Department of the Navy
Washington, DC

United States Coast Guard
Washington, DC

NATIONAL FLEET
A Joint Navy/Coast Guard Policy Statement

CONCEPT.

In December 2004, the President issued the National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD-41)/Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD-13) which directed the Secretaries of the Department of Defense and Homeland Security to lead the effort to develop a comprehensive National Strategy for Maritime Security (NSMS). In support of these directives, the Navy and Coast Guard commit to shared purpose and common effort focused on tailored operational integration of our multi-mission platforms, infrastructure and personnel. This synergy enables operations across the entire spectrum of America's twenty-first century maritime security responsibilities, from the homeland into the global domain. While we remain separate Services, we recognize that full cooperation and integration of our non-redundant and complementary capabilities must be achieved as noted in existing shipbuilding memorandums of understanding. This continues to ensure the highest level of maritime capabilities and readiness for the nation's security and investment. We describe the process that synchronizes research and development, planning, fiscal stewardship, procurement, development of doctrine, training, and execution of operations as the National Fleet. The result will serve as a force multiplier, as it will allow each Service to leverage the assets of the other by providing unique capabilities in expeditionary warfare and in Maritime Homeland Defense and Security missions with an increased capability to surge during high operating-tempo situations or to respond promptly to time critical events.

BACKGROUND.

Challenges to our sovereignty and maritime security mandated the formation of our respective Services in the early years after the founding of the Republic; the challenges grow more diverse and complex each year. Regional conflict, crisis response, sanctions enforcement, arms trafficking, weapons proliferation, illegal mass migration, smuggling, natural resource depletion, force protection, weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism are just some of the growing challenges we face in maritime security. As discussed in the NSMS, "Defeating this array of threats to maritime security – including the threat or use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) – requires a common understanding and a joint effort for action on a global scale." The Navy and Coast Guard must be able to deploy forces with greater agility, adaptability, and affordability across the full spectrum of conflict. A joint and interoperable maritime force is needed to establish the numerical sufficiency required for effective global operations and to effectively foster and leverage regional international partnerships in order to achieve global maritime domain awareness and maritime transportation security in the era of globalization.

Our long history of successful cooperation at sea establishes a clear basis to build upon our relationship as we develop a new course for the future. Recent examples of this cooperation include expeditionary force protection in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on USS COLE, response to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, support of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, conduct of Indonesian Tsunami Relief and Hurricane Katrina relief efforts in 2004 and 2005, and ongoing peacetime engagement and counter-narcotics operations. In support of the Coast Guard's counter-narcotics and homeland security missions, the Navy brings essential communications, intelligence, surveillance, detection, and sea-control capabilities. In the Navy's peacetime engagement, maritime interception operations, and force-protection missions, the Coast Guard provides platforms and personnel with expertise and proficiency in maritime law enforcement, waterways management, natural resources protection, port security, and maritime environmental response and protection. In intelligence and humanitarian support operations, the Services support each other with a common dedication and complementary skill sets that are force multipliers for the nation. Our joint operational experience suggests that there are opportunities to attain greater efficiencies and achieve increasingly effective operational outcomes by pursuing integrated and interdependent strategies. As partners in globally networked maritime security and in the interest of fiscal responsibility, we should consistently pursue complementary and interoperable approaches wherever appropriate and as permitted under existing statutory authority.

ATTRIBUTES.

The National Fleet has three main attributes. First, the Fleet is composed of ships, boats, aircraft and shore Command-and-Control nodes that are affordable, adaptable, interoperable, and possess complementary capabilities. Second, these forces will be designed, wherever possible, around common command, control, and communications equipment and operational, weapon and engineering systems, and include coordinated operational planning, procurement, training and logistics. Third, the National Fleet will be capable of supporting the broad spectrum of national security requirements, from power projection to security and defense of the homeland. The Navy's contribution will be highly capable, multimission ships, submarines, and aircraft, as well as Naval Coastal Warfare, Naval Special Warfare, and C4ISR assets designed for the full spectrum of naval operations, from peacetime engagement through Global War. The Coast Guard's contribution will be statutory authorities, multimission cutters, boats, aircraft, and C4ISR as well as law enforcement and environmental response teams designed for the full spectrum of Coast Guard missions, including maritime security operations, counterterrorism crisis response, and filling the requirements for general purpose warships mandated by Combatant Commander theater plans. The Coast Guard will also provide Port Security Units and personnel to support the Naval Coastal Warfare mission area. All ships, boats, aircraft, and shore Command-and-Control nodes of the National Fleet will be interoperable to provide force depth for peacetime missions, homeland security and defense, crisis response, and wartime tasks.

NATIONAL FLEET BUDGETING PROCESS

The Coast Guard and Navy funding and programming initiatives require close coordination to ensure that both Services are adequately funded to carry out their missions. These areas include operating expenses, acquisitions, equipment maintenance funds, active and reserve training funds, sea service compensation issues and specific supplemental funds for contingency

operations. Coast Guard and Navy resource managers will consider the objectives of the National Fleet during budget preparation in areas that mutually support and complement each Service's roles and missions. The use and reuse of commercial-off-the-shelf and government-off-the shelf (COTS/GOTS) equipment and fielded maritime systems are being maximized for USN/USCG commonality and interoperability. The application of COTS permits the services to take advantage of the rapidly changing commercial market place and the investments which commercial firms make in their best of class technologies. By using COTS, the National Fleet can improve its interoperability with civil and international partners; a key consideration given the range of maritime challenges.

Distinct shipbuilding programs provide substantial advantages to the future security of our nation by maintaining a strong and stable shipbuilding industry. Diversified shipbuilding programs support the industrial base by spreading construction to different shipyards. Work force skill base is enhanced by construction of distinct designs promoting well-rounded expertise in small combatant construction. These distinct designs also improve the likelihood of follow-on construction for export. Higher-end capabilities (e.g., LCS) are appropriate for more developed navies seeking power projection forces; lower-end capabilities (e.g., Deepwater Program) are suitable for coast guards or navies performing maritime law enforcement, coastal defense, and resource protection missions. This approach to recapitalization satisfies each Service's unique mission requirements, provides economies of scale, maximizes performance and value at the system and sub-system level, enhances interoperability between the platforms and services, and provides a variety of ships for export fostering international partnerships and further cooperation in the Global War on Terror.

POLICY.

The Navy and Coast Guard leadership will continue to work together to plan and build a National Fleet of multi-mission assets, personnel resources and shore Command and Control nodes to optimize our effectiveness across the full spectrum of naval and maritime missions. The Navy and Coast Guard will coordinate, to the extent permitted under existing statutory authority, research and development, acquisitions, information systems integration, resourcing, force planning, as well as integrated concepts of operations, intelligence and information, logistics, training, exercises, and deployments. The Coast Guard and Navy will work together to plan, acquire and maintain forces that mutually support and complement each Service's roles and missions. Where appropriate, multiservice facilities and support arrangements will be used. America's National Fleet continues to serve as the model for world navies, coast guards, and maritime forces and is vital to promoting the interservice, interagency, and international cooperation and partnerships necessary to secure the global commons.

Michael G. Mullen
Chief of Naval Operations

Thomas H. Collins
Commandant of the Coast Guard

Dated: MAR 0 3 2006