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# The U.S. Coast Guard of the 21st Century



## INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON U. S. COAST GUARD ROLES AND MISSIONS

The Honorable Mortimer L. Downey  
Chairman  
Department of Transportation

Mr. Rand Beers  
Department of State

The Honorable James E. Johnson  
Department of the Treasury

Mr. Andrew R. Hoehn  
Department of Defense

Mr. James E. Castello  
Department of Justice

The Honorable D. James Baker  
Department of Commerce

Mr. William H. Samuel  
Department of Labor

The Honorable Timothy Fields Jr.  
Environmental Protection Agency

Mr. Michael D. Deich  
Office of Management and Budget

Mr. Richard A. Clarke  
National Security Council

The Honorable Thurgood Marshall Jr.  
The White House

Mr. Ronald E. Minsk  
National Economic Council

Mr. Paul J. Weinstein  
Domestic Policy Council

Mr. Thomas J. Umberg  
Office of National Drug Control

Ms. Ellen M. Athas  
Policy Council on Environmental Quality

Admiral James M. Loy  
U. S. Coast Guard

### Former Members:

The Honorable Kathryn Higgins

Mr William Houley

Ms Sally Ericsson

I am pleased to introduce this summary of the conclusions of the Interagency Task Force on U.S. Roles and Missions. As Chairman of the Task Force, I joined with fifteen other senior members of the Clinton/Gore Administration to answer a fundamental question for the President; does the nation require a Coast Guard to operate in the Deepwater environment? Our emphatic and unanimous conclusion is that the nation has an enduring need for a Coast Guard, specifically for a Coast Guard in the Deepwater environment, that there is a near term requirement for re-capitalization, and that the Coast Guard's Deepwater Capabilities Replacement Project should continue to be pursued.

Our findings reinforced the value of a multi-missioned Coast Guard with regulatory, law enforcement, and humanitarian-focused emergency response authority, and military capability that offer this and future Administrations a highly motivated, cost-effective service with the demonstrated competence to meet changing national priorities.

The Report focuses on long-term maritime issues facing the nation and the challenging environment in which we expect the U.S. Coast Guard to operate in the year 2020. It identifies changes that will be needed to ensure U.S. maritime leadership and the safety, security and prosperity of the American people. This report also projects the range of vital roles and missions the Coast Guard will perform to support national policies and objectives that will endure into the 21st Century.

I'd like to acknowledge the dedication and effort of the members of the Task Force. Its membership represents a broad cross section of the government, speaking for the multitude of Departments and Agencies that rely on the Coast Guard for delivering their services to many areas of national interest.

### Mortimer L. Downey

Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation  
Chair, Interagency Task Force on U.S. Coast Guard Roles and Missions

## U.S. Coast Guard

### The U.S. Coast Guard of the 21st Century

The U.S. Coast Guard is at an important crossroads in 2000. Since its founding as the Revenue Cutter Service in 1790, the Coast Guard has continued to provide unique services and benefits to America through its distinctive blend of humanitarian, law-enforcement, diplomatic, and military capabilities. A military, multi-mission, maritime service within the Department of Transportation and one of the nation's five Armed Services, the Coast Guard must meet growing operational challenges.

The President in 1999 established the Interagency Task Force on the Roles and Missions of the United States Coast Guard. The goal of the Task Force was to "provide advice and recommendations regarding the appropriate roles and missions for the United States Coast Guard through the year 2020". Deputy Secretary of Transportation Mortimer L. Downey served as Task Force chair. Other members,



representing a broad cross-section of the government, were drawn from federal departments and agencies, many of which rely upon the Coast Guard to carry out their mandates and deliver important services to the nation.

Following a year of intensive research, hearings, and deliberations, the Task Force concluded that the Coast Guard provides the United States a broad spectrum of vital services that will be increasingly important in the decades ahead. Moreover, the Task Force recommended that the nation must take action soon to modernize and recapitalize Coast Guard forces, if the Service is to remain

### Safeguarding Critical Maritime Interests

The Interagency Task Force reaffirmed the national importance of the Coast Guard's legally mandated missions—and the Service's continuing responsibility for performing them. They are:

- Maritime search and rescue
- Recreational boating safety
- Marine safety
- International Ice Patrol operations
- Aids to navigation
- Ice-breaking in domestic waterways
- Bridge administration
- Vessel traffic management
- Marine environmental protection
- At-sea enforcement of living marine resource laws and treaty obligations
- At-sea drug interdiction
- National defense operations, including polar ice-breaking and port security

***"Like their sister services in the Department of Defense, the Coast Guard goes regularly into harm's way, both natural and man-made, and deserves the best equipment and systems available."***

Mr. Edward V. Kelly  
Vice President,  
American Maritime Officers.  
Letter dated 1 June 1999.

# U.S. Coast Guard

***"Although the future cannot be predicted with a great deal of certainty history clearly demonstrates a recurring need for a flexible and nimble organization such as the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard possesses the capability to respond quickly to National priorities such as natural and man-made disasters and changing national security challenges."***

The Honorable Federico Peña  
Former Secretary of  
Transportation.  
Letter dated 7 June 1999.

*Semper Paratus*—"Always Ready"—as its creed states, to meet the compelling demands of the 21st century.

## America's Maritime Challenges

The United States will face a dramatically transformed world situation in 2020. Compared to the Cold War, which defined U.S. security during the last half of the 20th century, the United States is no longer confronted with a single, super-power adversary. Rather, the nation today faces numerous threats, many of which come from the sea, a situation likely to worsen during the next two decades.

The oceans and U.S. waterways, in addition to carrying commercial trade vital for America's economic health, are conduits for transnational threats such as pollution, over-fishing, illegal migration, drug smuggling, international terrorism, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, America's burgeoning economic links with the rest of the world will lead

to further increases in the volume and value of maritime trade, and continuing challenges for U.S. maritime safety and security.

In the last decade of the 20th century, the Coast Guard saw its roles and missions become more pressing, more complex, and more dangerous. Stemming the flow of illicit narcotics and illegal migrants has become a national priority, and the Coast Guard is at the front-line of defending homeland security against these threats from the sea. The National Security Strategy's imperative of proactive engagement with the forces of other countries to advance stability and democracy has led to increased Coast Guard involvement overseas—usually alone but increasingly alongside U.S. Navy assets. Public demands for clean waters and the Exxon Valdez oil spill generated new environmental legislation and regulations, which the Coast Guard must enforce and implement. Rapid growth in maritime traffic has put a premium on the Coast Guard's inspection, oversight, and safety

programs, as well as the Service's vessel traffic management and aids to navigation activities.

If history repeats itself, new maritime tasks only dimly perceived in 2000 will almost certainly be thrust upon the Coast Guard during the next two decades. The Service's traditional roles and missions will be taxed by the growing complexity of the nation's maritime safety and security needs. Illegal migrants and drug smugglers will continue to search for undefended maritime routes to the United States. Smaller-scale contingencies will pose asymmetric threats to America's homeland



security from terrorists and other non-state actors. The growing criticality of fish protein—annual demand projected to be more than 110 million tons by 2020—for burgeoning world populations—some two billion more people at the end of the next two decades—will tax protection and enforcement regimes. The growth in oil tanker traffic to satisfy as much as 66 percent of domestic consumption, with total maritime trade doubling, maybe even tripling, by 2020, will bring a greater need for maritime safety and aids to navigation. Competition for increasingly crowded and congested ocean and harbor space—plied by 80-knot ferries, cruise ships carrying 5,000 passengers if not more, 65 percent more recreational boaters than today, long-distance fishing fleets—all will demand more effective services from the Coast Guard during the next two decades.

Faced with this future, the Coast Guard must design, engineer, and acquire forces that possess an intrinsic flexibility and adaptability. Moreover, the Coast Guard must continue to meet growing demands for increased performance effectiveness.

The critical challenge arises from the fact that the Service confronts today's and tomorrow's requirements with an aging capital infrastructure, especially in the "Deepwater" operating area. For instance, the Coast Guard's Deepwater assets—medium- and high-endurance cutters, long-range aircraft, and their supporting command, control and communications systems—were originally acquired during a period stretching from the early 1960s to the mid-1980s. The average age of the Coast Guard's Deepwater cutters in 2000 is 27 years, making this force older than 38 of the world's 42 major naval fleets; a few cutters even date from World War II. Although some have already received mid-life upgrades, during the next 10 years these assets will reach the ends of their projected service lives while operating in a rigorous, highly corrosive and often hazardous environment.

The block obsolescence of much of the Coast Guard's most important assets presents both a threat and an opportunity. It is a threat in that the Service could soon be overwhelmed by a mismatch between its roles, missions, and tasks and the quantity and quality of the assets to carry them out. It is a Coast Guard opportunity in that the Service can take advantage of leading-edge technologies and systems, and the innovative operational techniques they enable, to do its jobs more effectively. The Coast Guard for several years has been addressing these trends and developments, and has put in place plans and programs to ensure that compelling needs can be met.



***"The continued improvement of Coast Guard counter-drug capabilities, particularly those that support agile deepwater operations, is critical to the future success of U.S. interdiction policy."***

The Honorable Barry R. McCaffrey  
Director, Office of  
National Drug Control Policy.  
Letter dated 12 October 1999.



# U.S. Coast Guard

# U.S. Coast Guard

## Overarching Conclusions

In light of these trends and dynamics, the Task Force agreed on six overarching conclusions that underscore the importance of the Coast Guard, its roles and missions, and the support it requires to continue to meet the nation's needs through 2020.

**1. The Coast Guard's roles and missions support national policies and objectives that will endure into the 21st century.**

America's future is already being shaped by globally linked economies, revolutions in maritime transportation and information systems, emerging threats to the marine environment, and expanding concepts of national security. Thus, the federal government has a legitimate and abiding interest in maintaining the Coast Guard's

active presence and effective influence in the nation's inland and coastal waters and on the high seas. Moreover, current trends indicate a growing demand for these and other services in the future.

The Coast Guard is the right agency to continue to safeguard America's multi-faceted maritime safety and security. Its fundamental roles are to save lives and property at sea; to provide a safe, efficient marine transportation system; to protect the marine environment; to enforce laws and treaties in the maritime region; and to defend national security interests and maritime borders. Its unique characteristics as a maritime agency with regulatory authority, law-enforcement authority, and military capabilities provide the United States a highly motivated, well-trained, cost-effective service with a demonstrated competence to meet critical national priorities.



**2. The U.S. will continue to need a flexible, adaptable, multi-mission, military Coast Guard to meet national maritime interests and requirements well into the next century.**

While the national policies from which Coast Guard missions originate can be thought of in discrete terms, Coast Guard people and capital assets by which those policies are implemented are a unified whole. This is the essence of the term "multi-mission"—a singular, integrated, synergistic system of boats, cutters, aircraft, and Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems that has capabilities and usefulness across a broad spectrum of civil and military missions and policies.

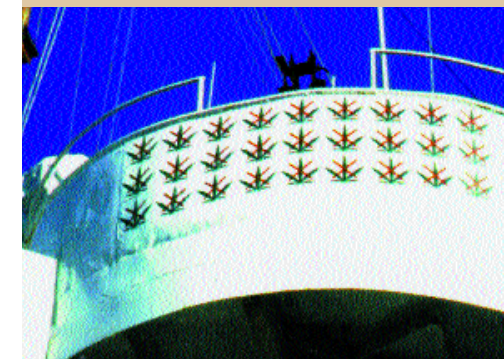
This multi-mission capability makes the Coast Guard one of the most efficient agencies in government—multiple outcomes from a single force give the American taxpayer maximum "bang for the buck." Additionally, as one of the nation's five Armed Services, the Coast Guard is a complementary and non-redundant military force-in-being that is available to the President and the regional commanders-in-chief as a specialized instrument of the nation's security. Overall national policy must preserve the Coast Guard's adaptability, mission flexibility, and efficiency—the factors that make today's Coast Guard a unique instrument of national policy.

**3. In order to hedge against tomorrow's uncertainties, the Coast Guard should be rebuilt so as to make it adaptable to future realities.**



The Coast Guard of the future must have the adaptability and flexibility to respond to a wide range of maritime challenges—a fact that must be reflected in today's planning for tomorrow's systems, forces, and operations. Among the numerous maritime threats and challenges the United States will face in the future, several pose significant demands on the Coast Guard:

- **Illegal migration and contraband smuggling**
- **Resource protection threats involving both living and inorganic marine resources**
- **Asymmetric and non-military threats that include weapons of mass destruction and terrorist activities**
- **Continued U.S. support of United Nations-sponsored sanctions and security operations**
- **Security, defense, and resource protection implications of the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea**



***"It is a fact that there is only one internationally recognized maritime force able to hinder the activities of narcotics traffickers in the Caribbean, the U.S. Coast Guard."***

Ms. Linda Watt  
Charge d'Affairs,  
Embassy of the United States of  
America, Santo Domingo,  
Dominican Republic.  
Letter dated 28 June 1999

***"The United States Coast Guard is the indisputable leading humanitarian agency of the world."***

Mr. William A. O'Neil  
Secretary-General, International  
Maritime Organization.  
Letter dated 10 June 1999.

# U.S. Coast Guard

# U.S. Coast Guard



***"Today's Coast Guard is one of the hardest working and best managed agencies of the federal government."***

Mr. Jack Kennedy  
National President, Navy League  
of the United States.  
Letter dated 27 May 1999.

Many of tomorrow's challenges are not in focus today. National policy for the Coast Guard and today's capitalization decisions that proceed from that policy must therefore enable tomorrow's Coast Guard to address these current as well as unknown future realities.

***4. In keeping with its well-deserved reputation as one of federal government's most effective and efficient organizations, the Coast Guard should continue to pursue new methods and technologies to enhance its ability to perform its vital missions.***

The federal government is committed to providing the services expected by the American public in the most effective and efficient manner possible, and the Coast Guard is widely recognized as being one of government's most efficient organizations. The Coast Guard was cited for "best practices" in conducting regional strategic assessments, developing a comprehensive planning architecture, and providing top-level support for performance measurement. Nevertheless, there may be ways for the Coast Guard to improve its efficiency. For example, the Service should improve its ability to obtain and use national intelligence information and to operate with other civilian agencies and military services more easily. It should also examine issues such as out-sourcing activities that are inherently non-governmental, optimal cutter crewing, and innovations from technological breakthroughs.

The Task Force recognized that the Coast Guard is or will be reviewing its internal

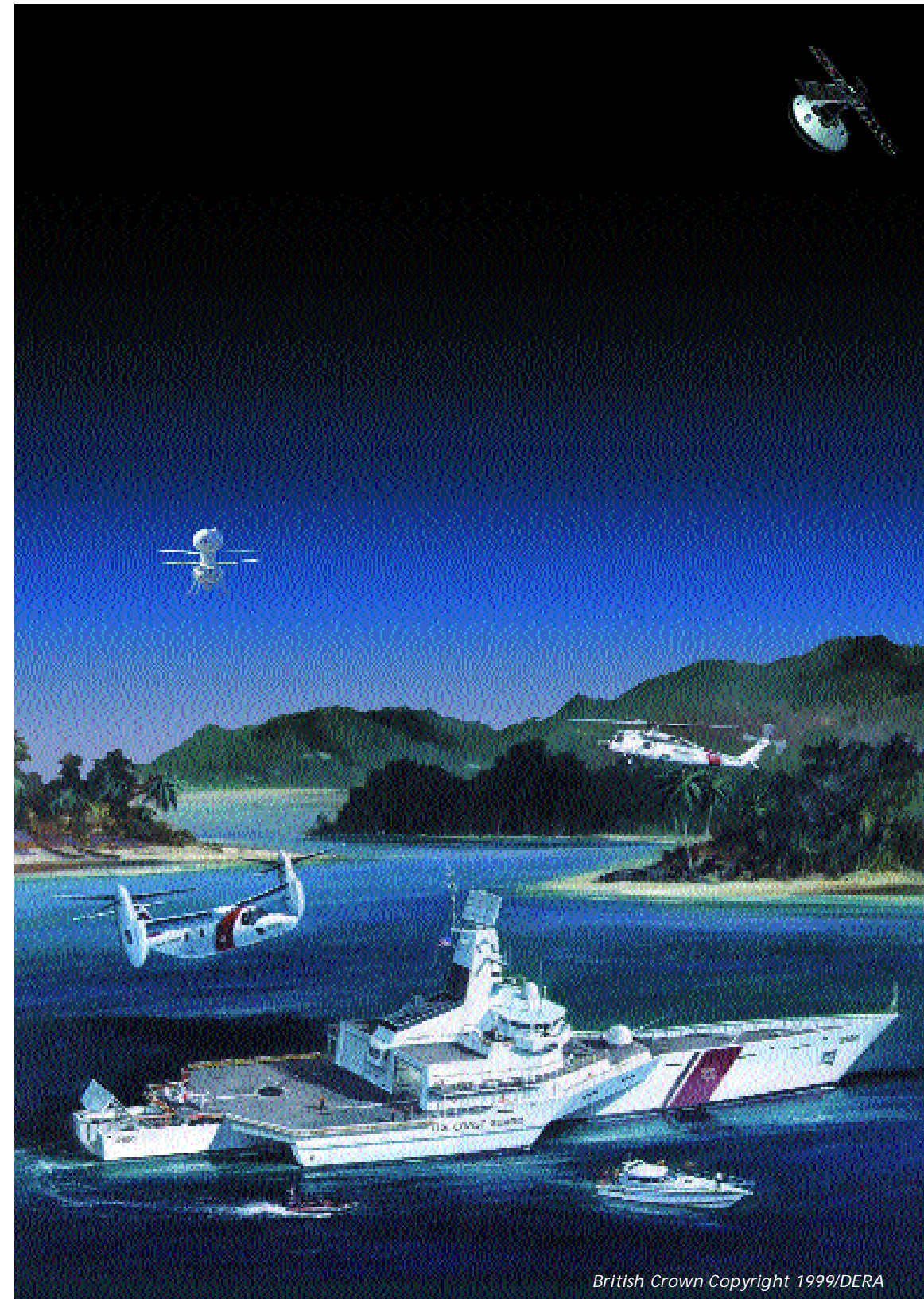
procedures and systems in the near future. Review of intelligence-related issues is a necessary input to planning the Deepwater acquisition project's C4ISR requirements. And, the other issues will be addressed as part of the Coast Guard's focused efforts to update its doctrine, management structure, and processes, both internally and with other agencies. By continuing to evaluate and incorporate new methodologies and practices, the Coast Guard can continue to provide excellent service to the American people at the right cost.

***5. The recapitalization of the Coast Guard's Deepwater capability is a near-term national priority.***

The modernization of the Coast Guard's Deepwater assets is the key means for assuring essential and sustained Coast Guard performance. The Coast Guard's Deepwater cutters, aircraft, and C4ISR assets are nearing the ends of their economic service lives. Therefore, planning for modernizing and replacing these capabilities must continue apace.

***6. The Deepwater acquisition project is a sound approach to that end and the Interagency Task Force strongly endorses its process and timeline.***

The principles underlying the Coast Guard's approach to modernizing and recapitalizing its Deepwater assets—employing a performance- and capabilities-oriented requirements approach—is sound. As a result of its innovative approach, the Coast Guard's



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# U.S. Coast Guard

***"The Deepwater project is the smartest, most innovative, and most cost-effective means for the Coast Guard to acquire its next generation of Deepwater assets."***

Ms. Cynthia L. Brown  
President, American  
Shipbuilding Association.  
Letter dated 25 May 1999

# U.S. Coast Guard



***"There is no question that we have a continuing need for a Coast Guard to manage America's waterways, in both peace and war."***

The Honorable Richard Danzig  
Secretary of the Navy  
Letter dated 12 October 1999



Integrated Deepwater Systems Capability Replacement Project has been designated a "Reinvention Lab" under the National Partnership for Reinventing Government. As such, it is empowered to test new ways of doing the government's business and share the lessons learned with other government agencies.

The Coast Guard's Deepwater acquisition strategy and method are worthy of both investment and strong multi-agency support to ensure its success in the coming decades. The Service has asked industry for conceptual approaches to maximize system effectiveness and minimize system cost by building new assets, refurbishing existing platforms, or transferring other agencies' excess assets. The Coast Guard's Deepwater acquisition project should move forward expeditiously and without interruption.

## **The Course Ahead**

The United States needs its Coast Guard. If the Coast Guard did not exist, it would

be in the best interest of the country to invent it, quickly.

America will need efficient and reliable waterways. It will need a guardian of safety on the water. The country will need a protector of marine resources on the high seas, at the maritime borders, along the coasts, and in the inland waterways. It will need a front line of defense and homeland security against a host of threats and illicit activities that will come from the sea. And, the nation will need a specialized naval force capable of operating alongside other U. S. Armed Services to support the nation's security strategies and policies at home and abroad. In short, it will need a world-class Coast Guard.

The Task Force's conclusions and recommendations provide a road map into the future for America's maritime guardian. They point the way forward so that the Coast Guard will indeed remain *Semper Paratus* for the daunting challenges confronting America in the 21st century.



***"A few armed vessels, judiciously stationed at the entrances of our ports, might at a small expense be made useful sentinels of our laws."***

Alexander Hamilton  
Federalist Paper Number 12  
"The Utility of the Union in Respect to Revenue"  
27 November 1787

President's Interagency Task Force  
on United States Coast Guard  
Roles and Missions  
Washington, D.C.  
January 2000

<http://www.uscg.mil/news/rolesandmissions.html>