Maritime Security Issues in the Caribbean Basin

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AGENDA

- Background

- Security Concerns in the Caribbean Basin

- Implementation of Port Security Standards

- U.S. Activities to Enhance Port Security

- Summary

NOTE: This presentation is based on GAO's *Information on Port Security in the Caribbean Basin* (GAO-07-804, June 29, 2007) done in response to the SAFE Port Act of 2006, Section 233(c).

BACKGROUND:
The Caribbean Basin (the "third border")

Source: GAO; Map, Map Resources (presentation).

BACKGROUND:
Importance of Caribbean Basin to the United States

- Caribbean nations are partners in trade, health, and education.

- The Caribbean Basin is a region of economic significance:
  - Hundreds of billions of dollars worth of total merchandise trade was conducted between the United States and Caribbean Basin countries in 2006.
  - 6.8 million out of nearly 10 million North American cruise passengers cruised within the Caribbean Basin in 2006.

- Given these economic links, a successful terrorist attack on or in the port infrastructure of the Caribbean Basin could potentially have a substantial economic impact.

SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE CARIBBEAN BASIN:
A Variety of Port Infrastructure

- Cruise Ships and Terminals

- Critical Energy Infrastructure

- Container Cargo Facilities

SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE CARIBBEAN BASIN: Potential Threats and Types of Attacks

- According to intelligence officials, there were no specific credible terrorist threats to port security for these facilities.

- Three types of attack considered most likely in the port environment:

  - Suicide Attacks
  - Standoff Attacks
  - Armed Assaults

SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE CARIBBEAN BASIN:
Areas of Concerns for Security

- Geography
- Corruption and Organized Gang Activities
- Stowaways
- Drug Trafficking
- Islamic Radical Groups and Foreign Terrorist Organizations
- Illegal Migration

IMPLEMENTATION OF PORT SECURITY STANDARDS:
International Port Security Standard

International Maritime Organization's **International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code**:

- Developed after 9/11 attacks
- Amended the 1974 Safety of Life At Sea Convention
- Provide standardized and consistent security framework
- Implemented by individual countries
- Countries self-report compliance
- Requirements are performance-based

IMPLEMENTATION OF PORT SECURITY STANDARDS:
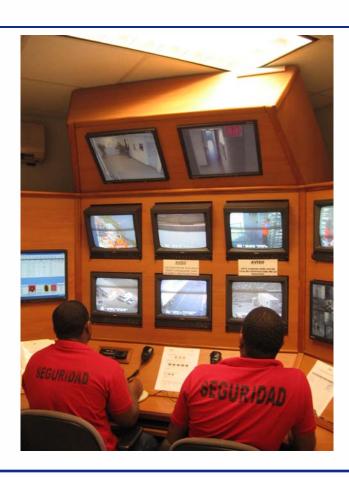## U.S. Coast Guard Observations of Implementation

International Port Security Program

- Focus on physical security measures, access controls, policies, procedures and security training.

- Coast Guard officials also make annual visits to the countries and ensure deficiencies found during the country visits are addressed.

- Most countries visited had "substantially implemented the ISPS security code." Some countries subject to a 90-day reassessment.

- At the facility level, several facilities needed improvements in areas such as access controls, communication devices, fencing, and lighting.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PORT SECURITY STANDARDS: GAO Observations of Implementation

- Access controls and fencing

- Closed Circuit TV to monitor areas and discourage corruption

- Communications

- Security Patrols

- Security Plans and Exercises

IMPLEMENTATION OF PORT SECURITY STANDARDS:
Challenges Cited by Regional Stakeholders Involved in Security

- Training

- Funding

- Support and maintenance

- Varying level of implementation within region

U.S. ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE PORT SECURITY: Several Federal Agencies Are Involved

Department of Homeland Security (DHS):
- Coast Guard
- Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Department of Energy (DOE):

Department of Defense

Department of State

U.S. Agency for International Development

U.S. ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE PORT SECURITY:
U.S. Coast Guard International Port Security Program

In addition to looking at compliance, the Coast Guard's International Port Security Program also provides a means for the Coast Guard to facilitate the implementation of security code requirements. For example:

- Periodic visits to promote bilateral relations, and share best security practices.

- Countries can make reciprocal visits to U.S. ports to observe U.S. implementation of the ISPS Code, obtaining ideas for implementation of the Code in their ports.

U.S. ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE PORT SECURITY:
Coast Guard Port State Control Program

- Inspections and boardings of vessels arriving from the Caribbean through a combination of risk-based targeting and random selection.

- Coast Guard District Seven—which receives the greatest number of vessels operating in, or arriving from, the Caribbean Basin — conducted 1352 security compliance examinations in 2006. Among these, 25 Caribbean vessels were found to have major security deficiencies that required a detention or other major control action.

- Coast Guard District Seven also requires all vessels with a last port of call in Haiti to conduct a security sweep for stowaways prior to entry into the port. A similar requirement for vessels arriving from the Dominican Republic was recently lifted.

U.S. ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE PORT SECURITY:
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

- **Container Security Initiative:** Screens containers before they are shipped to U.S. ports. Includes Honduras, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, and the Bahamas.

- **Training to Country Officials :** Training in topics such as seaport border enforcement, border control best practices and examination of fraudulent documents.

- **Secure Freight Initiative:** Pilot project to combine non-intrusive scanning, with radiological scanning and optical character reading technology as a test for 100 percent scanning requirement in SAFE Port Act. Includes Honduras.

U.S. ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE PORT SECURITY:
Department of Energy

Megaports Initiative-

- A DOE program to install radiation detection equipment for containers at foreign seaports.

- Operational in the Bahamas with agreements reached to eventually include ports in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Jamaica, and Panama.

U.S. ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE PORT SECURITY:
Other U.S. Federal Government Efforts

Department of Defense– Enduring Friendship Program:
- An initiative to achieve regional security cooperation and build maritime security capabilities for partnering with other nations to combat illicit trafficking and other activities.

Department of State
- The U.S. Department of State works with Organization of American States to coordinate and fund projects to improve maritime security in the Caribbean Basin.

U.S. Agency for International Development
- USAID has contributed funds toward the Maritime Security Alliance for Haitian Ports, a public-private sector coalition, to help Haiti become fully compliant with all of the ISPS Code requirements.

SUMMARY

- Intelligence sources reported no specific, credible maritime security threats existed in the Caribbean Basin at the time we were doing our work. However, officials we met with identified several concerns exist in the region that could impact port security such as corruption, the rise of radical Islamist groups, drug trafficking, and illegal migration, among others.

- Based on Coast Guard visits to countries in the region, international port security standards appear to have been largely implemented in the region, although the level of compliance with the ISPS Code in the Caribbean Basin varies widely.

SUMMARY (continued)

- According to Coast Guard officials, deficiencies were identified in areas such as access controls and security plan exercises. GAO's visits to countries in the region corroborated these findings. Generally, however, the region as a whole is further along than sub-Saharan Africa in implementing the Code but is not far along as most European countries.

- Several U.S. agencies are involved in the Caribbean Basin that could help enhance port security in the region. These activities include programs to monitor the implementation of ISPS Code requirements, efforts to train regional security officials, and programs to monitor the security of cargo transiting from the Caribbean Basin to the United States, among others.