



# Maritime Law Enforcement Assessment

*December 9, 2020*

Fiscal Year 2020 Report to Congress



Homeland  
Security

*United States Coast Guard*

# Foreword

December 9, 2020

I am pleased to present the following report, "Maritime Law Enforcement Assessment," which has been prepared by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Senate Report 116-125 accompanying the Fiscal Year 2020 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-93) directs the Coast Guard to provide an assessment of the Coast Guard's ability to conduct maritime law enforcement activities on the high seas in support of international partners.

Pursuant to congressional requirements, this report is being provided to the following Members of Congress:

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Chairwoman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

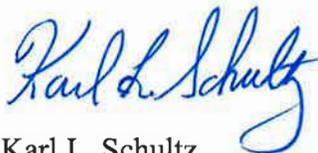
The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann  
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Jon Tester  
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

I am happy to answer any further questions that you may have, or your staff may contact my Senate Liaison Office at (202) 224-2913 or House Liaison Office at (202) 225-4775.

Sincerely,



Karl L. Schultz  
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard  
Commandant





# Maritime Law Enforcement Assessment

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# I. Legislative Language

This document responds to direction in Senate Report 116-125 accompanying the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-93).

Senate Report 116-125 states:

Maritime Law Enforcement.—The Coast Guard shall report to the Committee within 180 days of the enactment of this act with an assessment of the Coast Guard’s ability to conduct maritime law enforcement activities on the high seas in support of international partners. Specifically, the assessment should address the following elements of the Coast Guard’s current capabilities, capacity, and legal authority to conduct maritime law enforcement activities outside of United States territorial waters: human trafficking; forced labor; illegal, unreported, or unregulated fishing; and other illicit activity at sea. The report should detail: technical coordination with partner nations, non-governmental organizations, and the U.S. Navy to improve tracking and detection of vessels engaged in such activities; Coast Guard requirements, including material, personnel, logistic, and administrative requirements, for support from the U.S. Navy (either direct support requests, or through Geographic Combatant Commanders and the Global Force Management process) and partner nations, specifying any unmet resource demands; any limiting factors that constrain the Coast Guard’s ability to fully resource this mission, including legal authorities; and legislative proposals for mitigating these limitations.

## II. The Maritime Law Enforcement Program

The Coast Guard's Maritime Law Enforcement program protects America's maritime borders from encroachment, defends U.S. maritime sovereignty from illicit activity, facilitates legitimate use of the waterways, and suppresses violations of federal law on, under, and over the high seas and waters subject to U.S. jurisdiction. The Coast Guard is the lead federal maritime law enforcement agency and the only agency with both the authority and capability to enforce national and international law on the high seas, Outer Continental Shelf, and inward from the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to inland waters. Coast Guard responsibilities include detecting and interdicting contraband and illegal drug traffic; enforcing U.S. immigration laws and policies at sea; enforcing U.S. fisheries and marine-protected resource laws and regulations; ensuring the integrity of the EEZ; monitoring compliance with international living marine resource regimes and international agreements to which the U.S. is party; and complying with international agreements to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing that negatively affects maritime and economic security in coastal and regional areas worldwide.

### A. Counter-Drug Mission

The Coast Guard is the lead and only federal maritime law enforcement agency with both the authority and capability to enforce national and international law, including drug interdiction, on the high seas. The Coast Guard shares the lead for interdiction and enforcement responsibilities with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in U.S. territorial seas and directly collaborates with the Department of Defense (DOD) on its detect and monitoring counter-drug mission. Maritime drug flow is conveyed via noncommercial (small "go-fast" vessels with multiple outboard engines, semisubmersibles, fishing vessels, and sailing vessels) and commercial (primarily cargo ships) means. The vast majority of known maritime drug flow is conveyed via noncommercial means in the Western Hemisphere Transit Zone (WHTZ).

The Coast Guard uses cutters, boats, aircraft, and intelligence in a layered approach to combat cartels as they transport illicit drugs from the source zone, through maritime corridors off Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean, and into the United States. This approach confronts the threat beyond our land borders on the high seas where traffickers are most exposed and drugs are most vulnerable to interdiction by law enforcement assets. This layered approach begins overseas and predominantly spans the offshore transit zones, referred to as the WHTZ, which includes areas off South America, Central America, and Mexico in the eastern Pacific and Caribbean regions.

The Maritime Drug Law Enforcement Act (46 U.S. Code (U.S.C.) 70501-70507) is the primary criminal statute that the Coast Guard enforces with the counter-drug mission. To combat the growing threat posed by the expanded use of semisubmersible and submersible vessels by drug trafficking organizations, the Drug Trafficking Vessel Interdiction Act (P.L. 110-407) was enacted in 2008. The law includes specific findings that present a specific threat to the national security of the United States, which includes making it unlawful (when certain elements are met) for any person to knowingly operate, by any means, or embark in any submersible or

semisubmersible vessel. Both 46 U.S.C. 70501-70507 and P.L. 110-407 apply extraterritorially so that persons who are interdicted in a semisubmersible or submersible vessel in international waters may be prosecuted in the United States when the elements of the offense are met.

In the WHTZ, the Coast Guard is the predominant, on-the-water, interdiction asset provider to U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) through the Joint Interagency Task Force – South (JIATF-South), which executes the DOD statutory responsibility for the detection and monitoring of illicit drug trafficking in the air and maritime domains bound for the United States (10 U.S.C. 124). Toward this mission, the Coast Guard and its partners provide a variety of interdiction capabilities and assets. Two of the most effective are the fixed-wing maritime patrol aircraft, provided by DOD, CBP, the Coast Guard, and allied nations, coupled with sophisticated intelligence cueing capabilities provided through JIATF-South and other agencies, which enable U.S. Government and partner nation interdiction efforts. The Coast Guard's most capable interdiction platforms include flight deck-equipped major cutters embarked with airborne use of force rotary wing capability, and pursuit-capable boats. Additionally, the Coast Guard deploys Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDET) on U.S. Navy (USN) and allied ships, effectively expanding enforcement and interdiction capacity. In addition, the Coast Guard, DOD, and CBP also provide detection and monitoring capabilities.

At-sea interdictions of pure cocaine are the most effective way for the Coast Guard to limit cartels and other criminal networks from trafficking their entire spectrum of illicit products. Maximizing detection of smuggling vessels in the WHTZ will bolster Coast Guard interdiction efforts.

**1. U.S. Navy Support.** U.S. laws, most notably the Posse Comitatus Act (18 U.S.C. 1385), historically prohibit USN and other DOD personnel from participating directly in law enforcement activities unless expressly authorized by Congress. In 1981, Congress specifically authorized the limited use of DOD military facilities, platforms, and equipment to assist federal authorities in maritime drug interdiction. As an example, Coast Guard LEDETs routinely deploy aboard USN vessels to conduct law enforcement boardings pursuant to authority set forth in 10 U.S.C. 379. Until 2015, USN frigates were the primary platform for deployment of Coast Guard LEDETs. Following the decommissioning of frigates in 2015, the Coast Guard and SOUTHCOM continue to seek alternate platforms for Coast Guard LEDETs to embark. Since 2015, the USN has employed other ship classes in support of the counter-drug mission, including Cyclone-class coastal patrol boats, and more recently, littoral combat ships. In addition to surface asset support, the USN employs P-8 aircraft to bolster detection capability throughout the WHTZ. This class of aircraft proves to be one of the most effective detection assets in the region, bolstering interdiction performance for U.S. Government and partner nation surface assets.

**2. Partner Nation Coordination.** In coordination with JIATF-South, the Coast Guard engages with partner nations throughout the Western Hemisphere. Their capabilities and local knowledge are leveraged to improve maritime governance in littoral regions that are exploited by transnational criminal organizations (TCO). Coast Guard personnel are assigned as attachés, liaisons, and drug interdiction specialists at several embassies in the Western Hemisphere. These personnel develop strategic relationships with partner nations that facilitate the coordination of

real-time operations, confirmation of vessel registry, waivers of jurisdiction, and disposition of seized vessels, contraband, and detained crews. The Coast Guard's law enforcement, legal, and regulatory expertise are in high demand from Central American partners, whose navies more closely resemble the Coast Guard, focusing primarily on maritime law enforcement. Coast Guard International Training Teams, as well as Coast Guard units, deploy throughout the region and conduct professional exchanges, ship-rider activities, and training. They also execute maritime exercises coincident with port visits and patrols.

A prime example of these initiatives is the Coast Guard's Support to Interdiction and Prosecution Team program, established in 2015 through collaboration with the Department of State's (DOS) Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, which consists of two Coast Guard Investigative Service special agents. The first program was in Panama, which provided maritime counter-drug and prosecutorial support, and coordination among Coast Guard strategic, operational, and tactical units; the U.S. Embassy Country Teams in Central America; Combatant Commanders; and JIATF-South. This program served as a blueprint for innovative expansion of Coast Guard support to partner nations, with a similar program implemented in the Dominican Republic in 2019.

Further highlighting international cooperation and success, the Coast Guard leveraged the value of the bilateral agreements between United States and Costa Rica, and the United States and Guatemala, through joint ship-rider operations from December 2018 through December 2019. Costa Rican and Guatemalan Maritime Interdiction Units, supported by Coast Guard law enforcement personnel, enhanced their ability to conduct interdiction operations from their surface assets, including the newly acquired Costa Rican Libertadors (former Coast Guard 110-foot patrol boats), resulting in the removal of nearly 7 metric tons of cocaine and apprehension of 30 suspected smugglers. More important, the invaluable operational knowledge and skill sets conveyed by Coast Guard law enforcement personnel, coupled with a bolstered surface fleet, enabled both countries to emerge as powerful force multipliers in the WHTZ. Similar joint operations are expected to continue in the future.

Increased cooperation with our close Western Hemisphere partners including Colombia, Panama, and Costa Rica over the last few years garnered substantial results in the multinational fight against TCOs. In FY 2019, JIATF-South reported that partner nations contributed to 50 percent of interdictions in the WHTZ, the highest in the task force's history. Furthermore, the Coast Guard supported Panama and Costa Rica's prosecutorial systems to advance legal consequences, providing witness testimony to nearly 10 in-country trials, collectively enforcing rule of law in the Western Hemisphere.

Working in conjunction with DOS and Department of Justice (DOJ), the Coast Guard negotiated, concluded, and maintained more than 40 counter-drug focused bilateral agreements and operational procedures with partner nations throughout the world, the majority of which are in the Western Hemisphere. These agreements enable the Coast Guard to board suspect vessels, to facilitate interdictions in underpatrolled territorial seas of partner nations to deter illicit activity in the littoral regions, and to coordinate interdiction and apprehension operations in the WHTZ. Highlighting their importance to Coast Guard counter-drug efforts, nearly 60 percent of all Coast

Guard interdictions in FY 2019 involved the use of a bilateral agreement or operational procedure.

**3. Limited Resources and Efforts to Alleviate Gaps.** The Coast Guard is extremely thankful for Congress's continued support of its efforts to recapitalize surface and aviation assets that support JIATF-South operations; these efforts will increase maritime domain awareness and interdiction of the illicit maritime activities in the region. This includes support of the Offshore Patrol Cutter program, which will replace the aging fleet of medium endurance cutters and will bolster sensors and command and control systems on board the Coast Guard's medium- and long-range fixed-wing aircraft. The continued fielding of small-unmanned aerial systems (sUAS) onboard national security cutters will continue to maximize organic detection capability aboard the Coast Guard's most capable surface platform.

Recent investments in intelligence have allowed the Coast Guard to apply its limited resources better to document and media exploitation, biometric capabilities, and expansion of information sharing. These will bolster investigative efforts and intelligence cueing, which are critical to informing targeting efforts to maximize interdiction results. They also satisfy the need for continued expansion and leveraging of best practices to maximize awareness of drug movements, including commercial narcotic flow entering U.S. ports.

The Coast Guard currently is battling readiness challenges that limit its ability to resource counter-drug operations effectively. Lost cutter days and flight hours driven by maintenance backlogs and parts shortages reduce the amount of assets available for counter-drug operations.

## B. Alien and Migrant Interdiction Operations (AMIO)

Coast Guard interdictions of undocumented migrants provide effective law enforcement presence at sea and ensure the three main objectives: safe, legal, and orderly immigration. Coast Guard migrant interdiction operations also stem the flow of human smuggling and trafficking through maritime routes. Leveraging statutory authority, bilateral agreements, and policy, the Coast Guard conducts these interdictions as far from U.S. borders as possible. Doing so facilitates the return of migrants to their home country while further protecting them from an often perilous sea voyage. Strong partnerships and information sharing with other agencies, such as U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, CBP, and DOS, are critical. Although the Coast Guard leads the high seas' interdiction mission, partnerships with other agencies and governments are essential for carrying out timely disposition of interdicted migrants via repatriation and removal operations and for conducting further investigation and prosecution in the case of human smugglers or traffickers.

The Coast Guard actively patrols the offshore approaches to the United States in accordance with Executive Orders 12807 and 13276 and leverages bilateral agreements to deter illegal, disorderly, and dangerous maritime migration. Under 8 U.S.C. 1324-1326, the United States has the ability to prosecute those who smuggle aliens or who attempt to enter the country illegally. Pursuant to these laws, policies, and agreements, the Coast Guard interdicts smugglers and migrants as far from U.S. shores as possible with the intent to repatriate the migrants to their

country of departure or origin, or alternatively, and depending on the location of interdiction, land them in the United States for prosecution of applicable immigration offenses.

The Coast Guard follows the Special Interest Migrant Framework to work with interagency partners for providing notification, access to, and disposition of migrants intercepted at sea who are of potential law enforcement interest due to knowledge or involvement in criminal activities, or who are likely physical threats to other migrants, personnel, or facilities. The Coast Guard encountered migrants of 29 different nationalities in FY 2019, and this program is vital to continued efforts toward securing the maritime border.

**1. U.S. Navy Support.** DOD and USN support is critical in the event of a large-scale or mass migration event. In these cases, USN assets will be used to interdict, hold, and transport migrants; this will include supporting the Coast Guard in transporting migrants to another location where DHS has elected to conduct refugee screening. During these events, USN vessels will be embarked with Coast Guard law enforcement personnel. During mass migration events, the Migrant Operations Center (MOC) provides facilities for the housing and care of undocumented migrants interdicted in the Caribbean region and will assume the primary responsibility, as necessary to contain the threat to national security, for the care, custody, safety, transportation, and other needs of migrants at the MOC.

Outside of large-scale or mass migration, the USN typically does not engage in active AMIO. The USN continues to support the Coast Guard by hosting the MOC at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay. The MOC, a joint DHS and DOS facility, is used in accordance with an interagency agreement that allows for MOC use when some migrants with protection concerns are interdicted. The MOC provides a location outside of the United States to house and care for migrants interdicted in the Caribbean region who cannot be repatriated to their country of origin or who departed because of credible fear of persecution or torture.

**2. Partner Nation Coordination.** Partner nations, particularly The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands, are making significant enhancements in their interdiction capabilities and reporting processes. Increases in partner nation capabilities are crucial to stemming the illegal maritime migrant flow. Caribbean nations are seeing an increase of maritime migrants attempting to reach their shores, both to settle permanently and to attempt to reach the United States by various other means. The Coast Guard uses bilateral agreements with countries like The Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Haiti to leverage effective partnerships in the AMIO mission. The Coast Guard places liaison officers in various partner nations, who directly engage with their host governments to encourage the effective enforcement of immigration laws and policies. These collaborative efforts discourage the manifestly unsafe practice of illegal maritime immigration.

The Coast Guard employs repatriation agreements with the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Cuba; the three most frequent nationalities interdicted in the Caribbean region. The Coast Guard continues to seek partnerships and agreements with other nations to expand immigration enforcement capabilities. New and expanded bilateral agreements will allow the Coast Guard to increase its ability to conduct AMIO and to remain the lead federal agency for immigration enforcement in the maritime environment.

**3. Limited Resources and Efforts to Alleviate Gaps.** The Coast Guard continues to meet its internal migrant interdiction goals; however, ongoing readiness challenges increase the risk of an inadequate response to a maritime mass migration event. Shifting flows of migrants in the maritime domain will remain a challenge and will continue to require a highly agile workforce to respond. Because of the somewhat unpredictable nature of foreign state conflict, economic and social factors, and impacts from future natural disasters, the Coast Guard must remain capable of flexing operational priorities concurrent with national security and defense concerns, while remaining able to interdict emergent threats across all missions.

## C. Combatting Human Trafficking

According to an estimate by the International Labor Organization, human trafficking (which under the Coast Guard definition includes forced labor and sex trafficking) is a global crime that affects more than 25 million victims worldwide. This heinous crime occurs in affluent to impoverished areas in the United States and globally. The Coast Guard trains active, reserve, and civilian members in subtle indicators and in how to report a suspected trafficking event through their chain of command. These notifications most often require interagency awareness and decision making involving international cooperation due to the global nature of the Coast Guard's missions. In 2019, more than 13,000 Coast Guard members completed the DHS Blue Campaign Human Trafficking Awareness Training.

**1. Partner Nation Coordination.** When the Coast Guard identifies potential human trafficking victims, it coordinates appropriate screenings by foreign partners through international cooperation. The Coast Guard provided expertise in maritime law application and policy development related to human trafficking to The Bali Process, a 49-country coordination mechanism created to address regional responses to people smuggling, trafficking, and committing other transnational organized crime in the Indo-Asia Pacific Region.

**2. Limiting Resources and Efforts to Alleviate Gaps.** Although the Coast Guard has identified potential victims successfully, current substantive law limits the applicability of these federal codes in the maritime domain. Under 18 U.S.C. Chapter 77, the application of human trafficking-related violations remains limited to land-based encounters and lacks extraterritorial jurisdiction to all perceived scenarios that the Coast Guard could encounter through its 11 statutory mission areas. Some gaps in enforcement include non-U.S. citizens on U.S.-flagged vessels and events involving a U.S. citizen on foreign-flagged vessels encountered outside of U.S. territorial seas. Additionally, the United States lacks international agreements to pursue human trafficking-related events similar to counter-drug and migrant repatriation.

Currently, the Coast Guard and other DHS, DOJ, DOS, and Department of Labor partners are working together to remove enforcement gaps through the President's Action Plan, a DOJ working group on forced labor on fishing vessels, and in DHS's newly released Human Trafficking Strategy. These efforts include the exploration of legislative change proposals to expand the jurisdiction of 18 U.S.C. Chapter 77 violations, creating dialogue with international partners to create new or to expand current bilateral agreements to include human trafficking provisions and international communications protocols.

The Coast Guard, through continued and future coordination, is committed to put in place policy and efforts toward the eradication of human trafficking not only in the maritime domain but throughout the globe.

#### D. Other Law Enforcement – International Fisheries and U.S. EEZ Protection

The Coast Guard is the only U.S. federal law enforcement agency or military service with both the capabilities and authorities to enforce fisheries regulations across the vast 3.4 million square miles of the U.S. EEZ, on the high seas, and in the EEZ and territorial seas of partner nations. Operations to prevent, detect, and suppress IUU fishing require persistent presence of capable enforcement assets and the right mix of authorities to deny vast ocean spaces to bad actors.

IUU fishing activity is global in reach, and it adversely affects coastal communities by distorting competition and by jeopardizing the economic survival of those whose livelihoods depend upon local fisheries. Actors engaged in IUU fishing often exploit the gaps between governance structures and operate in areas where there is little or no effective enforcement presence. On a global scale, pervasive IUU fishing operations significantly distort market economies and represent a major loss of revenue, particularly to some of the poorest countries in the world. Global losses from IUU fishing are estimated to be between \$10 billion and \$23.5 billion (U.S.) per year.

The Coast Guard operates under the statutory authority provided under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management and Conservation Act (16 U.S.C 1801-1891). This act, which amended the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act, directs the United States to strengthen international fisheries management organizations and to address IUU fishing and bycatch of protected living marine resources. The High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act was amended further in 2011 by the Shark Conservation Act to improve the conservation of sharks domestically and internationally.

In addition to assisting partner nations to protect their sovereignty, Coast Guard operations include high seas boarding and inspections (HSBI) conducted under the authority of Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMO), the primary mechanism of fisheries management on the high seas. RFMOs are international regulatory bodies comprising countries with a common interest in the management of fisheries resources in a geographic area. The members may be coastal nations bordering the region or countries that have a fishing interest in the region. Existing and emerging RFMOs cover more than 95 percent of the world's oceans. Currently, a small percentage of RFMOs include HSBI regimes as part of the governing convention.

Solidified under the recently passed Maritime SAFE Act, which is contained within the National Defense Authorization Act of 2020, the Coast Guard supports a whole-of-government approach to improve governance, capacity building, anticorruption efforts, and criminal justice reforms in partner nations affected by IUU fishing. In addition to at-sea enforcement operations, the Coast Guard supports U.S. Agency for International Development, DOS, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration capacity-building efforts in partner nations by providing advice and technical support.

**1. U.S. Navy Support.** Operations to deter, detect, and disrupt IUU fishing require a dedicated surface presence that the Coast Guard alone cannot provide at the levels needed. To mitigate these challenges, the Coast Guard collaborates with the USN and Indo-Pacific Command to enhance maritime domain awareness and to assist Pacific Island nations in exercising sovereignty over their resources by merging Coast Guard authorities with DOD resources through the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative (OMSI). Coast Guard LEDETs embark USN platforms transiting high-threat IUU fishing areas, along with Pacific Island nation ship riders, to conduct boardings of opportunity along the USN asset's transit route. OMSI enables the Coast Guard and the USN to monitor and deter IUU fishing in the Western and Central Pacific and to provide presence for maritime surveillance and security in the region. Similar operations are conducted with United States Africa Command to thwart IUU fishing along the coast of West Africa.

**2. Partner Nation Coordination.** The Coast Guard manages bilateral agreements with partner nations that share a common interest with the United States to protect the oceans and living marine resources. Coast Guard presence, combined with the authorities of its partners, promotes regional stabilization, maritime stewardship, resource conservation, and safety by promoting the rule of law at sea. These agreements allow the Coast Guard to support partner nations' organic enforcement capabilities by training personnel and by providing operational platforms from which nations with limited resources may exert their sovereignty. U.S. Coast Guard operations across the world's oceans, in partnership with remote Pacific Island nations in the Western Pacific Ocean and nations along the Atlantic West Coast of Africa, promote optimal management and protection of vital living marine resources and their environments.

The Coast Guard supports the United States Africa Command's African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership (AMLEP), as part of the Africa Partnership Station, which enables partner nations to build maritime security capacity and to improve management of their maritime environment through real-world, combined maritime law enforcement operations. Many African coastal nations rely on fishing as food and as a significant contributor of revenue and jobs to local economies. IUU fishing, along with the other illicit activities that take place in African waters, negatively affect the nations' economies and directly contribute to instability throughout the Gulf of Guinea region. Although AMLEP, through Operation Junction Rain, can target a broad range of illicit maritime activity, combatting IUU fishing is a predominant role. AMLEP includes a host nation and Coast Guard law enforcement boarding teams operating from a U.S. or partner nation's maritime asset. During this operation, the U.S. teams will act in an accompany, advise, and assist role to the host nation's teams while conducting at-sea boardings. These exercises consist of identifying a target of interest (i.e., a suspect vessel fishing within the partner nation's EEZ), employing small boats with teams aboard, directing the suspect vessel to stop, and embarking the vessel to inspect. During this inspection, the host nation teams will review documentation, search for suspected illicit activity, and enforce maritime law pertaining to the respective host nation's authorities and jurisdiction.

**3. Limited Resources and Efforts to Alleviate Gaps.** Countering IUU fishing is an asset-intensive operation, requiring Coast Guard cutters, USN vessels, and partner surface assets to deliver boarding teams in remote areas of the world's oceans. For this reason, the Coast Guard feels a greater impact from readiness challenges and will benefit from ongoing recapitalization

efforts, including the Coast Guard's Offshore Patrol Cutter program, which will replace the aging fleet of medium endurance cutters, and the fielding of sUASs onboard Coast Guard's National Security Cutters. Fielding of sUASs will maximize organic detection capability aboard the Coast Guard's most capable cutter platform.

The Coast Guard supports Congress's enactment of the Maritime SAFE Act, which provides the needed structure to shape the whole-of-government approach to counter IUU fishing. The act will help to capitalize on the broad capabilities and authorities available across the government to address the complex nature of international fisheries enforcement.

### III. Conclusion

The Coast Guard's maritime law enforcement activities represent some of the most challenging and complex missions across the Coast Guard's responsibilities. The Coast Guard represents the Nation's premiere maritime law enforcement capability and is regarded as the global leader in maritime law enforcement expertise. The Coast Guard leverages its skill, expertise, and partnerships to ensure secure, safe, and sustainable use of the world's oceans.

Although the Coast Guard continues to explore partnerships with the USN, allies, and partner nations to support maritime law enforcement operations, it is hindered by readiness challenges and finite resources. Addressing the Coast Guard's readiness needs, investing in modern technologies, and maintaining momentum on recapitalization efforts are essential to sustaining these operations.

With continued support and through strategic investments, the Coast Guard will begin to rebuild overall Coast Guard readiness while concurrently applying improvements that specifically drive increased maritime law enforcement effectiveness. These efforts will lead to increased maritime domain awareness across all mission sets and a more reliable and effective surface and air fleet. The efforts also will pave the way to smarter, more strategic use of resources through technology-based decisions.

## Appendix: List of Abbreviations

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
AMIO	Alien and Migrant Interdiction Operations
AMLEP	African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership
CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOD	Department of Defense
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOS	Department of State
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FY	Fiscal Year
HSBI	High Seas Boarding and Inspections
IUU	Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated
JIATF-South	Joint Interagency Task Force – South
LEDET	Law Enforcement Detachment
MOC	Migrant Operations Center
OMSI	Oceania Maritime Security Initiative
RFMO	Regional Fishery Management Organizations
SOUTHCOM	United States Southern Command
sUAS	Small-Unmanned Aerial System
TCO	Transnational Criminal Organization
U.S.C.	U.S. Code
USN	U.S. Navy
WHTZ	Western Hemisphere Transit Zone