**Title:** Maritime Homeland Security/Defense Command and Control: One Team, One Fight  

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**Abstract:** Various actions since September 11, 2001 have introduced changes in the government that will ensure that this nation is less vulnerable to attack, yet the terrorist threat still exists and one of this nation’s more vulnerable spots is an attack from the sea.  

With the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the DoD’s Northern Command (NORTHCOM), both agencies will focus on countering threats to U.S. territory and sovereignty. Both have maritime components that theoretically will focus on the maritime threats to the U.S. DHS and the U.S. Coast Guard will focus on the prevention of terrorist attacks and the reduction of America’s vulnerabilities, while NORTHCOM and the U.S. Navy will focus on the protection from terrorist attacks and crisis response. Both agencies will have separate maritime command and control structures and rely on interoperability and integration when dealing with either Defense or Security missions.  

This structure lacks unity of command, effort and decentralized execution and does not provide for adequate maritime command and control when addressing vulnerabilities along our nation’s coasts. However with clear command and control established, the Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) counter-drug model should be adopted within NORTHCOM to ensure DoD forces are focused on the maritime aspect of the Homeland Defense and integrated into the Homeland Security interagency effort. This will seal the seams between the two missions and deny the enemy a chance to attack our vulnerabilities.
MARITIME HOMELAND SECURITY/DEFENSE
COMMAND AND CONTROL
ONE TEAM – ONE FIGHT

By

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

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: _______________________

03 February 2003

______________________________
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This structure lacks unity of command, effort and decentralized execution and does not provide for adequate maritime command and control when addressing vulnerabilities along our nation’s coasts. However, with clear command and control established, NORTHCOM must adopt the Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) counter-drug model on each coast to ensure DoD forces are focused on the maritime aspect of the Homeland Defense and integrated into the Homeland Security interagency effort. This will seal the seams between the two missions and deny the enemy a chance to attack our vulnerabilities.
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This nation must have ready forces that can bring victory to our country, and safety to our people . . . innovative doctrine, strategy and weaponry . . . to revolutionize the battlefield of the future and to keep the peace by defining war on our terms . . . We will build the security of America by fighting our enemies abroad, and protecting our folks here at home.

President George W. Bush
January 10, 2002

INTRODUCTION

Almost a year and a half has passed since the terrorist attacks against New York City, NY and Arlington, VA were conducted. The Global War on Terror, that defeated the Taliban and scattered Al Qaida into remote hiding places, continues. Various governmental actions have introduced changes and new processes that will ensure that this country is less vulnerable than before September 11, 2001. Yet the threats of continued terrorist attacks against this country still exist and one of this nation’s more vulnerable spots is an attack from the sea.

With the signing of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, the Executive Branch created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The Department of Defense (DoD) established the Northern Command (NORTHCOM) in October 2002. Both agencies will focus on countering threats to U.S. territory and sovereignty. Both have maritime components that theoretically will focus on the maritime threats to the U.S. DHS will incorporate the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Customs Service, among many others, while NORTHCOM will rely on the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard.

But there exists a difference in each entity’s mission. DHS and the U.S. Coast Guard will focus on the prevention of terrorist attacks and the reduction of America’s vulnerabilities, while NORTHCOM and the U.S. Navy will focus on the protection from
terrorist attacks and crisis response. Despite the differences in mission, the DoD and U.S. Navy is expected to support the U.S. Coast Guard for Homeland Security missions, and likewise the U.S. Coast Guard is expected to support the DoD and U.S. Navy on Homeland Defense missions.

Will this maritime command and control structure planned under NORTHCOM and the DHS adequately address the vulnerabilities along our nation’s coasts? And how will these two agencies integrate with each other? This paper’s thesis postulates that with clear command and control established, the Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) counter-drug model should be adopted within NORTHCOM to ensure DoD forces are focused on the maritime aspect of the Homeland Defense mission and integrated into the Homeland Security interagency effort.

This paper will examine the maritime command and control structure established under NORTHCOM and DHS with respect to operational art and command and control fundamentals. Even though the U.S. Coast Guard has been designated the Lead Federal Agency for Maritime Homeland Security and will be subordinate to the DHS, it remains DoD’s fifth service and considerable vulnerabilities and seams exist between the U.S. Coast Guard’s mission and the Maritime Homeland Defense mission of NORTHCOM.

**ANALYSIS**

**Continuing Maritime Threat.**

Most post September 11, 2001 threat estimates and policy guidance indicate that the world in the near future holds uncertain elements and continued anti-U.S. underpinnings and that the “antipathy of our (U.S.) enemies may well be increasing, and new enemies may emerge.” The Director of Central Intelligence’s post September 11 intelligence estimate
concluded that “the connection between terrorists and other enemies, the weapons of mass
destruction they seek to use against us, and the social, economic, and political tensions across
the world that they exploit in mobilizing their followers” will exist for the foreseeable
future.

This nation’s maritime vulnerabilities are great. The “maritime border includes
95,000 miles of shoreline and navigable waterways as well as a 3.4 million square mile
exclusive economic zone,” and supports the flow of 16 million container arrivals in the U.S.
each year. Taking advantage of vulnerabilities, terrorists will “choose their targets
deliberately based on the weaknesses they observe in our (U.S.) defenses and our (U.S.)
preparedness,” which may include planning spectacular attacks by maritime means along
this nation’s coasts.

**Homeland Security versus Homeland Defense.**

In establishing a method to counter this threat, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have made a
distinction between Homeland Security and Homeland Defense with the following
definitions:

**Homeland Security** (HLS): A concerted national effort to prevent
terrorist attacks within the United States, reduce America’s vulnerability
to terrorism, and minimize the damage and recover from attacks that do
occur.

**Homeland Defense** (HLD): The protection of U.S. territory,
sovereignty, domestic population and critical infrastructure against
external threats and aggression.

Homeland Defense is a subset of Homeland Security and the key words here are
“prevention” and “protection”. In the maritime realm, the U.S. Coast Guard is the lead
federal agency for Maritime Homeland Security or “prevention of an attack and reduction of
vulnerabilities,” while the DoD is responsible for Maritime Homeland Defense or “protection from an attack.” This effort effectively separates the responsibilities between security and defense with the creation of the DHS and NORTHCOM. However as Homeland Defense is a subset of Homeland Security, the two are excruciatingly linked. Another linkage is that the current plans call for the U.S. Navy to support the U.S. Coast Guard in its Homeland Security role, and for the U.S. Coast Guard to support the U.S. Navy in its Homeland Defense role providing for additional integration and interoperability issues. For the U.S. Navy vision on responsibilities, Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Clark concedes:

> I am convinced that responsibility should rest first and foremost with the Coast Guard. I am also convinced that there is a role for the United States Navy to play in response and in support of the Coast Guard, bringing our resources to bear wherever they are required. What I believe is our requirement for the future is to integrate with any force that is available, civil or military, to integrate on demand in the future. That is our task.

The point is that the establishment of these two separate organizations, with separate responsibilities, the difficulty lies in effectively coordinating and integrating against a very probable and very serious maritime threat. Definitions aside, within the operational factors of space and time, there is very little difference between security and defense.

Take for example, that intelligence channels received information that a container vessel was just taken over by terrorists approximately 20 nautical miles off the San Francisco coast. While it is the U.S. Coast Guard’s responsibility to prevent terrorist acts by monitoring and controlling vessel movements, it is DoD’s responsibility for protection from a terrorist act. Traveling at 20 knots, the DoD or U.S. Coast Guard have just one hour to react before the vessel detonates under the Golden Gate Bridge. Will the Coast Guard respond from San Francisco, or the U.S. Navy from San Diego? Under what command and
control? Control from U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area located in Alameda, CA or from NORTHCOM in Colorado? As detailed, these are considerable command and control issues and space-time factors that two separate agencies with two separate command structures have to overcome.

**Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Coast Guard**

As approved by the President on 25 November 2002 when signing the “Homeland Security Act of 2002”, DHS was created and for the first time establishes a Federal Department whose primary mission will be to help prevent and respond to acts of terrorism on U.S. soil. The DHS unites 22 federal agencies with security responsibilities under a cabinet level post, which includes the U.S. Coast Guard.

The U.S. Coast Guard will be transferred intact from the Department of Transportation to Homeland Security within the next month and while transforming to focus on Homeland Security, its basic structure will remain the same. For Homeland Security, the U.S. Coast Guard strategy includes building maritime domain awareness, controlling high interest vessels, improving presence and response, protecting infrastructure and enhancing partnerships. Future strategy will focus on layered maritime security operations, strengthening of port security postures, “deep water” program and preparing, equipping and training forces to transition between Homeland Security and Homeland Defense operations. In doing so, the Coast Guard command and control structure will remain the same: two area commands, one on each coast, commanding separate subordinate regional districts.
Based on the above transformation initiatives and authorities granted to the U.S. Coast Guard, they are the service of choice for the Maritime Homeland Security mission, in essence, a security net around the nation’s maritime borders. The U.S. Coast Guard’s command and control structure is postured on each coast with subordinate Districts and Captains of the Port.

However, once that container vessel off San Francisco becomes a specified threat, the mission to counter it shifts from a U.S. Coast Guard responsibility to a DoD and NORTHCOM responsibility. A look at the DoD and NORTHCOM’s maritime command and control structure reveals significant shortfalls.

**Department of Defense, the Northern Command and the U.S. Navy**

DoD’s response to Homeland Defense or “protection against terrorist attack” mission was the creation of NORTHCOM. Its mission is to “conduct operations to deter, prevent, and if necessary, defeat aggression aimed at the United States, its territories, population and designated critical infrastructure within a the designated Joint Operations Area and provide
military assistance to civil authorities in support of national homeland security efforts as directed, in order to protect and defend the United States of America." Thus, the establishment of NORTHCOM clearly delineates a role for DoD in Homeland Security and Homeland Defense and appropriately provides centralized direction of that effort.

In its command and control structure, NORTHCOM has two domain oriented subordinate commands under its control: U.S. Element North American Aerospace Defense Command (USELEMNORAD), responsible for the protection and defense of the air domain and Joint Force Headquarters Homeland Security (CJFHQ-HLS), responsible for the protection, defense and crisis response of the land domain, by supporting both Joint Task Force Civil Support (JTF-CS) and Joint Task Force Six (JTF-6). However, no subordinate command has been created for the protection and defense within the maritime domain.

Within this maritime realm, NORTHCOM, will:

Exercise Operational Control (OPCON) or Tactical Control (TACON) of assigned and attached DoD maritime forces through its component commands. When authorized by the Secretary of Defense, TACON of DoD forces may be transferred to the U.S. Coast Guard for the execution of Maritime Homeland Security missions. Conversely, when directed, U.S. Coast Guard forces may be transferred to DoD for the execution of Maritime Homeland Defense missions.

However, in the current structure, neither NORTHCOM, nor its naval component, U.S. Naval Forces, Northern Command (USNAVNORTH), have forces assigned. Transfer of U.S. Navy forces to USNAVNORTH requires Secretary of Defense approval and would come from both Joint Forces Command and the Atlantic Fleet on the East Coast or from the Pacific Command and the Pacific Fleet on the West Coast.

In addition to the absence of fielded forces, The Commander of USNAVNORTH is in charge of three commands: the Atlantic Fleet (Force Provider), Fleet Forces Command (Fleet...
Requirements), and now USNAVNORTH. A memorandum of agreement (MOA) was signed 17 December 2002, between the Pacific Fleet Commander, the Atlantic Fleet Commander and the USNAVNORTH Commander, establishing a formal agreement that ensures efficient staff coordination and the flow of Pacific Fleet and Atlantic Fleet forces in support of NORTHCOM’s Maritime Homeland Security/Defense mission. The MOA calls for staffing from the Atlantic Fleet in Virginia, the Pacific Fleet in Hawaii, Second Fleet in Virginia and Third Fleet in California. Also USNAVNORTH “intends, to the greatest extent possible, to ensure TACON of attached Navy forces be exercised through the same tactical commanders that command those forces in their parent USJFCOM and USPACOM chains of command.” In essence, once naval forces are transferred to USNAVNORTH, with Secretary of Defense approval, those forces will be tactically controlled by the commands that transferred them. This delegation of authority across commands defies the basic Principle of War: Unity of Command.

(Figure 2. Current Command and Control for Maritime Homeland Defense)
The maritime command and control structure for Homeland Defense is convoluted. The U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area Commander with Homeland Security responsibilities and critical information on the terrorist controlled container vessel off San Francisco, would be required to notify NORTHCOM in Colorado Springs, Colorado and USNAVNORTH in Norfolk, Virginia. Once the threat is conveyed, NORTHCOM would request forces, with Secretary of Defense approval, from the Pacific Command and Pacific Fleet Forces in Hawaii. Under the MOA, OPCON of these forces would be transferred to USNAVNORTH in Virginia, while the Third Fleet in San Diego would have TACON. Yet Third Fleet has no operational command relationship with USNAVNORTH except that it provides partial staff support. Even if the Commanders and staffs understood this process and trained to it, they could not reasonably respond within an hour to the San Francisco bound container vessel, let alone work off the same time critical data sets.

**U.S. Navy/U.S. Coast Guard Integration and Interoperability**

Within this maritime domain and as discussed, The U.S. Navy and U. S. Coast Guard have overlapping missions with respect to Homeland Security/Defense. Each is required to support the other’s mission when requested and approved by the respective Secretaries. The maritime navies need to continue to operate as separate entities because they have different responsibilities, capabilities and authorities. However, they also need to be integrated to prevent, protect and respond to any potential terrorist threat. The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Clark commented, “that the current MOA between the Navy and Coast Guard is about common developments; about Coast Guard’s deepwater project, sharing research and development, developing effective communications and command and control capabilities and about interoperability that fundamentally we do not have today.”

Prevention of and
protection from terrorist attack cannot be done without interoperable military and law
enforcement entities, an interoperable U.S. Navy and Coast Guard linked partnership with
capabilities to surge when necessary and overwhelming awareness about the potential threat.

Currently, The U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard operate independently when
operating off each coast. The U.S. Navy is focused on training and the U.S. Coast Guard is
focused on security. When Homeland Security or Homeland Defense issues arise,
NORTHCOM and USNAVNORTH plan to rely on current U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard
relationships in an effort to transfer forces between missions. These current relationships
include liaison officers at the U.S. Navy numbered Fleets and include annual staff meetings.
Both have 24-hour operational watches, which pass information, intelligence and operational
orders, however they are not currently interoperable. What is displayed on the Coast Guard
Pacific Area GCCS maritime common operational picture (COP) in Alameda is almost
always different than Third Fleet GCCS terminal in San Diego.

One area where these maritime navies conduct mutual operations, are integrated and
interoperable, is in the national counter drug effort. The DoD runs, through the Pacific and
Southern Commands, two Joint Interagency Task Forces (JIATFs), essentially a U.S. Navy,
U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs and Drug Enforcement Agency effort to stop the maritime
drug flow into the United States. The DoD and U.S. Navy’s role in this mission is the
detection and monitoring of suspected drug movements for handoff to Law Enforcement
Agencies, primarily the U.S. Coast Guard. The JIATF provides specific DoD capabilities
law enforcement agencies don’t have which may include maritime patrol aircraft, blue water
endurance and improved intelligence collection and dissemination capabilities. However, it
is the interagency flavor, DoD, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs Service, Drug Enforcement
Agency and the FBI, all working as part of an interagency team focused on a specific threat, where the rubber meets the road. Plus, with the expertise involved, it is the right agency to coordinate the right mix of military or law enforcement response to bring to bear.

Lessons learned from the JIATF counter drug effort in the Eastern Pacific in the early 1990’s determined that effective blockades by multiple surface action groups would not discourage maritime drug runners who just either waited it out or changed conveyance to deliver large cocaine loads to Mexico and the U.S. However by the late 1990’s, increased battlespace awareness down to the individual ship/unit, focused intelligence and capabilities to surge and react to actionable intelligence did dramatically increase the cocaine seizure rates in the Eastern Pacific and force the trafficker to make alternate choices of delivery.

**Analysis Summary**

With the establishment of the DHS and NORTHCOM, the federal government has considerably changed its focus to Homeland Security and Defense. The Coast Guard has been placed under the DHS and is transforming into a potent security force. NORTHCOM was created as a place where all federal, state and local agencies could go for DoD support to Homeland Security. Yet NORTHCOM has a specific Homeland Defense mission and in the maritime domain lacks unity of command, decentralized execution and control of forces. In addition, space-time considerations and unity of effort between Maritime Homeland Security and Homeland Defense efforts require an integrated and interoperable DHS and NORTHCOM and U.S. Navy and Coast Guard. The Component Commander should attempt to fix these considerable seams that exist which could ultimately be exploited by terrorist entities.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Sound Command and Control should ensure unity of effort, provide for centralized direction and decentralized execution, and provide an environment for applying common doctrine and ensured interoperability.\textsuperscript{xxiii}

Unity of Command

The purpose of Unity of Command is to ensure unity of effort under one responsible commander for every objective.\textsuperscript{xiv}

While there is only one Commander for NORTHCOM’s Maritime Homeland Defense objective, USNAVNORTH lacks both efficiency and forces and thus lacks unity of command and effort. It is recommended that the Atlantic Fleet, Fleet Forces Command and USNAVNORTH combine into one staff and transition into the U.S. Navy’s only Fleet wide force provider, taking that responsibility away from both the Pacific Fleet and Atlantic Fleets. It is essentially the current U.S. Navy structure with the exception of Pacific Fleet. The operational Fleet commands, Third Fleet and Second Fleet, would report to USNAVNORTH. USNAVNORTH would now focus on manning, training and equipping all U.S. Navy forces for both homeland defense missions and overseas deployments and forwarding consolidated Fleet requirements to the Chief of Naval Operations, responsibilities that are complimentary.

At the Combatant Command level, the same reorganization should be applied but would require a change to the Unified Command Plan.\textsuperscript{xxv} It is recommended that NORTHCOM take over responsibility for serving as the Joint Force Provider of assigned CONUS based units vice Joint Forces Command, who has no “area” responsibility and primary focus is on transforming U.S. military forces and Joint Doctrine.\textsuperscript{xxvi}
Now with forces and staff, USNAVNORTH’s primary mission would be to support NORTHCOM, but also be a force provider to the Pacific, Central, South and European Commands (via their navy component commander) in the man, train, and equip role. The Second and Third Fleets would support OPCON and TACON of forces, under the guidance of a single Fleet Commander, responsible to the Commander, NORTHCOM. This provides both a simple command and control architecture and focused forces to conduct Maritime Homeland Defense operations.

(Figure 3. Proposed Command and Control for Maritime Homeland Defense)

Under this Command and Control structure, the U.S. Naval Forces Commander would not have to request forces from the Pacific Fleet Commander in order to respond to the container vessel off San Francisco. Third Fleet forces, with decentralized execution authority from the U.S. Naval Forces Commander and trained in Homeland Defense missions, could react faster to the terrorist container vessel threat. However, reaction time would be even
faster if there was a joint interagency effort controlling the Homeland Security and Homeland Defense continuum.\textsuperscript{xxvii}

\textbf{Unity of Effort}

Unity of effort, coordination through cooperation and common interests, is an essential complement to unity of command.\textsuperscript{xxviii}

Unity of effort in the maritime homeland is attainable only by closing the seams separating law enforcement security and military defense, and by filling the void between shore defense and naval offense.\textsuperscript{xxix}

In order to provide the unity of effort required for successful DoD Homeland Defense operations, this paper recommends the establishment of a robust interagency command subordinate to NORTHCOM, specifically focusing on maritime threats and capitalizing on regional and inherent U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy service capabilities.

The creation of a Joint Interagency Task Force on each coast is essential because it provides NORTHCOM two Joint Force Maritime Component Commanders focused on the maritime threat, one on each coast, splitting the factors of space and time in half. It allows NORTHCOM to conduct traditional Combatant Command duties, which include setting policy, establishing doctrine and plans, but most importantly providing liaison with the DHS. It also allows the Navy component, USNAVNORTH to focus on administrative details to include Manning, training and equipping forces for both the Homeland Defense mission and overseas deployments.
The Joint Interagency Task Forces, manned by Joint Forces (Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps) and interagency personnel, will provide the interagency fusion of threat data and maritime awareness. It provides expertise in law enforcement and military operations together at one location; whichever are required in the short factors of space and time. By placing these JIATF commands near Coast Guard Areas Commands in Alameda
and Norfolk, the link between Homeland Security and Homeland Defense would be provided.

Whether the target set is terrorists or drug traffickers, the process you go through to thwart them is largely the same: intelligence fusion to identify the threat; monitoring the transit zones to the United States; detecting the bad guys as far away from U.S. borders as possible; and handing off to law enforcement or the military to intercept them. In terms of homeland security, I also think the standing joint task force is a good model. It’s the best way we’ve come up with for focusing the capabilities of all our government agencies in one direction, and on one overriding mission.

To ensure this unity of effort, the maritime navies need to be seeing and using the same data sets. What is required is a system that manages battle space awareness by combining inputs from Intelligence, and Federal, State and local agencies with potential threat data and military and law enforcement capabilities. Then the key is providing that single picture to the DHS, the U.S. Coast Guard, NORTHCOM, U.S. Naval Forces, NORTHCOM. The U.S. Coast Guard calls this “Maritime Domain Awareness”. JIATF West and East are fusion centers capable of supporting that effort. Only by awareness off both coasts will Homeland Defense and Security efforts be able to identify potential threats, understand vulnerabilities and react to actionable intelligence.

JIATF West in Alameda, CA alerted almost instantaneously to the information received by U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area concerning the terrorist controlled container vessel off San Francisco, would immediately access locations of U.S. Navy Third Fleet, U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, or additional Joint assets in order to defeat the terrorists onboard that container vessel. An aspect that neither U.S. Navy Third Fleet nor U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area would control by itself.

CONCLUSION
NORTHCOM’s maritime command and control structure must change to ensure unity of command and decentralized execution authority. This will enable a clear and simple command and control structure with trained forces focused on both the overseas fight and defense of the homeland. Under NORTHCOM, a subordinate Joint Interagency Command must be created to be responsible for the maritime domain, manage the integration and interoperability of the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard for the Homeland Defense missions and provide the unity of effort required in bridging Homeland Defense and Homeland Security objectives. Those Joint Interagency Task Forces, one on each coast, coordinating with U.S. Coast Guard Area commands would be able to “integrate on demand” U.S. Navy and Joint forces into required missions and react to short fused actionable intelligence. In reality, there will be very little actionable intelligence for which the DoD and the NORTHCOM would react to. U.S. Coast Guard estimates that it will spend 95% of its time with the Homeland Security missions and 5% on Homeland Defense. Do we really need to allocate forces to NORTHCOM, create a maritime domain oriented Joint Task Force and an interoperable and integrated U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard? The answer is yes. Integral to NORTHCOM’s mission is control of emerging threat profiles, assessments, defining battle space awareness, and interagency coordination, while ensuring capable forces are ready. Only with clear command and control and a dedicated focus on each coast within the maritime domain will the seams be sealed. The NORTHCOM Commander needs to be prepared when that 5% chance of a terrorist attack, does materialize.
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