Homeland Protection: New Paradigms to Support NORTHCOM's Maritime Mission

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This paper reviews two critical issues that can redefine how the Navy and Coast Guard will fight the Global War on Terror as a team. The first analyzes the contrasting relationship between homeland security and homeland defense. The second analyzes existing operational command structures used by the Navy and the Coast Guard.

The paper will illustrate in both cases that existing schools of thought have unintentionally created cognitive barriers that have prevented the nation's maritime services from working effectively as a team. In response, the paper provides two new concepts that may help operational commanders unite the services to fulfill their common missions.
Homeland Protection: New Paradigms to Support NORTHCOM’s Maritime Mission

By

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The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____________________

14 February 2005
NEW PARADIGMS TO SUPPORT NORTHCOM’S MARITIME MISSION

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Homeland Protection: New Paradigms to Support NORTHCOM’s Maritime Mission

Introduction

A great deal of effort has been expended over the last three years to shape the way the United States government protects its citizens from terrorism. From the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission to revisions of the Department of Defense (DOD) Unified Command Plan, there has been a multitude of ideas that attempt to improve the way American forces organize themselves against an entirely unique and persistent threat. As the 9/11 Commission recommended\(^1\) and as many already knew, increased cooperation between legally and bureaucratically separate agencies was necessary to improve the quality of national defense.

The problems of interservice cooperation between the Navy and Coast Guard are very different and likely more problematic than the classic interservice struggles of the previous century. Unlike Cold War defense policy debates like the 1949 “revolt of the admirals,”\(^2\) the problems of protecting America’s coastline have not been characterized by bitter fights over power and budgets. Instead, the Navy and Coast Guard are already willing partners whose ability to function as a cohesive team has been hampered by bureaucracy and legal restriction. Laws such as the Posse Comitatus Act\(^3\) and other parts of the U.S. Code were clearly written to protect American freedom from tyranny by keeping the military out of civilian affairs. However, America is defending itself against skilled adversaries that fight for the antithesis of the democracy Americans hold dear. To make matters worse, the very existence of transnational terrorism exploits freedom to its own destructive end.\(^4\)

Many Americans already understand the way to defeat the terrorist threat to the country must respect our civil liberties. However, we must also recognize that protecting the homeland from within the boundaries that our laws and bureaucracy have created stop far
from guaranteeing the safety of America from terrorist threats. In fact, some have already suggested that the legal and bureaucratic principles that separate parts of the government are simply cognitive barriers to improvement. Regardless of one’s political stance, almost everyone agrees that revision or at least reassessment of the status of our federal bureaucracy is necessary to achieve the correct balance of government agility and civil liberty.\(^5\)

This paper does not endeavor to rewrite federal law or solve all of the collaborative problems created by bureaucracy. It does, however, provide an alternative way for operational military commanders and other leaders to think about how the Navy and the Coast Guard cooperate in their common mission of protecting the homeland. The intent of this paper is to provide two new paradigms for DOD and Coast Guard leaders to use as they endeavor to accomplish this vital mission. By thinking about the mission and ways to accomplish it in slightly different ways, there should be opportunities to provide greater unity and strength to the Navy-Coast Guard partnership inside the boundaries of existing legal standards.

The first paradigm shift provided in this paper lies in redefining each services’ mission. Terms like homeland defense (HLD) and homeland security (HLS) are used casually by insiders and commentators alike. In fact, these terms probably symbolize the same thing to most Americans. However, these two concepts have been separated by DOD and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to make planning easier by clarifying responsibilities and boundaries between the two departments.\(^6\) Regrettably, each service possesses shortfalls in their own HLD and HLS missions that are extremely difficult to overcome with current personnel and budgets. Fortunately, many of the services’ unique
problems can be mitigated if the missions they have in common are clarified and tasked to a Navy-Coast Guard team.

The second paradigm shift of this paper lies in redefining the operational relationship between the Navy and the Coast Guard. The military has been called upon for a wide variety of missions with a wide variety of partners, especially since the end of the Cold War. These efforts and the doctrine that has been written to help commanders organize the team have yielded many different command structure examples\textsuperscript{7} to model the efforts of the Navy-Coast Guard team. There are pros and cons to each of these command structures, but no existing constructs fully serve the needs of the team that is tasked with defending America’s maritime domain.\textsuperscript{8} Ultimately, the best solution for unity of effort between the Coast Guard and Navy will come from something new that takes advantage of the best qualities of all the available choices and not in selecting a single preferred case.

First Paradigm Shift – Homeland Protection

To understand the intellectual discourse on combating terror, Americans have been forced to learn many new faces and jargon. As many different people discuss these issues over many different media, some terms may lose their informative value.\textsuperscript{9} The subtle but bureaucratically important difference between homeland security and homeland defense is a prime example. These two terms probably mean the same thing to most Americans, but DOD and DHS define them very differently. However, the general public’s tendency to mix the meaning of these terms may be an indicator that the federal governments’ definition of HLS and HLD as separate entities is confusing and ineffective for those who must plan forces for these mission areas.
Defining homeland security versus homeland defense is an attempt to clarify the roles that DOD and DHS play in the War on Terror as they cooperate with each other. However, by emphasizing the separation between the two roles, leaders also create cognitive barriers between the two services that inhibit military commanders from effectively employing the Navy-Coast Guard team as an effective joint force. Although it may seem like a very simple word change, a clarification of common traits of these two mission areas under the umbrella of “homeland protection” may significantly improve the way military and civilian leaders use the Coast Guard-Navy team.

Before getting into what missions make up “homeland protection,” it is important to understand what the services define as HLD and HLS and how this separation impacts operational planning. With that knowledge in hand, it will be easier to understand what the two mission areas have in common and how they are different.

*What is Homeland Defense?*

According to DOD’s unified command for HLD, U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), homeland defense is described this way:

Homeland defense is the protection of U.S. territory, domestic population and critical infrastructure against military attacks emanating from outside the United States. In understanding the difference between HLS and HLD, it is important to understand that NORTHCOM is a military organization whose operations within the United States are governed by law, including the *Posse Comitatus Act* that prohibits direct military involvement in law enforcement activities. Thus, NORTHCOM's missions are limited to military homeland defense and civil support to lead federal agencies.\(^{10}\)

There are several pieces of this definition requiring critical examination. First, protection “against military attacks emanating from outside the United States” leads one to believe that NORTHCOM exists to protect the United States chiefly from threats organized by foreign governments. This point is reinforced by its leading mission of “military
homeland defense.” This is not necessarily a bad thing to define. Before 9/11, the Unified Command Plan appeared to be an adequate method for organizing DOD to protect American lives and interests.11 Cold War versions of the Unified Command Plan had the Air Force-centered North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) built to defend America’s skies while the Navy’s Atlantic and Pacific Fleets protected the homeland from the Soviet Navy, for example.

When the Cold War threat dissipated, it became easy for Americans to believe that our geographic isolation would keep us safe from future threats since there were no nations willing and able to harm us from across the oceans. However, 9/11 proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that America is no longer an island and needs a joint force commander focused solely on defending the homeland from a foreign aggressor using tactics radically different from those of the Soviet Union.12

The problem with the current definition of HLD is that NORTHCOM is forced to cast itself as the proverbial “self-licking ice cream cone,” a satirical term heard frequently around the Pentagon. In other words, NORTHCOM’s existence is to soothe a perceived (often political) concern rather than fulfill a truly substantive and necessary mission. The current threat to the homeland comes much more from stateless, transnational terrorism13 than from any sort of competitor state.14 This has boxed NORTHCOM into a logical corner that prevents it from meaningful cooperation with other government agencies in protecting the homeland other than through its civil support role. This secondary NORTHCOM mission is often thought of as consequence management rather than prevention or deterrence, and is an obvious handicap in the effort to aggressively defeat an enemy that always operates covertly.
What is Homeland Security?

NORTHCOM defines the missions of its counterparts in civilian agencies this way:

Homeland security is the prevention, preemption, and deterrence of, and defense against, aggression targeted at U.S. territory, sovereignty, domestic population, and infrastructure as well as the management of the consequences of such aggression and other domestic emergencies. Homeland security is a national team effort that begins with local, state and federal organizations. DOD and NORTHCOM's HLS roles include homeland defense and civil support.15

This likely resembles the definition that most civilians think of for both HLD and HLS. However, it is important to remember that the NORTHCOM definition insists that HLS begins with local, state, and federal agencies before it reaches military support. On land and in the skies, this approach makes a lot of sense, and is consistent with the spirit of Posse Comitatus. A robust defensive capability already exists in these domains vis-à-vis organizations such as the FBI, FAA, and a wide variety of other federal, state and local agencies. In the maritime domain, there are some organizations to support HLS such as the Border Patrol and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency, but there are only two legitimate force providers to protect America’s coastal waters and ports, the Navy and the Coast Guard. However, because the Navy is restrained from full cooperation as a NORTHCOM component, the Coast Guard is left with an unattainable mission of conducting HLS operations across 88,000 miles of tidal shoreline without consistently integrated support from the Navy.

What is Homeland Protection and why do I care??

At first blush, introducing new terminology into a realm already saturated by jargon may seem like an unnecessary shift in existing doctrine and a mere quibble over semantics. However, developing a concept of homeland protection as a combined subset of HLD and HLS can set up further logical changes in how military and civil leaders use the Navy-Coast
Guard team. Redefining these terms will help NORTHCOM define itself as an operational commander and, therefore, guide its operational planning and attempts to achieve unity of effort with the Coast Guard much more effectively. It will also likely advance each service’s ability to plan for their unique missions because joint preparation issues will be more effectively communicated.

Instead of being a simple combination of the terms HLD and HLS, homeland protection is where the missions of the Navy and Coast Guard intersect. This concept is illustrated in Figure 1:

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<tr>
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<td>• Defense from Foreign State</td>
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<td>• Narcotics Interdiction</td>
<td>• Aggression</td>
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<td>• Aids to Navigation</td>
<td>• Terrorist Interdiction</td>
<td>• Weapons of Mass Destruction</td>
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<td>and Ballistic Missile Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vessel Traffic Management</td>
<td>• Maritime Law Enforcement</td>
<td>• Piracy Interdiction</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Domestic Vessel Inspections</td>
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<td>• Consequence Management</td>
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Fig. 1. Maritime Homeland Protection – *A Unified Set of MHLS and MHLD Missions*

**Homeland Protection Applied**

Despite the difficulties of uniting the Navy-Coast Guard team, leaders in both services have already taken steps to build a more effective relationship. In fact, the Chief of Naval Operations has identified “a capabilities integration roadmap for the USN and USCG in support of the global war on terror” as one of his staff’s leading priorities for 2005, and integration of this interagency team is a critical step in fulfilling NORTHCOM’s maritime mission. Hopefully, this will eventually allow the Coast Guard to provide more support to its traditional missions and better prepare the Navy to fight and win overseas.
Joining the Paradigms: Integrated Effort through Unified Mission and Responsive Command

If we allow ourselves to think in terms of homeland protection, NORTHCOM’s problems of deciding how to utilize the Navy-Coast Guard team should become much easier to solve. With the common missions of the services unified, a more effective analysis of what each service brings to the team and what it needs from the team to accomplish the joint effort is possible. After this analysis, we will finally be able to determine the most effective command structure for making the new relationship work, making NORTHCOM’s responsibility of defending the homeland much more attainable.

*What the Navy and the Coast Guard have for MHLP and what they’re missing*

Looking at the big picture, the Coast Guard brings one critical capability above all others that the Navy lacks: extensive operational experience in the littoral, especially in America’s own coastal waters. Despite their emphasis on littoral combat operations since the end of the Cold War, the Navy remains a service that is oriented, trained and capitalized to combat a “blue water” threat much more effectively than a “brown water” threat. The Navy is certainly able to project awesome firepower into coastal regions and over land (mostly via air power), but aside from a small coastal patrol force and maritime security groups still in their infancy, the active-duty Navy is not accustomed to operating consistently in coastal waters. On the other hand, the Coast Guard is built and trained from the bottom to the top to be a “brown water” force. As such, the Coast Guard has many capabilities that NORTHCOM can draw from to accomplish homeland protection (HLP) missions that are not currently resident or less robust in the Navy.

As an example, Coast Guard law enforcement detachments (LEDETS) provide extensive skills and experience in the visit and search of suspect vessels. The Navy has a
high-threat boarding capability in the SEAL teams and a low-threat capability in the surface Navy that has mainly provided support to United Nations sanctions enforcement in Iraq since 1991. However, because of the high demand for SEALs in special operations and the minimal level of skill demanded of Navy boarding teams in Iraqi maritime interception operations, the Navy lacks an intermediate capability that understands law enforcement practices and possesses an ability to manage non-cooperative vessel crews. This is an inherent capability of the Coast Guard LEDETs.²¹

Speaking of law enforcement, experience in interfacing with civil authorities is another critical competency that the Coast Guard brings to this team. Having the Coast Guard on any interagency staff will make the DOD components’ job much easier and will foster even more effective information sharing among intelligence and law enforcement organizations, a critical need identified by the 9/11 Commission.²²

While the Coast Guard brings a wide variety of capabilities to the team by way of its intellectual capital, it is simultaneously restricted in performing its many missions by a lack of money and equipment. Although lawmakers have acknowledged the need to fill critical requirements for the Coast Guard since 9/11,²³ the Coast Guard is still vastly undercapitalized and will require consistent funding of the Deepwater²⁴ program over the next twenty years to be able to independently meet the demands of the HLS mission. Despite the post-Cold War drawdown, the Navy still maintains an extensive inventory of platforms at sea and in the air that can support the Coast Guard. These assets must, of course, be managed with requirements to send naval units around the globe, but even in varying states of readiness, CONUS-based naval forces can assist in the inter-agency homeland protection mission.²⁵
Aside from their ability to provide platforms for the HLP mission, the Navy also possesses intelligence capabilities that are far beyond those of the Coast Guard. For example, the analysis directorate at the headquarters of the Office of Naval Intelligence is approximately twice the size of the entire Coast Guard Intelligence Service. The Coast Guard has already seized on this opportunity to improve by opening Maritime Intelligence Fusion Centers on both coasts. The Atlantic Maritime Intelligence Fusion Center is collocated with the Naval Ocean Processing Facility in Dam Neck, Virginia which provides intelligence support (mostly in undersea warfare) to the Atlantic Fleet. Bringing the Navy’s manpower and technology to the team will significantly improve the Coast Guard’s coverage of the coastline and this will make the Coast Guard a much more effective information bridge between civil and military authorities.

Finally, there are capabilities marginally resident in both services but robust in neither. Port security units are provided by both services’ reserve components through a patchwork of organizations. The Navy possesses Naval Coastal Warfare Squadrons with assigned Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare Units and Inshore Boat Units. The Coast Guard has its own Port Security Units. The level of cooperation between these units is unclear based on published information, though they are frequently based in the same ports at home and have both provided port security abroad in Persian Gulf ports and on Iraqi oil terminals. The Navy also possesses an active component port security capability that is less than two years old. These units appear to work with each other as time and opportunity arise, but there is no apparent effort underway to conduct joint training or plan for joint employment of these units.
How the Navy and Coast Guard can complement each other

Fortunately for the Navy and Coast Guard, there are already plenty of examples to study how each service’s units have been employed as a team. Aside from historical examples of Coast Guard participation in operations during World War II, Korea and Vietnam, current operations at the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force\(^{31}\) provide operational planners insight on how the whole of this team becomes more than the sum of its parts. At Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South), it is common for naval warships to embark Coast Guard LEDETs in support of their counter narcotics mission.\(^{32}\)

Recent successes in counter narcotics operations have also illustrated the value of naval aviation support to the interagency mission.\(^{33}\) These operations show that although Coast Guard and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement have some aviation capability, naval aviation provides clear benefits in the much discussed issue of maritime domain awareness (MDA)\(^{34}\) by improving the overwater operating picture for command elements at sea and ashore. These capabilities are easily translated into the monitoring of vessel traffic in coastal waters for the purposes of preventing terrorism. The skill sets and assets required are the same. There will, of course, be a steep learning curve for the interagency team to collect intelligence and operating data against terrorists at sea since these forces are not accustomed to searching for specific personnel and weapons at sea. However, this is a hurdle that must be surpassed on the way to achieving operational goals for MDA.

In both the use of cross-decked LEDETs and aviation support, there is also evidence that cooperation in the MHLP mission will help each of the services in their unique missions of homeland defense and homeland security (as represented in Figure 1). For example, naval forces that operate with the Coast Guard in the MHLP mission at home will be better
prepared to achieve the goals of the State Department led Proliferation Security Initiative\textsuperscript{35} as part of the Navy’s HLD mission. On the Coast Guard side, support from naval aviation will free the Coast Guard to allocate air and sea platforms to their traditional HLS missions more effectively.

**Second Paradigm Shift – Interagency Maritime Protection Team**

With an understanding of the interagency homeland protection mission and the forces that are available to accomplish it, it is time to discuss how these elements will work together in a unified effort. This section will take a brief look at how the interagency team is led today, what command and control systems that structure was developed from, and how another new concept can make interagency integration for maritime homeland protection a reality.

*How do they do it today?*

At the outset, joint doctrine presents a clear problem for military commanders who are working to effectively and efficiently organize today’s Navy-Coast Guard team:

There is no overarching interagency doctrine that delineates or dictates the relationships and procedures governing all agencies, departments, and organizations in interagency operations. Nor is there an overseeing organization to ensure that the…organizations have the capability and the tools to work together.\textsuperscript{36}

The good news about this doctrine statement is that it gives the interagency team a great deal of freedom in determining its own structure. Unfortunately, commanders have responded by adapting multiple structures that are ineffective solutions for the Navy and the Coast Guard to successfully conduct their MHLP missions as a team. A review of existing command structures involving both the Navy and the Coast Guard show two primary,\textsuperscript{37} distinct schools of thought on how the team should be organized.\textsuperscript{38}
In the first case defined by DOD-DHS memorandum of agreement, the Navy component of the homeland team is under direct control of NORTHCOM via the Joint Forces Maritime Component Commander, North (JFMCC North) and the Coast Guard component only functions in coordination with JFMCC forces. This organization is reflective of a typical DOD combatant commander’s organization and allows DOD commanders to assume operational control of Coast Guard units to support homeland defense. This organization (displayed in Fig. 2 below) is a fine system for a national crisis when DOD needs support in HLD against a peer competitor. However, it also makes working with the Coast Guard very difficult on a routine basis because funding support and tasking authority required for Coast Guard assets to serve under a DOD JFMCC can become problematic rather quickly. This confines the two services’ working relationship to the constraints of the homeland defense paradigm and limits the Navy’s ability to reciprocate the relationship and provide support to HLS. Essentially, this does not support interagency HLP.

Fig. 2. Current MHLD Command Structure

Speaking specifically to homeland protection, this structure (depicted above) also cuts out a great deal of Coast Guard expertise at the operational planning level since JFMCC North is an essentially Navy staff and Coast Guard Defense Force (CGDEFOR) East and
West primarily work for the Coast Guard Commandant instead of the JFMCC with whom they are tasked to coordinate. This is problematic because joint doctrine also informs the military that the service with the preponderance of forces in a theater shall be the one responsible for leading a (land, air, or maritime) component command. The Navy is used to being the maritime component commander because they are typically the only force in a theater with seaborne assets. However, in the case of homeland protection, the Coast Guard holds more personnel and assets dedicated to the mission than the Navy does.

Putting the concept of the JFMCC organization aside for a moment, there is another existing Navy-Coast Guard command relationship that must be reviewed for its potential to support the joint homeland protection mission.

The JIATF organization, discussed previously vis-à-vis JIATF-South and counter narcotics operations, presents another perspective on the Navy-Coast Guard operational relationship. JIATF-South is commanded by a two-star Coast Guard admiral, with staff members from each of the other services. JIATF-South has definitively shown that Navy and Coast Guard forces operate well together at the tactical level. However, relatively few Navy assets are sent to JIATF-South and due to a lack of funding and personnel, it is difficult to say that a JIATF in its current state could function well in the broader HLP mission because it requires a lot of manpower for a relatively small responsibility. The Coast Guard also has very little experience in manning a large military staff. Typically, the Coast Guard supports large DOD staffs in a liaison role only.

What is an Interagency Maritime Protection Team and why do I care??

Everyone involved in protecting America’s maritime domain is aware that the Coast Guard and Navy must create partnerships in order to be successful against the terrorist threat.
However, Coast Guard-Navy partnerships in the JFMCC and JIATF mindsets force the services to compromise with each other and make sacrifices to the unique missions of their services without a meaningful arbitrator to determine the most beneficial courses of action for each solution offered by the services. It is, of course, bureaucratically difficult to create an arbitrator between two different agencies with meaningful power, a fact also illustrated in the aforementioned joint doctrine quote. However, there is a framework that may be successful.

Fig. 4. Alternate MHLP Operational Command Structure

The command structure pictured above (Fig. 4) is a concept that attempts to integrate the better qualities of the JFMCC and JIATF organizations into a single operational construct that will enable the Navy and Coast Guard to manage their daily cooperation in the maritime protection mission. This construct focuses on the principle of unity of command by ensuring an integrated operational chain of command, a strength of the JFMCC organization concept. At the same time, the Interagency Maritime Protection Team (IMPT) will be led by the Coast Guard using an interagency staff, filled mostly by members of the Navy. Placing command of the organization under a Coast Guard flag officer fits the joint
doctrine principle that indicates a joint force component command belongs to the service with the preponderance of assets in theater and by way of the Coast Guard’s traditional Title 14 responsibilities, it allows the team better access to other U.S. government agencies. This will ensure better cooperation between military and civilian agencies in the maritime protection mission.

**Who plays on the IMPT?**

Filling the IMPT staff with Navy personnel will provide the commander with much needed DOD staff experience and provide the Coast Guard the opportunity to grow into an expanded operational planning presence. Also, because the IMPT concept emphasizes integration, the subordinate commands depicted in the chart also reflect unity of effort. There are certainly many ways for the subordinate staffs to be organized, but in order to better illustrate the IMPT concept, three subordinate commands were listed in fig. 4. In the depicted example, the existing 2nd and 3rd fleet staffs from the Navy would manage the protection of the coastline via naval combatants, cutters, and associated platforms. The Seaport Defense Command staff would be drawn from the Coast Guard Area Atlantic or Pacific staff and make use of both services’ reserve support in protecting the nations ports and harbors. This is just one idea; the most important takeaway is that operational homeland protection commands must integrate with leadership tailored for the specific mission in order for the overall team to be successful.

**Conclusion**

The research for this paper revealed some critical flaws in the way that the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security organize themselves. Fortunately, it did not reveal that this was due to lack of effort or skills at any level. It is clear that following
September 11, 2001 and especially after the formation of DHS, both agencies made a commitment to support the country by dividing up an ever-growing workload and to support each other when requested. Unfortunately, the covert nature of terrorism forces America’s defenders to forge an integrated relationship much more than a cooperative one. By supporting each other in a combined set of homeland protection missions, the Navy and the Coast Guard will form a more responsive interagency maritime team to defeat the ever-lurking threat from terrorists.

This, of course, will be no small feat. NORTHCOM and its Navy component will need to learn how to apply their assets and personnel in synchronization with the efforts of the Coast Guard. There will also be a substantial learning curve for the officers of the Coast Guard, who must learn how to work with their Navy brethren on staffs to plan the efforts of a team that will be stronger than the sum of its individual service efforts.

In the end, adoption of these paradigms will make the best use of available forces to defend America, live within existing means, and enable each service to devote more to their core security and defense missions.

Notes

3 Posse Comitatus, U.S. Code, Title 18, sec. 1385 (1878).
4 This specifically refers to “Super-Empowered Angry Men” as conceived by Thomas L. Friedman, The Lexus and the Olive Tree (New York: Anchor Books 2000), 401-405.
5 There are literally thousands of written references to Posse Comitatus and its impact. For a concise overview of the issues review Appendix D of Preparing the U.S. Army for Homeland Security: Concepts, Issues, and Options by Eric Larson and John Peters of RAND’s Arroyo Center.

Ballard and Critz.

This belief is based mostly on anecdotal evidence in news reporting. For an example of how the terms are used interchangeably, visit the Homeland Defense Journal at <http://www.homelanddefensejournal.com>.


Speaking specifically to historical U.S. Navy involvement in homeland defense, The Wartime Diversion of U.S. Navy Forces in Response to Public Demands for Augmented Coastal Defense from the Center for Naval Analyses provided some interesting insight, but confirmed the Navy’s 1945-present insistence on using “defense in depth” by focusing on countering threats almost exclusively on the high seas instead of a homeland focused fleet.


Of course, there is also state-sponsored transnational terrorism, but the response to this threat is already held by the other regional commanders, most notably CENTCOM and PACOM.

Editorial opinion: China is certainly a rising global power, but its military preparations are focused on Taiwan, owns limited long-range power projection abilities, and is basically economically interdependent with the United States. Although military confrontation is possible over Taiwan, a direct threat to the American homeland is unlikely and would certainly be disastrous for both sides in the long run.


Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Establishment of Mobile Security Group One (COMSG ONE) San Diego, CA, Mobile Security Units (MSUs) and Mobile Security Detachments (MSDs) for COMPACFLT, OPNAV Notice 3111 (Washington, DC: 2003).

As the Navy learns to manage its deployment schedules under the new Fleet Response Program, interagency support to the Coast Guard may provide valuable sustainment training for naval surface units in various readiness states as they prepare for deployments on more volatile schedules than their traditional 18-month rotations between overseas deployments.


Vice Admiral James Hull, Commander Cari Thomas and Lieutenant Commander Joe DiRenzo III, USCG, “What was the Coast Guard Doing in Iraq?” U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, August 2003.
Because of the increasing links between drugs and terrorist activities, this mission area is starting to gain the moniker Counter-Narco Terrorism (CNT).

MDA is essentially an effort to improve the quality of information available on vessels operating in U.S. Coastal Waters, this effort has also been defined as the “Maritime NORAD” by Admiral Clark and others. For more info: Malina Brown, “Navy, Coast Guard Redefining Relationships in Post-Sept. 11 World,” Inside the Navy, 8 March 2004.

Another structure identified by Ballard and Critz is the Maritime Defense Engagement Zone concept. The MARDEZ concept basically absorbed Coast Guard assets into a third echelon Navy command, and was probably not regarded highly by the Coast Guard. This concept was established in 1984 and used for several years, even producing its own professional journal Naval Coastal Warfare News. However, the MARDEZ organization (and its journal) were defunct by 1999, and the concept has not significantly resurfaced since.

This is based on the fact that all of the Coast Guard assets in America support the HLS/HLP mission, while many naval assets in the NORTHCOM area of responsibility are in an overseas deployment cycle. The previous noted article “27 tons of cocaine seized,” is just one example. The Coast Guard, DHS and U.S. Southern Command all maintain news release archives on their websites that detail successful drug seizures in Latin American waters.

Administrative functions of the services will remain intact in accordance with U.S. Code Title 10 and 14 responsibilities. For example, the Navy’s Second Fleet Commander will report to the Commander of Navy Fleet Forces Command for administrative matters and the IMPT Commander for operational matters.
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