



Arctic Strategy Implementation

May 22, 2014

Fiscal Year 2014 Report to Congress



Homeland
Security

United States Coast Guard

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Foreword

I am pleased to present this report on Arctic Strategy Implementation, prepared by the United States Coast Guard.

The report has been compiled pursuant to the Joint Explanatory Statement and Senate Report 113-77, which accompany the *Fiscal Year 2014 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations Act* (P.L. 113-76).

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

The Honorable John R. Carter
Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable David E. Price
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Mary L. Landrieu
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Daniel Coats
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security.

I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 372-4411 or the Department's Acting Chief Financial Officer, Chip Fulghum, at (202) 447-5751.

Sincerely,



R. J. PAPP, JR.
Admiral U.S. Coast Guard
Commandant





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I. Legislative Requirement

The report has been compiled pursuant to the Joint Explanatory Statement and Senate Report 113-77, which accompany the *FY 2014 DHS Appropriations Act* (P.L. 113-76).

The Joint Explanatory Statement includes the following provision:

...In addition, the Commandant shall submit to the Committees a report on the costs of homeporting a National Security Cutter (NSC) in Alaska and an Arctic strategy implementation plan, as required in the Senate report.

Senate Report 113-77 states:

ARCTIC STRATEGY

The Coast Guard recently released its Arctic Strategy, which looks at the changing conditions in the region and contemplates future requirements. The strategy outlines three broad objectives: improving awareness; modernizing governance; and broadening partnerships. To carry out these objectives over the long term, the Coast Guard next needs to develop an implementation plan, including the identification of necessary capabilities, requirements, authorities, and resources. Therefore, the Coast Guard is directed to submit an Arctic strategy implementation plan no later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this act.

II. Background

The United States is an Arctic nation with significant equities in the future of the region. In May 2013, the Commandant of the Coast Guard promulgated the Coast Guard's Arctic Strategy. This strategy sets the Coast Guard's vision for the region to "ensure safe, secure, and environmentally responsible maritime activity in the Arctic" and includes three strategic objectives:

- (1) Improving Awareness;
- (2) Modernizing Governance;
- (3) Broadening Partnerships.

The Coast Guard presents this report on "Arctic Strategy Implementation" – framed in a 10-year horizon – that identifies twelve initiatives needed to meet the challenges of operating in the changing Arctic environment.

III. U. S. Coast Guard Arctic Strategy Implementation

Operating in the Arctic is not a new venture for the Coast Guard. Coast Guard cutters, aircraft, and boats are engaged in operations in the region. With one heavy icebreaker, POLAR STAR, and the medium, science-focused icebreaker, HEALY, the Coast Guard has the capability to operate in the region in ice-covered waters. Additionally, for the past several years, the Coast Guard has conducted Maritime Domain Awareness flights along the North Slope and over the Arctic Ocean, monitoring maritime activity and assessing aircraft performance. Since 2008, the Coast Guard has been conducting summer operations in the region, including Operations Arctic Crossroads (2008-2011) and Operation Arctic Shield (2012-present), deploying personnel, cutters, and aircraft within the Arctic region and to small villages on the Arctic coast such as Barrow, Kotzebue, and Nome. As human activity increases, the Coast Guard will continue its mobile and seasonal presence and further develop operational capabilities in the region.

In addition to the *U.S. Coast Guard Arctic Strategy*, this implementation report incorporates two Federal-level plans that were recently released by the White House:

- Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for the Arctic Region (January 2014); and
- National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan and its Appendix (April 2013).

In the Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for the Arctic Region, the Coast Guard was identified as the lead agency for seven tasks. The initiatives identified in this report directly enable the Coast Guard to lead on those Federally-mandated tasks. The tasks are:

- Enhance Arctic Domain Awareness;
- Sustain Federal Capability to Conduct Maritime Operations in Ice-Covered Waters;
- Improve Hazardous Material Spill Prevention, Containment, and Response;
- Promote Arctic Oil Pollution Preparedness, Prevention, and Response Internationally;
- Enhance Arctic Search and Rescue;
- Expedite International Maritime Organization Polar Code Development and Adoption; and
- Promote Arctic Waterways Management.

This report contains twelve Coast Guard initiatives that implement the U.S. Coast Guard Arctic Strategy and simultaneously implement tasks in both the National Strategy for the Arctic Region Implementation Plan and the National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan within existing resources.

Initiative (1): Enhance Operation Arctic Shield. Arctic Shield operations include air and sea patrols for search and rescue, maritime domain awareness, training, and protection of sovereign interests; exercises with Federal, State, Local, Tribal, industry, and international partners; and evaluation of technologies for pollution response. Major cutters, patrol boats, sea-going buoy tenders, helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft, and personnel are deployed to the Bering, Chukchi, and Beaufort Seas and throughout Alaska for Arctic Shield. These operations are primarily conducted during the summer months and by assets not stationed in the Arctic – these assets are considered mobile and seasonal for Arctic operations. Additionally, accident prevention and community outreach activities are conducted year round.

While Operation Arctic Shield has been successful since it started in 2008 (then called Arctic Crossroads), challenges remain. Activity in the area is increasing and vast distances are the reality. Operational effectiveness in Arctic Shield can be greatly increased with success in the other eleven listed initiatives. For example, increased Maritime Domain Awareness will enable Coast Guard operational commanders to make better-informed decisions and improved communication capabilities will enable Coast Guard operators to respond faster and more accurately to events requiring emergency intervention.

Status: Ongoing.

Next anticipated milestone: Operation Arctic Shield: Summer 2014.

Initiative (2): Improve Maritime Domain Awareness. Maritime Domain Awareness is a tool used for effective Coast Guard operations. It involves collection, analysis, and understanding of data pertaining to a wide range of information. This too goes far beyond awareness of vessel locations. Maritime Domain Awareness also means awareness of current and historical passengers, crew, ownership, and financial relationships; what activities the vessels are conducting; what cargoes they may be carrying; and what natural conditions they are facing—wind, seas, tides, currents, storms, ice conditions, and marine mammal migrations. When these “layers” of data are considered together, the Coast Guard is able to make the best possible decisions to ensure safe, secure, and environmentally responsible maritime activity.

The National Strategy for the Arctic Region designates the Coast Guard as the lead agency for enhancing Arctic Maritime Domain Awareness. To do this, the Coast Guard must leverage partnerships with all entities collecting Maritime Domain Awareness data in the Arctic, including Federal, State, Local, Tribal, and International stakeholders. With its partners, the Coast Guard continues to study the feasibility of Unmanned Aircraft Systems, the Long Range Identification and Tracking system for ships, requiring recreational and other smaller vessels to report on their positions, and the collection of environmental data by satellite. Additionally, the Coast Guard is evaluating space-based observation capabilities, and enhanced Automatic Identification System capabilities.

Status: Ongoing.

Next anticipated milestone: Publish a plan to establish a mechanism for information sharing in the Arctic: 2015.

Initiative (3): Recapitalize Polar Icebreaking. Heavy icebreaking capability is critical to providing assured access to the Polar Regions for the U.S. and executing the Coast Guard's statutory responsibilities in areas such as search and rescue and marine environmental response. The cutter POLAR STAR returned to service in 2013 following a major overhaul providing approximately 7 to 10 additional years of service life. The Coast Guard's medium icebreaker HEALY was commissioned in 2000 with a planned 30-year service life. POLAR SEA, another heavy icebreaker, is in an inactive status, and a final decision regarding her disposition is pending. Operation of existing Polar Class icebreakers is a bridging strategy until a new longer-term capability is available.

Coast Guard has formed a multi-agency workgroup to inform development of its Operational Requirements Document (ORD) for a new Polar Icebreaker. The resulting Operational Requirements Document is currently scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2015.

Status: Ongoing.

Next anticipated milestone: Operational Requirements Document: 2015.

Initiative (4): Improve Arctic communications capabilities. Communications capability in the Arctic is vital to the success of Coast Guard operations in the region. The harsh environment has hampered development of a robust communications infrastructure. The Coast Guard is working with the Department of Defense to evaluate High Frequency and Satellite Communications coverage to determine gaps, test the communications capability of the Mobile User Objective Satellite, and identify the communications needed to support military operations in the Arctic region.

Status: Ongoing.

Initiative (5): Continue International Maritime Organization Polar Code Development. The United States is working through the International Maritime Organization to develop a mandatory Polar Code with its supporting guidance and recommended provisions. This collaboration will result in amendments to multiple instruments, including the Convention for Safety of Life at Sea and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships conventions. Once adopted, the Coast Guard will embark on a multi-year, multi-office effort to incorporate the resultant international instruments into domestic regulations. The Coast Guard will capitalize upon its good relationship with industry while implementing the Polar Code.

The code will be the set of international rules by which the maritime industry operates in the Arctic and will establish mechanisms for governments to check for adequate safety, security, and environmental protection. The Polar Code is being drafted to cover the full range of safety, design, construction, equipment, operational, training, communications, and environmental protection matters relevant to ships operating in the inhospitable waters surrounding the Arctic and Antarctic.

Status: Ongoing.

Target Completion Date: 2014.

Initiative (6): Establish an Arctic Policy Board. The Coast Guard is working with DHS to develop an Arctic Policy Board under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. As America's primary agency operating in the Arctic, the Coast Guard is uniquely positioned to effectively establish and lead this Board. The Arctic Policy Board will engage with domestic stakeholders to inform Coast Guard Arctic policy development. The Coast Guard will seek Board members from industry, science, academia, tribal

communities, environmental groups, and other stakeholders. It will provide a broad range of expertise to the Secretary of Homeland Security on safety, security, and stewardship matters relating to the Arctic region.

Status: Ongoing.

Target Establishment Date: 2014.

Initiative (7): Establish an Arctic Coast Guard Forum. The Coast Guard proposes to establish an Arctic Coast Guard Forum to bring all eight Arctic coast guards (United States, Canada, Russia, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland) together to collaborate on Arctic issues. The goal is to seek common solutions to coast guard issues within the region. Notionally, the commandants of the Arctic coast guards would meet once per year to steer collaboration; experts would meet twice per year in workgroups on topics such as search and rescue, pollution response, and maritime security; and the nations would hold a multi-mission exercise each year to test interoperability. The eight Arctic nations have agreed to meet to discuss the structure of this forum.

Status: Ongoing.

Target Establishment Date: 2014.

Initiative (8): Support U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council. The Arctic Council is an important tool for gaining international consensus as well as demonstrating leadership on Arctic issues. The United States will chair the Arctic Council from May 2015 to May 2017. The Coast Guard expects to play a significant role due to our existing engagement in Council activities and because of the Coast Guard's visible role in U. S. Federal governance in the U.S. Arctic.

Status: Ongoing.

Initiative (9): Establish a Center for Arctic Strategy and Policy. The Coast Guard plans to develop a think tank for Arctic policy and operations in conjunction with the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. The Center for Arctic Strategy and Policy will connect operators, academics, indigenous experts, international partners, and industry experts. This center will collaborate with the Coast Guard Research and Development Center, the DHS Science & Technology Directorate's network of Centers of Excellence, and other academic centers.

Status: Ongoing.

Initiative (10): Promote Waterways Management. The Coast Guard is developing Arctic waterways management regimes including aids to navigation, vessel tracking, and ship routing in cooperation with international partners to ensure safe, efficient, and free flow of maritime traffic.

Status: Ongoing.

Next anticipated milestone: Bering Strait Port Access Route Study (second comment period): 2014.

Initiative (11): Create an Arctic Fusion Center. The Coast Guard plans to study and, if warranted, implement a Fusion Center to collect and disseminate critical information with Federal, State, Local, and Tribal stakeholders. The Coast Guard will evaluate the need for such a center and confer with domestic partners to determine their operational requirements and interest. The evaluation will include alternative approaches such as establishment of a seasonal center and/or a virtual fusion center.

Status: Ongoing.

Initiative (12): Create an Arctic Maritime Assistance Coordination Center. The Coast Guard plans to study and, if appropriate, implement an international center for Arctic mission coordination for search and rescue and other emergency response. The establishment of an international cooperative center that shares capabilities, expertise, and information may be the best way to increase both capacity and awareness to enable effective and timely responses.

Status: Ongoing.

Continuous Assessment and Adaptation

The Arctic is an evolving region where maritime activity is expanding each year. The Coast Guard continually reassesses requirements for Arctic operations. The Coast Guard will continue to take a “mobile and seasonal” approach to operations, providing the Service with the opportunity to assess and test operational capabilities and identify any additional resources needed to provide assured access, effective presence, and response capabilities in this region.