation system.

The national security and economic stakes associated with the dirty bomb risk could not be higher. This is because such an attack would almost certainly lead in its aftermath to the global disruption of the maritime transportation system and international commerce. A terrorist attack involving a dirty bomb, originating from an overseas source and arriving in the U.S. in an intermodal container, would trigger port closures around the United States. This would set off a series of cascading disruptions throughout the global supply system that would lead to billions of dollars of daily losses and cause gridlock across the intermodal transportation system within 10 days to 2 weeks. Since the U.S. government currently has no comprehensive plan for managing the global recovery of this system in the aftermath of a major security breach, it would almost certainly require several weeks to restore the flow of commerce. This is because it would take time for public officials to reassure a traumatized American public in order for U.S. ports to be reopened. It would also take time to clear cargo backlogs in transportation hubs and distribution centers around the world, as well as to reposition transportation conveyances so that they can service their normal scheduled routes. The economic impact of such an incident would likely spawn a worldwide recession.

This risk can be effectively managed, but the key is advancing the appropriate security safeguards and resilience planning on a global scale. The U.S. Coast Guard has the requisite domestic and international authorities and relationships with the international maritime industry, maritime nations, and key international organizations such as the International Maritime Organization, to make this happen. Congress and the Administration need to give the service the mandate and resources to provide the needed leadership.

The way forward is for the U.S. government to shift its emphasis from one that focuses primarily on policing U.S.-bound cargo. Instead it needs to approach the security of the global supply system as a necessary requirement for all nations in meeting their shared international commitments for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and materials and combatting organized crime. Next, it needs to enlist the active participation of the private industry that owns and operates port terminals and transportation conveyances that move supply chains around the planet. There is a business continuity and enterprise resilience imperative associated with the dirty bomb threat that should animate the same kind of close collaboration between the private and public sectors that we saw in the aftermath of the foiled October 2010 cargo planes bomb plot involving explosives hidden in printer cartridges shipped from Yemen. Third, the U.S. government needs to step-up efforts to advance the use of new technologies, tools, and protocols on a global scale that can provide for the near real-time visibility and accountability of the contents and location of cargo, thereby bolstering the security and resilience of trade flows. Such a system would be neither too costly, nor difficult to deploy. Based on a study that I have done with my colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, embedding the capacity within the global supply system to routinely capture non-intrusive images of a container's contents and incorporating them into the data flow that underpins the current risk management process would cost about \$15 per container.¹ This is less than the aviation security fee I paid for my domestic flight from Boston to Washington to participate in this hearing.

Specifically, I believe that the global supply system security and resilience can be significantly advanced by the U.S. Coast Guard playing an international role in undertaking five actions that I recommend in a 2017 report on Global Supply System Security and Resilience underwritten by a research grant from the MacArthur Foundation:²

1. Linking the currently disconnected: (a) global counter-proliferation mandate set by UN Security Council Resolution 1540, and (b) the global port security requirements embedded in the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) code so that nations abide by uniform global standards and procedures that ensure that containerized cargo is not wittingly or unwittingly being used to transport prohibited nuclear materials and contraband.
2. Inviting the world's major port operators to actively partner with the U.S. government and the governments of other maritime nations, the International Maritime Organization, supported by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the World Customs Organization, in establishing recommended guidance to be placed within part B of the ISPS Code, for uniform, performance-based standards for non-intrusive inspection (NII) equipment to be used in maritime terminals.
3. Creating the means for the world's major port operators to provide the data collected by non-intrusive inspection equipment to government officials at both the port of loading and the port of arrival as requested. This includes securely sharing and storing all non-intrusive inspection data for an agreed upon time period.
4. Authorizing bonded-third parties to partner with governments to address and resolve alarms generated by the NII equipment when they occur.
5. Allowing port operators to levy an estimated \$15 to \$20 per container cost of implementing these actions as a part of the authorized Terminal Security Charge that supports investments to comply with the ISPS Code.

CONCLUSION

The transnational risks to the United States associated with the maritime realm continue to grow. As the current global disruption highlighted by the COVID-19 outbreak makes clear, the stakes for U.S. national security and economic security associated with better managing these risks could not be higher. Yet the investment in the primary maritime agency most able to lead U.S. government response to these risks—the U.S. Coast Guard—has not grown in a commensurate fashion. Indeed, Congress and the Administration have woefully underinvested in this service to the determinant of the current and future safety of the American people.

¹Nitin Bakshi, Noah Gans & Stephen Flynn, "Estimating the Operational Impact of Container Inspections at International Ports" *Management Science*, 57:1 (Jan 2011): 1–20.

²*A New International Framework for Bolstering Global Supply System Security and Resilience* (Boston: Northeastern University, Oct 2017) <https://repository.library.northeastern.edu/files/neu:cj82r8265>

The very name of the Coast Guard may, in part, be contributing to this neglect—for many it conjures up an image that the service has almost exclusively a domestic role. But since the 1790s, when its predecessor organization the Revenue Cutter Service was deployed to the coast of North Africa to confront the Barbary Pirates, the Coast Guard has always had an international role. Transnational risks by their very definition confound efforts that attempt to neatly distinguish between national security and homeland security. Tackling these risks also requires an extraordinary degree of collaboration with not just governments, but the private sector, and civil society as well. The Coast Guard is unique in its ability to lead such collaborative efforts and bridge national security and homeland security. Indeed, the service deserves as much public recognition for the contributions it has made and is poised to make to U.S. national security, foreign policy, and facilitating international commerce, as the fame the Coast Guard has rightly earned from its proud history of operating through surf and storm to save lives.

Mr. MALONEY. Thank you, Dr. Flynn.

Dr. Searight?

Ms. SEARIGHT. Chairman Maloney, Ranking Member Gibbs, and other distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My testimony will focus on the U.S. Coast Guard cooperation with Southeast Asia littoral nations, which face tremendous challenges in the maritime domain. And because of this, they represent a real strategic opportunity for Coast Guard cooperation.

The strategic importance of Southeast Asia to the United States is often underappreciated. Southeast Asia lies at the heart of the Indo-Pacific, with vital sea lanes flowing right through it, including the South China Sea, where one-third of global shipping passes; the Malacca Straits, which is one of the most crowded waterways in the world; as well as the Sulu Sea, which is a hotbed of transnational crime and terrorism.

Aside from its geostrategic location, the region provides critical ballast for a rules-based order through its regional organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, which has led the creation of a security and economic architecture that convenes the major powers and provides some rules of the road for good behavior. ASEAN norm-setting and ASEAN-led regional dialogues provide somewhat of a bulwark against China's growing assertiveness in the region.

Because of Southeast Asia's pivotal geostrategic role in the Indo-Pacific, it has become the fulcrum of emerging U.S.-China strategic competition, and yet U.S. engagement with countries in the region does not always match their strategic significance.

A fully integrated and well-resourced Indo-Pacific strategy for the United States would place a high priority on maritime cooperation with the littoral states of Southeast Asia to help them address the serious challenges they face in the maritime domain. These challenges include, first and foremost, protecting their sovereignty and their ability to monitor maritime activities, access natural resources, and protect the marine environment within their Territorial waters and EEZs, all of which are under growing threat from China's increasing maritime assertiveness.

Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia, in particular, have seen growing Chinese encroachment into their Territorial waters and around disputed maritime claims, as China seeks to aggressively assert its expansive claims under its nine-dash line.

China relies heavily on its coast guard, along with its paramilitary maritime militia, to project power and assert its claims through gray-zone tactics that seek to blur the line between civilian and military forces, and engage in coercive actions while remaining under the threshold of military response. China has been rapidly expanding and modernizing its coast guard. And today the Chinese Coast Guard is the world's largest, boasting more hulls in its fleet than all of the regional neighbors, combined.

Chinese Coast Guard ships have played a lead role in several recent gray-zone skirmishes in Southeast Asia, including the political row sparked by the incursion of several Chinese Coast Guard cutters escorting Chinese fishing vessels into Indonesia's EEZ off the coast of the Natuna Islands in December, and the standoff between Vietnam and China over the Vanguard Bank, and recent harassment of Malaysia's oil and gas exploration activities in waters on its extended continental shelf. These episodes demonstrate the new normal in the South China Sea, in which new energy development by Southeast Asian states anywhere within the nine-dash line will be met by persistent intimidation from Chinese law enforcement and paramilitary vessels.

Chinese maritime coercion in the South China Sea grabs most of the headlines, but the countries in the region face a number of other maritime-related challenges that are very high on their political agendas. And at the top of the list is illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, IUU, which causes huge economic losses to these countries.

There are other sorts of transnational crime, from wildlife and human trafficking, to narcotics, and piracy that are also very important, and real problems in the Territorial waters of these countries.

And this region suffers disproportionately from large-scale maritime natural disasters—the typhoons and cyclones in the region are only intensifying, and growing more frequent with climate change. And so disaster response capabilities are also at the top of their list.

Faced with the growing challenges of Chinese maritime assertiveness and other threats in the maritime domain, Southeast Asian countries have been doing a lot recently to build up their coast guards. And I go in my written testimony into some detail about the various steps that these countries have taken.

And in seeking to boost their coast guard capabilities, the U.S. Coast Guard is a partner of choice. Indeed, the U.S. Coast Guard has played an important role in helping Southeast Asian coast guards build capabilities through a variety of capacity-building programs, training and educational opportunities, and equipment transfers, in particular for the countries of the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam. And I do go into some detail again in my written testimony about the various ways that the Coast Guard has assisted the coast guards of these countries.

Of all the tools in the U.S. foreign policy toolkit, the U.S. Coast Guard is perhaps the most valuable and yet underutilized in cooperation with Southeast Asia. The U.S. Coast Guard is uniquely positioned to engage with Southeast Asian counterparts and advance U.S. national security interests for several reasons.

First and foremost, Chinese threats to these countries' maritime sovereignty is the largest security challenge that they face, which has led them to really seek the expansion and deployment of their coast guards to counter Chinese gray-zone tactics. And as these countries increasingly rely on their coast guards, U.S. Coast Guard engagement and capacity building with these partners is incredibly valuable.

Because the United States does not take sides in maritime disputes with different claimants, American diplomatic efforts, as well as military options to deal with Chinese maritime coercion, are, to some degree, limited. The U.S. Navy, conducting frequent and regularized FONOPS to challenge excessive claims of China and other states is a very useful tool to underscore the U.S. commitment to freedom of navigation.

However, FONOPS alone are not sufficient as a strategy to help these countries counter Chinese maritime aggression, because it does not directly address the immediate challenges they face in terms of coercion against fishing, oil exploration, and other lawful activities within their waters.

Mr. MALONEY. Dr. Searight, if I could ask you to—

Ms. SEARIGHT. Yes.

Mr. MALONEY [continuing]. Wrap up your prepared remarks, so we can move to Members' questions, and then we would be happy to give you a chance to elaborate on that, in particular, in my own. But if you have any concluding remarks, feel free to conclude.

Ms. SEARIGHT. No, I would just reiterate that I think, you know, there are various reasons why the U.S. Coast Guard is uniquely valuable as a tool of engagement with these countries on core issues of importance to them. And so I think it is really important to consider the Coast Guard in light of an effective Indo-Pacific strategy. Thank you.

[Ms. Searight's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Amy E. Searight, Ph.D., Senior Adviser and Director, Southeast Asia Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies

Chairman Maloney, Ranking Member Gibbs, and other distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you. The strategic importance of Southeast Asia to the United States is often underappreciated. Southeast Asia lies at the heart of the Indo-Pacific, and vital sea lanes of communication that connect the Indian Ocean to the west with the Pacific Ocean to the east flow right through the region. These critical waterways include the South China Sea where one third of global shipping passes, the Malacca Straits which is one of the world's busiest waterways, as well as the Sulu Sea, which is both a hotbed of transnational crime and the focus of emerging regional cooperation in the form of joint patrols conducted by Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Aside from its geostrategic location, the region provides critical ballast for a rules-based order through its regional organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, which has led the creation of regional security and economic architecture that convenes the major powers of the region and helps establish "rules of the road" for good behavior. ASEAN norm-setting and ASEAN-led regional dialogues provide somewhat of a bulwark against China's growing assertiveness in the region. Because of Southeast Asia's pivotal geostrategic role in the Indo-Pacific, it has become the fulcrum of emerging U.S.-China strategic competition, and yet U.S. engagement with countries in the region does not always match its strategic significance.

MARITIME CHALLENGES FACED BY SOUTHEAST ASIAN LITTORAL STATES: CHINESE
GREY-ZONE COERCION

A fully integrated and well-resourced Indo-Pacific strategy for the U.S. would place a high priority on maritime cooperation with the littoral states of Southeast Asia to help them address the serious challenges they face in the maritime domain. These challenges include, first and foremost, protecting their sovereignty and their ability to monitor maritime activity, access natural resources, and protect the marine environment within their territorial waters and EEZs—all of which are under growing threat from China's increasing maritime assertiveness. Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia in particular have seen growing Chinese encroachment into their territorial waters and around disputed maritime claims, as China seeks to aggressively assert its expansive and excessive sovereignty claims under its nine-dash line, which lays claim to about 90% of the South China Sea.

China relies heavily on its coast guard, along with its paramilitary maritime militia, to project power and assert its maritime claims through grey-zone tactics that seek to blur the line between civilian and military forces, and engage in coercive actions while remaining under the threshold of a military response. China has been rapidly expanding and modernizing its coast guard and today the Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) is the world's largest, boasting more hulls in its fleet than those of all regional neighbors combined. The CCG has 260 offshore patrol ships over 500 tons, including two massive 12,000 ton, 165-meter cutters that far outclass all other coast guard ships and navy vessels in Southeast Asia.

Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) ships have played a lead role in several recent grey-zone skirmishes in the region, including the political row sparked by the incursions by several CCG cutters escorting Chinese fishing vessels into Indonesia's EEZ off the Natuna Islands in December, and the standoff between Vietnam and China over the Vanguard Bank. My colleagues at the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI) at CSIS recently reported on a "dangerous, ongoing game of chicken" involving at least two CCG vessels leading an effort to harass and intimidate Malaysian oil and gas exploration activities on the extended continental shelf claimed by both Malaysia and Vietnam. These episodes demonstrate the "new normal" in the South China Sea, in which "new energy development by Southeast Asian states anywhere within the nine-dash line will be met by persistent, high-risk intimidation from Chinese law enforcement and paramilitary vessels."¹

OTHER MARITIME CHALLENGES: ILLICIT ACTIVITIES AT SEA AND DISASTER RESPONSE

China's maritime coercion in the South China Sea grabs most of the headlines and focuses the attention of U.S. policymakers and strategists, but governments in the region also face a spectrum of non-traditional security challenges linked to the maritime domain that often rise to the top of their policy agendas. At the top of the list are fish. The South China Sea is one of the most productive commercial fisheries in the world, supporting the livelihood of millions of Southeast Asians fisherman and those in related industries. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) cause huge economic losses for these countries. It also contributes to the rapid depletion of fish stocks and declining biodiversity, causing perhaps irreparable damage to the marine ecosystem. China's massive fishing fleet, supported by its Coast Guard, paramilitary maritime militia and naval forces, is a major contributor to the IUU problem, but fishing vessels from other regional neighbors are also involved. IUU vessel catches are estimated to be over one third of reported catches in Southeast Asia. Indonesian President Joko Widodo has made confronting IUU fishing a top political priority, with his government putting the value of Indonesia's stolen catch at \$20 billion a year.

Other forms of transnational crime, from trafficking to piracy, continue to challenge the maritime law enforcement capabilities of Southeast Asian governments. Maritime trafficking routes run throughout Southeast Asia and serve as a conduit for illegal trade flowing between China, Africa, and Southeast Asia itself. A recent UN report highlighted how transnational organized crime groups are expanding "aggressively" in Southeast Asia, generating hundreds of billions in illicit revenue and posing a destabilizing force in the region. Methamphetamine use is exploding across Southeast Asia, along with a large heroin trade that combine for illicit annual revenues of between about US\$ 40–70 billion for the drug trade. Human and wildlife trafficking remain serious and large-scale problems, both within the region and to and from destinations in China and Africa. Although piracy has declined overall in key waterways like the Malacca Straits, kidnappings-for-ransom and other maritime

¹ <https://amti.csis.org/malaysia-picks-a-three-way-fight-in-the-south-china-sea/>

attacks, largely carried out by affiliates of the Islamic State (IS), continue to plague the waters of the Sulu Sea, despite increased maritime cooperation between the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

The region also suffers disproportionately from large-scale maritime natural disasters brought on by typhoons and cyclones, which are intensifying in their impact with the warming waters of the ocean. “Super typhoons” like Typhoon Haiyan, Cyclone Pam and Cyclone Winston devastated parts of the Philippines and Pacific Islands, causing high death tolls and requiring large-scale relief operations. These super-charged storms are becoming more frequent, requiring governments to improve their ability to carry out coordinated humanitarian relief efforts for those affected.

SOUTHEAST ASIA’S COAST GUARD BUILD-UP

Faced with the growing challenges of Chinese maritime assertiveness and the broad range of other maritime-related threats, maritime Southeast Asian countries are responding by expanding the role of their coast guards and building up their capabilities. The littoral states of Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia have been most focused on raising the profile of their coast guards and modernizing their capabilities, although most still lack the scale and sophistication needed to meet their broad mandates and deter Chinese aggression.

Vietnam has the largest Coast Guard fleet in Southeast Asia, reflecting its focus on deterring Chinese challenges to its sovereignty. The uptick in clashes with China over disputed territories and China’s growing reliance on its Coast Guard to patrol contested waters and assert claims has led Vietnam to sharply increase investments in its coast guard. Along with renaming the Vietnam Maritime Police as the Vietnam Coast Guard (VCG) and separating it from the navy, Vietnam has commissioning four 4,300 ton patrol vessels, which will be the largest coast guard vessels in Southeast Asia, building on a surge in total tonnage across the board, rising from 20,500 to 35,500 from 2010–2016. The United States, Japan and Korea have transferred vessels to Vietnam in recent years, with the U.S. transferring a Hamilton-class U.S. Coast Guard cutter in 2017, a total of 18 metal shark patrol boats, and another transfer of a U.S. Coast Guard cutter planned in 2020.

The Philippines has also initiated a buildup of its Coast Guard, although its role has softened somewhat under President Duterte as he seeks closer ties with China by downplaying tensions in the South China Sea. Duterte has supported the development of the Philippines Coast Guard (PCG), allocating relatively large budgets and calling for more ships and personnel for the PCG. In 2019, the Coast Guard began recruiting 4,000 new personnel, and is planning for an additional 6,000 new recruits in 2020, which will result in a 23,000-strong PCG, more than doubling its size from a few years ago and far surpassing the 14,000 member Philippine navy. The pace of acquisitions of vessels for the PCG has also surged under both the Duterte and Aquino administrations, including ten new 44-meter patrol boats from Japan; two 92-meter offshore patrol vessels from Japan; four 24-meter fast boats, and an 84-meter, 1400 ton offshore patrol vessel built in France and recently delivered to the PCG, which is now the largest vessel in its fleet. Duterte’s “fondness” for the Coast Guard is explained in part by his desire to de-escalate maritime tensions with China by replacing grey hulls with white hulls to police the Philippines territorial waters and having them operate under softer “rules of engagement” with Chinese coast guard and fishing vessels when incidents occur with Filipino fishermen.² This runs counter to the trend in the region that has Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia seeking to expand the use of their coast guards to increase presence and assert maritime claims in the face of growing Chinese incursions.

Indonesia lags behind its neighbors in developing a coast guard, although under President Jokowi efforts have been underway to build one. The Jokowi government has been focused on rationalizing its 12 different entities responsible for civilian maritime security and establishing a coast-guard-like agency, known by its acronym BAKAMLA, meant to synergize national efforts among the patchwork of civilian maritime agencies. However as a “coordinating body,” BAKAMLA has had to rely on the assets and personnel from other civilian and naval entities and coordinate efforts rather than lead on maritime law enforcement. BAKAMLA fields a fleet of old refurbished naval ships that are hardly adequate to secure and patrol the waters of its vast archipelago. However the incursions of Chinese Coast Guard ships in the waters surround the Natuna Islands last December have galvanized the Jokowi administration to focus anew on enhancing the capacity and strengthening the bureau-

²Observers have noted that in its current operations the PCG seems more intent on enforcing violations of Filipino fishermen rather than aggressive actions by Chinese fishing vessels.

cratic position of BAKAMLA, with President Jokowi declaring his vision of having BAKAMLA evolve into a full-fledged Indonesian coast guard, entrusted with the authority to secure the country's maritime territory.

In line with the trend of other Southeast Asian countries, Malaysia officially renamed its Maritime Enforcement Agency the Malaysian Coast Guard in 2017, and has also rapidly expanded its capacity in recent years. Its largest patrol boats are a pair of Japanese Coast Guard cutters transferred in 2017, and it is building three 83-meter Damen patrol boats expected to be commissioned in 2021.

U.S. COAST GUARD COOPERATION AND CAPACITY-BUILDING WITH SOUTHEAST ASIAN PARTNERS

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) has played an important role in helping Southeast Asia's coast guards build capabilities and capacity through a variety of capacity-building programs, training and educational opportunities, and equipment transfers.

Coast guard cooperation with the Philippines offers a great example. U.S. assistance to the Philippines has included training and education, which has surged under the Duterte administration. Over the last three years an average of 60 PCG officers have been sent to the United States to participate in coast guard-related training, while more than 1,500 PCG personnel were trained within the Philippines in various courses taught by USCG personnel.³ Last year the USCG participated in two maritime exercises with the PCG, using each of its two National Security Cutters that were deployed in the Indo-Pacific under the operational control of the Navy's 7th Fleet. In May the USCG cutter *Bertholf* participated in search-and-rescue exercises with the PCG near Scarborough Shoal and then made a port call to Manila, the first visit of its kind in seven years. In October the USCG cutter *Stratton* participated in the annual Sama Sama exercise near disputed waters in the Spratley islands, and made a port call to Palawan. This was followed a few weeks later by a visit to Manila from U.S. Coast Guard commandant Admiral Karl Schultz for a series of engagements. The U.S. government has funded the Philippines National Coast Watch Center (NCWC), designed as an interagency hub for maritime domain awareness which opened in 2015, and last year USCG training teams helped the PCG stand up the first phase of a planned \$3 million law enforcement training and maintenance facility that will greatly expand the PCG's capacity to train its workforce and sustain its equipment.

In addition to the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam have been priority countries for the USCG Security Sector Assistance since at least 2015. With Indonesia, the focus has been supporting the organizational development of the Indonesian Coast Guard, BAKAMLA, and enhancing the technical skills and professional development of its workforce through educational partnerships, reciprocal visits by USCG mobile training teams and BAKAMLA personnel, and other engagements.

Last year, the USCG partnered with BAKALMA on a multilateral engagement for regional coast guards on IUU fishing and drug trafficking under the Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Initiative (SEAMLEI). BAKALMA hosted the workshop and training exercise, with participation by Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam in addition to Indonesia. USCG also participates regularly in the annual Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT) exercises that bring together regional navies and coast guards from across Southeast Asia to promote interoperability in order to better coordinate, communicate and counter illicit activities at sea.

Finally, U.S. Coast Guard officers serving as liaisons in the U.S. Embassies in the Philippines and Vietnam have been tremendously valuable in fostering engagements and identifying opportunities for closer coast guard cooperation between the United States and these countries.

INCREASING USCG FOCUS ON SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE INDO-PACIFIC

The U.S. Coast Guard's recent moves to step up engagement with Southeast Asia and other partners in the Indo-Pacific, in particular the Pacific Island countries, have been strongly welcomed and point towards an even larger role that the USCG can play in support of a Free and Open Indo Pacific strategy. Although security sector assistance and training cooperation have been important features of USCG cooperation with Southeast Asian partners for at least a decade, the recent high level of engagement and increasingly visible and frequent bilateral and multilateral coast guard engagements have been notable. The deployments of two National Security Cutters for long tours (ten months in 2019) in the Indo-Pacific theater under the

³ <https://thediplomat.com/2019/06/what-is-the-us-coast-guards-role-in-the-indo-pacific-strategy/>

operational command of the Navy's Seventh Fleet is another very encouraging development.

The U.S. Coast Guard is uniquely positioned to engage with Southeast Asian counterparts and advance U.S. national security interests for several reasons. First and foremost, Chinese threats to these countries' maritime sovereignty is the largest security challenge that they face, which has led them to focus on expansion and deployment of their coast guards as a counter to Chinese grey-zone tactics. As these countries increasingly rely on their coast guards, U.S. coast guard engagement and capacity-building with these partners offers an important and still relatively underutilized tool for U.S. policymakers. Because the United States does not take sides on maritime disputes among the different claimants, American diplomatic efforts as well as military options to deal with Chinese maritime coercion are to some degree limited. The U.S. Navy conducting frequent and regularized Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPS) to challenge excessive claims of China and other states is a very useful tool to underscore the U.S. commitment to the principle of freedom of navigation and to demonstrate the resolve of the U.S. military to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows. However FONOPs alone are not sufficient as a strategy to help these countries counter Chinese maritime aggression. As important as this signal of resolve may be to regional partners, it does not directly address the immediate challenges of Southeast Asians facing maritime coercion against fishing, energy exploration, and other lawful activities within their waters. A highly skilled, well equipped and professionalized coast guard is one of the most important instruments these countries can deploy to face these challenges. U.S. coast guard assistance can contribute substantially to their ability to monitor their waters and begin to mitigate Chinese coercion.

Second, the capability gaps remain large, not just because of the scale of the CCG and paramilitary forces and their coordinated and aggressive tactics, but also because of the myriad of other maritime-related challenges these regional coast guards face and the vastness of their maritime domains, making their mandate very challenging even in the best of times. The Philippines for example has 7,000 islands and 36.7 thousand kilometers of coastline, equivalent to one-tenth the world's coastline. Indonesia's challenge is even greater, with a vast archipelago of over 70,000 islands and a coastline of 54 thousand kilometers. The increase in tonnage of the coast guard fleets in maritime Southeast Asia and the growth of personnel and professionalization of the workforce is laudable, but coast guard capacity remains insufficient to meet the growing demands they face in Southeast Asia. U.S. Coast Guard capacity-building, training, transfer of equipment, and other U.S. resources have a huge potential role to play in helping to narrow this gap.

Third, coast guard cooperation is seen as a comfortable "safe space" for countries like Vietnam and Duterte-era Philippines where naval cooperation remains sensitive.

Finally, the U.S. coast guard is ideally positioned to focus on enforcing a rules-based order in the Indo Pacific, which is at the core of a successful U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy. The USCG can work with regional coast guards on a whole range of skills, professional development and capacity building, all of which help these countries police their territorial waters and EEZs, and work with regional counterparts to counter transnational threats by sharing information and working collaboratively in maritime enforcement operations. By boosting the capability to enforce the rules in areas of great interest to these countries, including IUU fishing, countering illicit activities that take place on the seas, and dealing with piracy and other maritime-related threats, regional coast guards can contribute to regional stability and promote regional cooperation, which in turn can help strengthen regional solidarity in ways that may help keep Chinese maritime assertiveness in check.

Of course, the U.S. Coast Guard is limited in how much it can expand cooperation with Southeast Asia and other Indo-Pacific partners due to its core homeland security mission, competing global priorities and constraints on its resources, including the size of its budget, its fleet, and perhaps most importantly the size and training requirements of its personnel. However from the perspective of an Indo-Pacific national security strategy that puts Southeast Asia and the challenge of Chinese maritime coercion at the center, the prospect of increasing U.S. Coast Guard cooperation and engagement with regional coast guards offers a big strategic opportunity for the United States, one that I hope Congress can support and resource.

Mr. MALONEY. I appreciate that. And we will now move to Members' questions for 5 minutes each. I will begin by recognizing myself.

Let's just pick up right there, Dr. Searight. So would you say a word, please, about what we should be doing in Southeast Asia, the South China Sea, that we are not?

And if you could, say, in particular, a word about Vietnam, specifically Vanguard Bank, and also the Philippines. And with respect to the Philippines, I am curious about the role the Coast Guard can play in an area—obviously, we understand the importance of the island formations and the Spratly Islands, and the rest. But also with respect to the different perception President Duterte has of the Coast Guard versus, say, the rest of the United States military.

Ms. SEARIGHT. Yes, the Philippines is an excellent example, because under Duterte, of course, he has sought warmer ties with China, and he has downplayed conflict with China, various tensions in the South China Sea.

And he has also, of course, sought some distance between the United States and our military alliance.

But he really favors the Coast Guard, in part because he sees it as a de-escalatory mechanism for dealing with, you know, various incidents in Territorial waters. So he has boosted the Coast Guard, and that has offered an opportunity for the U.S. Coast Guard to offer training, both in the Philippines and educational opportunities here in the United States.

There has been a, you know, a number of articles that—of—excess defense articles, equipment that have been provided to the Philippines, et cetera.

So, in terms of your—the broader question, though, what can the United States do in the South China Sea, I mean, our options are limited because, you know, we do not take a position. The United States does not take a position on the claims, the various claimants. And really, the—you know, whereas the Navy, conducting FONOPS and doing various naval engagements, is certainly important to boost the capabilities of these partner countries, these countries are relying more and more on coast guards to counter the white hulls of China.

And so that—the best—really, I think the best tool that we have in our toolkit is to help them build up coast guard capabilities and make them into professionalized, well-equipped, and well-trained forces that can project presence and deal with a variety of challenges on the maritime domain.

Mr. MALONEY. And that would be equally true with respect to our growing relationship with Vietnam and situations like the Vanguard Bank, is that right?

Ms. SEARIGHT. Yes, absolutely. And when it comes to Vietnam, there is still a lot of sensitivity about too much military cooperation with the United States. They are concerned about China's reaction to doing too much too soon.

Mr. MALONEY. The Coast Guard provides an opportunity—

Ms. SEARIGHT. And the Coast Guard is a less sensitive area.

Mr. MALONEY. I appreciate that.

Ms. SEARIGHT. Yes.

Mr. MALONEY. But because I have limited time, let me turn to you, Dr. Flynn. So let's just go up to 30,000 feet. So let's say we were going to properly resource the United States Coast Guard. Let's say we lived in a world—just this morning we have heard about \$2 billion. We know about that, and the backlog of shoreside infrastructure. We know about \$700 million, annually, of unreimbursed expenses from DoD.

What does a fully resourced Coast Guard look like, in your view?

And if you could be specific, that would be great, in terms of where you would add additional resources.

Mr. FLYNN. The great strain—

Mr. MALONEY. We are spending about \$11 billion—just to calibrate people—we are spending about \$11 billion now. It is about 1.5 percent of U.S. military expenditures in a \$700 billion budget, a pretty big bang for the buck, a bunch of statutory missions.

What should that budget be? What should we resource it at? If you could, help us with that, please.

Mr. FLYNN. We should be working towards doubling—

Mr. MALONEY. Over what period of time?

Mr. FLYNN. The next decade.

Mr. MALONEY. Doubling in a decade?

Mr. FLYNN. In a decade, yes.

Mr. MALONEY. And where would you put that additional \$11 billion?

Mr. FLYNN. Well, really—

Mr. MALONEY. Are you including the backlog of shoreside infrastructure in that under reimbursements, or is that in addition to that?

Mr. FLYNN. Yes, well—

Mr. MALONEY. Did you get—

Mr. FLYNN. I have a—

Mr. MALONEY [continuing]. The \$7 billion if you just reimbursed, right?

Mr. FLYNN. So I would say, yes, double—you got to clean the backlog up here.

But it really is across the Service's missions. It is this multimission capability, relationships, again, it has at the domestic, international, law enforcement—so you don't want to do this as a—pick a—just pointy-end-of-the-sword piece of it, or just in a particular geography. It is the overall capacity of the Service that creates such a powerful national asset. And it is why the Service has such good standing and strong standing with other countries, because it deals with the full range of challenges, whether it is in the Caribbean or in Southeast Asia.

But as we certainly look to the Arctic, just the need to invest into at least three icebreakers, the needs we talked about on the Great Lakes, the further icebreaking capability—

Mr. MALONEY. Right—

Mr. FLYNN. You know, and from economic policy and all the rest of it here, those are the terms we should be talking about, not in 5, 7 percents.

And overall, it is minuscule from the kinds of resources we have been willing to invest in our national security capabilities, and cer-

tainly in our intelligence capabilities. We just haven't been putting the Coast Guard in that mix.

Mr. MALONEY. I appreciate that, sir. And I couldn't agree more.

And just by one data point that I think people might find useful, Russia currently has 46 icebreaking vessels, I believe, with 12 more on the way. The United States Coast Guard has two, one large and one medium-sized, with a handful on the way.

Russia, just to calibrate people, has an economy the size of the State of New York. It is approximately \$1 trillion GDP. We are a \$20 trillion economy. And it is shocking, given the emerging opportunities and challenges and national security threats from the Arctic that we don't properly resource that mission.

But I take your point about the underinvestment in, I believe you said, the most underleveraged and underinvested asset we have. And I really appreciate your testimony on that. A lot of us would like to work on that issue.

Mr. Gibbs?

Mr. GIBBS. Thank you,

Dr. Flynn, after 9/11 the United States and much of the world updated its port security infrastructure and the framework under which that security infrastructure was regulated. There was discussion at the time on whether those updates and initiatives were focused too narrowly on responses to terrorist attacks, or whether they met the broader resiliency need of our ports and supply chains that depend on those ports.

It appears that the coronavirus response might pressure that—the system. Do you believe that the current port safety and security regimes in the United States provide a level of resiliency necessary to protect our ports and the supply chains that rely on the ports against the spread of coronavirus?

Mr. FLYNN. No.

Mr. GIBBS. I kind of figured you might say that.

You know, it is just amazing, the conversation we are having here. When I think where—what we are asking the Coast Guard mission what to do. We have them off the coast of Africa. We have them in the South China Sea. We have them in the Arctic, and, of course, the Caribbean, and in both our Great Lakes, and also, of course, our ports on the east and west coasts.

And your discussion just now about how much money it would take, it just amazes me.

The relationship that the Coast Guard has with DoD, how do you see that? Is it strained, or is it a good working relationship? Or is it, you know, the Coast Guard is treated like the second child, or I don't know how you want to say it.

Mr. FLYNN. I think—

Mr. GIBBS. Stepchild.

Mr. FLYNN [continuing]. If you talk to anyone in the operational part of our armed services—

Mr. GIBBS. I—go ahead.

Mr. FLYNN. If there is—if you talk to anyone in the operational part of the armed services, they are overwhelming fans of the Coast Guard, if they know the Coast Guard. It is the budget people that are a little bit of a challenge.

Mr. GIBBS. OK.

Mr. FLYNN. And they are very good at hanging on to resources for DoD, not so good at spreading the resources when they are getting capability out of the Coast Guard. But this is how disconnected this is.

You know, we spend more money on protecting the Port of San Diego than all the other commercial west coast ports combined, because it is force protection, and it is a rounding error for DoD to say, all right, we have got to step up our port security. But for L.A.-Long Beach, Oakland, San Francisco, Richmond, Seattle-Tacoma, we spend less on port security for those ports than we are spending—

Mr. GIBBS. Combined?

Mr. FLYNN [continuing]. On a single port—yes.

And then further, we deploy the Coast Guard to do force protection for the fleet from L.A.-Long Beach to San Diego to escort it in and out.

Now, DoD is getting an important service that is a vital national security interest for us, for it to be able to project power. But again, as a tradeoff, we are trading off investing in our own security, and then the capacity of the Service to be able to be out in front of something like the coronavirus, and managing with the merchant marine, and all the kind of capabilities there that require—you are always robbing Peter to pay Paul in the Coast Guard when, in fact, the need for it is being well recognized, operationally. It is not being well recognized by—as resources.

Mr. GIBBS. And I know in your testimony you referred to the Caribbean, and also the challenges up in the Arctic. Obviously, the Russians are eating our lunch up there, and I assume the Chinese are trying to do the same. You know, we don't even have a port close to the Bering Strait, right?

Mr. FLYNN. No, it is—and the needs of—the investment in the Coast Guard to provide that presence is an order of magnitude less than it often takes to get—for DoD assets, and you get all this other multimission capability, as well.

And you get an agency that is used to dealing with the domestic. So the State of Alaska, which has very good relations with many of the local communities, because there are Coast Guard women and men who are living in those communities, and they are relationships with all the Arctic nations, Canada, and—

Mr. GIBBS. Well, what is the—

Mr. FLYNN. And so you have leveraged that, and yet we are looking at the money—national security as entirely separate from homeland security. And when we look at homeland security, we are overwhelmingly looking at the border, and the Coast Guard just sort of falls away as a—

Mr. GIBBS. Are—

Mr. FLYNN. As a—

Mr. GIBBS [continuing]. International agreements in the Arctic up with Canada, what is that situation, the status with Canada, our working relationship? Does Canada have enough capacity to make up some of this deficit, or—

Mr. FLYNN. There is, I think, a real willingness on the part of the Canadian Government to work very closely with the U.S. Coast Guard on additional Arctic presence.

You know, as we know, we have freedom of navigation issues and others up there. But done in a collaborative way to engage, both recognize—our country and theirs—recognize the Chinese and the Russian, particularly, presence presents a real challenge to the security, economic security, as well as both countries.

So there is opportunity, but we have to bring some resources to the party. The Canadians are making an investment with a much smaller GDP than ours, and, you know, they should, they are a true Arctic nation. But we are, as well. Alaska is a big chunk of the Arctic, and our sea lanes, whether they come from transpacific, transatlantic, come with great circle routes right through the Arctic Ocean as, essentially, the—Chinese and Russia have more presence there. It is extraordinary that the Department of Defense has not woken up and taken that on as a higher national security priority.

Mr. GIBBS. I am glad to—thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. MALONEY. I thank the gentleman. And just to put some gloss on that point, it is interesting to note that the closest point China has to the Arctic is 900 nautical miles, and yet they have a more aggressive presence in the region than we do.

Mr. Larsen?

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize I wasn't here for the Coast Guard portion. I will be submitting comments, questions for the record to the Coast Guard.

Is it Dr. or Ms. Searight? I have questions for you, but you answered them. They were along the lines of the unique capability the Coast Guard has in Southeast Asia that is different, say, from our U.S. Navy, and I think you answered that adequately for me. That is fine.

I do have a question for Dr. Flynn and Mr. Balton, Ambassador Balton—is that right? Yes, I can't see that far anymore. So—bigger print on the name tags.

The issue of U.S.-Canada. So my concern—I have a lot of concerns. One is about the Arctic. But we share a water border with Canada in Washington State. So British Columbia and U.S.-Canada. So the questions I have are really less maybe strategic, and more about that particular relationship, especially as it impacts the management of the waters, as that impacts the Southern Resident killer whales.

So Canada has a—I forget what they call it—like, a whale plan to deal with ensuring shipping doesn't interfere, as best they can, with migratory routes of the Southern Resident killer whale, introducing increased regulations in the event of increased oil transport through the Salish Sea, through the Gulf Islands, and outside of the San Juan Islands.

And I am wondering what kind of cooperation can we and should we expect the U.S. to provide Canada so that we are comanaging across the boundary, as opposed to just relying upon Canada to manage that, manage that set of issues.

Dr. Flynn?

Mr. FLYNN. I think the key—I think, with our relationship with the Canadians in the Pacific Northwest, as it is in the Atlantic, as well as along the Great Lakes, is a willingness to share. And so, if they have some extra capacity, we can leverage some of theirs. And if we have some extra capacity on the—our side of the border

here, we can play those. And so we are willing, I think, to look at it portfolio versus purely one-on-one.

An area there, I think, there is real need and opportunity that I think the Coast Guard, working with its Canadian counterparts can be quite helpful, is an area with—concern that I have—is when we have the major Cascadia quake, the impact on the Port of Vancouver, and on Seattle-Tacoma, and potentially, depending on how the quake works, all the way down into Oregon.

You need close cross-border collaboration for managing—if what—what assets you have, where can you direct resources. So things like Jones Act and a whole series of other sort of challenging issues that could evolve when you are trying to respond and recover are things that require good planning and engagement in advance.

And if you find issues where you have real common interests, like the recovery post a major earthquake, where, if there is going to have to be shared assets across the Cascadia region, then some of the issues where there is real tension, perhaps, because, you know, we are not quite in alignment on some of the ways we look at whaling or other things, you can start to get some movement in those areas.

So, again, I think a unique strength of the Coast Guard is they can look at that through that sort of comprehensive lens, not just as a single agency looking at it purely as an environmental issue or purely as a security or law enforcement issue. You bring all the issues in play, and you use it to get the best outcome. And so—but more work needs to be done in planning for that inevitable disruption, what it will do to the port infrastructure.

You know, the Northwest really is an island infrastructure for most of the rest of the Nation's critical infrastructure. It is true of southern California, as well. And so the sea is where you are going to be able to manage your response and recovery. And we have got to think through very carefully how we have all the capacity we can, and do it in the context of our Canadian neighbor, as well.

Mr. LARSEN. Yes.

Ambassador Balton?

Mr. BALTON. Congressman, the question you are asking is not really about the Coast Guard, though. If your concern is cooperating with Canada to protect marine mammals or to manage shared fisheries in the Northwest, we are talking mostly NOAA, some Department of State—I worked in that space a lot.

But I would echo what Dr. Flynn was saying. There is a high degree of cooperation on both coasts with Canada. There is a willingness to share, including sharing data. So I think you couldn't ask for a better neighbor in that one respect, yes.

Mr. LARSEN. Yes. So—and who is best equipped here to answer any—sorry, oh, well—answer my next question on the second round, as we come up on my time. Thank you, I yield back.

Mr. MALONEY. I thank the gentleman. That completes the first round. I have no questions at this time, and neither does the ranking member. So you may continue, Mr. Larsen.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MALONEY. For an additional 5 minutes.

Mr. LARSEN. Yes. That might be a—again, getting back to some of the testimony, some of the written testimony about the Bering Sea and North Pacific, and IUU, what—the written testimony comes across a little bit too much like everything is great. But in talking with the fisheries folks in my State, there is a little more—perhaps a little more conflict between the U.S. and Russia than reflected in the testimony.

So I am wondering if you have any thoughts on what more needs to be done on IUU when it comes to the fisheries in the North Pacific and Bering Sea.

Yes?

Mr. BALTON. Excuse me, Congressman, sorry.

Mr. LARSEN. The chair didn't remind everyone to turn their phones off before we started?

[Laughter.]

Mr. BALTON. Sorry, my bad.

Not everything is wonderful. The relationship between U.S. and Russia has problems even in the fisheries space.

That said, in the Bering Sea it is in the interest of both countries to prevent illegal fishing. And there is a fairly high degree of cooperation, even now, thanks largely to the Coast Guard in the Bering Sea. We don't have a lot of fishing vessels coming over from the Russian side to fish illegally in U.S. waters. That used to happen in the mid-1990s. It has not happened very much since, thanks largely to the Coast Guard.

There is also some better sharing of science. And frankly, the Russian science on fisheries has gotten better in the last generation. I have seen that, as well.

The Russians fish all over the world, though, and are not necessarily a force for good. They don't police their vessels the way we do, especially far from home. And as fisheries start moving north of the Bering Strait into the Arctic Ocean, I worry about the sustainability issues there, and our ability to cooperate with Russia on those.

Mr. LARSEN. You say as fisheries begin to move north because of the warming water?

Mr. BALTON. Yes.

Mr. LARSEN. Yes, yes.

Dr. Flynn, anything to add?

Mr. FLYNN. [No response.]

Mr. LARSEN. Do you have anything to add, Dr. Flynn? Sorry.

Mr. FLYNN. I really don't. I don't have the kind of real expertise to lend to that.

Mr. LARSEN. All right.

Dr. Searight? All right. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MALONEY. I thank the gentleman. Seeing no further questions from the Members, I would thank each of the witnesses for your testimony here today. We really do appreciate your appearance. And it has been very helpful to the committee in its work.

I would ask unanimous consent that the record of today's hearing remain open until such time as the witnesses have provided answers to any questions that may have been submitted to them in writing, and further ask unanimous consent that the record remain

open for 15 days for any additional comments or information submitted by Members or witnesses to be included in the record of today's hearing.

Without objection, so ordered.

If no other Members have anything to add, then the subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:33 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Sam Graves, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Missouri, and Ranking Member, Committee on Trans-
portation and Infrastructure**

Thank you, Chairman Maloney.

The United States Coast Guard has unique authorities, international relationships, and Service culture that make it a crucial part of our national security system.

These authorities, relationships and the Service's culture also allow it to undertake a significant role in combatting the transnational crime organizations that bring drugs and illegal immigrants into the United States.

I look forward to hearing the witnesses' views on how we can strengthen our efforts to combat human and drug trafficking into the United States.

APPENDIX

QUESTION FROM HON. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY TO VICE ADMIRAL DANIEL B. ABEL,
DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR OPERATIONS, U.S. COAST GUARD

Question 1. During the hearing you mentioned that the Coast Guard would provide the cost of outfitting a SCIF⁷ on an Offshore Patrol Cutter. Please provide that an update of that cost.

ANSWER. A response was not received at the time of publication.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. BOB GIBBS TO VICE ADMIRAL DANIEL B. ABEL, DEPUTY
COMMANDANT FOR OPERATIONS, U.S. COAST GUARD

Question 1. The Fast Response Cutter and its parent craft have proven to be reliable, flexible vessels for use throughout North America, in non-continental U.S. areas, and throughout the world. Has the Coast Guard looked at international uses of the FRC beyond its use in PATSWFOR? For training of foreign Coast Guards and Navies which have coastal patrol responsibilities? For use by nations with which we have reciprocal defense agreements where interoperability is important?

ANSWER. A response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 2. The Coast Guard's unique position as the only armed service with law enforcement authority allows it to assist in or conduct many international operations, and its expertise in near coastal maritime safety allow it to provide training and work cooperatively with the Navies of smaller nations. As Dr. Flynn notes in his testimony and as former Commandant Bob Papp note frequently, managing trans-national risks requires pushing borders outward. In light of the increased pressure to carry out these missions, and the continued pressure to conduct activities further offshore combat transnational crime organizations, in other words to push our borders out, is the Coast Guard reconsidering its fleet mix to include more National Security Cutters which have greater range, capability and sophistication?

ANSWER. A response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 3. Current strategic guidance from the DOD and USCG sets operations in the context of great power competition. Near-peers and regional powers seek to undermine U.S. influence. Weak governance exacerbates this trend and enables competitors to manipulate our partner nations to our detriment. This harms US interests and increases instability. The USCG's soft-power approach allows greater access where the Navy would otherwise have challenges, making the USCG a key component of U.S. strategy. Is the Coast Guard considering a new fleet mix analysis that would include more Fast Response Cutters can be used to train and coordinate activities with the Navies and Coast Guards of smaller nations?

ANSWER. A response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 4. Current strategic guidance from the DOD and USCG sets operations in the context of great power competition. Near-peers and regional powers seek to undermine U.S. influence. Weak governance exacerbates this trend and enables competitors to manipulate our partner nations to our detriment. This harms US interests and increases instability. The USCG's soft-power approach allows greater access where the Navy would otherwise have challenges, making the USCG a key component of U.S. strategy. Is the Coast Guard considering a new fleet mix analysis that would include more Fast Response Cutters can be used to train and coordinate activities with the Navies and Coast Guards of smaller nations? Do you anticipate the Coast Guard having cutters in the South China Sea as part of the 'tri-service' operations?

ANSWER. A response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 5. In the Commandant's State of the Coast Guard Address, Adm. Schultz announced the Coast Guard will continue Operation AIGA where Fast Response

Cutters are transiting 2,200 miles from Honolulu to the island nations in Oceania. Can you give the Committee a sense of how operations in 2018 and 2019 went? Has the Coast Guard considered homeporting an FRC in American Samoa?

ANSWER. A response was not received at the time of publication.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. RICK LARSEN TO VICE ADMIRAL DANIEL B. ABEL, DEPUTY
COMMANDANT FOR OPERATIONS, U.S. COAST GUARD

Question 1. Can you elaborate on the Coast Guard's role in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

ANSWER. A response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 1a. Does the U.S. Coast Guard have the resources necessary to continue these efforts? If not, what else is required?

ANSWER. A response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 2. Canada's Enhancing Cetacean Habitat and Observation (ECHO) Program aims to better understand and mitigate the effects of vessels on at-risk Southern Resident Killer Whales throughout the southern coast of British Columbia; which has implications in the Pacific Northwest. What is the status of the U.S. Coast Guard work with the Canadian Government on these efforts?

ANSWER. A response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 2a. Do you have adequate resources to be an effective partner? If not, what additional resources does the Coast Guard need?

ANSWER. A response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 3. As a result of human activity, the Arctic is warming faster than any other region. Yet, the Coast Guard's Arctic Strategy makes little reference to climate change. This is a contrast with previous administrations' recognition of the impacts of climate change in the Coast Guard's Arctic Strategy. How will the Coast Guard strengthen its international partnerships in the region when our Arctic partners are clear-eyed about climate change, but this administration is not?

ANSWER. A response was not received at the time of publication.