

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN,
COMMANDANT, U.S. COAST GUARD, VIA TELECONFERENCE SUBJECT: STATE OF THE
COAST GUARD 2010 TIME: 4:00 P.M. EST DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2010

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LIEUTENANT JENNIFER CRAGG, U.S. NAVY (Office of the Secretary of
Defense for Public Affairs): I'd like to welcome you all to the
Department of Defense's Bloggers Roundtable for Tuesday, February 16,
2010. My name is Lieutenant Jennifer Cragg with the Office of the
Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs. And I'll be moderating our call
today.

A note to the bloggers on the line. Please remember to clearly
state your name and the organization you're with prior to asking your
question. Also -- please also place your phone on mute, so we don't hear
any background noises. And also if you have to place your phone on hold,
please exit the roundtable and call back in. We'll sometimes hear the
hold music. Without further ado, I'd like to introduce our guest
today. It is U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Thad Allen. And he
will be discussing the state of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Without further ado, sir, I'd like to turn it over to you for
opening statement. And then we'll go to questions. Sir, the floor is
yours.

ADM. ALLEN: Well, thank you very much.

Some of you may have heard or seen last Friday, I held my annual
State of the Coast Guard speech. This is a tradition that has been built
up, over the last 10 or 15 years, in the Coast Guard. It actually
started out as an internal luncheon to talk to Coast Guard people.

But over the last three or four years, we've branched out and
made a partnership with the National Press Club that allows us to involve
them, get coverage by C-SPAN and actually move out onto the Internet and
take advantage of some web 2.0 technologies, to extend the story further
out.

I prefaced the speech I gave last Friday with an e-mail to all
hands, in the Coast Guard, and a blog on the basic elements of our

budget, for 2011, and then followed that up with the actual speech appearance itself.

The State of the Coast Guard speech is intended to expand on our budget submission, which was sent to the Hill on 1 February, and start the discussion regarding Coast Guard budget issues leading up to the hearings that will be conducted, in the next three to four weeks.

What I emphasized in my speech regarding the budget was the need to be resilient, as far as the Coast Guard goes. And I'll talk about -- more about that in a minute. But our budget is slightly smaller than the year before, which indicates fewer people and a little reduction in force size.

The tradeoff for that was the sustainment of nearly a \$1.4-billion recapitalization budget that will allow us to continue to replace our aging cutters and aircraft.

When you're operating in a constrained budget environment, it's very, very difficult to make tradeoffs. But in this case, we have to focus on recapitalizing and rebuilding new ships.

Otherwise you create what they would call a hollow force. The State of the Coast Guard speech was an opportunity for me to explain that, to the public we serve and also to my internal Coast Guard audience. I also took the opportunity to recognize crews from Air Station Clearwater and the Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk, who participated in the early response operations in Haiti.

I was extraordinarily proud of our people, as the commandant, and I have been over time. They always surprise me in their ability to adapt, demonstrate honesty and initiative and become resilient, in spite of equipment casualties on the cutters and so forth.

Within 24 hours, we had three cutters in there. We were doing overflights, conducting assessments; even did some early air traffic control, sent folks ashore to deal with the most critically wounded, even resulted in one baby being born on the flight deck of one of our cutters.

So I thought it was a time also to recognize the performance of our people and to thank them, for what they had done, and finally to talk about overall modernization in the Coast Guard: where we're trying to go with changing the way we do maintenance and logistics support, for the service,

And actually using the support for our cutters in Haiti as a prime example of that, they were stressed in a great many ways. But our new logistics organization that we had built up allowed us to do a forward operating base in Guantanamo Bay and support cutters a great distance from the United States, in a manner that we would not have been able to absent the reorganization of our maintenance and logistics structure.

So with that, I'd be happy to take the conversation anywhere you would like and answer any questions.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir.

Let's go to Jim.

Jim, you're first. Please go ahead.

Q Good afternoon, Admiral. Jim Dolbow with the U.S. Naval Institute Blog.

What impact will this budget submission have on the Coast Guard's ability to perform its national defense mission?

ADM. ALLEN: Well, what we're going to have to do is -- with the smaller force structure, you have to make decisions and tradeoffs. And that's really part of our operational model now. We're a multi-mission service. We have cutters that can do a number of missions. But they can't do them all at once.

And so there's an inherent risk management process that takes place, in how we allocate our resources now. And all you're doing is reconciling a smaller force structure with the challenges you have out there. That doesn't mean we're going to walk away from any particular mission. But we'll judge everything on its merit and the exigencies that are apparent at that time, just as we did.

We pulled cutters from drug law enforcement working for Joint Interagency Task Force-South and sent them to Haiti even to the point of pulling a high-endurance cutter through the Panama Canal, to give us a larger, more capable platform there.

So we'll continue to work with the Department of Defense. But the allocation of resources is going to have to be based on risk and how we assess the competing priorities.

Q Thank you, Admiral.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, Jim.

Dale, please go ahead. You're next.

Q Yes.

Sir, Admiral Allen, Dale Kissinger from militaryavenue.com. I have a question concerning a budget success and a challenge that you'll have to leave for year 2012.

Would you highlight one success in this budget that you think will help the Coast Guard accomplish its mission and then one that you're going to have to wait for the out years?

ADM. ALLEN: Sure.

I think the funding that we're going to have, for the National Security Cutter, there's \$538 million for the fifth National Security Cutter. There's \$240 million for four fast response cutters, our patrol-boat replacement.

We're going to buy an additional eight C-144 aircraft, and there's 40 million (dollars) for that. And we continue to buy out our response boat mediums, our small jet drive response boats that are performing very, very well for us. And we're going to start designing the new replacement for our medium endurance cutters, which is going to be very important, because we're going to buy over 30 of those, ultimately.

And then one really nice thing that happened to us: with the great support of the president and the first lady, we got an infusion of \$14 million to build family housing for the Coast Guard.

So I think all of those will impact 2012 positively.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Dale. And I know that Susan from the Navy Times had joined us. I believe someone else also joined us. Can I please get your name, please?

Q Yeah. Greg Grant here, from Military.com.

LT. CRAGG: Hey, Greg. I know that you called in before Susan. Anyone else that I missed?

Q And John Doyle from 4G War blog.

LT. CRAGG: Okay. Thank you, Greg. Thank you, John. Thank you, Susan.

Okay, Chuck, please go ahead.

Q Admiral, Chuck Simmins from America's North Shore Journal. First I want to say how proud I am of the men and women under your command and the work that they have done and are doing in Haiti. It highlights the best of what it means to be a service member in the United States.

ADM. ALLEN: Well, thank you.

Q I wanted to ask about icebreakers. What's the situation with the icebreakers? Any chance of getting the one out of storage? Where are we headed with that particular part of the program?

ADM. ALLEN: With funds that were appropriated by the Congress in 2009 and 2010, we are renovating and bringing back to service the Polar Star, which had been, in a special capacity, laid up for several years.

Q And you've got the manpower for that?

ADM. ALLEN: Well, that's the next thing. Once the ship has been repaired -- and that'll take another 12 to 18 months -- we have to look at how we want to crew it and operate it.

I've been raising the issue a lot in the last four years. We need a national policy discussion and then an affirmative decision on the future of the ice-breaking program. These are very, very valuable ships to us, and with the increasing open water, diminished ice in the Arctic in the summer, we still need ice-strengthened vessels up there, and icebreakers are extremely important to us. And my goal is, in the final months that I'm in office here, is to more acutely frame that, so that my successor can engage the administration. But we need a decision on the future of icebreakers, and we need it soon.

Q And does that also include ice-breaking in the lower 48, or are we fairly comfortable in that regard?

ADM. ALLEN: Our force structure is fine, and our large icebreaker on the Great Lakes, the Mackinaw, is in very good shape, a brand-new boat, very capable. And we have -- we have fairly new buoy tenders, 225 buoy tenders that have ice-breaking capability, on the Great Lakes as well.

Where we are going to have to make some decisions sooner rather than later are 140-foot ice-breaking tugs, which are reaching the end of their service life and we're starting to see some reliability problems in some of their main machinery. These are really the workhorses. They're built specifically to break ice in the Great Lakes, and they facilitate the movement of commodities and goods there in the winter.

But if I were to give you one area in the lower 48, it is the 140-foot ice-breaking tugs. The rest of the fleet's in pretty good shape.

Q Thank you.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Chuck. Let's go to Greg. Greg, please go ahead.

Q Yes, Admiral. This Navy secretary, Bob Work, has -- he wrote a white paper last year -- or actually I guess it's been almost two years now -- but saying that the Coast Guard should be counted as part of the total -- the total battle -- what he called the battle fleet, saying that you are well configured for many of the littoral missions that he sees and others see in the future. And I just wondered what, as far as force structure, you have that you can contribute now to that or what shortcomings would not allow you to perform that mission? ADM. ALLEN: You know, Secretary Work and I share many of the same views. I will give you a couple of general concepts and I'll hone in on force structure.

One of my predecessors, Jim Loy, and CNO at the time, Jay Johnson, coined a term, national fleet. When we talk about the Navy and

the Coast Guard together, we collectively look at it as the national maritime fleet for the country. And where you start to get into the high end of Coast Guard cutter capability, you're usually dealing at the low end of naval combatant capability, and the notion is, how do you seam that up and maybe have some redundancy overlap where you need it for distinctive missions, but how do you move that moving forward?

That's been advanced considerably during my tenure with Mike Mullen and then Gary Roughead, as we developed the 21st century strategy for maritime security. And right now we're -- I've been working with Gary Roughead and Jim Conway, commandant of the Marine Corps, on what's called naval operating concepts, which actually try and look at the type of force structure issues that are associated with the maritime strategy and the recently concluded QDR.

I would -- I would say this in general. There is a demand signal out there for us to provide cutters for building partner nation capacity, like African Partnership Station. I have a significant demand out of EUCOM, AFRICOM and SOUTHCOM and PACOM for that type of work.

We could probably justify maintaining a continuous presence, what we would call a 1.0 presence, out of hemisphere east and west.

The question is, do we have the force structure to support that, and how does that impact our shipbuilding plans in the future?

The other issue is the tradeoff between the Littoral Combat Ship and the National Security Cutter. I would tell you the National Security Cutter is particularly suited for engagement-type activities because it can operate independently, can steam 12,000 miles, operate for 60 to 90 days without replenishment, and basically is used to operating independent of a battle group without the need of an oiler, which a Littoral Combat Ship would need.

So within that overall context, we are looking at a combined fleet and how that should manifest itself, and we're working that right now on the naval operating concepts.

Q So you said the National Security Cutter would be the -- probably the most important asset for you -- to allow you to really pursue that littoral strategy?

ADM. ALLEN: Well, it would allow us to -- not only the National Security Cutter, but the Offshore Patrol Cutter, are both going to help us support the National Maritime Strategy that was created by the Navy, the Coast Guard and the Marine Corps in 2007. The real question is going to be how much force can we put at the strategy, given the size of our fleet. The demand signal is right now is larger than our fleet, I will tell you that.

Q And what would you say is the size of the force that you could put to that demand signal today?

ADM. ALLEN: I think we're somewhere between about a 0.3 and a 0.5 presence; in other words, about from one-third to half the time, we've got a cutter over in EUCOM or AFRICOM, and a little less than that in the Pacific Rim. I can tell you that Admiral Stavridis, Kip Ward, and Rat Willard would all like to have more Coast Guard cutters over there if we could provide it.

Q Great, thank you.

ADM. ALLEN: Yeah.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Greg.

John, please go ahead. Q Hi, Admiral. John Doyle, 4G War. I wanted to talk to you about unmanned aerial vehicles, if we could. You have this joint operating situation with Customs and Border Protection with these marinized predators. One you've got and another one coming on, I think.

Where do you go from here, especially regarding ship-borne UAV for your National Security Cutter? What's on the horizon there?

ADM. ALLEN: Well, first of all, we're at -- we're anxiously awaiting the outcome of the CV radar test, which is the marinized predator that you talked about. It'll be done later on this spring, and we're working very, very closely with Customs and Border Protection. We need to kind of see how that operates before we make a decision on how far to go down in getting into a program of record and a production line with CDP.

In regards to vertically-launched UAVs for the National Security Cutter, we started out with Eagle Eye, which was a small Textron tiltrotor unmanned aerial system. We thought there was a lot of technical risks associated with that early on, and we opted to kind of draft behind the Navy, if you will, in their development of Fire Scout for Littoral Combat Ship.

Gary Roughead and I have talked about this quite a bit, and it comes up in our warfighter talks. We've demonstrated proof of concept by putting the maritime radar into Fire Scout and having an air-to-ground link associated with that. Fire Scout's just done interface testing with the destroyer McInerney, and we're looking, at some point in the future, at the possibility of taking Fire Scout and doing interface testing with the National Security Cutter.

So at this point, we are aligned very, very closely with the Navy, and watching where Fire Scout goes. This is one of those times where we're small enough, and they've got the throw-away -- they've got the lead on the developing of the system, and subject to putting that maritime radar in that'll help us with surface contacts, we're very happy with where we're going with the Navy right now.

Q Are you looking at any other unmanned vehicle besides the Fire Scout?

ADM. ALLEN: Well, we're watching. I know the Navy has done some work with Scan Eagle -- that's a much smaller system, much more economical to operate. And in fact, they're using that over in the Persian Gulf for some surveillance related to security we're doing with the Iraqi oil platforms. And sooner or later, we're looking at wide-area surveillance, getting into the high-altitude areas, like Global Hawk. We'd be interested in that as well, but we don't want to own any of that. We almost kind of want to rent the hours on that because of the lack of critical mass we have to support those kind of systems. Q Thank you, Admiral.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir. Thank you, John.

Susan, please go ahead.

Q Yes. Sir, I wanted to ask you about the -- since you brought up the whole issue of the cutters going to Haiti and 10 of them having problems, what are going to replace these medium-endurance cutters? How are you going to replace the ones that are breaking down on you constantly?

ADM. ALLEN: Well, that's the Offshore Patrol Cutter, which we're going to start the design work on with money that's provided in the 2011 budget, and looking to finish that design and start building these ships somewhere out in the 2012/2013 time frame.

You know, our big problem, although -- you know, it's readily apparent, with the condition of our fleet, you almost can't build them fast enough. And there's only a certain amount of money available each year, and trying to fit that into the box is our real challenge right now.

Q Mm-hmm.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir. Thank you, ma'am. We'll come back around.

We still have time to go around one more time, so let's start up with Jim. Jim, you were first, please go ahead.

Jim?

Q Admiral, Jim Dolbow again, with the U.S. Naval Institute blog. Besides finances, are there any obstacles to accelerating the Coast Guard's modernization program?

ADM. ALLEN: Well, let me ask you the -- I differentiate recapitalization of our cutters and modernization, which is an internal reorganizational structure of how we run the Coast Guard. So maybe I'll ask you to ask the question, are you talking about recapitalization or modernization?

Q Forgive me, recapitalization of the cutters and aircraft.

ADM. ALLEN: Okay. Could you just restate the question? I apologize.

Q No problem. Are there any technical challenges to accelerating your recapitalization, or is it just financial difficulties in this?

ADM. ALLEN: Well, we've resolved the technical baseline for the National Security Cutter, and we feel that's pretty solid right now. We're not going to have any exotic design for the Offshore Patrol Cutter; in fact, trying to take a look at designs that are already in use out there. We don't want to get too bleeding-edge here, and these ships have got to be affordable. So I don't think the technology challenges are as great an obstacle as trying to phase them and fit them into what's going to be a fixed funding level over a period of years.

Q Okay. Thank you.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Jim.

Dale, please go ahead.

Q Yes, sir. Dale Kissinger again. The -- you mentioned the family housing initiative. Are there any other initiatives to support the Coast Guard families that are -- you know, so many outstanding support to their friends and families out there in the world right now?

ADM. ALLEN: Well, you know, one of the basic things that sometimes becomes a struggle for us is what I would call parity or equity with DOD. When you talk about pay raises and things like that, we're automatically included, because we're one of the military services. But every once in a while, there will be a provision passed, for one reason or another, will be the four DOD service, but doesn't include the five -- all five military services, which is the Coast Guard.

So one of the things we've pressed very strongly for is to make sure we get equity and parity with DOD legislation. We need to make sure we just watch the National Defense Authorization Act and make sure -- nobody does this on purpose, but sometimes we can be inadvertently excluded. And some of the -- some of the asymmetries that that causes for us, a lot of it has to do with our size. But things like access to child-development centers, policy on how that's rank-ordered; being able to get into large programs that require up-front funding, like public-private ventures regarding family housing: Those are all things that are struggles for us. And our goal is to maintain parity. If we can do that, that will help us a lot.

One of our the real problems is, though, we're not deployed near large bases or military treatment facilities, and you could say, in many ways, our families are deployed all the time, if you're looking at the outer banks and access to medical care and things like that. So those are

the challenges we deal with. And frankly, the first lady's been very, very responsive to some of our concerns that are unique to the Coast Guard.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Dale.

Chuck, please go ahead.

Q Yes, sir, Chuck Simmins. Wanted to ask about recruitment and retention, and also whether the Coast Guard is in line to get any authorization to increase the number of Guardians that you have on payroll.

ADM. ALLEN: Well, the good news is, the recruiting has never been better and attrition has never been lower and retention has never been higher. The bad news is, retention's never been higher and attrition's never been lower, because our 2011 budget actually calls for the reduction of about little over 1,000 military personnel -- so trying to reconcile the size of our workforce and the fact that people are staying because they like the service and they're not leaving is actually a workforce management challenge we're going to have to deal with in the future.

I don't see any significant budget growth in the near -- I mean, billet growth in the near future, only because of the constrained budget environment. So our focus is to make sure that the workforce we have is adequately compensated, and make sure we keep that comparability with DOD.

Q Thank you.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Chuck.

Let's go to Greg. Please go ahead, Greg.

Q Yes, Admiral, I'd be curious to hear what's the state of your rotary wing fleet, and what perhaps are your priorities as far as recapitalization and modernization of that fleet? ADM. ALLEN: We made a basic decision at the start of the Deepwater Program not to build new helicopters. There was a helicopter option that was offered to us. We elected, because of the capabilities in that helicopter were not as great as the ones we have in our H-60 fleet, to basically modernize both the H-60 fleet and the H-65 fleet.

The first major step we did with that was reengining our H-65 fleet, which had traditionally underpowered engines and engines that couldn't level the torque load between the two of them with electronic leveling devices. So the first step was to get those helicopters -- been reengined, and then do some upgrades.

So we've basically been able to do block upgrades to both the H-65s and the H-60s that will make them reusable for the foreseeable future. My guess is we're probably 10 to 15 years away from having to make a decision regarding what we need -- might need to do with both of

those air frames, or what might replace them. But we're very, very satisfied with the upgrades we've done, and we've done this with our own depot-level lines and done a lot of the work ourselves. And I think we're pretty solid on rotary wing.

Q Great. Thank you for your time.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Greg.

John, please go ahead.

Q Yes, Admiral John Doyle again. I know you've touched on this, but can you, in kind of general terms, talk about what a burden financially and personnel-wise and equipment-wise the response to the Haitian earthquake has put on the Coast Guard? And are you -- are you looking for or are you getting any extra money to try and fill in that gap?

ADM. ALLEN: Well, first of all, one of the -- one of the real values the Coast Guard brings to the nation is -- and I talked earlier about allocating risks to what mission that you're involved in. We merely took vessels that were in one mission and applied them to another.

So there was a certain amount of base resources, or allocated ship days, if you will, that we merely take and apply to a different mission set based on priorities.

That said, the pace down there, the level at which we operate and the fact we need to keep those ships online, required us to surge down to Guantanamo Bay and create a forward operating base for logistics. And then we had to do extraordinary things when casualties did occur to keep them online that might be over and above what we were doing because of the urgency of the situation.

We've been tracking all the costs associated with that and are waiting for guidance right now from the administration, (OMB ?) and others, about how they're going to actually treat that in the budget. That's something that will be dealt with in the course of normal appropriations or there will be some other funding mechanism, and we haven't received guidance on that yet.

Q Since 9/11, it seems like every time I turn around, the Coast Guard has a new mission handed it. Are you pretty much at the point now where you just can't take on any more work, and are you conveying that to folks above you, to maintain the quality of the work you're doing now?

ADM. ALLEN: Well, I'm not sure we've gotten any new missions. We've had a mission set that's grown over 200 years, and what happens is we have cyclical demands placed on us that requires to surge from one mission to the other. A lot of people talk about the new port security mission after 9/11, but our port security mission was really created in World War I after an act of sabotage in New York Harbor that blew up an

explosives depot, and it was started with the Espionage Act of 1917. It just raised its level of importance after 9/11.

So it's really a matter of portfolio management and resource allocation. And again, that gets back to our operational model. I think the reason we're so valuable to the country is we have a set of resources, and whether I've got more or fewer than I had last year, the operational genius of the Coast Guard is how we allocate them.

That said, if you give me more resources, I could do more for the country, and I'll still do that the same way, balancing risk, but I can cover more areas for the country if I have more resources. And of course everybody always needs more. Q Right. Are the people who make those decisions -- are they sounding receptive to that request?

ADM. ALLEN: Well, the way we make those decisions is our field commanders -- we permanently allocate all of our resources. We don't hold anybody in garrison or wait to be deployed like DOD does, and it doesn't require an execute order to move our forces. They're already out there and they're scheduled to do something, and if that something is not as important as what needs to be done, then we merely redirect them. That's the reason you saw those helicopters show up in New Orleans within about 48 hours, because it didn't require any order from higher authority, it just required our field commanders to do the right thing and attack the mission.

Q Thank you very much, Admiral.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir. Thank you, John.

We have time for one more question before we turn it back to Admiral Allen and wrap up for today.

Someone stepped away from the call. Susan, are you still on the line?

Q I'm still here.

LT. CRAGG: Okay.

Q I just wanted to ask you -- when you were talking about the costs associated with Haiti, do you have a figure that you could give us?

ADM. ALLEN: Actually, we've already been asked by -- inside the administration. I think it's still under development. I think as soon as we can release it, we'll pass it to you.

Q Okay.

ADM. ALLEN: I'd hate to give you an order of magnitude on that right now and then have it change.

Q Okay.

With regard to the civilians that you're hiring to replace the active-duty people who are leaving -- I mean, it's not an exact replacement, but if this is to bring more expertise within the Coast Guard, is what's been said, and I just wondered in -- expertise in what areas? Can you outline that a little bit?

ADM. ALLEN: Well, to give you an example in the past, if you've been following the Coast Guard for the last couple of years, we actually brought more civilians into the Marine safety community. We need blue-suiters, but we also need continuity across transfer seasons. And a blended workforce combination of active and civilian and really auxiliaries and reserves is that serves us best.

There are a couple of areas where we have previously contracted out functions that we want to bring in-house consistent with where the administration wants to go. So we're going to take those 339 positions we got for civilians and kind of spread that across a variety of functions. And we've got a detailed analysis going on now exactly how we're going to apply that. And if you want to stick with us over the next couple of months, we'll be able to give you some more detail on it.

Q Okay.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you very much, sir.

And with that, I'd like to turn it back over to Admiral Allen. We're getting to a close to the roundtable.

So with that, I'd like to turn it back over to you, sir, if you'd like to close with any closing thoughts. The floor is yours.

ADM. ALLEN: Thank you for some of the very thoughtful questions, and they were a good follow-up to the speech we gave last week.

I guess I would say the challenges I see that are going to kind of transcend across my tenure -- and Admiral Papp's tenure, pending his confirmation -- are going to have to do with really clearly defining what it is we do within the Department of Homeland Security and in a constrained budget environment really making that value proposition, because one of the challenges for the Coast Guard is that we are a whole-of-government agency. We work for just about everybody in government, every department in government. And while that's a really good value for the country, it does result in a Balkanization of advocacy for us.

We do all the offshore enforcement for the National Marine Fisheries Service of NOAA. That wouldn't appear to be a priority within Homeland Security. That's how we manage that portfolio moving forward. And I think we are the exact type of agency the government needs right now, but in a constrained budget environment, we are the hardest to explain. And I think that's going to be an enduring challenge for us.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir. And with that, some admin remarks. You can get a transcript as well as the audio file. If you visit www.dodlive.mil/bloggerroundtable, you'll find a transcript, the audio file and a story from today's call.

With that, I just want to remind everybody you've been listening to U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Thad Allen, who discussed the state of the U.S. Coast Guard. With that, thank you so much, sir, for participating today. Thank you for your service. And thank you for the bloggers on the call today.

This concludes today's roundtable.

END.