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**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**U. S. COAST GUARD**

**STATEMENT OF**

**REAR ADMIRAL JAMES CARMICHAEL**

**ON**

**PORT SECURITY**

**BEFORE THE**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION AND MERCHANT MARINE**

**COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION**

**UNITED STATES SENATE**

**PORT EVERGLADES, FLORIDA**

**JANUARY 09, 2002**

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Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, I am Rear Admiral James Carmichael, Commander of the Seventh Coast Guard District headquartered in Miami, Florida. On behalf of the Commandant, Admiral Jim Loy, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about the challenges we face in the southeastern United States with respect to our role in port and maritime security.

Protecting America from terrorist threats requires constant vigilance across every mode of transportation: air, land, and sea. The agencies within the Department of Transportation, including the U.S. Coast Guard and the Maritime Administration (MARAD), touch all three modes of transportation and are cooperatively linked. This is especially true of the maritime mode. Ensuring robust port and maritime security is a national priority and an inter-modal challenge, with impacts in America's heartland communities just as directly as the U.S. seaport cities where cargo and passenger vessels arrive and depart daily. The United States has more than 1,000 harbor channels, 25,000 miles of inland, intra-coastal and coastal waterways, serving 361 ports containing more than 3,700 passenger and cargo terminals. This maritime commerce infrastructure, known as the U.S. Marine Transportation System, or MTS, has long been a Department of Transportation priority. The U.S. MTS handles more than 2 billion tons of freight, 3 billion tons of oil, transports more than 134 million passengers by ferry, and entertains more than 7 million cruise ship passengers each year. The vast majority of the cargo handled by this system is immediately loaded onto or has just been unloaded from railcars and truckbeds, making the borders of the U.S. seaport network especially abstract and vulnerable, with strong, numerous and varied linkages direct to our Nation's rail and highway systems.

Port and Marine Security is an immense challenges for our service since 95 percent of America's overseas trade moves by sea, through 361 ports along 95,000 miles of coastline. In the Seventh District, which comprises the coastal waters of South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, there are 35 major ports and extensive coastline in close proximity to foreign countries.

### **South Florida Maritime Homeland Security Challenges**

The maritime transportation system in this region contributes substantially to the economic growth and stability of our nation and the quality of life of our citizens. However, it is vulnerable to terrorist and criminal elements, and needs commensurate security. The cruise ship industry, maritime energy distribution system, and container vessel activity are critical to the economy of the region. The Port of Miami and Port Everglades are the number one and two cruise ship ports in the world. More than 6.5 million passengers cruise out of South Florida ports each year. During the height of this winter's cruise season, as many as 18 cruise ships will be moored in these two ports simultaneously. With the capacities of the largest of these ships exceeding 5,000 passengers and crew, numerous challenges exist with respect to passengers, stores, terminals, and waterside security.

The ports of South Florida facilitate trade with many Caribbean and South American countries. More than 1.5 million twenty-foot equivalent units of containers from foreign and domestic ports move through the combined ports of Miami and Port Everglades each year. This volume is equivalent to the fifth largest container port in the United States.

The geography of South Florida also presents its own unique security challenges. With an extensive coastline, close proximity to foreign nations, open ports and plentiful inlets along the Florida Keys and Intra-coastal Waterway, numerous opportunities exist for surreptitious entry and exploitation by criminal elements and terrorists.

### **Coordination to Address the Challenges of Maritime Homeland Security**

The Coast Guard has taken a leadership role in coordinating multi-agency, private sector, and international efforts to prevent terrorism. We are uniquely positioned because of our broad civil authorities as a law enforcement agency, our military character, and our ability to surge operations quickly to meet new threats to our nation.

In the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>, here in South Florida, the Coast Guard worked with our interagency partners to improve the security posture in our ports. The groundwork undertaken in recent years by various maritime security interests facilitated the swift implementation of enhanced security measures. For example, the Coast Guard Captain of the Port established Seaport Security Committees in the Ports of Palm Beach, Miami, and Port Everglades in March 2001. These committees are led by an executive steering group that consists of three co-chairs (Coast Guard Captain of the Port, Customs Port Director, and Port Authority Director), along with representatives from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), County Emergency Management, and local law enforcement.

Cruise ships are currently met at the sea buoy by armed pilot protection teams to ensure these foreign vessels are safely navigated into the Port of Miami and Port Everglades. A 100-yard moving exclusionary Security Zone is in effect around each cruise ship transiting the port. Security Zones are promulgated by the Captain of the Port in accordance with the Ports and Waterways Safety Act authority for port security. Large fixed Security Zones are also in effect where multiple terminals berth groups of cruise ships and petroleum tankers. These zones provide buffer areas to enable enforcement patrol craft to interdict potentially hostile boats before they can reach intended targets.

Within the passenger terminals, where security plans (level I) had previously required only basic access control and credentialing, the Coast Guard implemented Security Level III, the highest level of security, established under International Maritime Organization guidelines. Security Level III is defined in each Coast Guard approved passenger terminal or ship security plan. All luggage and stores are screened to detect the introduction of prohibited weapons, incendiaries, and explosives aboard vessels.

Physical security of passenger terminals and water adjacent cruise ships in port is critical to effective security. Unlike airports, which have physical barriers to protect the runways and tarmacs from unauthorized public access, seaports often allow vehicles direct access to ship berths, and boats have access to the sides of cruise ship hulls unless protected by patrolled security zones. Coast Guard Port Security Teams, assigned

full time to Port Everglades and the Port of Miami, conduct daily security “sweeps” of terminals and waterways before cruise ship arrivals, making sure guards are on duty, and that screening equipment is staffed by qualified personnel. These teams conduct continuous patrols of the terminals during passenger operations to ensure that cruise lines follow their approved security plan procedures.

Security concerns, especially for high capacity passenger vessels, also extend to foreign ports of call. After September 11<sup>th</sup>, the Government of the Bahamas requested Coast Guard assistance in assessing their ports for cruise ship operations. Under a US law (46 USC and 22 USC) containing provisions that encourage anti-terrorism assistance to foreign governments, the Coast Guard Captain of the Port Miami sent representatives to Nassau, the fourth ranked cruise ship port of call in the world, to begin a dialogue on this important security concern.

Within the ports, a new normalcy for security remains to be established by balancing security responsibilities among the federal, state, local and commercial maritime activities. Then those responsible must be resourced to execute security measures. The provisions of S.1214, HR 3437 and Florida’s 311.12, the state’s Port and Maritime Security Act, are bold steps along that path. These bills recognize port needs. Senate bill S.1214 even recognizes private terminals in its provisions.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the United States Coast Guard is a leader in America’s maritime security and we have taken a leadership role in coordinating a multi-agency, public and private sector, and international effort to achieve the goals of the Coast Guard’s Maritime Homeland Security Strategy. The Coast Guard is committed to the continuing protection of our nation, its citizens, and its marine transportation system against terrorism, while also maintaining our safety of life at sea, maritime law enforcement and environmental protection missions. Thank you for the opportunity to share the unique challenges that the Coast Guard currently faces in Southeast Florida with respect to our role in port and maritime security, and the response being made to address those challenges. I also thank you for your continuing support of the Coast Guard. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.