

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD  
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SECURITY SECTOR  
ASSISTANCE  
STRATEGY



JULY 2015  
WASHINGTON, D.C.



## THE COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD



Helping foreign partners to build sustainable capacity sufficient to address today's global security challenges is a formidable undertaking and a decade-long process under the most ideal conditions. Doing so on the heels of conflict, a long-standing political crisis, or in the face of dire economic circumstances can be a multi-generational endeavor. While the same is often true of many areas of international development, maritime development is subject to particular challenges; chief among them the vastness and inhospitable nature of the maritime domain and the propensity of nations to consign maritime security to a tertiary national priority ranking.

Effective maritime programs, particularly those involving across-the-board modernization and expansion, must address the full range of interconnected requirements and deliverables through a comprehensive project management approach. Programs designed around or assessed chiefly by volume of activity rather than progress toward established end states are destined for failure or long-term life-support.

The majority of the world's maritime organizations, regardless of name or ministerial affiliation, are charged with carrying out U.S. Coast Guard-like missions. Often comparable in size to a typical Coast Guard sector, the smallest foreign coast guards and navies may be the functional equivalent of a 25-person Coast Guard station. As a world-class coast guard, the U.S. Coast Guard has both the opportunity and responsibility to share its best practices and hard-fought lessons learned to positively influence the development and operational effectiveness of near-peers and aspiring organizations alike.

*Semper Paratus.*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Paul F. Zukunft". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Admiral Paul F. Zukunft**  
Commandant

THE U.S. COAST GUARD'S VISION FOR  
SECURITY SECTOR ASSISTANCE  
IN THE MARITIME DOMAIN

*Helping partner nations build  
sustainable capacity to address common  
security challenges and to disrupt and defeat  
threats from the sea.*

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# I.

## Introduction

Successful Coast Guard-led development programs are built around a three-strand critical path emphasizing vessel operation, vessel sustainment and boarding party employment; without which coast guards and navies, regardless of size, cannot deter or defeat threats from the sea. Achieving and sustaining self-sufficiency in these core areas requires an equal or greater investment in designing and institutionalizing an array of support systems, processes, policies and authorities which are addressed elsewhere in this strategy.

The Coast Guard's broad mission portfolio touches all aspects of maritime governance, prevention and response. This strategy is specifically directed toward the security aspect of international assistance as defined in Presidential Policy Directive 23, Security Sector Assistance (SSA), and focuses primarily on maritime organizations confronted by threats emanating from ports, waterways and coastal waters.

Cooperation with more capable or better equipped blue water partners is an equally important aspect of Coast Guard SSA. Similarly, Coast Guard International Port Security Program (IPSP) cooperation with foreign partners is integral to the security of U.S. and global supply chains and to the professionalization of foreign port authorities and facilities around the world.

For seagoing maritime organizations, the ultimate measure of success often comes down to one question - Can the partner nation's maritime organization operate in ports, waterways and on the sea with sufficient regularity and effectiveness to deter or stop criminal and terrorist elements from successfully engaging in illicit activities? If no, the U.S. Coast Guard stands ready to work with stakeholders to identify the root causes, and to implement lasting solutions to each. Effective maritime security requires persistent at-sea presence.

Nothing in this strategy precludes the Coast Guard from participating in other forms of authorized international engagement such as search and rescue, disaster response and environmental protection.

*Just as the world's oceans are avenues for a nation's overseas commerce, they are also the highways for the import and export of illegal commodities.*

— The National Strategy for Maritime Security - 2005







## II.

### A New National-Level Approach

Annually, the United States Government invests billions of dollars and thousands of person-years in the business of aiding foreign security organizations, military and civilian alike, with the complex work of developing and improving their capabilities, professionalism and operational effectiveness. Assistance to foreign security organizations is referred to throughout the U.S. Government by many terms; security cooperation, security assistance, building partner capacity, security force assistance, capacity-building and simply developmental assistance. Many of these terms have specific legislative and program meanings, making their interchangeable use confusing to the uninitiated. Presidential Policy Directive 23 (PPD-23) introduces a new term, Security Sector Assistance (SSA), for Interagency-wide use. SSA addresses a more narrowly defined range of engagement activities specific to the international security sector-

#### **Defining the Security Sector**

The security sector is composed of those institutions - to include partner governments and international organizations - that have the authority to use force to protect both the state and its citizens at home or abroad, to maintain international peace and security, and to enforce the law and provide oversight of those organizations and forces. It includes both military and civilian organizations and personnel operating at the international, regional, national, and sub-national levels. Security sector actors include state security and law enforcement providers, governmental security and justice management and oversight bodies, civil society, institutions responsible for border management, customs and civil emergencies, and non-state justice and security providers.

#### **Defining Security Sector Assistance (SSA)**

Security sector assistance refers to the policies, programs, and activities the United States uses to:

- Engage with foreign partners and help shape their policies and actions in the security sector;
- Help foreign partners build and sustain the capacity and effectiveness of legitimate institutions to provide security, safety and justice for their people; and,
- Enable foreign partners to contribute to efforts that address common security challenges.





# III.

## Goals of U.S. Security Sector Assistance

-Presidential Policy Directive 23-

***Help partner nations build sustainable capacity to address common security challenges,*** specifically to: disrupt and defeat transnational threats; sustain legitimate and effective public safety, security, and justice sector institutions; support legitimate self-defense; contribute to U.S. or partner military operations which may have urgent requirements; maintain control of their territory and jurisdiction waters including air, land, and sea borders; and help indigenous forces assume greater responsibility for operations where U.S. military forces are present.

***Promote partner support for U.S. interests, through cooperation on national, regional, and global priorities,*** including, but not limited to, such areas as: military access to airspace and basing rights; improved interoperability and training opportunities; and cooperation on law enforcement, counterterrorism, counternarcotics, combating organized crime and arms trafficking, countering Weapons of Mass Destruction proliferation, and terrorism, intelligence, peacekeeping, and humanitarian efforts.

***Promote universal values,*** such as good governance, transparent and accountable oversight of security forces, rule of law, transparency, accountability, delivery of fair and effective justice, and respect for human rights.

***Strengthen collective security and multinational defense arrangements and organizations,*** including by helping to build the capacity of troop- and police-contributing nations to United Nations and other multilateral peacekeeping missions, as well as through regional exercises, expert exchanges and coordination of regional intelligence and law enforcement information exchanges.





## IV.

# Coast Guard Security Sector Assistance

### **A Legacy of Expanding the Base**

The Coast Guard has a long history of partnering with foreign coast guards, navies and civilian maritime organizations. The Coast Guard emerged as a recognized leader in international maritime development in the 1980s with the formation of uniquely qualified teams of international trainers who at the time worked primarily throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Teams such as the Drug Interdiction Assistance Team (DIAT) and the International Maritime Law Enforcement Team (IMLET) ultimately combined to form a single internationally-focused resource charged with delivering a quality, standardized product to foreign partners.

Two decades later, a seemingly endless procession of world-changing and policy-shaping events such as the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, the attack on the USS COLE, the events of September 11, 2001, the Iraq War, the Georgia-Russia crisis of 2008, the establishment of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), and the Asia-Pacific Rebalance each contributed to a burgeoning global demand for Coast Guard developmental assistance; much of which is now directed outside the Western Hemisphere.

As the National strategic pendulum has swung from Latin America, to the former Soviet Union, to Africa, to the Middle East and Asia-Pacific, the Coast Guard has adapted, shifted resources and reshaped its SSA programs to meet U.S. Government and emerging partner requirements.

Annually, the Coast Guard is involved in a diverse range of productive SSA partnerships. We will continue to choose our partners carefully and avoid being involved in efforts assessed as too hindered by obstacles, beyond our control, to measurably improve partner capabilities.

Maintaining strong maritime relationships in support of global cooperation unquestionably matters, however, the Coast Guard will give special consideration to partnerships supportive of Department of Homeland Security and Coast Guard mission requirements and those focused on fulfilling the SSA goals of “Helping partner nations to build sustainable capacity to address common security challenges” and to “disrupt and defeat transnational threats.”

## **A Time for a More Discerning Philosophy**

More than ever, the Nation and the Coast Guard are being pulled toward vital maritime regions such as the Gulf of Guinea, Horn of Africa, Red Sea, Persian Gulf, Black Sea, Straits of Malacca, South China Sea and the Caribbean Basin. To be effective, we must adopt a philosophy that directs our SSA capacity in favor of the most impactful SSA partnerships. To this end, we will:

- Be selective in adjudicating requests for SSA engagement;
- Seek to be the lead agency for comprehensive, multi-year maritime development efforts where we are a major contributor to the standup of new coast guard-like organizations and the establishment of in-country maritime advisors;
- Migrate away from training-only partnerships when appropriate and use our resources to greatest affect where the conditions are right for more comprehensive, sustained progress in line with broader U.S. foreign policy objectives;
- Base long-term partnering decisions on regional and country strategies, work plans, well-reasoned end states and the likelihood of being able to achieve desired results;
- Seek to properly outfit and equip partner nations through our Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and Excess Defense Articles (EDA) programs;
- Seek to expand foreign student attendance in our schoolhouses by marketing the Coast Guard Academy, expanding senior officer opportunities and exploring alternative delivery methods to increase student participation from key non English-speaking partner nations;
- Follow-through, consistent with partner nation will and U.S. policy, on legacy commitments to security organizations the Coast Guard has a special SSA relationship with and who remain heavily reliant on the Coast Guard for sustainment and continued development;
- Provide partner nations and funding agencies with economical and sensible solutions for achieving timely success;
- Remain steadfast in our advocacy for an outcome-based approach to maritime development and our conviction that an agenda of engagement activities is not alone a development plan;
- Manage the SSA business efficiently by maximizing the use of available engagement resources and leveraging the full spectrum of uniquely qualified Coast Guard competencies; and
- Be prepared to withdraw from initiatives that, over time, yield an unacceptably low return on investment and show limited potential for measurably improving regional maritime security.

## **The Ways for Making an Impact**

The Coast Guard is a full-service maritime development partner with the technical and professional wherewithal to address the complete range of small-service maritime development issues. A military service with law enforcement authorities and a global reputation for humanitarian response, the Coast Guard often enjoys a level of entrée not afforded other U.S. or foreign security organizations.

When designing programs for improving regional maritime security, we balance the delivery of essential technical skills and the long-term benefits of institutionalizing improved management and business practices. We advocate on behalf of a systems approach and maintain the resources and competencies necessary for sustaining the following portfolio of SSA partnering options:

- **Comprehensive needs assessments and master plan development**
- **Asset and equipment acquisition management**
- **Model doctrine, policy and legislation development**
- **Human capital development through education and training**
- **Small-scale infrastructure development in conjunction with a systems approach**
- **Implementation of anti-terrorism security measures through established international standards**
- **Participation in combined exercises and multi-national regional forums**
- **Personnel exchanges**
- **Assignment of long-term advisors/program managers**

## **The Means for Making an Impact**

Few foreign government or U.S. agencies have the financial wherewithal, legislative authority, organic SSA competency and sufficiently responsive delivery systems to independently satisfy all of the requirements associated with a comprehensive maritime development undertaking. The global maritime domain is littered with reminders of the common but mistaken belief that, with a small fleet of boats, a cadre of personnel and a modest amount of equipment, regional maritime security can be demonstrably improved and sustained. While modest investments can and often do yield meaningful SSA results, these yields can be short-lived and overly dependent on the next infusion of hurried outside support. Achieving meaningful SSA results requires a level of sustained and coordinated support beyond historic norms. The Coast Guard will therefore establish and maintain the means to fulfill its SSA responsibilities -

**Maritime Competency**– The Coast Guard’s eleven statutory missions and sizable, professional workforce are the foundation upon which Coast Guard-led SSA programs are built. In recognition of the practical, diplomatic and cultural challenges associated with SSA implementation, the Coast Guard will maintain a corps of trainers and subject matter experts to support SSA.

**Maritime Development Project Management** – Designing and effectively executing complex maritime SSA initiatives requires the bringing together of technical knowledge in multiple competencies, practical experience, diplomatic acumen, and superior leadership and management. The Coast Guard will maintain a cadre of qualified personnel to design and lead comprehensive SSA initiatives.

**Military Department Partnerships** – As a military service, the Coast Guard is fully integrated into U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) systems and processes for coordinating training, acquisitions, and broad-based cooperation between U.S. and foreign military organizations. The reimbursable nature and well-established manner in which DoD-sponsored activities are programmed and managed contribute to Coast Guard SSA efficiency and long-range planning efforts.

**Civilian Interagency Partnerships** – Longstanding relationships and reimbursable agreements involving the Departments of State (DOS) and Justice (DOJ) and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are central to the Coast Guard’s uninterrupted support of SSA efforts and to preserving the agility necessary to effectively address the full range of immediate and long-term development issues.

**International Organization Partnerships** – As a global leader in maritime governance and the development of international standards, the Coast Guard maintains partnerships with international organizations such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Organization of American States (OAS) and will seek to support SSA programs in countries of mutual interest.

**Collaboration with Like-minded Regional Leaders and Sponsoring Nations**– More resources, more critical thinking, more in-country presence and more long-term mentorship are a formula for more impact and greater regional cooperation. The Coast Guard will actively pursue opportunities to build on legacy and emerging SSA partnerships with third-country partners such as Canada (Haiti), United Kingdom (Yemen), Colombia (Panama) and Japan (Vietnam/Philippines).

## **Threat-Based Investment**

Persistent threats to maritime security in multiple strategically important regions of the globe prohibits the wholesale application of Coast Guard SSA resources in less threatened regions. The promise of improved relations is not alone a compelling basis for long-term Coast Guard SSA investment.

The Coast Guard maintains SSA capability principally to assist partner nations in addressing those maritime threats with the greatest potential to adversely impact U.S. strategic interests. Cooperative engagement in non-security mission areas such as humanitarian assistance and disaster response are managed in parallel with the SSA prioritization process and with an appreciation for the fact that, if not managed properly, humanitarian crisis can and often does bring about security challenges.

*Priority consideration will be given to SSA proposals directed at mitigating the most troubling maritime security threats -*

- *Terrorism in ports, waterways and coastal waters*
- *WMD proliferation*
- *Piracy and armed robbery against ships*
- *Contraband smuggling*
- *Human trafficking*
- *Illegal migration*
- *Critical infrastructure protection*
- *Encroachment on maritime/economic sovereignty*
- *Post conflict/crisis stabilization and security sector reconstruction*



## A Multitude of Considerations

The volume of relevant scholarly, government and international organization analysis on global security is extensive. Credible references such as the Department of Defense - Guidance for Employment of the Force (GEF), the Department of State - Foreign Operations Congressional Budget Justification (CBJ), the International Maritime Organization – Reports on Acts of Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships, the Council on Foreign Relations - Preventive Priorities Survey (PPS), and the Department of Homeland Security – Security Sector Assistance Implementation Plan are representative of the objective data and well thought-out views of leaders in security and foreign policy and are foundational to the development of the Coast Guard’s SSA strategy.

For centuries, geography has been and remains a leading factor in the control of world’s major sea routes and the development and influence of maritime superpowers. Today, in an era of new emerging world powers, asymmetrical warfare, non-state actors and 90% of global trade moving by sea, the security of maritime chokepoints and established sea lanes is more critical than ever. The closure of a single strategic chokepoint such as the Bosphorus or Dardanelles Straits in Europe would halt maritime traffic between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean; setting the stage for regional conflict involving states whose access to the Atlantic and beyond would be cut off. Events involving Ukraine in early 2014 highlighted this point. The potential exists for similar scenarios to play out elsewhere in the world.

The strategic value of prominent waterways and the ability of local and regional maritime organizations to ensure freedom of navigation and compliance with international norms are important factors in global maritime security and the allocation of Coast Guard SSA resources.

Acts of piracy and general lawlessness off the coast of Africa and in the South China Sea continue to disrupt trade and threaten lives and prosperity. While worldwide acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships fell in 2013, incidents in the South China Sea rose dramatically to 142 incidents; the majority of which occurred in port or while at anchor. In response, the Coast Guard will, with U.S. Interagency support, expand its existing SSA partnerships in a number of Asia-Pacific countries and evaluate the long-term return on investment in one or more African nations.

The world is reminded regularly of the ill effects of weak borders and port security regimes that permit the illegal and unregulated flow of goods and people between nations. In the Caribbean Sea and Central America, the proceeds from illicit narcotics trafficking finance both criminal and terrorist enterprises. The destabilizing effects of mass maritime migration and the potentially catastrophic effects of permitting the transfer of sensitive technologies and materials to nations unfriendly to the United States and its allies and partners are well documented.

Worldwide Piracy and Armed Robbery against ships – 2013	
South China Sea	142
Gulf of Guinea – West Africa	54
Indian Ocean	31
East Africa	20
South American/ Caribbean Sea	17
Straits of Malacca	16
Mediterranean Sea	8
Arabian Sea	6
Persian Gulf	2
North Atlantic Ocean	1
<i>Note: South China Sea includes Indonesia and Philippines Ref: International Maritime Organization (IMO), 2013 Annual Report</i>	





## V.

# The Nature of Our SSA Partnerships

Coast Guard SSA partnerships are categorized in three ways: comprehensive, recurring and discrete. Comprehensive partnerships involve several if not all elements of maritime development and are the most demanding and enduring, often lasting decades. Comprehensive partnerships generally revolve around the creation or modernization of a new or expanding maritime organization and often require the assignment of a full-time Coast Guard maritime advisor or program manager.

When working with more established and self-sufficient organizations, or those unable to meet the demands of a comprehensive partnership, the Coast Guard achieves positive, targeted results through a more modest program of recurring engagement focused on developing partner capability in select areas such as the creation of a multi-year master plan or compliance with international maritime security norms.

Partnerships based on an even less frequent discrete level of cooperation can successfully close gaps in narrowly defined areas such as a specific training deficiency, thereby improving organizational effectiveness and setting the stage for future self-sufficiency in the given area.

A comprehensive whole-of-organization approach involving all of the elements of development has long been a rarity in the business of maritime SSA. Limited resources, inadequate stakeholder commitment and many other issues often conspire to delay or prevent this preferred and more productive level of cooperation.

The Coast Guard is judicious in selecting its SSA partners and is particularly analytical in determining the nature of those SSA partnerships, especially when the established end states indicate the need for a comprehensive-level of investment, by all stakeholders, over an extended period.

Three factors have historically had the greatest impact on long-term SSA engagement: the extent and reliability of out-year funding, political will and stability, and internal security. While more practical than strategic, these factors are fundamental to the Coast Guard's categorization of SSA partnerships and the overall decision whether or not to invest. A setback in any one of these areas can lead to overall failure.

### Elements of U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Development

- *Roles, Missions, Authorities*
- *Policy and Doctrine*
- *Personnel Staffing and Standards*
- *Training and Education*
- *Assets*
- *Equipment and Supplies*
- *Infrastructure*
- *Systems*
- *Multi-Year Master Plan Development*
- *Long-Term Partnering and Mentoring*





## VI. Identifying Focal Partnering Opportunities

The Coast Guard will proactively work to sustain, expand and establish comprehensive SSA partnerships, of varying complexity, with maritime organizations in select countries. These partnerships reflect the intersection between threats, larger U.S. and Coast Guard strategic interests, stakeholder political will and commitment, the availability of a multi-year funding mechanisms and the long-term likelihood of Coast Guard SSA efforts being impactful and appropriate for U.S. Government investment.

The Comprehensive element of the Focal Partnering Opportunities List (FPOL) is not an all-inclusive SSA partnering list. Additional mutually beneficial SSA relationships will be established and sustained at the discrete and recurring engagement levels in accordance with National and Interagency goals and Coast Guard SSA business rules. Operationally-based partnerships, particularly those with near-peers, will continue to be sustained independent of the FPOL.

The FPOL is formally reviewed biennially, however, is subject to amendment at any time based on global events and changing National and Coast Guard priorities. More than just a guide to investment, the FPOL exists to -

- **Inform the Coast Guard writ large;**
- **Inform Coast Guard SSA investments;**
- **Inform future senior leader engagement;**
- **Inform the establishment of new long-term partnerships;**
- **Inform interagency partners and promote Coast Guard equities;**
- **Inform human resource investments (e.g. liaisons, attaches, advisors);**
- **Inform and shape Coast Guard policy (e.g. training, education, support, and budget);**
- **Inform a standardized Coast Guard position during interagency and international dialogues; and**
- **Identify and commit to those countries in which the Coast Guard is uniquely positioned for a successful long-term partnership.**





## VII.

### Conclusion

The Coast Guard conducts business daily in the civilian law enforcement, military and international maritime governance spheres; a reality that brings into being an unusually diverse foreign and domestic partner base and the recurring opportunity for the Coast Guard to serve as a maritime SSA integrator across the U.S. interagency and international community.

The fluidity with which the Coast Guard is able to employ military, civilian and international assistance is fundamental to the organization's SSA effectiveness. By leveraging the strengths of other implementing and resourcing partners, the Coast Guard is able to more effectively and efficiently drive projects toward successful completion.

As with all forms of comprehensive development, maritime SSA is complex and fraught with the ever-present threat of squandered resources and outright failure. The breakdown of a single interconnected project timeline for the acquisition of a capital asset such as a vessel or aircraft, or the open-ended postponement of an essential waterfront construction project can ripple through a larger master plan halting personnel recruitment and rendering months of earlier training and perishable skills null and void.

Effective SSA programs are as much or more about quality project management and enduring stakeholder commitment as the development of technical capabilities and capacity. No element of maritime development can be set aside without prompting adverse consequences; a seemingly intuitive fact that is often overlooked or ignored. The wide range of independently managed and narrowly focused regional, functional and agency funding mechanisms are best exploited through the employment of hybrid SSA resourcing and implementation strategies; without which all elements of development cannot be addressed.

As a leader in maritime SSA, the Coast Guard will seek to move the National and international dialogue beyond the question of how to best allocate current year resources in key partner nations. Instead, we will look first to shaping desired end states and identifying all that is required for a partner to achieve and sustain the agreed upon level of capability. We will offer our services as a lead integrator for multi-year initiatives addressing National, Departmental and Coast Guard equities. When our role is necessarily limited to a specific aspect of a larger effort, we will be guided by the same principles, leaving our partner with a fully functional, self-contained capability in our given area of development.



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