

**DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
U.S. COAST GUARD**

WRITTEN STATEMENT

OF

VADM ROBERT J. PAPP, JR.

ON THE

**NOMINATION OF ROBERT J. PAPP
TO BE COMMANDANT OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD**

BEFORE THE

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION**

U.S. SENATE

MARCH 18, 2010

Introduction

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee. It is a privilege to appear before you today. I am grateful for the confidence of President Obama and Secretary Napolitano in nominating me to become the 24th Commandant of the United States Coast Guard. I would also like to thank Admiral Thad Allen, our current Commandant, for the opportunity to serve as Chief of Staff of the Coast Guard and Commander of the Atlantic Area. It has been an honor to serve in the Coast Guard for nearly 35 years, and I am humbled by the prospect of serving as the Commandant. Today, I will discuss my priorities and objectives to provide an overview of how, if confirmed, I will lead the Coast Guard in support of the goals of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Unique Agency of the Federal Government

The Coast Guard is a unique federal agency. We trace our history back to August 4th, 1790, when the first Congress authorized the construction of ten vessels to prevent smuggling and enforce tariff and trade laws. Over the last two centuries, we have expanded in size, authorities, and responsibilities to confront the ever-evolving challenges of the maritime environment. With its broad safety, security, military, and law enforcement authorities, today's Coast Guard is a versatile, adaptable, maritime service within DHS and one of the nation's five armed services. In fulfilling the Coast Guard's eleven statutorily-mandated missions, we protect against hazards to people, maritime commerce, and the environment; defend our borders; rescue those in peril on our waters; respond promptly to both man-made and natural disasters to restore the nation's waterways—safeguarding and fostering the rapid recovery of the Marine Transportation System (MTS); and, when called upon, defend the nation both at home or abroad in partnership with the other Armed Forces. On the rivers, in the ports, on the seas, and around the globe, the Coast Guard provides a great service to our nation through our distinctive blend of military, humanitarian, and civilian law enforcement capabilities.

Our People-Our Results

We have approximately 42,000 active duty, 8,200 reserve, 8,000 civilian, and 31,000 volunteer auxiliary members engaged in conducting or supporting Coast Guard operations. These dedicated men and women deliver critical services and value to the public across our eleven missions. In FY 2009, under the leadership of Admiral Allen, we responded to more than 23,500 search and rescue cases and saved more than 4,700 lives; removed more than 160 metric tons of cocaine bound for the United States; interdicted more than 3,700 undocumented migrants attempting to enter our nation illegally; and conducted thousands of security boardings and escorts. In support of the MTS, we serviced more than 17,700 aids to navigation and corrected more than 7,500 discrepancies; performed domestic icebreaking to keep waterways open for commercial traffic carrying more than \$600 million worth of cargo; performed more than 17,300 facility inspections, 25,400 container inspections, and over 14,000 inspections on U.S.-flagged certificated vessels; and conducted nearly 4,500 marine casualty investigations.

Since our inception, the Coast Guard's service to the nation has been defined by our missions and our people. Our men and women are inspired by the rich heritage of our Service and its accomplishments. Today, the challenges that we face are as varied as they are demanding. The American people and our partner agencies expect clarity of purpose and excellence in performing our statutory missions – and that is what we seek to do on a daily basis.

Unity of Effort

The Coast Guard's core competencies, organizational ethos, and broad capabilities are tightly aligned to DHS' vision to provide a homeland that is safe, secure, and resilient against terrorism and other hazards. Our Service's eleven missions, performed by a talented and versatile workforce, reflect and support the Secretary of Homeland Security's five priorities as articulated in the Department's Quadrennial Homeland Security Review:

- Preventing Terrorism and Enhancing Security
- Securing and Managing Our Borders
- Enforcing and Administering Our Immigration Laws
- Safeguarding and Securing Cyberspace
- Ensuring Resilience to Disasters

My Priorities

I am wholly committed to carrying out the Coast Guard's eleven statutory missions in the most professional and effective manner possible. If confirmed, I will set a course that completes several ongoing reforms, honors our profession, strengthens our partnerships, and respects our shipmates. I will briefly elaborate on my priorities below.

Completing Ongoing Reforms

The Coast Guard can and will increase our effectiveness by completing several ongoing staffing, financial management, and mission alignment reform efforts over the next few years. The tragic 9/11 attacks and Hurricane Katrina displayed the Coast Guard's exceptional skills, yet also brought to light several structural areas in our organization that needed improvement. We continue to modernize our headquarters and logistics organizations, we are updating our financial management systems to reflect contemporary controls and procedures for accounting and property management, and I am committed to completing the efforts already underway to reform our acquisitions program and recapitalize our cutters, aircraft, and Command, Control, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance systems. Our challenge is to effectively coordinate and complete these efforts as expeditiously as possible while maintaining our high levels of performance across our operational mission set.

In order to realize all of the priorities I am outlining today, we need to remain committed to the recapitalization of our aging fleet. We have worked diligently to overcome our acquisition program's performance gaps, and Congress' continued support for, emphasis on, and oversight of this program is critical. We need to build on the acquisitions successes of our seagoing and coastal buoy tenders, as well as the 87-foot coastal patrol boat program, and extend those successes to our other cutter classes.

The operational demands on the Coast Guard require completion of our critical recapitalization programs. Aging, deteriorating, and technically-challenged resources have exacerbated our operational challenges. To maximize effectiveness in the future, I will ensure that the Coast Guard is optimally organized to most effectively operate within its available resources. I will take aggressive steps to refocus on the versatile and adaptable capabilities provided by our cutters, boats, and aircraft in order to be prepared for the challenges of today and tomorrow. Most importantly, I will ensure our people have a clear vision and focus on how we will collectively navigate the way ahead to best leverage our versatile and adaptable maritime core capabilities and ensure the stability of our Service.

Honor our Profession and Respect Our Shipmates

The Coast Guard's greatest asset is the men and women who are called to duty in our active, reserve, civilian, and auxiliary components. Over the last decade, our workforce has grown rapidly to meet expanding requirements. To establish the highest professional standards, I will work to identify and address any gaps in capabilities, competencies, and performance measures. I am deeply committed to developing our collective workforce, enabling our men and women to build upon their experiences and excel throughout their careers.

I am also fully committed to providing the absolute best in human resource management, administrative support, wellness programs, and professional development. It is imperative that we continue to recruit and retain talented and motivated people. Our ability to accomplish this depends upon the substantive opportunities we offer, and our actions to care for our own. To implement this mandate, I will implement policies to benefit the workforce and their families by providing a safe, collaborative, and productive workplace environment, and support the White House initiative to provide family and geographic stability to our men and women in the armed services. I am committed to a Service that reflects the racial, ethnic, and gender composition of our nation. In short, if confirmed as Commandant, maintaining the Coast Guard as a profession of choice will be one of my top responsibilities.

Strengthen Our Partnerships

The Coast Guard has strengthened our ability to protect our nation's ports, waterways, and coastlines by partnering with federal, state, and local agencies; tribal nations; the marine industry; and international stakeholders. By working collaboratively, we can align our efforts to create an effective and efficient system to meet today's demands and fulfill our national security goals. I will work closely with Secretary Napolitano to fully implement the shared vision for homeland security set forth in the Department's first ever Quadrennial Homeland Security Review. I will also build upon the Coast Guard's strong record of developing and supporting maritime security partnerships at all levels of government and internationally with foreign coast guards. Prioritizing these partnerships will help us create a Maritime Transportation System that is safe, secure, and resilient against all hazards.

Conclusion

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Admiral Thad Allen for his exceptional service to our nation during his tenure as Commandant. Admiral Allen has presided over the needed adjustments to our organization and force structure that have set us up for success now and in the future. Our recent response to the tragic earthquake in Haiti underscores these improvements, as we led the initial U.S. response during the first 24 hours and supported the effort coordinated by the U.S. Agency for International Development and U.S. Southern Command in the following days.

Serving our country is more than a job – it is a calling that obligates us to responsible conduct, accountability, and commitment to the Coast Guard’s core values of Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty. We are inspired to serve by patriotic motives and the rule of law, and we have sworn to support and defend the Constitution. My operational and leadership experience over more than three decades has constantly re-energized my passion and enhanced my vision to lead the Coast Guard in a meaningful, efficient, and effective manner to serve the American people.

Again, I am privileged to appear before you today in consideration of serving as the 24th Commandant of the United States Coast Guard. I look forward to working with the leadership and members of this Committee to make the Service as effective as possible. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.