

STATEMENT OF RICHARD M. LARRABEE
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ON
STRENGTHENING U.S. SECURITY AGAINST MARITIME THREATS
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS, ATMOSPHERE AND FISHERIES
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION
UNITED STATES SENATE
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Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the important issue of port security given the events of September 11.

I am Rear Admiral Richard M. Larrabee, United States Coast Guard Retired and I am currently Director of Port Commerce at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. On behalf of our Board of Commissioners and staff, I extend our thanks to Congress for the outpouring of support for all in the New York/New Jersey region so directly impacted by these terrible events.

The Port of New York and New Jersey is the third largest in the nation and the largest port on the east coast of North America. Last year the port handled over 3 million containers and 560,000 autos. New York/New Jersey handles more petroleum products than any other port in the nation, along with a variety of other bulk and breakbulk commodities. The harbor also supports a wide range of passenger services including cruise ships and growing, as well as increasingly important, commuter ferry services. Ports like New York and New Jersey are key transportation links in global trade; ninety-five percent of US trade comes by ship. The Port of New York and New Jersey serves a region of 18 million people locally and a larger population of 80 to 90 million people within the ten state region surrounding the port. Serving consumer demand for international goods is an essential component of our national economy and ports provide the critical intermodal link

for the transfer of those goods from ships to our national landside transportation network.

On September 11, the world witnessed the use of civilian transportation as a weapon to destroy property and take the lives of thousands of innocent people. The tragic events of that day underscore the critical need to meet America's transportation requirements while ensuring the safety and security of the nation.

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the crash in Pennsylvania, the Port of New York and New Jersey was closed by actions of the US Coast Guard and local law enforcement as a precaution against a potential terrorist threat. This response by federal, state and local enforcement agencies, along with the support and cooperation of private marine terminal operators and their security teams, was well coordinated and orderly. The port was reopened on the morning of Thursday, September 13 under new procedures established by the Coast Guard, Customs, local law enforcement and terminal operators. These procedures include

Waterside:

- At sea boarding by joint Coast Guard, Customs and Immigration teams to inspect the vessel, paperwork and crewmembers;
- Tug escort from sea to dock;
- Coast Guard Port Security Units (PSU) providing additional waterside security, including the protection of national assets;

Landside:

- Increased targeting and inspection of cargo containers by joint federal teams;
- Increased physical security;
- Increased patrols and roadway checkpoints within the port;
- Restrictions on all foreign crews going ashore except in the case of medical

emergency and repatriation.

- Security meetings among all Federal, State and local law enforcement twice a week and with terminal operators weekly.

These new, intensive security procedures highlight the means that the federal government and others will need to consider as we move forward in the weeks and months ahead. Over the past month, we have raised many questions as to how national security in general and port security in particular will be coordinated, managed and, most importantly, funded.

Under current manning and mission priorities, the Coast Guard and others are able to adequately respond in an intensive way to these types of events, but these organizations can only sustain this level of security for a short period of time. Currently, there are not enough resources in terms of personnel and equipment to maintain this level of security over an extended period within the Port of New York, let alone the rest of the nation.

I congratulate you, Mr. Chairman and the committee, for taking up this important issue at this time and respectfully request that you seriously consider the Coast Guard's and other agencies' needs for both personnel and equipment to provide the level of protection and response that we as a nation now expect and require.

While the focus of this morning's hearing is on the Coast Guard and NOAA, I know, Mr. Chairman, that you and the members of the Committee are aware that they are only two of several federal agencies that have a role in port security. In addition, there are state and local agencies that also have port security roles and responsibilities.

Therefore, among the challenges that we face in addressing the issue of port security is the question of "Who's in Charge?" In 1989, in the wake of the Exxon Valdez disaster, we faced a similar question when it came to identifying who was in charge in the event of an oil

spill in one of our harbors. Today, we have an answer to that question because this Committee, the Congress and others took a coordinated approach to developing new laws that laid out clear responsibilities and roles for each of the agencies involved in responding to an oil spill event. This could serve as a model to coordinate the various agency jurisdictions to first prevent and, if necessary, respond to a terrorist attack on our ports. It is an issue we hope that the Office of Homeland Security will address.

Communication is the foundation for coordination among the various agencies responsible for port security. This includes sharing intelligence and threat assessment information among federal, state and local agencies, as well as certain limited private interests, such as terminal operators, when in those instances the private companies have an explicit responsibility for securing their operations against a potential threat. As a port director, I cannot give you or my superiors a fair assessment today of the adequacy of current security procedures in place because I am not provided with information on the risk analysis conducted to institute these measures.

Mr. Chairman, as you and the Committee members are aware, Senator Hollings has been considering these issues of port security well before the events of September 11. He and Senator Graham are to be commended for their pro-active thinking on these issues. The Senate and others are actively considering the Port and Maritime Security Act of 2001. We look forward to reviewing this legislation with Congress, port operators and private interests to ensure provide adequate resources and funding are in place to provide the highest level of security, commensurate with the vulnerability and threat, while also maintaining the safe and efficient movement of commerce and protection of the public.

Our success in providing heightened port security in the wake of the September 11th attacks clearly indicates that no one entity is responsible or capable for providing port security, but rather, it is a shared responsibility among Federal, State and local law

enforcement, and private security forces. Thus, any legislation must consider not only those partnerships but also private terminal operators and port authorities as well. The port industry must have the ability to work together with the local Coast Guard Captain of the Port to develop security guidelines and standards specific to the unique nature and vulnerability of each port area, rather than generic guidelines for all ports.

One of the major provisions of the Port Security Bill calls for vulnerability assessments followed by the submission of comprehensive security plans. In the wake of recent events, the schedule of vulnerability assessments, which now calls for 50 ports over 5 years, must be accelerated or at least prioritized. At this point, the Port of New York and New Jersey is not even scheduled for a vulnerability assessment in FY 2002. I believe that this is inadequate.

While the Port Security Bill continues to be revised, we commend Senators Hollings and Graham for drafting legislation that provides focus for a national policy on maritime security. We would, however, appreciate an opportunity to comment on any further revisions before the bill is finalized.

Providing for national security goes beyond law enforcement procedures and providing adequate resources. Investments in our transportation infrastructure are critical to both our national defense and our economic well-being. Given our heightened awareness of the need for greater security, along with our effort to increase capacity at our ports, we can begin to incorporate security needs into the design and construction of national transportation infrastructure. This could include the application of new technologies that allow us to enhance our security measures while minimizing the impact on transportation systems on the flow of cargo.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I want to commend and thank the Commandant of the Coast

Guard, the FBI, the U.S. Customs Service, the Immigration and Naturalization Service and a number of other agencies for the tremendous response they have provided to us in the New York/New Jersey region and the unprecedented level of cooperation among federal agencies and between federal and local jurisdictions over these past weeks. Their efforts are deeply appreciated and will not be forgotten. Our hope is that with the support of the Congress and the Administration we can provide these agencies with the tools they need to sustain this level of service to the nation not only in times of crisis, but over the long term.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to take any questions.