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# Coast Guard SOF

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*Coast  
Guard  
SOF*

Gary R. Bowen

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# Foreword

This paper examines the Coast Guard's historic participation in special operations and posits a requirement for the Coast Guard to designate a special operations force today—Coast Guard SOF. Lieutenant Commander Bowen advances a timely argument for the formation of additional SOF units, Coast Guard (CG) SOF units, at a time when USSOCOM is under pressure to expand SOF capabilities. Bowen argues that the Coast Guard has considerable experience fighting terrorists, insurgents, and criminal networks, all of which have the cellular, compartmented structures that describe the current threats in the global war on terrorism. These are the same threats that US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) seeks to thwart by means of its global campaign plan to synchronize the counterterrorism efforts of the Department of Defense.

He points out that Title 46 of the US Code established the Coast Guard's Maritime Safety and Security Teams to respond to terrorist activity. These teams are a rapid response force capable of deployment in response to various threats against seaports and waterways, and they provide protection for strategic shipping, high interest vessels and critical infrastructure. Plus, Coast Guard teams are active on the high seas as well. With its maritime assets fully committed, augmentation by properly trained and assimilated CG SOF could advance USSOCOM capabilities in difficult mission areas.

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*... US Code established the Coast Guard's Maritime Safety and Security Teams to respond to terrorist activity.*

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Bowen suggests that forces of a CG SOF component could fill the gap he finds in maritime control and interdiction. While we have a few highly qualified teams that can do this type of work, many more are needed, and they can be made available from the Coast Guard. In this paper he writes that maritime security response requires prolific, robust, all-weather, day-night, opposed boarding capabilities with highly discriminate use of force to respond immediately to real-time, all-source intelligence.

Especially useful could be the Coast Guard experience and involvement in Foreign Internal Defense (FID) and the potential that CG SOF hold for augmenting USSOCOM's mission requirement in maritime environments around the globe. Indeed, Lieutenant Commander Bowen relates current Coast Guard special purpose force

capabilities to six of the nine SOF Core Tasks—including FID and Civil Affairs Operations.

A Coast Guard SOF component in USSOCOM could potentially enhance SOF operations with both tactical maritime and law enforcement capabilities, particularly in the demanding environment of homeland defense. One of the conundrums of military support to homeland defense operations is the Posse Comitatus stricture that, by law and augmenting DoD policy, circumscribes the use of Federal armed forces for domestic police work—search, seizure, arrest and the like. But countering radical extremist groups that are intent upon killing Americans at home is both a military and a law enforcement concern. Lieutenant Commander Bowen’s paper suggests that CG SOF can address both requirements since CG SOF can be at once badge-carrying law enforcers and counterterrorist fighters.

Lieutenant Commander Bowen steps to the front rank of military thinkers who approach our most difficult military challenges with new ideas and fresh concepts for future operations. The reader will agree that his vision for a CG SOF is worth consideration.

Lt Col Michael C. McMahon, USAF  
Director, Strategic Studies Department  
Joint Special Operations University



# 1. Introduction

Due to its complex nature and immense size, the Maritime Domain is particularly susceptible to exploitation and disruption. The United States must deploy the full range of its operational assets and capabilities to prevent the Maritime Domain from being used by terrorists.<sup>1</sup>

*President George W. Bush  
Homeland Security Presidential Directive 13, Maritime Security*

I want to emphasize that our analysis of the threats and risks will drive the structure, operations, policies, and missions of the Department, and not the other way around.<sup>2</sup>

*Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff  
Statement before the House Appropriations  
Homeland Security Subcommittee  
2 March 2005*

Americans are in a fight for their lives and their way of life. Although the administration has labeled this fight a global war on terrorism (GWOT), terrorism is simply a tactic in the broader scope of insurgency and revolutionary war.<sup>3</sup> In testimony before Congress, defense analyst Andrew F. Krepinevich defined insurgency as “a protracted, multi-phased struggle, whose objective is to overthrow the existing order,” and applied the term to the GWOT.<sup>4</sup> This definition is broader than the classic definition that applies to a single nation-state. According to the State Department, “The global jihadist movement—including its most prominent component, Al Qaeda—remains the preeminent terrorist threat to the United States, US interests and US allies.”<sup>5</sup> According to General Wayne Downing, former commander of the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and former Deputy National Security Advisor (to President G. W. Bush) for Combating Terrorism, radical-Islamists “are waging a worldwide insurgency to reestablish the Caliphate in ‘corrupt’ Muslim nations and institute Salafist, extreme-Islamist states [resembling] the Taliban.”<sup>6</sup> These insurgents see Western governments as supporting the existing regimes and see Western culture as antithetical to their own, and therefore as targets. Whether or not one agrees on the nature of the enemy, the era of the nonstate actor has arrived, and radical-Islamists will make further attempts at horrific attacks within the United States.

The research suggests two critical ways in which the Coast Guard can contribute to the global counterinsurgency:

- with a credible, kinetic counterterrorism (CT) capability at knife-fighting distances in the nation's Tier One ports
- by using its influence and access abroad, integrated with theater special operations command campaigns, to build the capacity of foreign forces, deny sanctuary to terrorists, and provide early warning on the strength or collapse of maritime security forces around the world

Some may counter that the Coast Guard is not the place for special operations, but in point of fact, the Coast Guard has been a place for special operations and must be a place for special operations if it is to contribute the full weight of its authority, expertise, and capability to help the nation defeat the radical-Islamist insurgency.

### **A Future Concept**

Consider this scenario: at 1900 hours, the duty officer for the Coast Guard Captain of the Port in San Francisco receives a weak cellular call from an officer aboard an oil tanker. The caller reports that approximately 40 miles offshore, the ship's Filipino crew has mutinied, seized control of the ship, and killed the officers with automatic weapons. The source managed to escape but he knows they will find him soon. In fleeing to another part of the ship, he nearly ran into another group of crewmen working on some kind of device that he had never seen before. He overheard one crewman asking another if he was sure they could steer the ship into the bridge, and the man responded, "We shall certainly destroy it, if God wills it. And about 30 minutes later, when the first responders and the media helicopters have arrived, the nuclear bomb will explode. God willing, your brothers shall attack the infidels in four cities tonight!"

Via classified situational awareness and intelligence fusion networks, the duty officer feeds this digital audio simultaneously to the Coast Guard 11th District command center, the Pacific Area Maritime Intelligence Fusion Center, NORTHCOM, USSOCOM's Center for Special Operations, the National Counterterrorism Center, and the national and local FBI Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs). The audio correlates to recent intelligence streams and a distress code transmitted by the ship's Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) radio and received at Coast Guard Group San Francisco. The Group's GMDSS software plots, on the Common Opera-

tional Picture, the ship's name, position, course, speed, cargo, and the preprogrammed message, "This ship is under attack by armed pirates or terrorists."

Nationally, DHS sets the Homeland Security Advisory System to "Code Red/Severe" for the maritime domain and the Coast Guard sets Maritime Security Level Three in all Tier One ports. In San Francisco, the FBI assumes Lead Federal Agency (LFA) for CT investigation, and the 11th Coast Guard District Commander assumes LFA for maritime security response. Together, they establish a unified command post on Coast Guard Island. The FBI commander and Coast Guard Captain of the Port decide that a rapid, maritime CT response is required to interdict and defeat the threat as far offshore as possible. Via secure computer network, the 11th District command center launches the Security Response Team (SRT) and diverts an airborne Coast Guard unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) with a mission module optimized for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) to get "eyes on" the target ship.

Within minutes, the ready assault and support elements of Coast Guard SRT-2 (San Francisco Bay) "come out of the woodwork" all over the city, each with a secure, GPS-enabled cell phone. Because of the need for rapid response, the distance, the infamous Bay Area traffic, and the need for operational security as well as public discretion, all team members proceed to preplanned staging locations for helicopter pickup. The SRT carries law enforcement credentials and the SIG P229R DAK handgun on their persons and the rest of their kit in the hardened trunks of their cars: flight suits; dry suits; boots; helmet; encrypted, hands-free radio; CBRNE protective mask; integrated body armor, flotation, and tactical vest labeled COAST GUARD; M4 CQBR carbine; and jacketed-hollow-point ammunition for both firearms. The team masses at Fort Baker in the Marin Headlands, briefs the plan, loads radio codes, and conducts a quick rehearsal using the UAV's live thermal imagery and as-built 3D animations of the target ship provided by enhanced MDA, which allows each squad to rehearse its route through the ship. The SRT then disperses into gray fast-boats and gray helicopters for tactical movement to the target ship.

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*The SRT carries law enforcement credentials and the SIG P229R DAK handgun on their persons ...*

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Also confirmed by UAV imagery, there are four armed terrorists on deck and two on the bridge—all neutralized from the air by the

security element's designated marksmen. Simultaneously, the assault elements board the ship using fast-rope and small-boat climbing tactics. With synchronization, shock, and violence of action, the first team penetrates to the exact location where three terrorists are preparing a stolen nuclear device (as previously phoned in), overwhelms them, and secures the scene for investigators. At this point, the SRT has achieved what Rear Admiral Bill McRaven, USN (SEAL) calls "relative superiority, a condition that exists when an attacking force, generally smaller, gains a decisive advantage over a larger or well-defended enemy."<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, the second team has assumed positive control of the ship. The technical team follows on and prepares the nuclear device for packaging and removal via special purpose vessel to the end destination. The security element then deploys the vetted and scheduled San Francisco Bar Pilot to safely moor the ship at its scheduled berth, resulting in zero disruption of maritime commerce. Total time from alert to takedown: less than one hour. Before the target ship ever got "danger close" to the US population and port infrastructure, the Coast Guard SRT has interdicted an oil tanker and nuclear device under the command of terrorists. They have killed or arrested 15 terrorists for transfer to the FBI. Scratch one combined maritime terrorism and WMD "incident of national significance"<sup>8</sup> in San Francisco. Scratch three more in the Ports of Los Angeles/Long Beach, Hampton Roads, and New York/New Jersey. The Coast Guard's Observe-Orient-Decide-Act (OODA) Loop was faster than the terrorists'. No search and rescue (SAR) alarm ever sounded, and all SAR assets remain in immediate (B-0) standby.

Compared to the capabilities of today's Coast Guard, this scenario may seem far-fetched, but—save the domestic scenery—such operations are routine for Department of Defense (DoD) special operations forces (SOF). The means to achieve this capability within the Coast Guard exist today, but is it necessary? Is this a Coast Guard mission? Can the Coast Guard reasonably expect to achieve this capability in its multi-mission (i.e., conventional) forces, or does it lie exclusively within the domain of special operations?

## **A Brief History of USSOCOM**

USSOCOM is a service-like combatant command that organizes, trains, and equips SOF to meet the needs of the warfighting combatant commanders. US SOF as they exist today have a history of about

60 years. Army and Navy SOF trace their roots mostly to World War II. President John F. Kennedy significantly expanded SOF in the 1960s to counter the communist insurgencies spawning all over the world.

USSOCOM is the result of a decades-long process triggered by the post-Vietnam decay that produced the failed rescue attempt and subsequent disaster in Iran at Desert One in April 1980. In an effort to apply the hard lessons learned in the desert, the Army consolidated its SOF under the First Special Operations Command in 1982, but proved unable to translate this concept into action “at the joint level,” and Congress took note. By 1984, growing pressure from Congress prompted DoD to form the Joint Special Operations Agency (JSOA), but JSOA lacked budgetary, organizational, operational, and command authority. DoD and the services opposed pulling SOF out from under the services. Thus SOF still languished under the weight of conventional forces, whose rigid culture, regulations, and training precluded their understanding and appreciation for SOF capabilities.

In 1986, Congress “shocked” DoD by introducing several bills that proposed drastic restructuring for the military, including the 1986 DoD Reorganization (or Goldwater-Nichols) Act that among other things established the Unified Combatant Commands as the joint warfighting authorities. Later that year, Nunn-Cohen amended Goldwater-Nichols to provide that SOF would be commanded by its own four-star combatant commander. It also established the Assistant SECDEF for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict and created a new budget line item in Major Force Program 11 (MFP-11), which specifically designates funding for SOF operations and SOF-peculiar materiel at the DoD level. “Congress clearly intended to force [DoD] to face up to the realities of past failures and emerging threats.”<sup>9</sup> Despite the resistance from DoD and the services, seventeen years after the birth of USSOCOM (as USCINCSOC), and with such SOF victories as Operation Earnest Will (against Iran in 1987-1988), Operation Just Cause, coalition warfare and “SCUD hunting” in Operation Desert Storm, Operation Allied Force, the astounding Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and countless lesser-known engagements, it is hard to imagine a US force structure without USSOCOM.

Unfortunately, both Goldwater-Nichols and Nunn-Cohen completely overlooked the Coast Guard, and the Coast Guard was happy to be overlooked.<sup>10</sup> By way of example, there is no reason for the Coast Guard ever to be transferred administratively to the Navy in

the wake of Goldwater-Nichols, because the CNO and the Secretary of the Navy have no warfighting responsibilities. They organize, train, and equip only. Geographic combatant commanders and Commander, USSOCOM fight wars. Therefore Goldwater-Nichols should have amended 14 USC 2 to require the Coast Guard to maintain capability and interoperability sufficient to meet the needs of the combatant commanders. Similarly, it seems that no one considered the Coast Guard's significant contributions to special operations since before World War II. Had the Coast Guard been included in the SOF discussion of the 1980s, and had its special purpose forces been placed within the SOF context, the Coast Guard may have been positioned to make more significant contributions and, in some cases, possibly even prevented some of SOF's casualties by freeing up Naval Special Warfare reinforcements from critical infrastructure protection to direct action missions.

## **Emerging Threats**

In considering emerging threats, not every battlefield in the global counterinsurgency may be found in the desert. Consider the island nations of Southeast Asia: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and The Republic of the Philippines. According to Jane's Intelligence Review, considerable evidence suggests that the next batch of 11 September terrorists right now is training and refining its skills in this region for their next attack on the United States. Indonesia has a newly established and still fledgling democratic government, Al Qaeda has demonstrated operational capabilities there, and the country faces a continuing maritime piracy and terrorism threat from the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakin Aceh Merdeka, GAM), which was established in the 1970s to compel Indonesia into recognizing Aceh as an independent Islamic state. Malaysia faces Islamist terrorist threats from Jemmah Islamiyya (an Al Qaeda ally) and Kumpulan Mujahadeen Malaysia (KMM). The Republic of the Philippines has the radical Islamist Abu Sayyaf Group, a close ally of Al Qaeda also conducting an active piracy campaign. Citing a January 2004 report by the International Maritime Bureau, Jane's noted that pirate attacks increased from 370 in 2002 to 445 in 2003. In addition, the numbers indicated an increase in the incidence of murder and kidnapping by pirates. In 2003, 22.5 percent of all reported attacks involved military small arms and rocket-propelled grenades. "In the maritime domain, the distinction between terrorism and piracy has become blurred both

in terms of execution, outcome, and gain. Certain terrorist groups have well-honed piracy capabilities and a willingness to use them.”<sup>11</sup> While the fundamental aim of piracy is private gain, terrorist organizations may use piracy—like drug trafficking—to support their political objectives.<sup>12</sup> A successful, global counterinsurgency will require defeating existing terrorist organizations worldwide, denying sanctuary, and improving the capacity of foreign maritime security forces. According to Jane’s,

All the pieces are now in place—nautical skills, personnel, weaponry, firepower, motivation, connections, tactical flair, command and control acumen, and strategic outlook—to design a maritime terrorist operation. Thus, something that may first be dismissed as an act of violent piracy in waters distant from US or European shores could evolve into a maritime terrorist attack against a critical and densely-populated Eastern Seaboard port-urban area complex, a vital Asian trading artery, a Gulf Coast port-located refinery, or a 100,000 [gross ton] cruise ship two hours into a night passage in the Strait of Florida.<sup>13</sup>

President Bush and the Congress have enacted similar findings into law via the Homeland Security and Maritime Transportation Security Acts. The opening lines of this legislation are essentially laundry lists of homeland security vulnerabilities.

Are the emerging threats of Southeast Asia to become “past failures” before the United States acts decisively? Although the Coast Guard’s International Training Division (ITD) has trained host nation forces in Southeast Asia and the Coast Guard Cutter Mellon participated in the Southeast Asia Cooperation Against Terrorism exercise, Southeast Asia merits considerably more attention.<sup>14</sup> Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSSTs), Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDETs), Port Security Units (PSUs), and/or Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) also should be engaged there regularly, pervasively, and clandestinely if necessary to improve those nations’ maritime security forces and vet Coast Guard forces in real-world operations for use at home, where their success is most important.

There are several factors that point toward using Coast Guard special purpose forces in special operations. First is the Principle of Unity of Effort. USSOCOM has been directed to “synchronize” all efforts in this counterinsurgency against radical Islamists.<sup>15</sup> Therefore it would be reckless of the Coast Guard to freelance such operations, even though it may be accustomed to doing so in politically sensi-

tive areas where large commitments of DoD forces have been unacceptable. Although some overlap in capability exists between Naval Special Warfare (NSW) and Coast Guard special purpose forces, the forces are not identical. Further, the scarcity of NSW assets dictates that they be employed at the high end of their operational spectrum: clandestine, deep-penetration missions for direct action, strategic reconnaissance, and joint targeting that require them to use all of their specialized skills to the utmost of their capabilities.

With SEALs and other direct action and strategic reconnaissance (DA/SR) SOF decisively engaged in the hunt for Al Qaeda and in counter-proliferation, Coast Guard special purpose forces can conduct—and for years have conducted—SOF-like missions in the other three quadrants of full-spectrum military operations: defense, stability, and support. Traditional special operations missions in this respect include Security Assistance and Foreign Internal Defense, Counter-insurgency, Counterdrug, and Foreign Humanitarian Assistance to name only a few. In much the same way as SF work with indigenous ground forces to shape the foreign security environment, Coast Guard special purposes forces have long-term relationships with the maritime police and other counterdrug forces of Latin America. Likewise, they are ideally suited to working with host-nation maritime security forces to help them establish Maritime Security Conditions in their ports; to help them run an ongoing, asymmetric, mobile defense of their maritime domain; and to support national intelligence requirements in the maritime domain. As a law enforcement agency that reinforces state power, the Coast Guard brings with it an inherent legitimacy. With Naval Special Warfare focused on direct action and strategic reconnaissance missions, USSOCOM has never had a maritime equivalent to the Army Special Forces and Civil Affairs teams that build ground force capacity overseas and carry out the increasingly decisive work in the civil-military realm. The maritime forces that can best perform such missions exist today in the US Coast Guard.

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*... Coast Guard special purposes forces have long-term relationships with the maritime police and other counterdrug forces of Latin America.*

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## Coast Guard Transformation

The question of Coast Guard SOF (CG SOF) is an important dimension of the Coast Guard transformation. The transformation to a modern and capable maritime force cannot be simply a play for the



Deepwater recapitalization program. Deepwater recapitalization is a necessary condition of Coast Guard transformation, but it is not sufficient. For their multi-billion-dollar investment in Deepwater, Americans have a right to expect more than a newer, sleeker, faster version of the U. S. Coast Guard working traditional missions in the usual modes of thought. In a 1997 study, the Center for Naval Analysis made this recommendation to the service: “Accept the growing divergence in the technological capabilities between high-endurance cutters and US Navy vessels of comparable size, and the related need to think more broadly about its defense role. That means recognizing that Coast Guard cooperation with DoD is broader than its naval mission, and not solely an afloat procedure.”<sup>16</sup> Formal command and support relationships with USSOCOM would give the Coast Guard a second means of ingress into DoD power circles.

The Coast Guard recognizes that it needs new capabilities to deal with emerging threats facing the country, and that some of its forces must be exceptionally well trained in select specialized skills. The Coast Guard created MSSTs specifically in response to 11 September. HITRON, originally intended and used extensively to counter “go-fast” drug smugglers, has since been approved for use in Homeland Security missions. With the help of the Marine Corps Special Operations Training Group, the Coast Guard established its Special Missions Training Center at Camp Lejeune specifically to train the service’s special purpose forces. Yet the Coast Guard process seems to want to “reinvent the wheel” by learning all over again what others already have figured out.

Consider vertical insertion (fast-roping), diving, and Deployable Pursuit Boats (DPBs)—DoD already has these capabilities, and DoD SOF are the best. The Coast Guard has been working on vertical insertion for over five years and has yet to implement a coherent policy or a pervasive operational capability. MSSTs, in existence since 2002, have been operating on policy waivers, implicit if not explicit. The problem generally lies with the myriad of program managers exercising authority over small niches of MSST life.<sup>17</sup> In 1999, the Coast Guard procured highly complex DPBs (high speed RIBs) which then failed to perform well in the Caribbean Sea while chasing “go-fast” speed boats smuggling cocaine.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, USSOCOM in 1997 had developed the Naval Special Warfare RIB for high-speed SEAL insertion and extraction. These vessels have the same operational capabilities as DPBs: they can carry a Coast Guard boarding team as easily as SEALs, they are about five feet shorter in length, they have

the secure communications and electronic navigation aids needed to operate over the horizon, they have better sea-keeping, and a forward .50-caliber machine gun mount that works. As a DoD system, the NSW-RIB certainly is more easily supported than the DPB. The [NSW-RIB] program, which was completed under cost and months ahead of schedule while exceeding every performance objective, won the 1998 Defense Department's Packard Award for excellence in acquisition.

Not all of the news is bad. Some of the Coast Guard's resounding successes include the enhanced and original MSSTs, LEDETs, PSUs, ITD, Airborne Use of Force, and the over the horizon rigid hull inflatable boat (OTH-RHIB) concept. Taking these forces' capabilities to the next level, however, requires Coast Guard leaders to think anew, to drop old prejudices and inhibitions, and to allow such forces to operate, train, and develop their capabilities beyond the constraints of conventional imaginations.

While some of these capabilities may occasionally migrate to multi-mission forces as they have in DoD, the more specialized Coast Guard forces will always be at the forefront in their employment and development. If 11 September was a "failure of imagination," then establishing a Coast Guard SOF component offers an immediate, direct opportunity to change the old paradigm, which is tempered by post-Vietnam, Department of Transportation (DOT)-inspired notions of what the Coast Guard is and does.<sup>19</sup>

To earn a starting position on the varsity national security team, the Coast Guard should reorganize its special purpose forces into a flag-level Coast Guard special operations command, train and equip them to accomplish national special operations and intelligence missions in support of both homeland security and the global counterinsurgency, and build ties between this new command and USSOCOM that progress from an interagency relationship to a fully joint and subordinate component of USSOCOM. The next chapter describes the Coast Guard's historical connection to some types of special operations and demonstrates that the constitution of CG SOF would continue a well-established heritage.

## 2. Historical Basis and Policy Guidelines

The sea was, and still is, a grand arena for the pursuit of fighters and for decisive battles. Some of the great days of Arab conquests were fought at sea, such as Dhat al-Sawari and Dhat al-Salasil—or the destruction of the destroyer USS Cole, and the strike against the French oil tanker, and others. We ask God to grant us power over the necks of the Crusaders and the Apostates, and grant us the means to massacre the enemies of The Faith.<sup>20</sup>

*Anonymous author, calling himself  
“The Brother of Him that Obeys God” 17 April 2004  
issue of the Al Qaeda online military magazine  
Mu’askar al-Battar (Al-Battar Training Camp)*

**T**ime to Designate Coast Guard Special Operations Forces. Strategic leaders have written a considerable body of literature that addresses “The US Coast Guard’s National Security Role in the 21st Century”<sup>21</sup> as well as the impacts of the 11 September terrorist attacks on various niches within the national security community, but no one has asked whether or not the Coast Guard—as the military, multi-mission, maritime “lead federal agency” for maritime homeland security—ought to integrate its efforts with those of USSOCOM, the supported Combatant Commander in the GWOT, and if so, then to what degree.

In June 2001, four Coast Guard officers authored an article entitled “The Coast Guard Goes Expeditionary,” published in Proceedings. These officers suggested a similar reorganization of Coast Guard special purpose forces (as opposed to multi-mission forces such as cutters and stations): Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Teams (TACLETs, with their Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDET)s), Port Security Units, Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON and the proposed “HITRON West”), the Special Missions Training Center, and the National Strike Force (or elements thereof)—the same units considered herein along with the special purpose forces created since 11 September 2001 (original and “enhanced” versions of the Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSSTs)). These officers suggested that an “Expeditionary Operations Command (EOC)” serve as the parent administrative command and act as force provider di-

rectly to the supported Coast Guard commander, lead federal agency, or regional combatant commander. They did not plug this EOC into any higher-echelon organization, DoD or otherwise.<sup>22</sup> The similarity of approach suggests merit in consolidating the Coast Guard special purpose forces under a major command that acts as a forces command, policy shop, doctrine house, standardization authority, and budget advocate.

In considering whether to establish Coast Guard SOF, it was necessary to review applicable policies.

## Governing Policies

The Department of Defense (DoD) has promulgated two terms that define the question in its simplest state:

- **Special Operations.** Operations conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to achieve military, diplomatic, informational, and/or economic objectives employing military capabilities for which there is no broad conventional force requirement. These operations often require covert, clandestine, or low visibility capabilities. Special operations are applicable across the range of military operations. They can be conducted independently or in conjunction with operations of conventional forces or other government agencies and may include operations through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces. Special operations differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets. Also called SO.<sup>23</sup>
- **Special Operations Forces.** Those Active and Reserve Component forces of the Military Services designated by the Secretary of Defense and specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. Also called SOF.<sup>24</sup>

The issue then, in its simplest state, is whether Coast Guard special purpose forces conduct or could conduct special operations and therefore whether such forces ought to be designated as SOF by the Secretaries of Defense and Homeland Security. The effects of designating Coast Guard as SOF must be considered within the context of national-level policy, which pigeonholes counterterrorism actions into homeland security and combating terrorism (overseas).

***The National Strategy for Homeland Security.*** “The strategic objectives of homeland security in order of priority are to: Prevent terrorist attacks within the United States; reduce America’s vulnerability to terrorism; and minimize the damage and recover from attacks that do occur.”<sup>25</sup> To achieve these goals, the strategy identified “six critical mission areas: intelligence and warning, border and transportation security, domestic counterterrorism, protecting critical infrastructure, defending against catastrophic terrorism, and emergency preparedness and response.”<sup>26</sup> Regarding vulnerability, the strategy says, “Unless we act to prevent it, a new wave of terrorism, potentially involving the world’s most destructive weapons, looms in America’s future. It is a challenge as formidable as any ever faced by our nation.”<sup>27</sup>

***National Security Presidential Directive Nine (NSPD-9) and The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism.*** NSPD-9 is classified, but the unclassified strategy has four overarching goals: “Defeat Terrorists and Their Organizations; deny sponsorship, support, and sanctuary to terrorists; diminish the underlying conditions that terrorists seek to exploit; and defend US citizens and interests at home and abroad.”<sup>28</sup>

***Presidential Decision Directive 39 (PDD-39) and Presidential Decision Directive 62 (PDD-62),*** signed by President Clinton in 1995 and 1998, respectively, established the basic construct for the nation’s existing and best-case operational response to terrorist attacks at the close of the twentieth century. Under these policies, the Attorney General through the FBI exercised Lead Federal Agency responsibility to manage terrorist incidents.<sup>29</sup> Anyone with any involvement in the matter over the last 20 years can recite these policies without thought or effort. Numerous sources did just that during the course of the research for this paper, as if the matter had been comprehensively thought out and required no review in the aftermath of the 11 September attacks. It is clear, however, that the law and policy signed into effect since that date accept that PDD-39 and PDD-62 do not fully account for post-11 September realities.

***Homeland Security Presidential Directive Five (HSPD-5).*** HSPD-5, signed 28 February 2003, established a uniform “national incident management system.”<sup>30</sup> Under HSPD-5,

The Secretary of Homeland Security is the principal Federal official for domestic incident management. Pursuant to the Homeland Security Act of 2002, the Secretary is responsible for coordinating Federal operations within the United States to prepare for, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters,

and other emergencies. The Secretary shall coordinate the Federal Government's resources utilized in response to or recovery from terrorist attacks, major disasters, or other emergencies if and when any one of the following four conditions applies: (1) a Federal department or agency acting under its own authority has requested the assistance of the Secretary; (2) the resources of State and local authorities are overwhelmed and Federal assistance has been requested by the appropriate State and local authorities; (3) more than one Federal department or agency has become substantially involved in responding to the incident; or (4) the Secretary has been directed to assume responsibility for managing the domestic incident by the President.<sup>31</sup>

HSPD-5 also specifically states that the Attorney General and FBI now lead only the criminal investigative portion of terrorist incident preparation and response.<sup>32</sup>

***National Security Presidential Directive 41 (NSPD-41) / Homeland Security Presidential Directive 13 (HSPD-13)***. NSPD-41 and HSPD-13 are the same document, signed 21 December 2004, governing US maritime security policy. The following unclassified excerpts make some of the relevant points:

It is the policy of the United States to take all necessary and appropriate actions, consistent with US law, treaties and other international agreements to which the United States is a party, and customary international law as determined for the United States by the President, to enhance the security of and protect US interests in the Maritime Domain.<sup>33</sup>

The United States must deploy the full range of its operational assets and capabilities to prevent the Maritime Domain from being used by terrorists, criminals, and hostile states to commit acts of terrorism and criminal or other unlawful or hostile acts against the United States, its people, economy, property, territory, allies, and friends, while recognizing that maritime security policies are most effective when the strategic importance of international trade, economic cooperation, and the free flow of commerce are considered appropriately.<sup>34</sup>

These actions must be undertaken in a manner that facilitates global commerce and preserves the freedom of the seas for legitimate military and commercial navigation and other legitimate activities as well as civil liberties and the rights guaranteed under the Constitution.<sup>35</sup>

HSPD-13 directs that the Secretaries of Homeland Security and Defense draft and submit within 180 days of 21 December 2004 a "National Strategy for Maritime Security" that details "an over-arch-

ing plan to implement this directive and address all of the components of the Maritime Domain, including domestic, international, public, and private components. It shall further incorporate a global, cross-discipline approach to the Maritime Domain centered on a layered, defense-in-depth framework that may be adjusted based on the threat level.”<sup>36</sup>

One of the most important requirements and effects of HSPD-13 is the development of:

... a comprehensive National Maritime Security Response Plan to ensure seamless United States Government response to maritime threats against the United States. The plan, at a minimum, shall reflect lead agency roles and responsibilities, including recommendations regarding changes to existing policy, including those reflected in PDD-39 and PDD-62, in the following areas: 1) maritime security response and counterterrorism operations; 2) maritime interception operations; 3) prevention and detection of, and response to, the mining of US ports; 4) detection, interdiction and disposition of targeted cargo, people, and vessels; and 5) attacks on vessels with US citizens aboard or that affect US interests anywhere in the world.<sup>37</sup>

HSPD-13 has cast aside the assumptions of America’s late-twentieth-century CT response capability, directed a review of government-wide operational capabilities, and accepted that Lead Federal Agency designations may change. Given that some DoD SOF have important roles in supporting PDD-39 and PDD-62, it seems elemental that if the Coast Guard’s responsibilities were to increase as a result of the HSPD-13-directed review, the Coast Guard increasingly may be involved in work currently carried out by DoD SOF.

## **Is the Coast Guard a Combat Force?**

Before considering the issue of Coast Guard participation in special operations, some may find it necessary to first consider whether the Coast Guard participates in combat operations or high-risk law enforcement missions.

In most strategic communications published by the US Coast Guard, including every press release from Coast Guard Headquarters, one finds the following statement: “The US Coast Guard is a military, maritime, multi-mission service within the Department of Homeland Security dedicated to protecting the safety and security of America.” Every military member of the Coast Guard carries an “Armed Forces of the United States [and] Geneva Conventions Iden-

tification Card.” Title 10, US Code, Section 801 defines “military” as “any or all of the armed forces.” The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines the adjective “military” as, “of or relating to soldiers, arms, or war,” and “armed forces” as, “the combined military, naval, and air forces of a nation.”<sup>38</sup> DoD defines “military capability” as “the ability to achieve a specified wartime objective (win a war or battle, destroy a target set).”<sup>39</sup> Since there is no provision in the English language for a military service that does not engage in combat, the Coast Guard’s only claim as a “military” organization lies in its readiness and capability to go to war. It has done so in every major war the nation has fought.

## From the First Years of the Republic to WWs I & II

The Coast Guard was founded in 1790 as a seagoing customs service under the Department of the Treasury. The Coast Guard’s military character was born in the period when it served as the nation’s only navy, between the end of the War of Independence in 1783 and the beginning of the Quasi-War with France in 1798. Acts of Congress in 1790, 1797, and 1799 indexed Revenue-Marine pay to that of the Army and Navy, authorized the use of Revenue Cutters for naval service, and subjected officers and crew to the rules of military discipline. As foreign interdiction of US shipping became acute, the President and Congress directed the Revenue-Marine to fight the naval battles of the undeclared war with France until a new program of battleship construction could be completed. As depicted in Figure 1, the Coast Guard again conducted combat operations in the War of 1812, when it comprised nearly half the US naval fleet.

When war was declared on England in 1812, the United States’ small maritime service faced a powerful navy of 600 warships.

Fig 1. The Defeat of the Privateer Dart by Dean Ellis.

From the Coast Guard Historian (online at <http://www.uscg.mil/community/Art%20Program/exhibit3/e30002a.htm>).





At the outbreak of the war, the United States could only muster 16 naval vessels and about a dozen cutters for coastal defense. The capture of the *Dart* was one of the most impressive captures by a revenue cutter. When the *Dart*—which had already seized between 20 and 30 American ships—arrived in Providence with its latest prizes, Captain John Cahoone offered the services of the revenue cutter *Vigilant* to challenge the enemy vessel. After sunset, the sloop *Dart* was located off the east end of Block Island. *Vigilant* fired one broadside and boarded *Dart*. [See Figure 1.] Actions such as the *Vigilant*'s capture carried on the cutter service's military activities throughout the War of 1812 and helped establish the traditions of today's Coast Guard.<sup>40</sup>

According to the Coast Guard historian, “augmenting the Navy with shallow-draft craft evolved into a continuing wartime responsibility. During the last two centuries, cutters have been used extensively in ‘brown water’ combat.”<sup>41</sup>

In World War I, a German U-Boat sank the Cutter *Tampa* with all hands while on ocean convoy escort. Cutters sank U-Boats in World War II. Signalman Douglas Munro, USCG, earned the Medal of Honor at Guadalcanal by engaging the enemy with a machine gun while placing his landing craft between the enemy position and a group of Chesty Puller's Marines evacuating their overrun position in other landing craft of Munro's group.

## Historical Precedent for Coast Participation in Special Operations

Coast Guard wartime service has not been limited to “augmenting the navy.” According to the Coast Guard Historian, “The Coast Guard has traditionally performed two roles in wartime. The first has been to augment the Navy with men and cutters. The second has been to undertake special missions, for which peacetime experiences



Fig 2. Captain William Cooke Seizes Contraband by John Thompson.

From the Coast Guard Historian (online at <http://www.uscg.mil/community/Art%20Program/exhibit3/e30012a.htm>).

have prepared the Service with unique skills.”<sup>42</sup> Figure 2 depicts an early direct action mission wherein a LEDET-style force from the Cutter *Diligence* “seizes contraband gold” from the French Privateer *Francois Henri Hervieux* near Brunswick, North Carolina in 1793.<sup>43</sup>

## The Greenland Patrol

The Greenland Patrol is an example of the Coast Guard performing both wartime roles in combination—augmenting naval forces with cutters and employing Coast Guard expertise in arctic operations. From April 1941 until the end of World War II, the Coast Guard-pure Task Force 24.8 was tasked “to defend Greenland and specifically to prevent German operations in Northeast Greenland.” Then-Commander Edward “Iceberg” Smith, captain of the Cutter *Northland*, led



Fig 3. USS *Northland* (USCG) in Greenland.

From the Coast Guard Historian (online at [http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/history/h\\_greenld.html](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/history/h_greenld.html)).

Fig 4. A Coast Guard Landing Team Dines On Captured German Rations.

From the Coast Guard Historian (online at [http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/history/h\\_greenld.html](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/history/h_greenld.html)).



a force of six cutters with their three reconnaissance planes and the indigenous Greenland Sledge Patrol, “a contingent of intrepid Eskimos and Danish hunters who spent the war patrolling the coastal regions on dog sleds.” In addition to its naval engagements, this task force raided clandestine German weather and radio stations ashore, captured their operators, and captured a clandestine insertion and resupply ship, the Norwegian trawler *Buskoe*. This incident began 1 September 1941—three months prior to America’s formal entry into

the war—with a report from the Sledge Patrol “that a suspicious-looking party of men had landed near the entrance of Franz Joseph Fjord.” When *Northland* boarded the *Buskoe* on 12 September, the boarding team discovered advanced radio equipment, further interrogated the crew, and learned that they had landed a party ashore with another radio transmitter. “That night one of the *Northland*’s officers, LT Leroy McCluskey, went ashore with a party of twelve armed men. They found a supposed hunter’s shack and surrounded it while



Fig 5. German SOF Captured by Coast Guard Landing Team on Greenland.

From the Coast Guard Historian (online at [http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/history/h\\_greenld.html](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/history/h_greenld.html)).

McCluskey kicked in the door.” The team captured three Germans with their radio and code book.<sup>44</sup> Figures 3 through 5 comprise some of the record of these actions.

## Vietnam

On 16 April 1965, the US Navy requested Coast Guard assistance in Vietnam because it then lacked a brown water capability. At 0700 on 20 July 1965, the first eight Coast Guard 82-foot patrol boats “sailed into Danang Harbor,” having observed “distant flashes of artillery fire as they approached the coast of Vietnam.”<sup>45</sup> The first elements of Task Force 115, Operation Market Time, had arrived for combat duty. Task Force 115, composed of Coast Guard patrol boats and Navy swift boats, was assigned coastal interdiction missions to prevent North Vietnam from resupplying the Viet Cong. In addition, Navy forces formed Task Force 116, the famous river patrol boats (PBRs) of Operation Game Warden, and Task Force 117, the Mobile Riverine Force composed of monitor-like troop ships and the Army’s 9th Infantry Division.<sup>46</sup> In Figure 6, “a Navy swift boat and the Coast Guard Cutter Point Banks enter Kanh Rau Canal, a known

Viet Cong area, to broadcast amnesty programs over loudspeakers for the South Vietnamese government.”<sup>47</sup>

Fig 6. A War of Persuasion by Noel Daggett.

From the Coast Guard Historian (online at <http://www.uscg.mil/community/Art%20Program/exhibit1/e10363a.htm>.)



In his compelling history of Coast Guard operations in Vietnam, Captain Alex Larzelere, USCG (ret.)—who as a Lieutenant (O-3) commanded the 82-foot patrol boats *Point Comfort* and *Point Banks* in Vietnam service—detailed extensive Coast Guard participation in special operations. Although the cutters maintained an incredible 70 percent underway patrol schedule supporting the coastal interdiction missions of Operation Market Time—and were generally the only maritime interdiction forces underway offshore in monsoon season—these ambitious fighters spent much of their 30 percent “down time” routinely infiltrating and exfiltrating Marine Force Reconnaissance and Army Special Forces units into known Viet Cong (VC) strongholds, participating in direct action raids on VC junk bases, conducting psychological operations, and providing naval gunfire support to both conventional and special operations ground forces using their 81mm mortars. Coast Guard patrol boats engaged covert enemy trawlers delivering supplies to VC on the beach, were engaged by both the trawlers and their receiving parties, and synchronized their fires with those of Air Force close air support aircraft. Coast Guard patrol boats earned such a reputation for reliable fire support that they became the naval gunfire force of choice, as reflected in this Marine quoted during operational planning: “Sir, I want Coast Guard WPBs. When I say I got guys in trouble and we need gunfire at this point, I get it. I don’t get a lot of questions about whether I have permis-

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*Coast Guard patrol boats earned such a reputation for reliable fire support that they became the naval gunfire force of choice ...*

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sion from the province chief or how deep the water is or how far can I go in.”<sup>48</sup>

On 21 September 1965, the Coast Guard patrol boats were painted a dark, “deck gray” to improve their effectiveness at night. That same day, planning began for the Special Forces raid at Hon Mot.<sup>49</sup>

On 26 September 1965, cutters POINT COMFORT and POINT GREY embarked a raiding party of thirty-six civilian irregular defense group (CIDG) strikers—Chinese mercenaries serving with the Vietnamese Army—their Vietnamese special forces officers, and two US Army special forces advisors. In total darkness, the two cutters eased in toward shore on 27 September 1965. They stopped when soundings got down to six feet under the keel; the beach was 200 yards away. At 0500, troops climbed down scramble nets into rafts in complete silence, shoved off, and paddled for shore. The cutters slowly backed away, keeping the sound of their stern exhausts to seaward. They stood by at 1000 yards offshore ready to provide gunfire support.<sup>50</sup>

When the raiding party made contact, cutters silenced enemy positions with seven rounds of 81mm mortar fire. The cutters also provided covering fire for the extraction and then direct action mortar fire on the VC junk base.<sup>51</sup>

The Coast Guard had other significant roles in Vietnam. It provided port security and mission-critical explosive loading details for the US Army First Logistical Command in Saigon and elsewhere, and members of these units earned combat decorations such as the Silver Star and Purple Heart. The Coast Guard installed and maintained the LORAN-C system that allowed for all weather air and marine navigation and fire support.

Coast Guard pilots flew combat search and rescue with the Air Force in Southeast Asia, under an inter-service exchange program. Most of the time the pilots were assigned to the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, at Danang. They flew Sikorsky HH-3F “Jolly Green Giants” [and HH-53C “Super Jolly Green Giants”<sup>52</sup>] in some of the most dangerous operations undertaken during the war [including the NEO-style rescue at Quang Tri, 1972<sup>53</sup>]. One Coast Guardsman, LT Jack Rittichier, was killed when his helicopter was shot down during an attempt to pull an American from enemy-held territory. Some 8,000 Coast Guardsmen served in Vietnam. Seven lost their lives and 59 were wounded. Although research is incomplete, it has been verified that through 1970, Coast Guardsmen received the following awards: 12 Silver Stars, 13 Legion of Merit medals, 13 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 114 Bronze Stars, 4 Air Medals, 151

Navy Commendation Medals, 27 Army Commendation Medals, five Coast Guard Commendation Medals, 43 Navy Achievement Medals, 66 Purple Hearts, 53 Vietnamese Navy medals and 15 Presidential Unit Commendations.<sup>54</sup>

How is it that such superlative combat skills and an unmatched reputation for reliable NGFS have all but disappeared from the service? Quite simply, they were allowed to. All of the Navy boat forces generated during Vietnam stayed on after the war and became today's Special Boat Teams. In contrast, most of the Coast Guard material in Vietnam was given to the South Vietnamese and subsequently captured by the North.<sup>55</sup> The Coast Guard apparently made no effort whatsoever to retain the warfighting skills it had developed with blood, sweat, and tears over the course of ten years in Vietnam.

### Current Operational Environment

In 1993, a two-ship formation air assaulted from Trinidad, Bolivia deep into the heart of the Amazon Basin on a raid to find a coca base transshipment site, seize contraband, and arrest suspects. The team of six inserted beyond hearing distance of the UH-1 helicopters and paddled two combat rubber raiding craft down the river to set up for the raid on the remote target house. At the house, two teammates—members of the Bolivian counterdrug forces—gathered further intelligence that the coca base product was hidden in the jungle several hundred meters away. At the follow-on raid, two US DEA agents and the two Bolivian counterdrug policemen assaulted the second house while the two remaining teammates—US Coast Guardsmen of the International Maritime Law Enforcement Team—maintained security with the boats. When the assault team took fire from the house, the two US Coast Guardsmen flanked the house on foot, directed suppressing automatic rifle fire into the house, and helped the team secure the objective. In the fight, four drug traffickers were seriously wounded, including one who sustained a gunshot wound to a lung; the Coast Guardsmen provided emergency medical aid that saved their lives and thus facilitated the justice process for the Bolivian government. The Bolivians took custody of all suspected drug traffickers and coca base, and

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*... the two US Coast Guardsmen flanked the house on foot, directed suppressing automatic rifle fire into the house, and helped the team secure the objective.*

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the force exfiltrated by helicopter with everything they had brought with them.<sup>56</sup>

In 1998, Commander, Fifth Fleet (N-31CG) organized and conducted the first-ever Maritime Interception Surge Operations designed to tighten UN sanctions enforcement in response to Saddam Hussein's expulsion of UN weapons inspectors. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDETs), embarked on USSOCOM Mark V boats and supported by Navy SEAL special reconnaissance, boarded dhows (small freighters typical of the Arabian Gulf) carrying embargoed goods and thus enforced the UN sanctions in the shallowest waters of the Northern Arabian Gulf near the outlets of Iraq's and Iran's Kawr Abd Allah and Shat al Arab waterways.

In 2002, the Naval Special Warfare Command (NSWC) transferred tactical control of 13 USSOCOM 179-foot Patrol Coastals (PCs) to the US Coast Guard for maritime homeland security operations outside the nation's major ports. "PCs are used for Naval Special Warfare maritime operations in low-threat environments. [Their primary] purpose is coastal patrol, surveillance, and close-to-shore interdiction operations."<sup>57</sup>

In 2003, the US Coast Guard deployed six cutters, two PSUs, and two LEDETs—totaling 1,250 personnel—supporting US Central Command's requirements for unique Coast Guard capabilities in the Northern Arabian Gulf. Coast Guard LEDET 403—operating from USSOCOM PCs with Naval EOD units—discovered a covert Iraqi mine-laying tug before it was able to deploy its mines. The same LEDET discovered a hidden Iraqi arms cache along the banks of the Kawr Abd Allah waterway. The Coast Guard Cutter Walnut, which had deployed with its oil-skimming gear to counter the threat of maritime environmental terrorism, also conducted maritime interception operations and reset all buoys into the Iraqi port of Um Qasr such that critical humanitarian aid shipments began to flow immediately into the liberated southern cities of Iraq.<sup>58</sup> According to a former CIA Baghdad Chief of Station, at least one Port Security Unit (PSU) has conducted combined special operations with Britain's 22 Special Air Service Regiment along the Al Faw Peninsula.<sup>59</sup>

## What Prompted the Army and Navy to Establish Special Operations Forces, and Do Similar Conditions Exist Today for the Coast Guard?

All SOF (even new SOF generated from old SOF) share a common thread: Conventional forces resisted the formation of new, specialized forces for new missions of an unconventional nature. Once they were generated, SOF generally stagnated for the entire time they were controlled by conventional forces. The exceptions are accounted for by direct presidential interest in specific SOF to meet specific mission requirements.

The histories of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), Army Special Forces, Navy SEALs, and USSOCOM in their formative years are replete with examples of how, in response to the formation of unconventional forces in their midst, commanders of large, conventional forces manifested their lack of appreciation or outright disdain for unconventional forces. Admiral Nimitz and General MacArthur refused to allow the OSS to operate within their geographic areas of responsibility throughout World War II, even though the ranks of its special operations division had been filled by soldiers and navy divers.<sup>60</sup> “One of the most consistent and outspoken opponents of OSS was Major General George V. Strong, Chief of Army G-2 (Intelligence),”<sup>61</sup> who obviously had hoped to protect the fiefdom of Army Intelligence.

The histories of these forces also share the advocacy of a corps of military “true believers” at the O5-O8 levels allied with powerful political figures. For the OSS it was President Franklin D. Roosevelt who directed General George C. Marshall to “give [General] Bill Donovan a little elbow room to operate in.” President Eisenhower and General McClure established the Army’s Psychological Warfare Center and 10th Special Forces Group in 1952.<sup>62</sup> President Kennedy’s interest in counterinsurgency warfare paved the way for the “Green Beret,” for which Army Special Forces renamed the Psychological Warfare Center the JFK Special Warfare Center. President Kennedy also motivated the Navy to morph some of its Underwater Demolition Teams (UDTs) into Navy SEALs in 1962.<sup>63</sup> President Reagan revived and expanded Special Forces after their post-Vietnam gutting, again for the specific purpose of challenging Communist insurgencies.

In the aftermath of special operations failures at Desert One and Grenada, Senators Sam Nunn and William Cohen sponsored the leg-



isolation establishing the US Special Operations Command against the counterweight of the Defense Department.<sup>64</sup>

## What Can the Coast Guard Do that Existing SOF Cannot?

The United States Congress has vested the Coast Guard with very broad military and law enforcement authority (see Appendix B). Prominent among the various statutes is Title 46 of the US Code which mandates a Coast Guard counterterrorism capability and specifically addresses Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSST):

*Title 46, US Code, Section 70106 (46 USC § 70106)*

— *Maritime Safety and Security Teams*

(a) IN GENERAL. To enhance the domestic maritime security capability of the United States, the Secretary shall establish such maritime safety and security teams as are needed to safeguard the public and protect vessels, harbors, ports, facilities, and cargo in waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States from destruction, loss or injury from crime, or sabotage due to terrorist activity, and to respond to such activity in accordance with the transportation security plans developed under section 70103.

(b) MISSION. Each maritime safety and security team shall be trained, equipped, and capable of being employed to:

- (1) deter, protect against, and rapidly respond to threats of maritime terrorism;
- (2) enforce moving or fixed safety or security zones established pursuant to law;
- (3) conduct high speed intercepts;
- (4) board, search, and seize any article or thing on or at, respectively, a vessel or facility found to present a risk to the vessel or facility, or to a port;
- (5) rapidly deploy to supplement United States armed forces domestically or overseas;
- (6) respond to criminal or terrorist acts within a port so as to minimize, insofar as possible, the disruption caused by such acts;
- (7) assist with facility vulnerability assessments required under this chapter; and
- (8) carry out other security missions as are assigned to it by the Secretary.<sup>65</sup>

The development of multiple MSST under the operational control—or even combatant command—of USSOCOM will be a significant plus-up.

## What Can USSOCOM Do for the Coast Guard?

Nothing has been written specifically on this subject, but much has been written on what USSOCOM does for Army, Navy, and Air Force SOF. USSOCOM has transformed DoD SOF from the overlooked, underfunded, underappreciated forces of the 1970s and 1980s into today's "force of choice."

Unlike any other combatant commander, USSOCOM has so-called "service-like" Title 10 authorities to develop a Program Objective Memorandum (a DoD budget instrument) and acquire SOF-specific materiel. Whereas the Navy receives its funding through Major Force Program Two (MFP-2), and the Air Force via MFP-4, Nunn-Cohen and amplifying "Sense of Congress" legislation authorized MFP-11 specifically to remove SOF budgeting from the normal service chains of command.<sup>66</sup>

In his 1992 study at the Naval War College, Captain Bruce Stubbs found that Navy admirals on the whole were more inclined to reject the Coast Guard's roles in any form of warfare, while non-Navy combatant commanders were more likely to appreciate Coast Guard contributions across the spectrum of operations.<sup>67</sup>

## How Can the Coast Guard Support SOF Operational Priorities?

The operational priorities of USSOCOM establish the guidelines for the employment of scarce SOF resources. They are: preempting global terrorist and CBRNE threats; enhancing homeland security; performing unconventional warfare and serving as a conventional force multiplier in conflict against state adversaries; conducting proactive stability operations; and executing small-scale activities. Coast Guard SOF elements would have the capability to contribute to all of these in some measure, but they would be especially helpful by their unique contributions to homeland security.

To be viable, Coast Guard special operations contributions should flow naturally from their statutory missions and accumulated expertise. The Homeland Security Act of 2002 specifies five homeland security missions for the Coast Guard:

1. Ports, waterways, and coastal security
2. Defense readiness
3. Drug interdiction
4. Migrant interdiction
5. Other law enforcement, including prevention of foreign fishing vessel incursions

Because of these missions, the Coast Guard has always worked to counter the unconventional, transnational threats posed by non-state actors. Terrorist organizations, drug and migrant trafficking organizations, and organized crime all follow insurgent organizational and operational models. Preparing for this fight at home has made the Coast Guard a key asset in stability operations, particularly Security Assistance and Foreign Internal Defense programs around the world. Moreover, the Coast Guard's engagement in these missions abroad significantly improves its capabilities to run these missions at home by providing its teams with real-world operational expertise in a variety of contexts not available in domestic operations.

Coast Guard leaders have identified the five strategic objectives of the Maritime Homeland Security Strategy:

1. Prevent terrorist attacks within, and terrorist exploitation of, the US Maritime Domain.
2. Reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism within the US Maritime Domain.
3. Protect US population centers, critical infrastructure, maritime borders, ports, coastal approaches, and the boundaries and seams between them.
4. Protect the US Marine Transportation System while preserving the freedom of the Maritime Domain for legitimate pursuits.
5. Minimize damage and recover from attacks that may occur within the US Maritime Domain as either the lead federal agency or a supporting agency.<sup>68</sup>

To achieve these objectives, Coast Guard leaders further identified six "Maritime Strategy Elements":

1. Increase Maritime Domain Awareness
2. Conduct Enhanced Maritime Security Operations
3. Close Port Security Gaps
4. Build Critical Security Capabilities
5. Leverage Partnerships to Mitigate Security Risks
6. Ensure Readiness for Homeland Defense Operations.<sup>69</sup>

Likewise, SOF leaders have written about the impacts of 11 September on their activities. "A sea change occurred on 11 September 2001, and the importance of SOF to national defense became paramount."<sup>70</sup> Most SOF today are deployed to, are preparing to deploy to, or have just returned from Iraq or Afghanistan.<sup>71</sup> Members of

Congress have called for a rapid doubling or even tripling of their numbers.<sup>72</sup> Yet such remarks contradict the essential SOF truths:

1. Humans are more important than hardware.
2. Quality is better than quantity.
3. Special operations forces cannot be mass produced.
4. Competent special operations forces cannot be created after emergencies occur.<sup>73</sup>

These truths have stood the tests of time. They reflect the lessons learned in many successes and failures of special operations over the history of warfare. SOF must only be expanded deliberately with care for enforcing the same high standards that are their hallmark today. In this regard, the advent of CG SOF can make an important contribution now. The following chapter develops a further assessment of the potential roles of CG SOF.

### 3. Assessing the Role for Coast Guard SOF

If you have no capacity for violence then you are a healthy, productive citizen: a sheep. If you have a capacity for violence and no empathy for your fellow citizens, then you have defined an aggressive sociopath—a wolf. But what if you have a capacity for violence, and a deep love for your fellow citizens? Then you are a sheepdog, a warrior, someone who is walking the hero's path. Someone who can walk into the heart of darkness, into the universal human phobia, and walk out unscathed.<sup>74</sup>

*Dave Grossman, Lieutenant Colonel, USA, Retired  
On Combat*

Lieutenant Colonel Grossman attributes the sheepdog analogy to a Marine veteran of Vietnam. The analogy is useful because some Coast Guardsmen need to think long and hard about what it is that Coast Guard cuttermen, aircrews, boat crews, and boarding teams are called by Congress to do in their maritime security role. The Congress has directed them to detect and suppress violations of US law, protect vessels, ports, and facilities from terrorist attack, and “use all force necessary to compel compliance.”<sup>75</sup> Some violators are more difficult to suppress than others. Some may need to be shot in the face at close range if that is the “force necessary to compel compliance.” From a recent film entitled *Dirty War*, consider the fictional but realistic takedown of the second dirty bomb van by the Anti-Terrorist Branch (SO13) of London’s Metropolitan Police Service—although an ongoing investigation was too late to interdict the first dirty bomb, Scotland Yard identified a second van believed to be en route to another target in London. SO13 used London’s security camera network to deploy and vector in CT snipers and street-level response teams. With the suicide bombers obscured from sniper fire, SO13 interdicted the van at street level. A single “civilian” car cut off the van and an operator killed the terrorists instantly in a burst of automatic weapon fire. The bombers, with their hands on the detonator, expired before they could detonate the second dirty bomb.<sup>76</sup>

In his essay, “The New Warrior Class Revisited,” Ralph Peters closed with this comment: “A healthy state must cultivate a discriminating appetite for killing.”<sup>77</sup> Although such a statement may be anathema to a number of good-natured “Coasties” who perhaps have

specialized in rescue or other maritime safety missions, its essence is perhaps one of the most important facts that all Coast Guardsmen need to accept regardless of their role in the service or their opinion of its roles and missions: the elected representatives of the people have entrusted the Coast Guard as a service and some members as individuals with the authority of the state to mete out violence to those who need it. The murderers of 11 September 2001 and others since then have demonstrated that there are many in need.

Those engaged in maritime security missions are sheepdogs (or German Shepherd Dogs, if one prefers a stronger motif) under authority to interdict, fight, apprehend, maim, and kill the wolves, using all force necessary to stop attacks and protect the people of the United States. For those officers whose careers have focused on more happy-go-lucky types of missions, what they need to understand is this: “the sheepdogs [who are under authority] prepare life-long for the hour of need and they yearn for validation of their training.”<sup>78</sup> When the battle rages, these men and women run toward the sound of the guns, not away from them. Such was clearly true of patrol boat crews in Vietnam. “The sheep say, ‘Thank God I was not aboard any of the hijacked airplanes on September 11th.’ The sheepdogs say, ‘I wish I had been on one of those planes. Maybe I could have made a difference.’”<sup>79</sup> The sheepdogs stand into danger out of their sense of duty to protect the flock—and may God bless them for it.

## **The Coast Guard in Special Operations**

The Coast Guard clearly is a combat force that has gone to war since the first days of the republic, but is there a precedent for the Coast Guard’s participation in special operations? In addition to its more well known role in “[augmenting] the navy with men and cutters,”<sup>80</sup> the Coast Guard has a strong history of contributing to specialized, niche missions in which its predominantly peacetime roles give it expertise, especially in small-unit, low-intensity conflict. The previous discussion of the Greenland Patrol, Task Force 115 in Vietnam, counterdrug operations, MIO surge operations, and CT operations seems adequate to answer this question in the affirmative.

One of the strongest examples in the current context has been the Coast Guard’s International Training Division (ITD). In the author’s version of the history of this unit (assembled over the years through personal interaction in the field, numerous friends and acquaintances at the unit, and the published articles), ITD began as the

Drug Interdiction Assistance Team (DIAT) sometime in the 1980s.<sup>81</sup> DIAT made Soldier of Fortune in the early 1990s and this fact alone offended some of the more genteel and influential among the officer corps. CGHQ changed the unit's name to the International Maritime Law Enforcement Team (IMLET). This name proved almost as offensive and changed again to International Maritime Law Enforcement Training Team (IMLETT). In 1996, the name changed once more to ITD and that name has survived. The unit's sole mission since its inception has been Foreign Internal Defense. Probably ahead of their time, DIAT and IMLET were well known within the Coast Guard for their SOF-like operations, including the 1993 coca raid described earlier and shown in Figure 7.

Fig 7. Bolivia – 1 Nov 1992 – A six-man boat team composed of personnel from the USCG, USDEA, and Bolivian National Police insert by helicopter into the Amazon Basin for counter-drug operations. USCG photo by PAI Dave Silva.



When the name changed to IMLETT with two Ts, CGHQ gave strong guidance that the unit constrain its activities to training, although field evaluation of host nation operations also was permitted at least as late as 1999.<sup>82</sup> The unit conducts most of its deployments under the authority and funding of the State and Defense Departments to support host nation Internal Defense and Development programs.<sup>83</sup>

In Bolivia, where a high percentage of the world's coca is grown, the ITD works with the Drug Enforcement Agency and US Special Forces to support and train the Diablos Azules (Blue Devils). The US-funded group is a counter-narcotics division of the Bolivian Navy and has [maritime law enforcement] authority over thousands of miles of navigable waterways. The ITD also established the International Waterways Law Enforcement School in Trinidad, Bolivia, where, each

year, more than 100 Bolivians and other Latin Americans complete an 8-week program in riverine operations and law enforcement. In Peru, the ITD is part of a DoD and DEA-led task force. Team members there are assisting the Dinandro, the Anti-Narcotics Division of the Peruvian National Police, and the Peruvian Coast Guard with the establishment of a joint waterways law enforcement school and engineering maintenance facility in Iquitos, Peru. In Panama, the ITD works directly with the Coast Guard liaison at the US Embassy. ITD members serve as advisers to the Panamanian Servicio Maritima Nacional (National Maritime Service), an agency modeled after the US Coast Guard. In 1998 alone, the Panamanian force seized more than 10,000 pounds of cocaine and 19 speed boats. In Haiti, the ITD maintains a year-round presence where the US and Canadian Coast Guards have helped Haiti establish a coast guard. Since it formed in 1996, the Haitian Coast Guard—more than 100 members strong—has seized 7,315 pounds of cocaine, 6,712 pounds of marijuana and six speed boats.

Recently the Coast Guard cashed in ITD's successful long-term deployment program—one that amounts to a core competency—for exclusively short-term training missions in more GWOT-friendly countries such as Yemen, where it lacks the depth of long-term personal relationships. The last long-term training detachment left Bolivia on 30 September 2004.<sup>84</sup>

ITD, never more than 45 strong, consistently has been among the most selective of Coast Guard units thanks to a degree of extra latitude granted by the CGHQ Office of International Affairs and the Coast Guard Personnel Command. Candidates volunteer and submit applications that include qualifications, experience, physical fitness scores, and command endorsements. The unit screens these applications and enjoys some discretionary say in who is assigned to the unit—more say than most units get. ITD has always been serious about physical fitness, advanced tactical training, and language proficiency, especially in Spanish. Long-term deployers to South America attended at least three months of immersion training in Guatemala and generally scored two/two or better on the State Department language exam.

## **Conditions Are Set for a Coast Guard SOF Component**

Army SF trace their roots to OSS support for the French Maquis insurgency against the Nazis and Vichy French. Later, when President



John F. Kennedy emphasized the need to counter the new threat of insurgency and low-intensity conflict as the favorite expansionist tools of Communism, Army SF expanded and the Navy formed a new force from its underwater demolition teams: the Navy SEALs. Smaller in number, Navy SEALs concentrated on direct action and special reconnaissance; as a general rule they did not concentrate on organizing, training, and leading host nation (i.e., indigenous) forces. When the threat of terrorism arrived in the 1970s, DoD set their CT forces at the top of the special operations food chain. FBI did the same with its Hostage Rescue Team (HRT).

Coast Guard special purpose forces are engaged daily in many of the same missions as DoD SOF using similar constructs of small, specialized teams (usually two to nine people) operating with zero to minimal support from conventional forces. Teams operating in the drug source and transit zones have specialized cultural and language capabilities, although

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*Coast Guard special purpose forces are engaged daily in many of the same missions as DoD SOF ...*

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the recent demise of the ITD long-term deployment program threatens serious degradation of that expertise. ITD's sole mission is FID. If, for example, Bolivia or Colombia were to become failed states, Coast Guard special purpose forces have strong relationships with key security forces in those states based on 20 years of continuous FID deployments in six-month intervals, and could even work with those forces in a UW context with a modicum of additional training. Very little imagination is required to envision the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) suddenly in charge of most of Colombia and "the good guys" taking on the role of insurgents.

LEDETs, MSSTs, and PSUs conduct their own operations, but they also conduct a significant amount of FID by training foreign forces and operating with them in a "technical assistance" capacity. In the author's two years with LEDET 103 (1996 to 1998), the team trained or operated with the counterdrug forces of Mexico, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, and the Cayman Islands—most on multiple occasions—and that is typical of LEDET operations. On one occasion, four of the team left the Navy ship in Mazatlan and flew by Mexican government aircraft of the Procuraduria General de La Republica (PGR) to Manzanillo to conduct a combined, interagency operation with two USDEA special agents and perhaps five Mexican officials. In order to mitigate risk of convoy ambush on the ground by the drug

cartel, the Mexican officials had established a change of vehicles at a preplanned staging area enroute to the site of the operation. This served as a moment of clarity for the author that LEDETs needed better training and equipment. The Coast Guardsmen found themselves the only unarmed participants, giving new meaning to the phrase, “alone and unafraid.” The teammates worked a hasty contingency plan to avail themselves of someone else’s weapon at the onset of hostilities—not the best way to operate. The reality is that the Coast Guard has special purpose forces often conducting SOF-like missions in SOF-like conditions without a SOF-like approach to organizing, and equipping.

The multi-mission approach, appropriate for 95 percent of the Coast Guard, does not adequately prepare special purpose forces for their missions. Multi-mission commanders, likewise, cannot be expected to have an intuitive understanding of these forces’ requirements. Historically, the units have been left to fend for themselves, sometimes with adequate operations and maintenance funding, generally without sufficient funding or infrastructure to support the necessary additional training. It was exactly this state of neglect among SOF and ignorance among the general purpose force commanders that led Congress to legislate USSOCOM into existence.

While the Coast Guard arguably could have created a special operations command at any time in the last 20 or so years with the advent of its various special purpose forces, clearly now, having a Congressional mandate specifically to conduct CT operations (46 USC 70106), such forces must be designated as SOF and organized, trained, and equipped as such. The Coast Guard should not wait for its own version of Desert One to come to this conclusion. Desert One already happened and the lessons are well documented. If DoD thought its primary role was homeland security instead of taking the fight to the enemy, everyone knows they would assign this mission to Navy SEALs, Army Special Forces, and supporting SOF. The enhanced Maritime Safety and Security Team (MSST) capability is modeled on some of the most specialized SOF. If FBI or Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) were given the mission, they would use career law enforcement officers and expand their specially-designated tactical teams (such as Hostage Rescue Teams) to accomplish this mission. That the Coast Guard has not yet fully embraced this model is indicative of how senior multi-mission commanders have spent their careers; it does not reflect how some Coast Guardsmen have spent

their careers since 1982, when the first LEDETs commenced operations. Those officers have only been promoted to about the O-6 level at this point in history.

When one considers that much of the Coast Guard—including all of the “white-hull,” multi-mission units and all of the special purpose forces—exists expressly to mitigate the threats of non-state actors, and when one further considers the levels of danger and sophistication posed by non-state actors, there is no longer any place for a culture that accepts risk only from the environment and only to pull someone out of the water; that rejects risk from intelligent adversaries who would as soon destroy the entire population of the United States as explode a bomb on the approach of a Coast Guard boarding team. While existing missions dictate that perhaps 95 percent of the Coast Guard can operate at familiar levels of risk, the five percent that make up the special purpose forces must be designated, trained, experienced, and truly comfortable operating at the highest levels of risk, where perhaps millions of lives may depend on the success of a single operation of less than an hour’s duration and the DoD “cavalry” may not come. The choice that leaders may be faced with is to stop an attack with Coast Guard special purpose forces or not to stop it at all.

In sum, the Coast Guard as a service faces the same conditions that caused DoD to generate SOF: lawlessness and low-intensity conflict undertaken by non-state actors; traffickers in drugs, arms, people, and WMD; terrorists of various ilk; regional insurgents such as the FARC and the GAM; and global insurgents such as Al Qaeda and its allies.

## **The Value Added for Coast Guard SOF**

Coast Guard special purpose forces number approximately 2,000 active and reserve personnel, over 90 percent of whom are in operations career fields. Most units have only a handful of supporters. Most are active component forces; only the Port Security Units are in the reserve component. Figure 8 shows a notional Coast Guard Special Operations Command. Unit definitions from the Coast Guard online fact files are included in the glossary (Appendix C).

The Commander in Chief is the end user of all military and law enforcement forces. Very simply, the Coast Guard gives the Commander in Chief more options than DoD can give him alone. The Coast Guard has unique military and law enforcement authorities,

unique expertise beyond that of any DoD force in boarding the full range of commercial and recreational vessels and discerning the legal from the illegal, and the most experience with maritime drug and

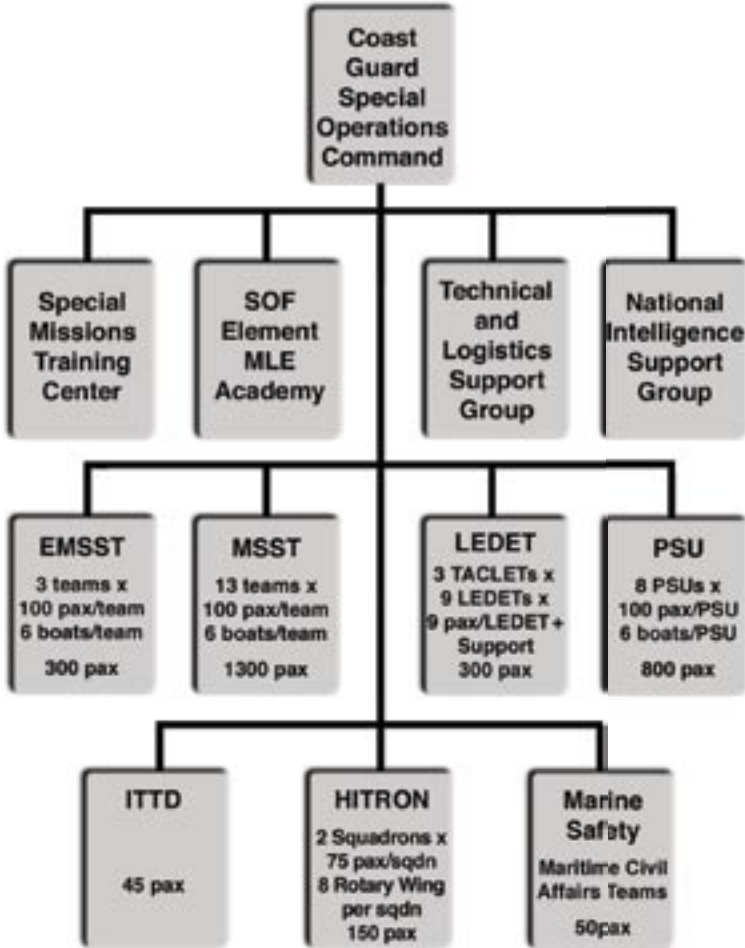


Figure 8. Notional Coast Guard Special Operations Command.

migrant interdiction operations. Combining Coast Guard strengths with the flexibility and power of SOF gives the President new options across the full range of military and civil operations both within and beyond the US territorial jurisdiction. Military special operations could more easily transition to law enforcement operations and vice versa without any need of the legal shenanigans envisioned by the

FBI to avail themselves of national CT forces. In the counterdrug arena, Coast Guard special purpose forces already have demonstrated their ability to transition seamlessly between military and civil operational control and maintain the Constitutional safeguards necessary for prosecution in the United States.

Since federal courts have begun to question the indefinite mass storage of detainees at Guantanamo Bay and elsewhere, there is every reason to suspect that the courts and the American public will demand the criminal prosecution of terrorist suspects caught in or near the United States. Given an attack already in progress, Coast Guard SOF would thus serve what are likely to be the president's top two priorities with respect to homeland security: to stop terrorist attacks and to arrest for prosecution all surviving terrorists, the latter of which also supports the needs of the Attorney General.

SECDEF should strongly support the concepts in this paper because he currently commands none of the national CT forces despite being saddled with responsibility to coordinate the federal response to terrorist attacks. As a general rule, Coast Guard SOF would work for DoD or the State Department while abroad (as they do already), and for DHS when conducting homeland security missions.

SECDEF, USSOCOM, and SOF units also gain substantially. The Coast Guard can support them by meeting some of the considerable demand for scarce SOF resources. The Coast Guard can give SECDEF a SEAL Team not by creating another SEAL Team, but by committing Coast Guard SOF under USSOCOM operational control where previously a SEAL Team or ODA was the only asset available to meet the need, and where the need may be in shortfall due to prioritization of SOF tasking. For example, Coast Guard SOF can perform the "global scout" and stability missions in places like PACOM and SOUTHCOM while DoD SOF are concentrated in CENTCOM. To an extent this already happens, but Coast Guard special purpose forces abroad often work in the interagency mode rather than in the joint mode. The interagency has no equivalent of the regional combatant commanders and theater special operations commands. Therefore, Coast Guard special purpose forces often work directly for the country team, often unintegrated with DoD operations in the same countries. Aligning Coast Guard special purpose forces with USSOCOM would integrate those forces and their operations with the theater SOCs and promote unity of effort, one of the six basic principles of Military Operations Other Than War.<sup>85</sup>

Unlike conventional component commanders who work in terms of brigades and strike groups—thousands of people and billions of dollars in assets—theater SOCs are inherently comfortable working at the team level. Further, the Coast Guard can augment theater SOC staffs with officers who have operational experience with the special purpose forces, but who need experience in time-sensitive operational planning in order to translate that experience into the most effective, time-sensitive, homeland security planning. Every staff officer the Coast Guard contributes to the undermanned theater SOC staffs increases staff support to fielded SOF without pulling a SEAL, SF, or special tactics officer off the teams to do so.

Some have said that NORTHCOM may need a theater SOC to execute its homeland defense missions.<sup>86</sup> Since the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD-SO/LIC) and the Naval Special Warfare Command have both declared policies of “focusing on overseas threats,”<sup>87</sup> assigning SOF to a “SOCNORTH” requires a reduction in their overseas commitments. And assigning routine homeland security missions to existing DoD SOF necessarily invokes issues of *Posse Comitatus*. The Coast Guard can offer DoD an out for both problems. Since it is hard to envision the need to infiltrate SOF by minisub into or near the United States, USSOCOM could largely meet any future needs that NORTHCOM might have for maritime SOF by using Coast Guard SOF instead of Naval Special Warfare. This is fully consistent with Constitutional principles and the expectation of the public, as well as the politically powerful maritime industry, that they not interact with SEALs or Special Forces teams on any frequent basis whatsoever.

Since the Navy and Marine Corps have never designated an active component naval special operations aviation capability, there is a niche potentially available to Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) flyers. Although the Army’s 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) does some over-water aviation, maritime operators working in the maritime environment, if given the choice between two equally competent aircrews, are more comfortable flying with pilots who are primarily maritime flyers.<sup>88</sup>

For US Ambassadors and their country teams, affiliating with USSOCOM those Coast Guard teams already deployed and conducting security assistance/foreign internal defense, counterdrug, counterterrorism, and counterinsurgency operations best achieves unity of command and unity of effort with deployed SOF engaged in the

same missions. For USSOCOM and SOF units, Coast Guard special operations officers could follow their operational tours with tours at theater special operations commands (TSOCs) and joint special operations task forces (JSOTFs)—these critically understaffed entities could benefit significantly from the added manpower, and the experience Coast Guard officers would gain could not be replaced by ten such tours in domestic homeland security planning cells. Finally, USSOCOM and SOF would gain from habitual relationships that Coast Guard teams have established in countries around the world—some of which have limited or no contact with Defense Department assets. The Coast Guard has better access in some countries and thus can provide additional access for SOF should the need arise.

In a general sense, the SOF officers in the CGSC Class of 2005 have agreed that Coast Guard special purpose forces have the potential to contribute significantly to the SOF community. Commander, Special Operations Command Pacific (SOCPAC) recently commented that the relocation of Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) West with

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*Coast Guard special purpose forces have 24 years' corporate experience in maritime interdiction operations ...*

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PACOM and SOCPAC has great potential for synergistic effects.<sup>89</sup> Coast Guard special purpose forces have 24 years' corporate experience in maritime interdiction operations in the JIATF South and West Areas of Responsibility (AORs). The tactical problems in these AORs—illicit

trafficking in people, weapons, and drugs over vast bodies of water, multiple international boundaries, and small island chains—are so similar to the “War on Terror” tactical problems in Southeast Asia that SOCOM and SOCPAC should take advantage of Coast Guard expertise. The reality is that most TSOCs have more special operations work than SOF to do it, and Coast Guard special purpose forces would be using their existing capabilities fully in line with service values and traditions to mitigate some of that risk. Integrating these capabilities with those of SOF only sweetens the pot for both SOF and the Coast Guard.

At the same time, proponents of one government program often encounter resistance from proponents of other government programs competing for scarce resources. Within the SOF community, the potential for resistance to designating Coast Guard SOF likely will be greater where the Coast Guard fails to educate DoD SOF com-

manders on what factors make Coast Guard special purpose forces inherently unique and therefore a valuable addition to DoD SOF.

Many within SOF think they have the right formula for success and simply need more of it. For example, since user demand for 160th SOAR support significantly outpaces its capacity,<sup>90</sup> Army SOF commanders likely would prefer expanding the 160th to designating a Coast Guard SOF air component. While the 160th is generally acknowledged as having the best existing rotary wing capability in special operations aviation, Coast Guard pilots bring their own expertise in the form of large numbers of operational over-water flying hours, much of it in extremely bad weather, and much of it in single-aircraft missions. Interdicting 52,600 of the 240,000 pounds of illegal drugs seized by the Coast Guard in Fiscal Year 2004,<sup>91</sup> HITRON likely flies more small boat interdiction missions than anyone on earth.

An Army soldier may view a Coast Guard LEDET as simply a less capable version of a SEAL platoon. Even though LEDETs today lack some of the more exotic special warfare capabilities such as joint targeting or the SEAL delivery vehicle (and may never have a need for such capabilities), LEDETs have much of the ship-boarding expertise along with their own inherent expertise in matters of great importance to special operations: smuggling of people and contraband, piracy, legitimate maritime commerce, legal documents, providing technical assistance to host nation prosecution efforts, language skills (mostly Spanish at present), and cultural understanding. They are similar, but not the same. Once the Coast Guard accepts the SOF construct and begins to build operators to that standard, then synergies are bound to appear even where today they might not be predicted. The key is to avoid the more tempting, taxonomic approach that pigeonholes Coast Guard special purpose forces in terms of DoD “equivalents.”

### **How Should USSOCOM Assist?**

What the Coast Guard needs from USSOCOM is an adaptation of the special operations ethos for Coast Guard special purpose forces, which focuses on the worth of a few mature, highly trained, and discriminate operators who can use soft and kinetic power at the proper place and time; facilitates time-sensitive planning; and enables small teams to achieve strategic effects beyond their size and capability in conventional terms. The Coast Guard will realize these benefits in direct proportion to its commitment to contributing the unique



expertise, capabilities, authorities, and access of its special purpose forces to the special operations fight.

Historically, the Coast Guard–Navy relationship served as the only real avenue of approach into DoD power circles. Although the Coast Guard’s relationship today with Navy flag officers seems to be healthy by virtue of the continuing “National Fleet” concept, the Navy frankly has a spotty track record in supporting the Coast Guard’s role in the joint force. Historically the Navy has bought major weapons systems on major cutters, but there has been some hesitation to renew this commitment via Deepwater. The Navy only requested Coast Guard participation in Vietnam because it lacked the coastal patrol capability necessary to deny sea lines of communication between North Vietnam and the Viet Cong.<sup>92</sup> The Navy helped to prevent the use of Coast Guard patrol boats in Desert Storm and influenced USSOCOM’s decision to buy the 170’ Patrol Coastals.<sup>93</sup> Although Navy admirals on other occasions (such as Operation Iraqi Freedom) have sung the Coast Guard’s praises, the overall record indicates that, of all flag and general officers, Navy admirals historically have constrained Coast Guard options in the joint force more than the general officers of other services.<sup>94</sup> Intuitively, it seems that the Coast Guard would be wise to nurture symbiotic relationships with other power players in DoD. Recall that the Center for Naval Analyses made such a recommendation in 1997.<sup>95</sup> Title 14 USC 2 and the Coast Guard’s subservience to the Navy are pre-Goldwater-Nichols vestiges. The Navy and Coast Guard should be natural allies with non-redundant forces, and Coast Guard multi-mission forces are likely to work for a Navy-manned maritime component command in any sizeable joint task force. However, if 14 USC 2 were reworked to reflect the realities of the joint force, the Coast Guard should be able to secure its own funding for its own major weapons systems that meet the needs of all shades of combatant commanders. The Navy-Coast Guard relationship thus far has largely manifested itself along the lines of conventional force relationships. USSOCOM possessing its own service-like characteristics, seems like a wise choice precisely because it is both unconventional and extra-naval.

By contributing its special purpose forces to USSOCOM as the supported combatant commander in the global counterinsurgency, the Coast Guard would gain a critical ally within DoD that understands the key contributions made by small, specialized teams. Conventional land and naval forces dwarf the Coast Guard, and even

more so its specialized teams. Yet USSOCOM, which commands roughly 46,000 people, is very similar in size to the Coast Guard. With such an ally as USSOCOM, the Coast Guard could solidify its combat roles (both in conventional and special operations) and gain a powerful advocate within DoD to help out when the Navy is less inclined to do so.

Another critical requirement is training. By means of an agreement signed 10 May 2005, the Coast Guard and USSOCOM already have recognized the untapped potential in this form of interaction. Rather than reinventing the wheel as it is prone to do, the Coast Guard has recognized that SOF have learned some lessons the hard way and have created the best training available for certain types of operations. USSOCOM has authorized direct liaison between its Service Component Commands and the Coast Guard to support the training of maritime security forces.<sup>96</sup> A second-order effect will likely be the education of both Coast Guard and SOF officers on each other's roles and missions.

Further along the commitment continuum, the Coast Guard as a full joint partner in USSOCOM could gain access to Major Force Program 11 (MFP-11) funding, which funds all SOF-specific training and equipment. Not only is this funding stream important, but so is the highly qualified Special Operations Acquisition and Logistics Center (SOAL). This is a specialized logistics staff dedicated to the rapid fielding of equipment that meets the unique needs of special operators. Examples of Coast Guard equipment that could fall within MFP-11—and therefore external to the Coast Guard budget—include all HITRON materiel, all MSST and SRT materiel or modifications beyond the service-adopted standard platforms, all PSU materiel, all vertical insertion (fast-roping) materiel, the TACLET/MSST canine programs, and the considerably greater ammunition allowances and associated ranges and shoot houses. If the Coast Guard had designated SOF, MFP-11 would fund all overseas operations of Coast Guard SOF where USSOCOM or the theater SOCs had operational control. The Coast Guard would continue to pay the personnel and administrative costs for its designated SOF, but SOCOM would equip, train, and operate them as SOF.

MFP-11 funding comes with a string: the Coast Guard must be willing to assign operational control of designated SOF to USSOCOM like the Army, Navy, and Air Force already have. SOCOM is not going to fund these teams at any significant level without the authority to

assign them as necessary to execute SOCOM missions, particularly the global counterinsurgency. Since Coast Guard and SOCOM objectives abroad have abundant overlap, this should not be an insurmountable obstacle. Much of what these Coast Guard forces do overseas is Foreign Internal Defense (FID), a USSOCOM-identified core task for SOF. Whether FID addresses a counterterrorism or counterdrug threat is immaterial. Together, counterterrorism, counterdrug, and their FID derivatives probably account for 90 percent or more of the activity of Coast Guard special purpose forces overseas. If SOCOM would not agree to provide Coast Guard SOF to JIATF South and JIATF West for counterdrug operations (which themselves are FID supporting the global counterinsurgency when the work is conducted as technical assistance to host nation forces), then surely the Coast Guard and USSOCOM could agree on a fixed-percentage

... MFP-11 could provide funds in the millions of dollars ...

force apportionment between SOCOM and non-SOCOM missions, and fund these teams at an equivalent percentage. Each commander can pay for his own operations; equipment and facilities can be funded according to the fixed-percentage agreement. Thus, even on a percentage basis,

MFP-11 could provide funds in the millions of dollars that the Coast Guard would not have to budget for or, historically, not budget for.

Working for the TSOCs also would give Coast Guard special purpose forces something they have never had: responsive theater logistics support including the intra-theater airlift that Air Force special operators provide for USSOCOM in its service-like capacity. The increased survivability inherent in being “plugged in,” “on the grid,” and party to SOF personnel recovery plans should be obvious, and this is capability that the Coast Guard by itself could never replicate. This makes long-term deployments in remote regions considerably more palatable from a risk management perspective.

Importantly, by affiliating some of its forces with USSOCOM and conducting some of its overseas activities under the auspices of the theater SOCs and their JSOTFs, Coast Guard SOF would become truly formidable in the execution of their domestic homeland security duties. Coast Guard officers would gain valuable expertise in planning and executing asymmetric, unconventional operations with the best special operators in the world, and then could exert leadership in planning for such events as the G8 Summit or Olympics in the United States.

## SOF Core Tasks and Coast Guard SOF

The Coast Guard is a natural choice for the shaping operations in the global counterinsurgency, which the United States neglects at its own great peril. Much of DoD SOF has been redirected from the shaping zone to the decisive, or kinetic zone. One could even argue that these descriptors are reversed. Since DoD SOF and conventional forces have been challenged to kill or capture (indefinitely) the current generation of radical-Islamist insurgents, no leader should expect that America can kill or capture its way to a better future. For those already radicalized, that may be the only solution, but if the next generation is allowed to grow up in the absence of effective governmental institutions, food, water, sanitation, and economic activity, there may be too many of them. Thus, helping foreign governments establish their own effectiveness and legitimacy—preconditions of economic prosperity—is likely much more decisive than killing current enemies. These factors have made the Civil Affairs teams decisive in post-Taliban Afghanistan.<sup>97</sup>

The Coast Guard currently operates in the shaping zone by training foreign Coast Guards; combating the trafficking of human beings, drugs, weapons, and other contraband; and enforcing public safety on the water in places like the Horn of Africa, where on 17 March 2005, the Cutter Munro assaulted a Thai fishing vessel and detained three Somali hijackers armed with automatic weapons and demanding \$800,000 ransom for the ship's officers they held hostage.<sup>98</sup> However, the Coast Guard is severely hampering its effectiveness by avoiding the risk and expense of operating in the special operations context. Many countries—including Arab countries, Indonesia, and Malaysia—want help but do not want the brand recognition and resultant political upheaval that comes with overt US assistance. The Coast Guard should think beyond mere port security to how such operations and access can be exploited to further benefit the nation.

The Coast Guard gets away with much under the guise of interagency, but these examples clearly are special operations that should be coordinated with and supported by the TSOCs if for no other reason than risk mitigation (e.g., command and control and egress plans), but probably also for funding and unity of effort. The Coast Guard can field the ultimate low-profile SOF because they number so incredibly few in comparison to even DoD SOF.

SOF power in the shaping zone depends on credible kinetic power in decisive operations. Coast Guard forces must walk the walk with their host nation counterparts or the whole thing is a sham. Effective relationships are built only on prolonged interaction under the stress of operational conditions. Coast Guard kinetic power is derived of its people, its platforms, its small arms and larger ordnance, its C4ISR assets, the will to use them, and its popular and legal mandates to use force against those who would violate the law and threaten public safety.

For this reason, the Coast Guard must reassess its decision regarding long-term FID deployments. While it likely is more appropriate for operational units such as LEDETs, MSSTs, and PSUs to execute the operations that ITD and its predecessors pioneered (under the auspices and with the support of theater SOCs), the Coast Guard desperately needs to continue long-term FID deployments because they provide critical tactical skills and experience for its people. Although ITD's 45 members are barely 1/1000th the total active duty force, at least 22 percent of the first-generation MSST commanding officers had ITD experience. That pool of experience will shrink by 22 percent unless long-term FID deployments are reinstated immediately.

Some may counter that MSSTs will grow this experience and they may, but they will not learn these skills in New York Harbor. Anyone who thinks that expelling boaters from established security zones compares with fighting narco-guerrillas does not understand the nonstate actors who threaten the free world. Yet fighting narco-guerrillas is very similar to fighting terrorists. Fighting pirates in Africa and Southeast Asia is very similar to fighting terrorists. Some percentage of Coast Guard special purpose forces should be deployed constantly overseas in support of special operations and intelligence collection. The place for Coast Guard maritime security forces to learn their trade—to really learn it against intelligent and hostile adversaries—is overseas. When they do it in the United States, they need to get it right the first time. That is how overseas deployments help the Coast Guard in its homeland security role.

For the global counterinsurgency, the long-term deployment program sets conditions, denies sanctuary, deters terrorists, reassures allies, provides early warning; and maintains the personal relationships that are critical for access into the region as it begins to inflame. With DoD committed decisively to CENTCOM, the Coast Guard is

missing key opportunities to mitigate risk for the US government in the maritime domains of South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia.

Table 1 relates the Coast Guard special purpose forces' current soft and kinetic capabilities to the SOF core tasks.

**Table 1. Coast Guard Capabilities  
that Can Contribute to the SOF Core Tasks.**

<b>SOF Core Tasks</b>	<b>Coast Guard Capabilities</b>
Counter Proliferation (CP)	•
Counterterrorism (CT)	•
Special Reconnaissance (SR)	
Direct Action (DA)	•
Unconventional Warfare (UW)	•
Foreign Internal Defense (FID)	•
Civil Affairs Operations (CAO)*	•
Information & Psychological Operations (IO & PSYOP)	
Synchronize DoD Efforts in the Global War on Terrorism	
*in the context of maritime issues such as civilian port authorities, mariner licensing, and fisheries management, which military CA forces totally lack.	

– Source of Core Task list: LTC William D. Andersen, USAF, USSOCOM (SOCC) message to Joint Special Operations University (SOED-F), 29 August 2005: the current SOF Core Tasks were confirmed in two Board of Directors meetings at USSOCOM in February and April 2005, adding the Synchronize task to the list.

Arguably, elements of the Coast Guard's special purpose forces could also contribute to some facets of special reconnaissance missions in accordance with their unique capabilities, and they could be useful in assisting USSOCOM to synchronize the DoD effort in the Global War on Terrorism. But it is clear that a Coast Guard SOF component of USSOCOM could make significant contributions in mission areas attendant to the SOF Core Tasks. Thus in the following chapter, the argument is further advanced that now is the time to develop a special operations force within the Coast Guard.

## 4. Designating Coast Guard Special Operations Forces

Perhaps one of the most telling indicators supporting the designation of Coast Guard SOF is the recent debate between Captain Bruce Stubbs, USCG (retired) and Vice Admiral Terry Cross, USCG, both respected Coast Guard leaders. Captain Stubbs argued that the multi-mission construct is too expensive and precludes the specialization necessary for an effective CT capability. The Coast Guard, he wrote, should focus on CT operations and, presumably, out-source non-homeland security missions. Vice Admiral Cross countered that it was exactly the multi-mission construct that enabled the Coast Guard to turn on a dime and assume lead agency authority and responsibility for maritime homeland security. He wrote further that the nation certainly could not afford two deepwater programs. Meanwhile, the same problem continues: these leaders regard the Coast Guard as one block in the same way that other Service leaders viewed their Services each as one block—before Congress carved out a chunk of each Service called SOF. The reality is this: both leaders are right and both objectives can be achieved using the SOF construct for a small percentage of Coast Guard forces.

### **Prevention, Detection, and Response**

It should be obvious that the object of Maritime Domain Awareness cannot be merely to watch the attack as it unfolds. Having knowledge of an attack 30-60 minutes ahead of the news networks, while laudable, cannot define success for the government in achieving its principle objectives: “to insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.”<sup>99</sup> Security expert Bruce Schneier labeled Chapters 11 and 12 of his book, *Beyond Fear*, respectively, “Detection Works Where Prevention Fails” and “Detection is Useless without Response.” One analogy he uses is the common safe. The safe is a preventative barrier. The alarm provides detection, and guards or police make up the response force. Federal security requirements reinforce this “triad” of systems, as Schneier calls it, by requiring the use and regular exercise of each of the three components to safeguard weapons, cash, and classified material.

In tackling the issues of Maritime Homeland Security to date, DHS has placed considerable efforts on prevention—systems that run in the background to deny terrorists their “avenues of approach” and “freedom of maneuver” in Army parlance. Examples include US visit and other passport and visa initiatives; Customs and Border Protection’s (CBP’s) Container Security Initiative and Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT); the Transportation Security Administration’s improvements in commercial airline baggage and personnel screening as well as airport and cockpit physical security; and the Coast Guard’s 96-hour Notice of Arrival (NOA), National and Inland Rivers Vessel Movement Centers, and permanent security zones around critical infrastructure.<sup>100</sup> Likewise, Congress and the President have directed and resourced CIA and FBI to improve detection by stepping up HUMINT collection, intelligence sharing, and the integration of criminal databases and terrorist watch lists. The Coast Guard has established a headquarters office dedicated to improving Maritime Domain Awareness (i.e. detection). Some of these measures combine some functions of prevention and detection, but none of them is a SEAL Platoon or a SWAT Team taking down terrorists.

DHS has implemented at least two triad-based systems—the department’s color-coded Homeland Security Advisory System and the Coast Guard’s Maritime Security Conditions—but the increased presence of basic patrol officers on foot, mounted, and afloat to match increases in the threat posture brings with it only a modest increase in response capabilities: one cop watching a bridge or one boatcrew observing infiltration into a port facility might stop that part of a terrorist operation, but neither would likely stop the larger group or interdict its operations. In many scenarios of imminent or in-progress attacks, arguably, the best response function such officers can serve is as reconnaissance for a more powerful response force.

In the area of Maritime Security Response, the successes to date include the establishment of 14 Maritime Safety and Security Teams (including one “enhanced” version) in the nation’s critical ports and a modest improvement in response boats at multi-mission Coast Guard boat stations. However, it is important to note that much of the collective wisdom in Coast Guard Headquarters sees the MSST as predominantly a preventive measure: if terrorists see the bright-orange boats with the mean-looking machine guns, hopefully that will dissuade them from hitting the particular target the boat is sitting in front of, and so the MSST should never have to fire a shot in anger.



To their credit, MSSTs take their response mission very seriously. Having the will to use force is every bit as important as having the means. There are two major factors, however, that make the MSST an inherently limited Maritime Security Response asset. The first cannot be overcome: the MSSTs are absolutely necessary in protecting critical infrastructure and high-value naval and military assets. This mission—predominantly boat against boat with a limited human against human role—makes them most effective in preventing or interdicting USS COLE-type attacks and in boarding merchants in compliant and non-compliant modes. In the spate of MSST commissioning ceremonies since 2001, DHS, the Coast Guard, and members of Congress have frequently referred to MSSTs as “maritime SWAT teams.”<sup>101</sup> This capability provides a critical layer of (mostly defensive) security, but five terrorists on deck firing automatic weapons or rocket-propelled grenades changes the equation entirely. That revelation, learned by the FBI in Waco, is what prompted the Bureau to stratify its SWAT capabilities into basic SWAT, enhanced SWAT, and the Hostage Rescue Team as depicted in Figure 9.

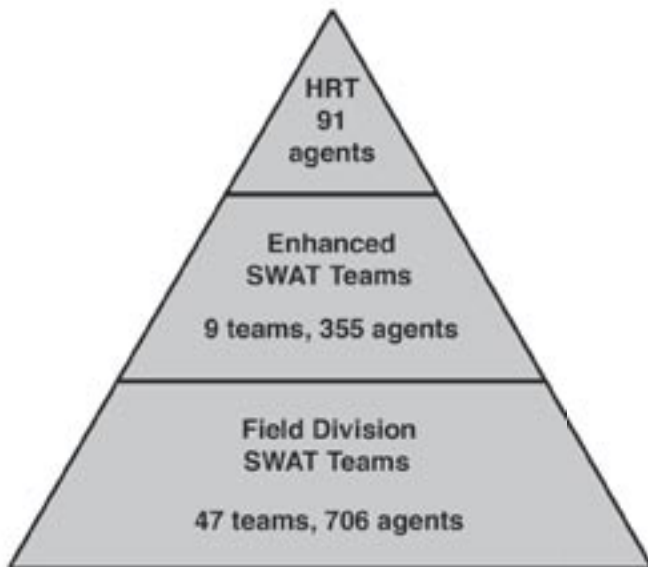


Figure 9. FBI Tactical Assets.

Source: 1997 GAO/NSIAD-97-254 Combating Terrorism

So too would armed opposition to the initial boarding seriously threaten the successful outcome of an MSST operation employing only noncompliant tactics, techniques, and procedures. What is lacking in most major seaports is that additional layer of security that can be provided only by a firehouse-style force-in-being capable of responding to terrorist attacks regardless of the level of resistance—up to and including the capability to conduct an opposed boarding at night to render safe special nuclear materials. Figure 10 shows how the Coast Guard might stratify its emerging homeland security capabilities in terms of CT response capability, including both the FBI methodology and the DoD concept of habitual relationships.

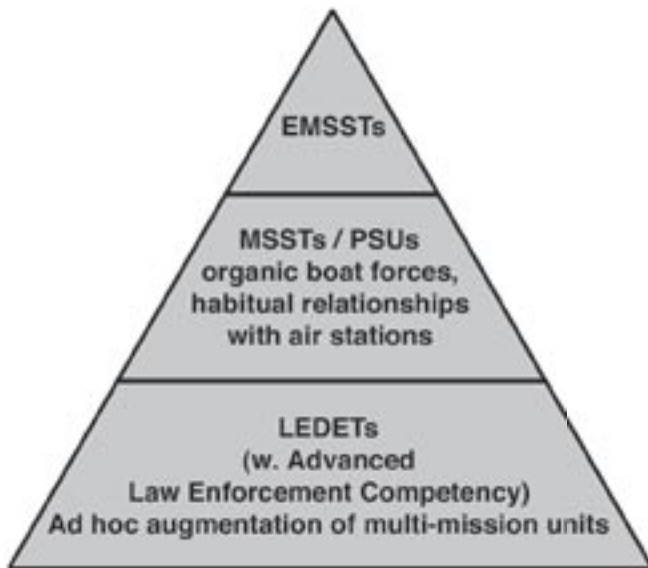


Figure 10. Notional Coast Guard Stratification for CT Resourcing.

## Coast Guard SOF in the Close Fight

Most of the preceding analysis has dealt with Coast Guard SOF in the deep fight. With Naval Special Warfare protecting us predominantly over the horizon, there is a clear need for maritime SOF in the homeland, and this is where Coast Guard SOF would predominantly fulfill their kinetic use of force roles. On 21 December 2004, President G. W. Bush signed Homeland Security Presidential Directive 13, which requires the Secretaries of Defense and Homeland Security to conduct a comprehensive review of maritime security and to

draft a “National Strategy for Maritime Security.” The president has recognized that existing policies and capabilities are not adequate to counter today’s threats. HSPD-13 in fact invites the Secretaries to recommend appropriate changes to the lead federal agency (LFA) assignments outlined in the existing national CT policies as delineated in Presidential Decision Directives 39 and 62.<sup>102</sup> With statutory maritime law enforcement authority dating back to 1790, port security authority dating back to 1917, maritime CT authority from 2002, and the preponderance of operational air and maritime security forces in the homeland and the ability to command and control them, the Coast Guard should be assigned LFA for Maritime Security Response and properly resourced to execute the mission.

The Enhanced MSST, or Security Response Team (SRT), comes very close to that desired layer of SOF response capability the nation requires to protect itself at knife-fighting distances on last-minute intelligence. Not yet even an officially recognized unit, SRT-1 has been a success. The unit concept received broad support from the interagency at the National Security Council. The Coast Guard hired contractors with critical experience on the national CT forces to train this new unit. By the time SRT-1 had deployed for its third National Special Security Event, the Republican National Convention, SRT-1 had earned the trust and respect of the US Secret Service Counter-Assault Team (CAT). SRT-1 has provided operational support to the Secret Service with several critical capabilities, not least of which is inner-perimeter protection for the principals, including the president, with CAT in contingency evacuation plans.<sup>103</sup>

The SRT concept has upset the apple cart at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C., which is very comfortable with existing structures and budget authorities. The SRT concept embodies a new type of unit that requires cross-program authority in order to effectively execute its missions. To work, SRT requires new Coast Guard policies in manning, aviation and boat force risk tolerance, weapons, and training that probably are not appropriate for multi-mission forces.

In order to meet both SRT’s need for dedicated aviation and the need for aviation safety oversight and training, the Coast Guard should establish a special operations aviation command. This was one of the key recommendations of the Holloway Commission following Desert One and resulted in establishment of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment of the US Army.

The SRT concept runs counter to the sensibilities of many members who have worked hard to shape the Coast Guard's image as a lifesaving service, despite the fact that 95 percent of the Coast Guard will carry on as they do today even if the Coast Guard creates an official SOF capability. Interestingly, Los Angeles SWAT considers itself a lifesaving unit and so do DoD SOF. The motto of Army Special Forces is "De Oppresso Liber," which translates, "To Free the Oppressed." SOF personnel volunteered for SOF in order to make the world a better place. Had the Coast Guard the opportunity to kill the 11 September terrorists in order to save 3,000 lives, would it have done so? The Coast Guardsmen who delivered the Marines on Iwo Jima would have. The Coast Guardsmen who pounded Viet Cong junks with Army Special Forces would have. This business of lifesaving is a matter of perspective—and vision.

### **Is It Someone Else's Job?**

Even when there is agreement on the need for enhanced maritime security response capabilities, there may not be agreement on where to put the resources. People tend to default to FBI, for example. Although the FBI has enjoyed brand recognition as the LFA for counterterrorism, FBI has no sustained presence in the maritime domain. There are but three entities in the federal government that have any considerable maritime security presence: the Navy, the Coast Guard, and the Air and Maritime Operations (AMO) wing of DHS Customs and Border Protection (CBP). A final option might be the states (some of which have state or municipal marine patrols), but doing so prevents commanders from surging the capability for national and regional requirements, degrades integration into national CT planning, and prevents the teams from engaging in overseas combat operations, which is the only true indicator, short of an attack on the homeland, that this force will work when called on.

Clearly, DoD possesses the best existing capability in the US government to conduct opposed boardings and to render safe special nuclear material. Some of this capability is even arrayed to support domestic homeland security. Nonetheless, DoD has been very careful to emphasize that their focus is on overseas threats and that law enforcement agencies should focus on homeland security.<sup>104</sup> It seems clear that the converse of this statement is this: DoD would rather not be saddled with requirements to stage its best capabilities throughout the United States to respond to imminent homeland

security threats. DoD special operations and technical assistance forces are either forward-deployed around the world taking the fight to the enemy, have just returned from that mission, or are preparing for their next mission in that fight. If the answer to high-end homeland security needs is DoD, then most of their capability would have to be redeployed from overseas assignments to support homeland security. Few in federal government support such a strategy. In accordance with DoD's history and expressed desires, their strength lies in the "forward regions."<sup>105</sup> How many simultaneous homeland security incidents would overwhelm the existing, inward-focused capability? Once this capability is committed, there is no further strategic reserve for any follow-on events. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense, Mr. T. K. Custer, put it this way: in the "forward regions," where DoD is the predominant force best positioned to respond, DoD—via the conventional navy or naval special warfare—should take the lead and respond. In the "approaches" to the homeland, where there is a more even mix of DoD and Coast Guard assets, the "firstest with the mostest" rule should apply. Finally, in the homeland itself, where the Coast Guard has the strongest maritime presence of any government entity, there the Coast Guard should have the LFA responsibility for maritime security response. The policy also should allow the rare exception where, even in the homeland or the forward regions, a non-LFA asset should respond if it is best positioned and able to respond in time to make a difference. "If Al Qaeda succeeds in attacking us, it will not be because we tripped over our own interpretation of law and policy."<sup>106</sup>

The notion that the FBI should have the lead for maritime counterterrorism is fraught with inconsistency. Combined with current national policy, that would make the US Coast Guard the LFA for maritime homeland security except in really dangerous scenarios, at which point the civilian-manned FBI would step in. The factors favoring FBI are its brand recognition; its singular focus on security, law enforcement, and intelligence operations; and its assertiveness in using its authority and capability. Conversely, the extent to which the Coast Guard lacks these qualities is the single greatest risk factor to implementing a successful Coast Guard SOF or CT capability. Fortunately, this factor is really the only one that favors FBI and disfavors the Coast Guard, and the latter's emerging advanced law enforcement competency program may well balance the scales. In an interesting comment on federalism, the Constitution delegated most

land-based police power to the states. According to its own website, the FBI, not formed until 1908, has always been first an investigative vice a “cops on the beat” type of agency, whereas in the maritime domain, the Coast Guard has since 1790 functioned as a patrolling, federal, maritime, police power using “all necessary force to compel compliance.” Any who doubt this fact should read up on the Coast Guard’s battles with Jean Lafitte and his merry band of pirates in the Gulf of Mexico during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>107</sup>

These facts notwithstanding, the FBI has continually pursued greater kinetic police power, including air and maritime capabilities. Witness the bank robbery squads, the field division SWAT Teams, the regional “enhanced” or “super” SWAT teams, and the Hostage Rescue Team complete with helicopters and rigid-hull inflatable boats. PDD-39 in fact assigned FBI the LFA responsibilities for CT in international waters, apparently based on the Hostage Rescue Team (HRT), a single unit of 91 special agents in Quantico, Virginia on a four-hour recall.<sup>108</sup> Interestingly enough, HRT is listed as an “investigative program.” Consider for a moment the FBI’s capability to field a “sustained maritime presence” from zero to hundreds or even thousands of miles offshore.<sup>109</sup> Next consider their capability to command and control such a force. Finally, consider the expertise of the average FBI special agent in maritime affairs. As phenomenal an investigative agency as the FBI is, it may be time to say they have enough on their plate. Were Congress to press them into maritime security service, the FBI would mount an impressive campaign to acquire maritime resources: boats (or even ships), aircraft, sensors, command and control systems, and logistics systems—something that looks an awful lot like the existing Coast Guard and its Deep-water recapitalization program. The federal government already has a maritime law enforcement agency, and that agency is the Coast Guard. All that remains is for the Coast Guard senior leadership to step up to the plate, acknowledge the service’s responsibility as the nation’s primary maritime law enforcement agency, and accept whatever risks that entails. Failing this, there may well be a maritime division of the FBI in the nation’s future, and the likelihood is high that Coast Guard maritime law enforcement officers would flock to man it.

The remaining alternative among existing federal agencies is the Air and Maritime Operations Division (AMO) of CBP. In the author’s experience, its maritime enforcement officers are first investigative

agents who must also work a day shift and turn over cases for prosecution. Their boats, among the “coolest” and fastest on the water, are predominantly short-range, short-duration assets that are used to support casework, not to dominate the maritime domain; their command and control capability is quite limited; and the agency has never mounted a large, synchronized operation in the maritime domain without Coast Guard or JIATF assistance. Finally, one must admit that the AMO never would have been born had the Coast Guard remained in the Treasury Department alongside US Customs during the early years of the drug war. Properly resourced and properly emphasizing maritime law enforcement, the Coast Guard would have developed an AMO-like capability in the 1980s under Treasury leadership. As Secretary Chertoff conducts his department-wide review of organizations and operations, AMO’s boat forces and maritime patrol aircraft may be vulnerable considering Coast Guard preeminence in the maritime domain.

Maritime security response and consequence management operations likely will require dispersed, simultaneous, and sustained operations on the scale of the Mariel Boatlift or *Exxon Valdez* response operations. Only the Coast Guard can mount such operations in the homeland on a moment’s notice. To be more effective, the Coast Guard simply needs LFA authority for maritime security response and correlating, full-spectrum capabilities.

### **Counterargument: There Is No Money**

No discussion of this sort is complete absent fiscal considerations. In general, homeland security funding has increased insignificantly compared to the need, and the scale of Coast Guard SOF is very small. According to Steven Flynn, “new federal outlays for homeland security” since 11 September 2001 amount to four percent of the defense budget—not exactly an indicator that the government is serious about homeland security.<sup>110</sup> Considering the apportionment of federal spending shown in figure 7, that means four percent of a defense budget today that is less than 50 percent of what it was in 1962 as a percentage of spending.

In fiscal year 2005, defense appropriations totaled \$391 billion while homeland security appropriations totaled \$40.7 billion.<sup>111</sup> Can DHS imagine a budget even 25 percent of DoD’s budget? Can Coast Guard admirals imagine a 50 percent increase in manpower? CIA leaders can.<sup>112</sup> For the Coast Guard, that would equal 20,000 ad-

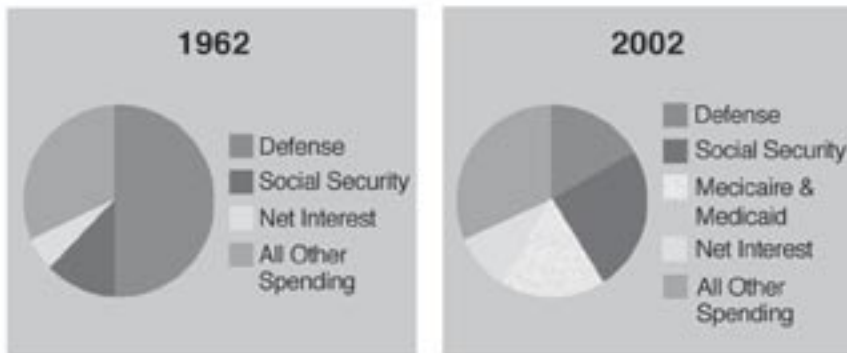


Figure 11. Composition of Federal Spending by Budget Function.

Source: <http://www.gao.gov/cghome/hscek/img2.html>

ditional active duty members. Fortunately, most of the forces considered herein already exist. While some programs such as SRTs, HITRONs, and LEDETs may require expansion to do their jobs effectively, the same is true whether or not they are designated as SOF. If formed today, the Coast Guard SOC would own about 2900 people already on the payroll. The expansions proposed herein likely would add another 500 to 600 people, depending on the troop-to-task analysis. Since most of the people are paid for, the main perceived drawback with designated SOF may be that their training and equipment could be more expensive per person than that of the multi-mission forces because of the greater emphasis on building cohesive teams of more mature and capable operators focused on specific missions. Such arguments fail to account for the high systems costs of Coast Guard multi-mission units—standard boats, aircraft, and major cutters in particular—and the years of training invested into the typical coxswain, officer of the deck, engineer officer, or aviator.

The operator is always the most important system in SOF. This drives the requirement for closed-loop personnel assignment policies, which adds some expense. MFP-11 theoretically could offset much of the operational cost of Coast Guard SOF. The Coast Guard should further engage USSOCOM in areas of mutual interest precisely because the potential for additional funding could be significant.

Another fiscal issue is the reality of political will. Although the Security Response Team (SRT) is expensive due to its dedicated air and boat forces, the SRT is also the only unit in the Coast Guard that has the potential to conduct national-level missions such as counterterrorism against a WMD threat. That is a mission that captures



the attention of national decision makers and the public in a way that Deepwater likely never will, because it operates primarily far offshore, where there is a dearth of American citizens. However critically important Deepwater recapitalization is for the Coast Guard, the program is simply a tough sell. On the other hand, ask the Congressional delegations from the powerful coastal states whether their major cities and ports—New York-New Jersey, Hampton Roads, Los Angeles-Long Beach, San Francisco, Seattle, and others—ought to have pre-positioned, maritime CT units that can stop simultaneous nuclear attacks and they will form a coalition to ensure each other's needs are met. General Downing has said that the nation needs more of this capability than what it has in DoD. He also said that if the Coast Guard were to take on this mission, it would have “real power and a real budget.”<sup>113</sup> Find the money for a robust SRT capability, make the Coast Guard a critical asset in national-level missions, and the Coast Guard will have more breathing space and allies for programs like Deepwater and Rescue21.

A final fiscal comment regards the relationship of CT capability to what GAO calls “results-oriented government” arising from the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993.<sup>114</sup> In short, there is none. In an interview, Kathy Kraninger, former Assistant to the Secretary of Homeland Security for Policy and now on the staff of the Senate Homeland Security Governmental Affairs Committee, mentioned that some people in government have questioned whether the original, much less enhanced, MSSTs have been worth their cost. While understandable, this is a flawed criticism. Military operations are not business operations. The United States and its allies spent billions of dollars on nuclear munitions to win the Cold War but never engaged in nuclear warfare. Few doubt the free world would have survived without them. How many did the country actually need? It is impossible to measure. Similarly, the United States rarely has used unconventional warfare to overthrow hostile regimes, yet incalculable was its value in toppling the Taliban in less than 60 days and accomplishing what the Soviet Union failed to do in 10 years.

When Al Qaeda launches a spectacular maritime attack against the United States, the millions of people at risk in the coastal communities (or their survivors) are going to ask, “Mr. President, Honorable Senator, where were you on maritime security? We all knew this would happen. You were supposed to protect us. What did you do to keep my family alive?” Midwest farmers will ask, “Mr. President,

Honorable Senator, how can it be that we cannot ship our grain to market? What happened to the ports?” Retailers large and small will ask, “Mr. President, Honorable Senator, how can it be that we have nothing to sell? What happened to the ports?” New England and California power companies will ask, “Mr. President, Honorable Senator, how can it be that we have no fuel for winter? What happened to the ports?” Not least, the combatant commanders will ask, “Admiral Commandant, how can it be that the retaliatory ground forces are barricaded in garrison? What happened to the strategic seaports of embarkation?”

This is the fundamental problem of the insurance buyer: if the consequences of the catastrophic event are unacceptable, then whatever its likelihood, the wise insure against it. Few appreciate the value of insurance when the bill is due; far fewer can afford to face disaster uninsured. So what is to be made of all this? The following chapter provides this author’s conclusions and recommendations for a CG SOF organization.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Coast Guard has always been a combat force. The Coast Guard's status as an armed force depends on its continued mandate, will, and capability to go to war. In the fullness of time, historians may conclude that the DOT and post-Vietnam era fostered elements of culture anomalous to the great heritage of the service.

### A History of Special Operations

The historical record demonstrates that small, deployed Coast Guard units have participated in special operations at least as far back as the run-up to World War II, which is about the time the United States established its first official special operations units. Coast Guard units have sought out opportunities to participate, they have been tasked to do so by higher headquarters, and they have supported, at a minimum, requests for supporting and direct action roles in the operations of US Army Special Forces, US Navy SEALs, and US Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance units.

Coast Guard special purpose forces have critical authority, expertise, and capabilities to contribute to the SOF community and national intelligence collection effort across the continuum of operations. Coast Guard operators and marine safety personnel add a unique layer of analysis and interpretation for planning and executing operations and intelligence gathering. The new warfighting paradigm for the non-state actor holds that finding the enemy is harder than fixing him, destroying him, or removing him from the battlefield. The Coast Guard's core competencies since 1790 have included discerning legitimate from illegitimate activities among civilians on the water, and affecting both activities through a variety of lethal and nonlethal means using inherently legitimate state powers of law, regulation, search, seizure, and violence. The organizations currently conducting operations in the covert and clandestine realms do not have the same access or visibility on maritime issues that the Coast Guard has, and moreover, they cannot expect to have it without Coast Guard help. From the strategic to the tactical level, the Coast Guard can help these organizations fill in some of their

“unknown unknowns,” as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld calls them.

## **USSOCOM Can Help**

USSOCOM and SOF can help Coast Guard special purpose forces by sharing its training resources, acquisition expertise, and imbuing Coast Guard teams with the special operations ethos. Should the Coast Guard commit its special purpose forces to the global counter-insurgency under USSOCOM operational control, USSOCOM could fund these forces’ SOF-specific requirements and thus remove that burden from the Coast Guard budget.

The data in Table 1 suggest that existing Coast Guard special purpose forces have existing capabilities in the SOF essential tasks of CT, CP, DA (concentrated on ship boardings, small-boat interdictions, and combined beach, boat, and air interdictions), FID, and maritime aspects of civil affairs (as yet a nonexistent capability in the joint force). Additionally, UW might be considered low-hanging fruit. Recall the contingency scenario involving a future FARC overpowering the legitimate government of Colombia. Coast Guard special purpose forces already conduct independent FID to such a degree that, with modest additional training in supporting insurgency, they could easily exploit existing relationships and access to conduct successful UW. So much of what SOF do can be summarized as using low-profile forces to stabilize the ungoverned space in the world. There has been a tremendous convergence in the military and law enforcement disciplines since the end of the Cold War. In a nutshell, Coast Guard special purpose forces are specialists against the nonstate actor.

## **It’s Time to Designate Coast Guard SOF**

Service history supports designating Coast Guard SOF, emerging threats demand Coast Guard SOF, and Coast Guard SOF would be fully consistent with law and policy. The term “peacetime” is a term not altogether applicable in today’s operational environment because the level of chaos and instability around the world necessitates commitment of conventional and SOF in continuing, simultaneous theaters for conflicts of lesser intensity than general war. However, many of the Coast Guard’s core missions—counterdrug operations, counterterrorism operations, building foreign Coast Guards (and thus respect for legitimate authority), and even general law enforcement where the host nation lacks an effective capability—are ex-

actly the type of operations to which DoD committed SOF before 11 September 2001, and exactly the type of operations that have made them the force of choice since then. That the threat from terrorism is so acute does not invalidate the need for stability and support operations—rather it underscores the need and makes it more urgent. By selecting, assessing, and training some individuals to the special operations standard, and by designating, organizing, training, and equipping some Coast Guard units as SOF, the Coast Guard makes itself more relevant to the future by contributing across the full spectrum of capabilities.

At a time when DoD SOF expect full engagement around the world in kill or capture missions, someone must attend to setting the conditions for peace, prosperity, self-determination, and human dignity to take root and flourish, thus denying the global insurgency their “sea in which to swim.” Places like Indonesia and Spain have been more amenable to US assistance when it does not come with a US flag, large naval blockades, and 24x7 media coverage. Again, the need to operate in denied, politically sensitive or even “politically denied” areas demands the use of SOF. How much more effective the US Coast Guard would be if some of its forces were free to operate out of uniform in nonstandard, foreign-made boats in foreign ports.

The situation whereby the Coast Guard is best able to defend the nation against the maritime spectaculars is also that in which the Coast Guard is most relevant to the joint force, where the Coast Guard offers a full spectrum of capabilities useful in both conventional and special operations.

To summarize the conclusions of this paper, it is time for Coast Guard law enforcement to come of age, for the Coast Guard to acknowledge its military past and reinvigorate that heritage. It should reject the budgeting and cultural failings of the Department of Transportation era and move ahead with confidence in its fighting force.

## **Recommendations for a Coast Guard SOF**

The foregoing conclusions invite a number of recommendations outlined below. It is recognized that Congressional legislation may come into play, particularly if the Department of Homeland Security continues to evolve in terms of policy and organization.

### *Policy*

The Secretary of Homeland Security should sign an agreement with the Secretary of Defense, backed by legislation if required, having the following components:

- ***SOF Designation.*** The Secretaries of Homeland Security and Defense designate Coast Guard forces assigned to the newly formed Coast Guard Special Operations Command as SOF.
- ***Service Component Command.*** The Secretary of Defense should designate the Coast Guard Special Operations Command as a service component command of US Special Operations Command. All command and support relationships are carried out in accordance with 10 USC 167.
- ***Command and Control.*** The Secretaries establish the command arrangements by which DoD and DHS exercise levels of command and control of CG SOF operating within military and law enforcement domains.
- ***Coast Guard augmentation of Naval Special Warfare Elements.*** USSOCOM should develop protocols to augment SEAL Teams and Special Boat Teams with Coast Guard SOF in the way that Air Force combat controllers augment Special Forces Operational Detachments. This recognizes that Naval Special Warfare assets will always have the best available collection of capabilities for getting to a maritime-accessible target, the desirability in some cases of prosecuting terrorists in the United States or foreign countries consistent with legal principles, and the need for some SEAL capabilities to filter back into Coast Guard SOF. A successful NSW augmentation program would give the president and the attorney general additional options to exercise maritime law enforcement authority under Titles 14, 18, or 46, US Code.

### *Reorganization*

The Coast Guard will need to effect several organizing actions to meet the need for an effective SOF capability:

- ***Headquarters Staff.*** Permanently reestablish staff directorates within Coast Guard headquarters to direct policy and planning for Coast Guard SOF. This should include provisions for Offices of Special Boat Forces and Special Aviation Forces. Assigned personnel should have professional experience with an Enhanced Maritime Safety and Security Team (EMSST),

Maritime Safety and Security Team (MSST), Port Security Unit (PSU), and/or Tactical Law Enforcement Team (TACLET) unit at both the detachment and command level.

- Coast Guard Special Operations Command. Designate a Commander of a new Coast Guard Special Operations Command—as a Major Command. Until it has a command relationship with USSOCOM, this command should report to the Assistant Commandant for Operations. It should establish to full operating capability as rapidly as possible the Enhanced Maritime Safety and Security Teams, also called Security Response Teams, (EMSST/SRT).
- Special Operations Group. Reprogram each EMSST/SRT as a Special Operations Group.
- Special Operations Aviation Command. The Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron should be reprogrammed as the Coast Guard Special Operations Aviation Command (SOAC) and airframes and paint schemes particular to their mission should be procured. SOAC should be a force provider for Special Operations Groups and other commands requiring full spectrum Airborne Use of Force capabilities.
- Forward-based Aviation Detachments. SOAC numbered special aviation detachments should be forward-based at Coast Guard Air Stations near, and share customer-focused relationships with, their supported Special Operations Group. Collocation with Coast Guard Air Stations should be designed to maximize economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of aviation logistics support and flight safety oversight.
- Special Boat Force. Establish Special Boat Forces as subordinate commands of Special Operations Groups, with Commanding Officers or Officers in Charge who are screened for command of SOF.

### *Operations*

The Coast Guard should consider key operational actions that must be implemented rapidly if it is to meet the challenge of combating terrorism:

- ***Commit to the Fight.*** The Coast Guard should engage US Pacific Command (and Special Operations Command Pacific) to commit cutters, aircraft, LEDETs, PSUs, and/or MSSTs to the fight in the Pacific Theater to counter the global insurgency.

It should engage USSOCOM and Theater Special Operations Commands now to explore where they may have needs that can be met by existing Coast Guard special purpose forces. It should get in the fight.

- **Global Scouts.** The Coast Guard should task its LEDETs to carry on Long-term Deployment and Operational Evaluation programs in Haiti and South America, and expand the program into Southeast Asia. These missions align with the SOF concept of “global scouts,” which are forces that keep their fingers on the pulse of their regions, provide early warning, and act decisively when called on to secure the nation’s interests around the world. No mission is purely counterdrug or counterterror. Lawlessness, like the cockroach, thrives in the absence of authority. With the Seventh SF Group, Navy SEALs, and ITD refocusing on other regions, one can almost hear the rush of air brought on by the sudden depressurization of South America. Everywhere the Coast Guard can improve stability is one less place the likes of Al Qaeda are free to operate. Internally, the Coast Guard cannot afford to shut down this key proving ground for officer and enlisted alike in conducting tactical operations. The Coast Guard must generate enough budget support for the LEDETs to carry on these missions and maintain average deployment days at 185 per year. It must find the money.

## Joining with USSOCOM in the Fight

The Commandant of the Coast Guard should sign an agreement with Commander, US Special Operations Command, ICW the Joint Staff, concerning command relationships, operations and support. Under this agreement:

- **Forces For Planning and Operations.** USSOCOM should be able to request Coast Guard SOF for worldwide deployment at any time via the established Request for Forces process. Such forces will be apportioned for planning to Theater Special Operations Command and allocated to Joint Special Operations Task Forces as established in plans and orders.
- **Liaison.** The Coast Guard establishes permanent staffs or liaison officers at USSOCOM and components and at the Theater SOCs. Coast Guard special operations staff personnel support standing and ad-hoc Joint Special Operations Task Forces



during major operations, whether or not the Coast Guard has participating SOF. The three primary functions of this recommendation are to build personal relationships within the SOF community, to give something back to the SOF community of immediate and lasting value, and for Coast Guard SOF officers to learn the arts of deliberate and time-sensitive operational planning.

- **Naval Special Warfare Command.** Cooperation with USSOCOM will authorize Naval Special Warfare Command and its Naval Special Warfare Development Group support of Coast Guard EMSST training, test and evaluation, research, and development. An exchange program should authorize small numbers of Coast Guard EMSST personnel to work in a temporary duty (TAD/TDY) status with NavSpecWarCom and vice versa in such roles as might be approved by the commanders.
- **SOAL Support.** A support relationship with the Special Operations Acquisition and Logistics Center should be established. Initial acquisition efforts would be funded by the Coast Guard, but procured by SOAL.

These recommendations are advanced for consideration to our civilian, naval and military leaders trusting that these ideas will advance our efforts to counter the scourge of terrorism. The strategic and operational concepts provided here fully consider the dedication and potential of hard-working Coast Guard operators at home and overseas who risk their lives every day in the defense of our country. They enjoin our leaders to assure we are “Always Ready.” Semper Paratus.



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# Appendix A.

## Coast Guard Authorities

Note: The terms *Treasury Department* and *Secretary of the Treasury* as used here are no longer useful distinctions since both the Coast Guard and Customs (as reorganized) exist within the Department of Homeland Security. SECDHS can delegate relevant Customs authorities to the Commandant of the Coast Guard. Access to the United States Code is available at <http://www.findlaw.com>.

### *Title 14, US Code, Section 1 (14 USC § 1)* *Establishment of Coast Guard*

The Coast Guard as established January 28, 1915, shall be a military service and a branch of the armed forces of the United States at all times. The Coast Guard shall be a service in the Department of Homeland Security, except when operating as a service in the Navy.

### *Title 14, US Code, Section 3 (14 USC § 3)* *Relationship to Navy Department*

Upon the declaration of war or when the President directs, the Coast Guard shall operate as a service in the Navy, and shall so continue until the President, by Executive order, transfers the Coast Guard back to the Department of Homeland Security. While operating as a service in the Navy, the Coast Guard shall be subject to the orders of the Secretary of the Navy who may order changes in Coast Guard operations to render them uniform, to the extent he deems advisable, with Navy operations.

### *Title 14, US Code, Section 89 (14 USC § 89)* *Law Enforcement*

(a) The Coast Guard may make inquiries, examinations, inspections, searches, seizures, and arrests upon the high seas and waters over which the United States has jurisdiction, for the prevention, detection, and suppression of violations of laws of the United States. For such purposes, commissioned, warrant, and petty officers may at any time go on board of any vessel subject to the jurisdiction, or to the operation of any law, of the United States, address inquiries to those on board, examine the ship's documents and papers, and examine, inspect, and search the vessel and use all necessary force to compel compliance. When from such inquiries, examination, inspection, or search it appears that a breach of the laws of the United States rendering a person liable to arrest is being, or has been committed, by

any person, such person shall be arrested or, if escaping to shore, shall be immediately pursued and arrested on shore, or other lawful and appropriate action shall be taken; or, if it shall appear that a breach of the laws of the United States has been committed so as to render such vessel, or the merchandise, or any part thereof, on board of, or brought into the United States by, such vessel, liable to forfeiture, or so as to render such vessel liable to a fine or penalty and if necessary to secure such fine or penalty, such vessel or such merchandise, or both, shall be seized.

(b) The officers of the Coast Guard insofar as they are engaged, pursuant to the authority contained in this section, in enforcing any law of the United States shall:

- (1) be deemed to be acting as agents of the particular executive department or independent establishment charged with the administration of the particular law; and
- (2) be subject to all the rules and regulations promulgated by such department or independent establishment with respect to the enforcement of that law.

*Title 14, US Code, Section 143 (14 USC § 143)*

*Treasury Department*

Commissioned, warrant, and petty officers of the Coast Guard are deemed to be officers of the customs and when so acting shall, insofar as performance of the duties relating to customs laws are concerned, be subject to regulations issued by the Secretary of the Treasury governing officers of the customs.

*Title 19, US Code, Section 1589a (19 USC § 1589a)*

*Enforcement Authority of Customs Officers*

Subject to the direction of the Secretary of [Homeland Security], an officer of the customs may:

- (1) carry a firearm;
- (2) execute and serve any order, warrant, subpoena, summons, or other process issued under the authority of the United States;
- (3) make an arrest without a warrant for any offense against the United States committed in the officer's presence or for a felony, cognizable under the laws of the United States committed outside the officer's presence if the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the person to be arrested has committed or is committing a felony; and
- (4) perform any other law enforcement duty that the Secretary of [Homeland Security] may designate.

*Title 46, US Code, Section 70106 (46USC § 70106)*

*Maritime Safety and Security Teams*

(a) In General. To enhance the domestic maritime security capability of the United States the Secretary shall establish such maritime safety and security teams as are needed to safeguard the public and protect vessels, harbors, ports, facilities, and cargo in waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States from destruction, loss or injury from crime, or sabotage due to terrorist activity, and to respond to such activity in accordance with the transportation security plans developed under section 70103.

(b) Mission. Each maritime safety and security team shall be trained, equipped, and capable of being employed to:

- (1) deter, protect against, and rapidly respond to threats of maritime terrorism;
- (2) enforce moving or fixed safety or security zones established pursuant to law;
- (3) conduct high speed intercepts;
- (4) board, search, and seize any article of thing on or at, respectively, a vessel or facility found to present a risk to the vessel or facility, or to a port;
- (5) rapidly deploy to supplement United States armed forces domestically or overseas;
- (6) respond to criminal or terrorist acts within a port so as to minimize, insofar as possible, the disruption caused by such acts;
- (7) assist with facility vulnerability assessments required under this chapter; and
- (8) carry out other security missions as are assigned to it by the Secretary.



## Appendix B. Acronyms

AMO.....	Air and Maritime Operations (Division of Customs and Border Protection)
CBP.....	Customs and Border Protection (DHS Directorate of Border and Transportation Security)
CBRNE.....	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, or (High-Yield) Explosive
CGHQ .....	Coast Guard Headquarters
COTP.....	Captain of the Port (Coast Guard)
CT .....	Counterterrorism
DA.....	Direct Action
DHS .....	Department of Homeland Security
DPB.....	Deployable Pursuit Boat
EMSST.....	Enhanced Maritime Safety and Security Team (Coast Guard, also called SRT)
FARC.....	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
FBI.....	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GAM.....	Gerakin Aceh Merdeka
GWOT .....	Global War on Terrorism
HITRON.....	Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (Coast Guard)
HRT .....	Hostage Rescue Team
ISR.....	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
ITD .....	International Training Division (Coast Guard)
JSOA.....	Joint Special Operations Agency
JSOC .....	Joint Special Operations Command
LEDET .....	Law Enforcement Detachment (Coast Guard)
LOC.....	Lines of Communication
MIFC .....	Maritime Intelligence Fusion Center (Coast Guard)
MSST .....	Maritime Safety and Security Team (Coast Guard)
NEO .....	Noncombatant Evacuation Operation
NSSE.....	National Special Security Event
NSW .....	Naval Special Warfare
NSWC .....	Naval Special Warfare Command
ODA .....	Operational Detachment—Alpha (Special Forces)
OSS.....	Office of Strategic Services
OTH-RHIB.....	Over-The-Horizon Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat
PSU.....	Port Security Unit
RHIB .....	Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (Coast Guard parlance)
RIB.....	Rigid Inflatable Boat (Navy parlance)
SF .....	Special Forces (Army)
SOC .....	Special Operations Command
SOF.....	Special Operations Forces
SRT.....	Security Response Team (Coast Guard, also called EMSST)

SWAT .....Special Weapons and Tactics  
TACLET.....(Coast Guard) Tactical Law Enforcement Team  
UAV .....Unmanned Aerial Vehicle  
UN.....United Nations  
UNCLOS.....UN Convention on the Law of the Sea  
USASOC.....United States Army Special Operations Command  
USCG .....United States Coast Guard  
USDEA.....United States Drug Enforcement Administration  
USSOCOM ....US Special Operations Command  
WMD .....Weapons of Mass Destruction

## Appendix C. Glossary

**Civil Affairs.** Designated Active and Reserve component forces and units organized, trained, and equipped specifically to conduct civil affairs activities and to support civil-military operations. Also called CA. (JP 1-02)

**Civil Affairs Activities.** Activities performed or supported by civil affairs that (1) enhance the relationship between military forces and civil authorities in areas where military forces are present; and (2) involve application of civil affairs functional specialty skills, in areas normally the responsibility of civil government, to enhance conduct of civil-military operations. (JP 1-02)

**Clandestine Operation.** An operation sponsored or conducted by governmental departments or agencies in such a way as to assure secrecy or concealment. A clandestine operation differs from a covert operation in that emphasis is placed on concealment of the operation rather than on concealment of the identity of the sponsor. In special operations, an activity may be both covert and clandestine and may focus equally on operational considerations and intelligence-related activities. See also covert operation. (JP 3-05.1)

**Coast Guard Special Purpose Forces.** The author uses this term to describe collectively the Coast Guard EMSST/SRT, TACLETs, LEDETs, MSSTs, PSUs, ITD, SMTc, HITRON, and National Strike Force. Special purpose forces differ from Coast Guard multi-mission units in that they are organized, trained, and equipped to accomplish a much narrower mission set than Coast Guard cutters, boat stations and air stations, and most focus on the maritime security role.

**Combat Search And Rescue.** A specific task performed by rescue forces to effect the recovery of distressed personnel during war or military operations other than war. Also called CSAR. (JP 1-02)

**Counterterrorism.** Operations that include the offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, preempt, and respond to terrorism. Also called CT. (JP 1-02)

**Covert Operation.** An operation that is so planned and executed as to conceal the identity of or permit plausible denial by the sponsor. A covert operation differs from a clandestine operation in that emphasis is placed on concealment of identity of sponsor rather than on concealment of the operation. (JP 1-02)

**Danger Close.** In close air support, artillery, mortar, and naval gunfire support fires, it is the term included in the method of engagement segment of a call for fire which indicates that friendly forces are within close proximity of the target. The close proximity distance is determined by the weapon and munition fired.

**Enhanced Maritime Safety And Security Team.** Coast Guard EMSSTs support the Lead Federal Agency, Combatant Commander, or Coast Guard Incident Commander by providing a rapid-response, direct-action team for opposed boardings in ports and the maritime approaches. Also called EMSST, Security Response Team, or SRT. (SRT focus group)

**Foreign Internal Defense.** Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. Also called FID. (JP 3-05)

**Homeland Defense.** Protection of US sovereignty, territory, domestic population, and critical defense infrastructure against external threats and aggression. The Department of Defense is responsible for homeland defense. (Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support)

**Homeland Security.** A concerted national effort to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism, and minimize the damage and recover from attacks that do occur. The Department of Homeland Security is the lead federal agency for homeland security. (National Strategy for Homeland Security)

**Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace.** An analytical methodology employed to reduce uncertainties concerning the enemy, environment, and terrain for all types of operations. Intelligence preparation of the battlespace builds an extensive database for each potential area in which a unit may be required to operate. The database is then analyzed in detail to determine the impact of the enemy, environment, and terrain on operations and presents it in graphic form. Intelligence preparation of the battlespace is a continuing process. Also called IPB. (JP 1-02)

**Law Enforcement Detachment.** The Coast Guard officially established the LEDET program in 1982. The first LEDETs operated directly under Groups and Districts, where they served as law enforcement specialists, conducting training and local operations. In 1986, Public Law (P.L.) 99-570 specifically authorized the establishment of billets for active duty USCG personnel to carry out drug interdiction operations from naval surface vessels provided by DoD. Since Posse Comitatus strictly prohibits DoD personnel from directly engaging in law enforcement activities, LEDETs were tasked with operating aboard USN ships to investigate contacts and conduct boardings in accordance with USCG policy and directives. In accordance with P.L. 99-570, LEDETs were to deploy on US Navy (USN) "ships of opportunity", transiting or operating in areas frequently used by illegal drug traffickers. In 1988, P.L. 100-456 made it a requirement that USCG law enforcement personnel be assigned to each appropriate USN surface vessel that transits a drug interdiction area. The 1989 National Defense Authorization Act designated the DoD as the lead agency of the Federal Government for the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime trafficking of illegal drugs into the United States or any of its Commonwealths, Territories, or Possessions. In turn, the Coast Guard was designated the lead agency for the interdiction and apprehension of illegal drug traffickers on the high seas. In order to meet these statutory responsibilities, the DoD deploys surface assets to drug interdiction areas, making ships available for direct support of USCG law enforcement operations (G-OPL via [www.uscg.mil](http://www.uscg.mil)). Coast Guard LEDETs are subordinate units of TACLETs. Standing LEDETs number seven to nine people, but ad hoc teams may be formed with two or more people. LEDETs also conduct maritime interdiction operations pursuant to UN resolutions, foreign internal defense, and any other mission that requires specialized maritime law enforcement skills. Also called LEDET.

**Line of Communications.** A route, either land, water, and/or air, that connects an operating military force with a base of operations and along which supplies and military forces move. Also called LOC. (JP 1-02)

**Maritime Domain.** All areas and things of, on, under, relating to, adjacent to, or bordering on a sea, ocean, or other navigable waterway, including all maritime re-



lated activities, infrastructure, people, cargo, and vessels and other conveyances. (NSPD-41/HSPD-13)

**Maritime Domain Awareness.** The effective understanding of anything associated with the global maritime domain that could impact the security, safety, economy, or environment of the United States. Also called MDA. (HSPD-13/NSPD-41)

**Maritime Safety and Security Team.** MSSTs were created in direct response to the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, and are a part of the Department of Homeland Security's layered strategy directed at protecting our seaports and waterways. MSSTs provide waterborne and shoreside antiterrorism force protection for strategic shipping, high interest vessels and critical infrastructure. MSSTs are a quick response force capable of rapid, nationwide deployment via air, ground or sea transportation in response to changing threat conditions and evolving Maritime Homeland Security (MHS) mission requirements. Multi-mission capability facilitates augmentation for other selected Coast Guard missions. MSST personnel receive training in advanced boat tactics and antiterrorism force protection at the Special Missions Training Center located at Camp Lejeune, NC ([www.uscg.mil](http://www.uscg.mil)).

**Naval Coastal Warfare.** Coastal sea control, harbor defense, and port security, executed both in coastal areas outside the United States in support of national policy and in the United States as part of this Nation's defense. Also called NCW. (JP 3-10)

**Naval Special Warfare.** A designated naval warfare specialty that conducts operations in the coastal, riverine, and maritime environments. Naval special warfare emphasizes small, flexible, mobile units operating under, on, and from the sea. These operations are characterized by stealth, speed, and precise, violent application of force. Also called NSW. (JP 3-05)

**Naval Special Warfare Forces.** Those Active and Reserve Component Navy forces designated by the Secretary of Defense that are specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. Also called NSW forces or NAVSOF. (JP 3-05.2)

**Port Security Unit.** Coast Guard Port Security Units (PSUs) are [company-sized] Coast Guard units staffed primarily with selected reservists. They provide waterborne and limited land-based protection for shipping and critical port facilities both INCONUS and in theater. PSUs can deploy within 24 hours and establish operations within 96 hours after initial call-up. Each PSU has transportable boats equipped with dual outboard motors, and support equipment to ensure mobility and sustainability for up to 30 days. Every PSU is staffed by a combination of reserve and active duty personnel. PSUs require specialized training not available elsewhere in the Coast Guard. Coast Guard Reservists assigned to Port Security Units must complete a Basic Skills Course at the Special Missions Training Center in Camp Lejeune, NC. In addition to their most recent support of homeland security operations around the country, PSUs were deployed to the Persian Gulf during Operation Desert Storm in 1990, to Haiti during Operation Uphold Democracy in 1994, back to the Middle East to provide vital force protection for US Navy assets following the attack on the USS Cole in 2000, and again to protect Iraqi critical infrastructure and other operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 2003 to the present (G-OPD via [www.uscg.mil](http://www.uscg.mil)).

**Posse Comitatus Act** (18 USC 1385). A Reconstruction-era criminal law proscribing use of Army (later, Air Force) to "execute the laws" except where expressly au-

thorized by Constitution or Congress. Limit on use of military for civilian law enforcement also applies to Navy by regulation. In December 1981, additional laws were enacted (codified 10 USC 371-78) clarifying permissible military assistance to civilian law enforcement agencies—including the Coast Guard—especially in combating drug smuggling into the United States. Posse Comitatus clarifications emphasize supportive and technical assistance (e.g., use of facilities, vessels, aircraft, intelligence, tech aid, surveillance, etc.) while generally prohibiting direct participation of DoD personnel in law enforcement (e.g., search, seizure, and arrests). For example, Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDETs) serve aboard Navy vessels and perform the actual boardings of interdicted suspect drug smuggling vessels and, if needed, arrest their crews). Positive results have been realized especially from Navy ship/aircraft involvement (G-OPL via [www.uscg.mil](http://www.uscg.mil)).

**Security Assistance.** Group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the United States provides defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives. Also called SA (JP 1-02).

**Security Response Team (SRT).** Coast Guard SRTs support the Combatant Commander, Lead Federal Agency, or Coast Guard Incident Commander by providing a rapid-response, direct-action team for opposed boardings in ports and the maritime approaches. Also known as Enhanced Maritime Safety and Security Team or EMSST.

**Service Component Command.** A command consisting of the Service component commander and all those Service forces, such as individuals, units, detachments, organizations, and installations under that command, including the support forces that have been assigned to a combatant command or further assigned to a subordinate unified command or joint task force. (JP 0-2)

**Special Boat Team.** US Navy forces organized, trained, and equipped to conduct or support special operations with patrol boats or other combatant craft. Also called SBT. (JP 1-02)

**Special Forces.** US Army forces organized, trained, and equipped to conduct special operations with an emphasis on unconventional warfare capabilities. Also called SF. (JP 1-02)

**Special Mission Unit.** A generic term to represent a group of operations and support personnel from designated organizations that is task-organized to perform highly classified activities. Also called SMU. (JP 3-05.1)

**Special Nuclear Material.** Defined by Title I of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 as plutonium, uranium-233, or uranium enriched in the isotopes uranium-233 or uranium-235 (<http://www.nrc.gov/materials/sp-nucmaterials.html>).

**Special Operations.** Operations conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to achieve military, diplomatic, informational, and/or economic objectives employing military capabilities for which there is no broad conventional force requirement. These operations often require covert, clandestine, or low visibility capabilities. Special operations are applicable across the range of military operations. They can be conducted independently or in conjunction with operations of conventional forces or other government agencies and may include

operations through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces. Special operations differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets. Also called SO. (JP 3-05)

**Special Operations Command.** A subordinate unified or other joint command established by a joint force commander to plan, coordinate, conduct, and support joint special operations within the joint force commander's assigned operational area. Also called SOC. See also special operations. (JP 3-05)

**Special Operations Forces.** Those Active and Reserve Component forces of the Military Services designated by the Secretary of Defense and specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. Also called SOF. (JP 1-02)

**Tactical Law Enforcement Team (TACLET).** Coast Guard TACLETs as organized today are the command and support elements responsible for six to nine standing LEDETs. TACLETs report to either the Atlantic or Pacific Area Commander (3-star).

**Terrorism.** The calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological. (JP 1-02)

**Unconventional Warfare.** A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes, but is not limited to, guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and unconventional assisted recovery. Also called UW (JP 3-05).

**Unconventional Warfare Forces.** US forces having an existing unconventional warfare capability.

**Weapons Of Mass Destruction.** Weapons that are capable of a high order of destruction and/or of being used in such a manner as to destroy large numbers of people. Weapons of mass destruction can be high explosives or nuclear, biological, chemical, and radiological weapons, but exclude the means of transporting or propelling the weapon where such means is a separable and divisible part of the weapon. Also called WMD. (JP 1-02)



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- CDR Wilson, USN (NSW) currently serves on the operations staff of the Naval Special Warfare Command. All information attributed with permission.



## About the Author

**L**ieutenant Commander Gary R. “Russ” Bowen has qualifications in tactical law enforcement and boat force operations. A former-enlisted Marine, his commissioned assignments have included the US Coast Guard Cutter STEADFAST, Pacific Area Tactical Law Enforcement Team, the Maritime Law Enforcement Academy, and Coast Guard Group, Mobile, Alabama.

As team leader of Law Enforcement Detachment 103, he deployed for counterdrug operations in North, Central, and South America. LCDR Bowen also deployed to the Northern Arabian Gulf to enforce UN sanctions against Iraq, working with both Navy surface combatants and Naval Special Warfare.

LCDR Bowen has experience with interagency operations in the Southwest Border High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area and, most recently, at Hurricane Katrina Joint Field Office Baton Rouge.

He holds a Bachelor of Science from the US Coast Guard Academy and a Master of Military Art and Science from the US Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC). LCDR Bowen was the first Coast Guard officer to complete the Special Operations Track at CGSC and this year became the first Coast Guard student to attend the US Army School of Advanced Military Studies. Following graduation, LCDR Bowen will report to U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Office of Counterterrorism and Special Missions, in Washington, D.C.



LCDR Bowen on board USS HURRICANE (PC-3) off the southwest coast of Mexico in 1996 on the occasion of his first drug seizure, a modest 100 pounds of marijuana.

