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U.S. COAST GUARD ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Operation Noble Eagle Documentation Project

Attack on America: September 11, 2001 and the
U.S. Coast Guard

Interviewee: Admiral James Loy, USCG
Commandant

Interviewer: PAC Peter Capelotti, USCGR
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Place: Office of the Commandant

Q: Well good morning Sir.

Admiral James Loy: Good morning.

Q: Admiral, I just wanted to start out with a couple of background questions before we get to 9/11, and one is relating to you specifically.

I was in Portsmouth last Friday interviewing [Vice] Admiral [Thad W.] Allen and I walked the hall that has the paintings of the previous area commanders, and yours struck me as unique in several respects. Other than your ribbons, it would have been easy to place you on the bridge of a ship from 1995 or 1695. You were holding a glass. The wind was in your hair. But most significantly to me, I think, was that there were storm clouds behind you, and I didn't know if metaphorically they were preparing you to be Chief of Staff and then Commandant. Was that your decision to be painted like that, because it was very striking the way it was done?

ADM Loy: Well I think the artistic quality of the painting is probably the result of Russ Buckingham's talent much more than any design. What I wanted to capture if I could in that painting was the notion of a field commander, formal of course in the whites to a degree, but with the trappings of seamanship and the essence of what we had been through in those two years, which of course as you know included Operation Uphold Democracy and the whole Cuban/Haitian Migrant nightmare of the summer and fall and into the early winter of '94 and '95. So it was a bit of a transformational period for the [Coast Guard Atlantic] Area in many ways.



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Of course we moved geographically; literally from Governor's Island to Portsmouth. We went through the process of trying to understand what was best for the Coast Guard and Coast Guard people there, meaning there were options for what we should do as we made the move of the major commands from Governor's Island; the Area Command and the Maintenance and Logistics Command. We could have gone elsewhere, but it seemed to me that the challenges of the future already had identified that we would be working more and more with the Navy for example. Not only in expeditionary things overseas, but potentially as we were even saying then when we were trying to develop this notion of a unique instrument of national security as I termed it then and spoke about it often literally around the world to help people understand that the asymmetric array of threats that was facing the Nation was real and that we needed to be located, I thought, in a place that did a lot of good things for us.

First of all it really does enhance the relationship with the Navy; Admiral Allen probably being the most graphic example of that. I was only there for a month or two before Admiral Williams relieved me. But Admiral Allen, in the course of a post 9/11 environment, has done enormously good things in enhancing the field commander relationship with the Navy commanders down there. So that was an anticipated good thing.

The second thing was for Coast Guard people. The Tidewater area remained probably the most sought after location on a lot of people's minds, so we put literally thousands of more opportunities into the Tidewater area for young Coast Guard people to buy their first house and put their roots down, and maybe stay for a couple of tours in a row. You can do that there now quite readily, and I think that's been an enormous plus for Coast Guard people.

Q: The asymmetrical threat warnings seem, at least, to be captured metaphorically in those storm clouds in the painting. When you came here you had to deal with the effects of streamlining, downsizing; however they wanted to call it, and then as Commandant with Y2K and now 9/11. I think it's safe to say that, or is it safe to say that you walk out past the painting of [former-Commandant] Admiral [James S.] Gracey and commiserate with him?

ADM Loy: Well certainly a bit. Intellectually I do a lot. There were moments along the way of course that produced focused challenges, but as you were describing it in sort of a six or eight-year spectrum, it's been an amazingly challenging period for our Service.

We, of course, voluntarily stood up to the plate with respect to streamlining even in the face of the early [President William J.] Clinton intentions. [Former-Commandant] Admiral [Robert] Kramek led us through that period, and it was very hard to be talking about losing four hundred million dollars out of our OE [Operating Expenses] account and 4,000 people when all of us around this building and literally around the Coast Guard knew very well that the challenges, if anything, were going to be increasing. So in 1999 for example, the opportunity to do a roles and missions review for our Service was extraordinarily important. Now it was offered almost as a given from the Office of Management and Budget [OMB]. In order for us to be supportive - this is OMB speaking - in order for us to support the Deep Water Project we need to be much more comfortable in terms of what you're going to be doing. But when you look at the six overarching



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conclusions from that particular work . . . and these were a group of 16 people representing, if you will, our customer inventory in the Executive Branch of the United States Government. The value of our Coast Guard was cemented into place. There were people there from Commerce and Customs, and there were people there from Treasury and people there from Justice, ONDCP [Office of National Drug Control Policy], State and Defense, and all of the players that we have to serve as customers, based on the fact that we're the maritime law enforcement arm for the Nation, as well as all the rest of the things that we're responsible for. So to have that group of people led by the Deputy Secretary of Transportation at the time, Mort Downey, write as strongly as they did, the six overarching conclusions that were a part of that product, was an affirmation largely of everything that I had been trying to say for the last six years before that and the several years that have followed. They first and foremost said, looking down the road 20 years, basically sort of, if we didn't have a Coast Guard we'd have to invent one. They scrubbed every mission that we had on the dock at the moment and indicated that those things, and more, will all be enormously important policy and actual challenges for the Nation 20 years down the road, and that the Coast Guard's greatest value to us . . . they reinforced this multi-mission nature that we have where the American public gets all these things done for one single overhead. That is the essence of the value of our organization and they reaffirmed that as an overarching conclusion. Then they had two very interesting ones. The last two I'll reserve for just a second. The last two are about Deep Water, because that's a part of what they sat down to figure out.

But the other two were . . . the first was about technology. They said, this organization needs to stay on the leading edge of technology but not become sort of an R&D [Research & Development] focused organization. Take advantage of R&D where it makes sense to your mission accomplishment. You're too important to us as an organization. Take advantage of, sort of on-the-shelf technology; the leading edge of on-the-shelf technology, but understand how important technology is to your future. And of course since then the National Distress and Response System Modernization Project and Deep Water have just really carried out that notion very, very strongly.

The other one was about flexibility, and if 9/11 showed anything about us as an organization it was that the crisis of the moment could be reached by our Service doing what it does best, which we were able to do on 9/11. I literally was able to pick up the telephone and tell the field commanders, take a left and go to Port Security. All those people who were working all those other things . . . we went from about a two percent dedication of budgeted capability on the 10th of September to Port Security to almost 58 percent within a couple of weeks, and astonishingly, the ability as an organization to shift gears and go where the Nation needs you. Now that could have easily have been another Cuban refugee crisis. It could easily have been greater focus on drug law enforcement. It could easily have been on some major fisheries challenge in the Bearing Sea or off the Grand Banks off the First [Coast Guard] District. But our flexibility as a Nation was the other thing. They said, never lose that. Whatever you do Mr. Commandant, don't lose your flexibility to do what the Nation needs and that's, as I say, a reinforcement of that multi-mission character.



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Then the last two were about Deep Water. They said, this project is excellent. The requirement is absolutely as the Coast Guard has displayed it, and furthermore, the project that we see on the table that they have briefed to us is the right way to go about it.

So those six things just were, as I say, an affirmation of everything that I have spoken about for six years.

Q: Did those things you were speaking about for six years become manifest to you on 9/11? Did they expose, in effect, what we had lost in streamlining or our capabilities that we should have had?

ADM Loy: There's absolutely no doubt that if we had another 4,000 bodies on our active roster we would have been able to do more with less of a dependence on the Reserve call up than we have been able to do, which is absolutely not taking a single thing away from our reservists. They have performed magnificently as has the Auxiliary since 9/11. But you can see that in the budget process that we are now unfolding, we're having to go rebuild the capability that we lost through the course of the streamlining window.

Q: That sort of brings us to the morning of 9/11, because you've just spun out several themes I'd like to follow up on. I'd like to place you physically that morning and just ask, were you here in your office that morning?

ADM Loy: I was sitting right there in that chair. We were having a meeting with a number of folks associated with oversight of the Deep Water Project as a matter of fact, and the staff officer came in and said, Admiral, I think you better turn on the TV to see what's happening. We understand that a plane has hit the World Trade Center. Well immediately your notion goes to controlled air space, and if there's anything about New York that we have known for years its controlled air space associated with Manhattan. So I think there were a lot of us who were sort of hoping that it was some kind of a navigational accident. But by the time, I'd say literally minutes, my mind went to terrorism right away and of course the second plane just totally confirmed that for me.

Q: Were you watching the second plane here?

ADM Loy: I did watch the second plane hit the tower. In the meantime we had dismissed these folks who were here for some discussions about our project on Deep Water and I rallied the right players here to the office; the Vice Commandant and the Chief of "O" [Operations] and the Chief of "M" [Marine Safety & Environmental Protection] to begin the thinking process of what do we do next. It was interesting; two very, very important calls almost within minutes of each other. The first was to find the Secretary who had been pulled from his office almost immediately and taken over to join the Vice President [Dick Cheney] - as you remember the President [George W. Bush] was traveling - to join the Vice President in the secure spaces in the White House to deal with the aviation piece of this. I was able to get over into that secure space telephonically and seek his permission on a Reserve call up, which we instituted



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immediately. He, of course, has Title 14 authority to call up reservists on what is usually termed "domestic emergencies", and your thinking patterns usually go to hurricanes and floods and that kind of thing. But in this instance it was absolutely invaluable. Within seconds I had his authority to go ahead and begin the Reserve call up.

Q: So you knew even at a very early minute in the crisis that this was going to involve us significantly because it was involving the Port of New York?

ADM Loy: I did. Well not only that it was involving the Port of New York, but it just became that horrible event that in many ways through the course of our studies about the asymmetric array of threats and this notion of how we had developed the notion of the Coast Guard as a unique instrument of national security, both in an expeditionary sense and the value that we offered to other navies of the world, which as you know are far, far much more like the U.S. Coast Guard in terms of what they do for their countries than the U.S. Navy.

Q: Than the U.S. Navy, sure.

ADM Loy: I've told Admiral [Vern] Clark [the then-Chief of Naval Operations] many times that I love the U.S. Navy and I'm glad they're ours, and there's only one of them in the world. Thank God it's ours. But the reality of it is most of the other maritime services of the world do for their countries largely what we do for the United States. So that was one notion of it. But much more pointedly was the threat access notion that we've also been trying to discuss within this notion of a unique instrument of national security and that immediately, in my mind, came to be a "what's next" question in those minutes. In other words I saw what was happening in New York as an aviation nightmare that would have to be dealt with. But to me - and I don't know whether its from time in Vietnam, from time in other things, from time intellectually developing this notion of a unique instrument thing in the asymmetrical array of threats - to me it immediately went to our responsibilities for the ports and waterways of the Nation, and if they are, in my mind hitting the World Trade Center today, where are they going to be at tonight, let alone tomorrow or next week?

Q: As it turned out they were there in about 45 minutes or so on the next target.

ADM Loy: Exactly.

Q: Before we get to that Sir, how much of the [USCGC] *Point Lomas* [WPB-82321; the cutter ADM Loy commanded in Vietnam] do you carry around in your head now as Commandant? Do you look back on those times and does that inform you in situations?

ADM Loy: Yes it does.

Q: From your staff I gather that you are very likely our last commandant to have seen combat in Vietnam of those likely to succeed you in the next two or three go-arounds, so you have a unique position in that respect. Do you carry it and do you feel a responsibility to sort of impart that, in essence combat experience, to those around you in times like this?



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ADM Loy: Combat experience is an amazingly maturing process for a young person and certainly for a young officer. I went over there responsible for those 12 guys who became blood brothers to me over the course of that time. That's just the boat crew. That's just the guys who were on that patrol boat with me. We see each other from time to time. The guy that was the BM1 [Boatswain's Mate First Class] onboard came to the State of the Coast Guard address here last week. I stay very close to my XO [Executive Officer]; Mike Ballard, who's down in New Orleans. But for us it was a matter of maturing very quickly. You find out your personal strengths. You find out your personal weakness, and you are not afraid because of the survivability kind of a quotient in that whole mix. You're not afraid to share those both, in both directions such that the collective strength of the crew at large becomes a set of almost interchangeable parts, especially in a small patrol boat crew.

Q: Have you been back?

ADM Loy: I've not been back to Vietnam. I've been to Southeast Asia several times.

Q: Do you want to go back?

ADM Loy: I have no problems with going back. I can say for 20 years or so I held those things greatly at arm's length. It was all a matter of the national experience that we were going through; the rejection of the Vietnam vet when they first came back, the discoloration of national patriotism and harmony that had always been part of our experiences in that regard in the past.

I went to Wesleyan University, a very liberal school in 1969 and '70 to prepare to go to the [Coast Guard] Academy to teach, and was accepted very well as sort of an older guy among the student body for the first several months. Then those of us who were in the services, and students there, chose to wear our uniforms on Armed Forces Day, and the shift in people who were helping you in the library yesterday and discarding you as a colleague the next was palpable . . . those were vivid experiences.

Q: You had to; in essence, deal with two whole separate sets of stresses. You had the stress of what you had seen and the stress of how you got to fit back in.

ADM Loy: Yes, that's exactly right. So yes, I feel it's enormously important to tell stories about that to keep those experiences as fresh and those historical lessons as alive as possible. That's why I use historical vignettes and anecdotes in my speeches to help people understand that we've been there before. You know the classic old aphorism about history; if you don't become a student of it you're doomed to repeat it, and Lord knows as a historian you understand that better than most.

Q: I like to think so Sir. In fact one of my favorite quotes is from - and that I'd like to throw out to you and see your response to it - is from Paul Fussell, the military historian. He describes the role of the officer in a time of crisis, and it's something on the order of the role of the officer is to seem what you would be and that the formula for dealing with fear is ultimately rhetorical and



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theatrical. You have to adopt a carriage that will affect your audience as fearless in the hope that you will be imitated by those underneath you.

ADM Loy: I think it works much better with much larger contingents of people.

Q: Do you?

ADM Loy: Frankly, you know the [General George S.] Pattons of the world who can define the moral tone and morale and intentions of a 7th Army or a 3rd Army is much different than living and breathing with 11 other people inside an 82-foot hull. So first of all, the seeming of it better be backed up by the being of it, and it's within milliseconds that those things are figured out.

Q: By those people under you.

ADM Loy: By those people inside an 82-foot hull, absolutely.

Q: But now you are in essence Patton. You've got a sort of division or army strength underneath you where you have to be the visionary for this whole organization.

ADM Loy: And I think the lessons learned along the way made me take that thought process enormously seriously. I spent months prior to taking the job, you know, into the wee hours of many, many nights sorting out what became this five-point structure that I used at the beginning of my time here, and further, to make sure that it was not insulting to Admiral Kramek's tenure as we went by, but to point out clearly and unequivocally what I thought was important for us as an organization to get on with, and then becoming the spokesman for that in as many different forays as I could find; on the Hill, in the Administration, and anybody that would give me the blessing of a lunchtime speech at whatever might be available. I'm also very much of the mind that the more often you say with conviction what it is that truly is on your mind, and you've harnessed that down to a capability of being memorized - I was going to say the word memorable but that's not what I meant - it's the consumability of the piece that is enormously important. And if you tell not only those working for you and around you and others that are important - impact audiences I came to call them - as to the value and - especially if you are willing to bring the solution along with you and that you're not just whining about something - but you tell them specifically what is needed in order to make it better, that is about being visionary. That is about being willing to look 20 years down the road and commit to consultants that cost you some money in a timeframe when you don't have an awful lot to throw around. To go through scenario planning episodes and then to tie all that stuff back together and produce not only Coast Guard 20/20 as a "vision document" for Admiral Kramek, which he signed just literally before he walked out the door, and then develop that into a strategic plan. I spent my two years as the Chief of Staff literally breaking down and rebuilding the Planning, Programming and Budgeting System here in Coast Guard Headquarters, which had become just incredibly laborious and cumbersome. We had staff officers spending hours and hours and hours on stuff that we knew didn't have a prayer when it came to actually finding its way into the budget process and surviving. So the refocusing on all of that stuff, such that this building too



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became efficient and effective. We were less effective because we were less efficient and that's not good from the front end of any organization. So I'm just so pleased at what [Vice] Admiral [Timothy W.] Josiah has done with what we . . . we did the breaking down and the identification of what needed to be done, but largely as a four-year Chief of Staff, God bless him. He's done remarkably good things in making coherent here in the building the ideas that I insisted that we have. For example, field commander's involvement in the Planning, Programming and Budgeting system; this whole business of writing RSAs [Regional Strategic Assessments] began as a frustration on my part sitting in Governor's Island seeing absolutely no opportunity as a field commander to input to major policy judgments and budget judgments that were being taken here in the building. And to Bob Kramek's great credit he offered me the podiums to the platforms in which to say a lot of those things. So that stuff, to whatever degree you're perceived at the other end of the day, I just want to be perceived as the guy that for the time I had the watch, you can go back, I think, to the comments that I had on the occasion of relieving Admiral Kramek, who I treasure as a friend and past commandant, that this notion of so much of the Coast Guard's continuum is the long gray line, long blue line to a degree, that's more about leadership and leadership development, but the institutional value that began literally with [Alexander] Hamilton's notion of sentinels at sea and develops over time and is projectable into the future as a consistent constant national need. I saw a four-year segment in there that I wanted to do the very best I could to pay tribute to that constancy and then if there were ways in which I could make it more efficient, more effective, and offer the Nation visibility as to the value that this Service provides, those are the kind of things I was all about.

Q: I want to come back to that Sir. You were also in this room, or your conference room I take it, when there was a big thump that went through the building.

ADM Loy: When the Pentagon was hit.

Q: And that, given your experience in Vietnam, you were very quick to think that this was not some sonic boom of a plane going over.

ADM Loy: No, I knew exactly that something had been hit here locally. In other words, that particular experience, there were sort of a series actually . . . and then there were sort of reports. A bomb went off in the Mall. A bomb went off at the State Department building. None of which were true.

Q: So your battle space is expanding now?

ADM Loy: Well, not mine...but certainly the Nation's.

Q: It's becoming, instead of a localized disaster, it's suddenly starting to look like a national siege.

ADM Loy: Of course ... now we ask, what else could possibly go on here? Exactly.

Q: Were you looking at this at that moment as a national mobilization for the Service?



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ADM Loy: No doubt in my mind. We had already, as I indicated, talked about Reserve call up. That was already in the process of being made. I had spoken by then to the two Area commanders too.

Q: What was the first thing that you said to them when it became clear that the Atlantic Area was under attack for all intents and purposes? What were the kinds of things that you wanted to say to them? What were the kind of things that you were looking for from them?

ADM Loy: Well the first thing I wanted them to understand was that we each needed to have faith in our local commanders. This all of a sudden was a national defense of the ports and waterways of the Nation thing. So it's interesting, and we are continuing to develop this closure of what has sort of been the separation between the "M" Coast Guard and the "O" Coast Guard over time, and this experience has probably accelerated that to a greater degree than anything that I've ever watched, and it's happening at the local level at the same time it was happening philosophically, policy wise, here at the Headquarters level. So the first thing I said to the Area commanders was to understand that what's next, we don't know. But your challenge is to have faith in those local Captains of the Port and the local District commanders, and as necessary, the next level down; the Group commanders. Your early challenge is perhaps more from your Four Shop than it is from your Three and Five Shops in the classic nomenclature of the Department of Defense. The logistics guys to support those local commanders are what I would concentrate on as your first order of business. So as long as you have communications with your District commanders, find out what they need and get it to them as quickly as possible. We'll notionalize the big picture and where that's going in due time. But as long as the crisis appeared still to be alive and well, you know, what's next? That was a 24 to 48-hour kind of thing. It didn't stop with the Pentagon and the tragedy in Pennsylvania.

Q: Sure. Well I brought these along. I extracted these from our operational abstracts and graphed them. It shows the Boat Force on the 10th and you see Defense Readiness and Marine Safety. I think the way, at least I got it from, you know . . . here's the cutter surge that you see a similar spike in our overall platform hours. I think the public perception I got was that we were peeling back in a lot of areas, but if you look at these numbers we really weren't. At least nothing compared, to say, compensating for where we were. So we were still under a lot of pressure on all these other fronts while we were surging to meet that.

ADM Loy: All these other mission fronts?

Q: All these other mission fronts.

ADM Loy: Oh sure.

Q: Is that the sense you had here at Headquarters as well?

ADM Loy: Well I think you sort of need to understand the difference between the budgetary impact of making a 41-footer doing something different and the 378-foot cutter doing it.



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Q: Admiral Allen tried to explain that to me on Friday. (Laughter)

ADM Loy: Yeah, because if you're talking about a budget pie, which is about dollars, then it's almost . . . we spend about 67 cents of every dollar on people. So a cutter with 175 people in its crew and a 41-footer with three people in its crew . . . when you have the small boat do something different it doesn't show up in the budget pie very much. But if you have the 378 do something different, and that, I think, is what you're seeing here in the cutter surge chart; the dramatic increase of taking major cutters off of counter drug patrols or fisheries law enforcement patrols, and all of a sudden getting the [USCGC] *Tahoma* [WMEC-908] to New York, and whichever other 270 it was outside the VZ [Verrazano Narrows] Bridge, and doing the same thing in terms of what was necessary in Boston because we had that immediate surge of LNG [liquid natural gas] challenges with Mayor [Thomas M.] Menino up in Boston, and to understand that although those were getting the ink, the same thing was happening in all of the other major ports of the United States. The Pacific Fleet, if you will, was sort of called to home and dealt with Puget Sound, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Long Beach and San Diego; those five fundamental ports. And for literally weeks, and to a degree, months thereafter, the notion of taking them away from the other missions is largely a Deep Water issue.

Q: Could you explain that a little bit?

ADM Loy: Sure. It's about maritime patrol aircraft and Deep Water cutters; 110-footers and above that had been on the 10th of September routinely deployed, and there's a couple of great charts that show the actual deployment of major ships with little dots as to where ships were on the 10th of September and where they found themselves on, say the 13th of September, which supports these charts dramatically by the way. But the idea there was we had begun this notion of what constituted a maritime security condition array and it's now become enhanced to be Maritime Security Conditions 1, 2 and 3. Sort of associated because one of the earliest resource drivers was the Department of Defense going to Force Protection Condition; anything above Alpha, which was routine on the 10th, and we'll probably never go back too. I think Bravo has all of a sudden become the norm and you kick it to Charlie and Delta as necessary based on what their perception of Force Protection requirements would be. We'll react to that because we're the fifth military service. So we did the same things, quickly finding out that if we truly did everything the book called for on Charlie, which is where they all went to for the most part - Delta in Washington initially, but Charlie for the most part - we'd almost have nothing left to do anything else. So we said, we're not going to be able to comply. We need to challenge what we do with our small boat fleet, with our marine safety inspectors, etc., and everything else in the inventory against this Force Protection Condition chart and dream up our own. So over time now we've developed Maritime Security set of Conditions 1, 2 and 3. One will be on a parallel with Force Protection Bravo, if you will, and allows, frankly, the major cutter fleet to sort of go back to routine work. Then when we have any articulable intelligence as we build Maritime Domain Awareness that is so important to us in the future that would suggest we need to kick from Maritime Security Condition One to Two - then you'll again see borrowing from other missions, which are dramatically Deep Water in nature. You know cutters go to the Caribbean and to the EastPac [Eastern Pacific Ocean], to wherever they have to go to do those other jobs -



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and then go to Three and it's sort of an imminent attack kind of a notion. So we've arrayed now a force structure lay down for each of those three levels and we think this three-year bill that we're pushing through the budget process, with '03 being year one, will get us everything we need to be solid at Maritime Security Condition One. Then it's a matter of adjusting other assets into Two and Three as the case might be.

Q: I think it's fascinating that this scheme sort of sprang up almost instantaneously, and yet something like this was not unimaginable. I'm thinking about your article that you co-authored with Captain [Robert G.] Ross ["Meeting the Homeland Security Challenge: A Principled Strategy for a Balanced and Practical Response," *Homeland Defense Journal* (January 15, 2001)] where you mentioned Osama bin Laden before September 11th, which now seems remarkably prophetic.

ADM Loy: Prescient, huh? Well I don't think there's anybody here that's pressing in that regard. But it was just sort of yet another manifestation of this notion that we had been speaking about for five or six years and it had really developed philosophically to be something that I was very, very concerned about and told as many people as were willing to listen.

Q: Well I think that, in particular, what's fascinating to me about that article is your understanding of the potential effects of a global economy.

ADM Loy: Oh yeah.

Q: And I think you're very frank in that article that the global economy breeds, in a lot of quarters, resentment, and that that resentment can lead . . . did you ever envision that those kinds of resentments . . . do you see a more one-to-one correlation between globalization and Osama Bin Laden? Is that where you would tie in the nexus of those two, or are there other factors at work?

ADM Loy: Well I don't know that I'm a good enough student of either Osama Bin Laden the individual, or the Koran, to truly understand what I maybe had sort of categorized as something a bit more regional. It was a very negative nasty thing that I needed to know more about. For me it became, first of all, a realization about the economic underpinnings of this Nation's prosperity. You know in that part there was a great treatment of the sort of economic history of the United States written by a guy named Charles Beard back, I think probably around the turn of the century, and it was just one of those things that I had read along the way and studied at Wesleyan a bit. I think a couple professors used it as a reference. It was one of those things that stuck with me to the degree we focus on human rights and the Republic, and the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, and all those wonderful things. The reality of the 21st Century United States of America is that it is an economic superpower. It's the marketplace, and our prosperity as a Nation and the quality of life that we enjoy is first and foremost fundamentally underpinned by this economic stability. And when you have to internalize that and then can react to what you see going on that's potentially a threat to it, you can get there relatively, because it's not four or five levels of intellectual confusion that you've got to wade



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through. It's a pretty direct link. So over the course of the last four or five years we've listened to the folks of the world saying that the globalization of the economy was going to accelerate, if anything, and it's going to be two or three times larger in the next 20 years. Well that was all part of what we were trying to do with our scenario planning effort, with our visionary reach to CG 20/20 with the strategic plan that we put in place as a result of that, and with the work of the Roles and Missions Review Board, which as they came to their own conclusions - it was amazing how it tracked almost identically with the work that we had already done for ourselves. So that became such an incredibly reinforcing thing for me. So much that I carried it to the Department [of Transportation] and said to [former] Secretary [of Transportation Rodney] Slater, let me show you what has happened with us in the course of this thing. Of course as you know, their strategic planning process during his administration, it's actually lapsed a bit frankly since Secretary [of Transportation Norman] Minetta's a much more hands on, do it today kind of guy, and of course he's been overwhelmed with the aviation security challenges of post 9/11. But Slater was one of those guys that was willing to listen and be a bit visionary, and be a bit philosophical about things, and the Department picked up on that theme rather dramatically. But coming back here that all just became, almost playing out what we had come to learn about ourselves and about our role in all of that. Our role in all of that became perhaps most manifested by the MTS initiative; the Marine Transportation System Initiative, and you've got to go back to so many historical pinning there. I mean this Department, since 1967, has largely been focused on aviation and terrestrial things. They needed something wet in it so we came in it in the 11th hour and 59th minute in 1967 when President [Lyndon] Johnson wanted to stand up the Department. And in order to reach a critical mass they had to have us, and so we became the enabler so to speak to let the Congress be willing to establish the department. That's all well and good, but important. The second piece that's important is to understand how our ports and waterways in the maritime dimension of our transportation system is really an 18th or 19th century phenomenon. It's not a 21st century phenomenon. The terrestrial pieces . . . if you think about it, the terrestrial pieces are a post-[President Dwight] Eisenhower national highway system; subway systems and transit systems, which technology only allowed to happen in the last half of the century, and on the aviation side, just learning how to fly was a 20th century phenomenon. So the Federal Government's maturity at that point insisted on having a major infrastructure investment role. That's why they got the U.S. around those things that we all see and guide ourselves down the highway, because the United States Government built most of those highways or least were a significant part of an 80/20 match system that facilitated the establishment. The same thing with major transit systems. The same thing with airports. The same things with all those things. If you look at our ports and waterways, they go back to a private sector ownership phenomenon of the 18th and even the 17th century.

Q: Sure, seventeen hundreds, sure.

ADM Loy: Yeah. So that's very, very unique, and we will have some interesting challenges in the legislation that's currently in the Congress; Senator [Fritz] Hollings' bill in the Senate, which was passed before the holidays, and the House version of that, which I understand came out of Committee just last week. How they grapple with federal infrastructure investments as part of



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this new security umbrella they'd like to help us build in the ports and waterways will be a radical departure from anything that we've ever experienced as a Nation before.

Q: Do you consider - with the six plus month's hindsight now - do you think of 9/11 as what it seemed like at the time and perhaps still does, as the significant hinge in the history of the Coast Guard?

ADM Loy: I think it certainly has every bit as much significance and probably dramatically more than others I could sight. For example, one could say that the *Exxon Valdez* hitting the rocks in Alaska was a significant hinge in the history of the Coast Guard, in that it produced the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 - a hundred plus regulatory projects over the course of that decade - and really shifted focus to the prevention and response capabilities that we own as a Service, to serve the Nation in the oil spill business. I think this one has the potential to be every bit as dramatic as that. It's certainly every bit as dramatic in the opposite direction of an incoming administration saying we're going to streamline the government and each of you guys have to cough up 10 percent, or whatever the notion of the early Clinton years was in terms of doing that. But then I think you'd have to go back to find more significant things potentially to, probably almost to World War II and the dramatic size differential between a pre-World War II Coast Guard and the 300,000 or so that it grew to during the war. Then maybe the next one back would literally be Commodore [Ellsworth] Bertholf's establishment of the modern Coast Guard and the thematic notion that he so articulated well about the multi-mission character of the organization. He demanded that it stay military and he compressed and put together in the modern Coast Guard the fundamental agencies of the past that had done different things in sort of domestic U.S. work on the water, and identified the Coast Guard . . . held on to all of the law enforcement authorities that were resident in Title 14, originally coming out of Hamilton's work, if you will, and carrying those things forward in a modern day Coast Guard. Then all we have seen since is the willingness of the Congress and the executive to add missions to that inventory along the way, often without the benefit of the resources necessary to do it, which put the guy sitting in this chair in the prioritization business. I think, although that hurt often along the way, it also bread a skill set in this organization that I think is absolutely invaluable. We do prioritize things well and we have developed almost an inherent competency in risk-based decision-making that allows us to do well in the kind of the things that you saw play out on 9/11.

Q: Do you think that's what we see at work now, in say the port vulnerability assessment and so forth, that that whole thing will be risk-based? Is that how you see us guarding the port?

ADM Loy: There's no doubt in my mind. At the other end of the day there is no Congress that would ever have the resource to deliver to the United States Coast Guard that would be necessary to look some mayor in the eye and guarantee him with a hundred percent certainty that his port was safe. So we have to do it in two different ways. We have to define carefully what the minimum federal contribution will be on the Coast Guard to do that well, and other agencies, Customs, and whoever else has a role to play. Then I've talked about the all-hands evolution of in-port security and ports and waterways security in our Nation, has got to become an all-hands evolution. So we have reached out to the port authorities and to harbor safety committees and



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port readiness committees and all those kind of players saying, listen guys, we haven't got the whole thing totally figured out yet. But what we do know is that you have to make a contribution, and so if you're the owner of a container terminal in New York, New Jersey in Kill van Kull, you will be the one that's responsible for the waterside security as well as the port infrastructure security of your terminal. We'll see things like that come out of this legislation and it will go to port security plans, facility security plans and vessel security plans, so as when they visit they will have to do A, B, and C. What are the rules and regs going to be associated with cruise ship deployments and the separation of passengers and baggage, just like it is at the airport but it happens in Miami and San Juan and wherever else we have these major cruise ship terminals? So there will be a piece of legislation that we're helping them draft that will require those things and then the key will be how quickly we can get the real port vulnerability assessments done and develop the action plan necessary so that it's clear what the local political reality - it might be a state. It might be a region. It might be a city - will do as their contribution, what the Feds will do for their contribution and what the private sector will do for their contribution.

Q: I guess it's safe to say that this is the biggest port security operation the Coast Guard's undertaken since the Second World War.

ADM Loy: Without a doubt, absolutely without a doubt.

Q: You went to Ground Zero fairly soon after the 11th.

ADM Loy: Yes.

Q: I was there about a month ago with the Atlantic Strike Team and even now it was very moving to be there. It must of been especially so for you.

ADM Loy: Unbelievable. It was almost a religious experience. Having lived in New York for two tours of duty and having, you know, just as part of the skyline every morning when I'd get up and look out my window and there were the World Trade Centers. The combination of that and the scope of the damage was almost incomprehensible. America understands that the two World Trade Center towers fell down, okay. I don't know that they understand nearly as well about the rest of the complex that constituted the World Trade Center, and further what it meant as the economic symbol of America's strength as a superpower.

Q: I think that's right. Until you stand there you don't understand it.

ADM Loy: You just don't understand the scope. You truly don't.

Q: Did you have a chance to talk to the Coast Guard people on the ground there?

ADM Loy: Oh yes.



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Q: I have to ask you this Sir. You're the Commandant, so you must have a self-awareness that people don't react normally when you're around. They're uptight; however you want to describe it. How do you, especially in a crisis situation like that, how do you get them to either relax or just to be able to talk to them to say you're doing a good job with the reasonable expectation that you're not just going to get, oh thank you Admiral, in return?

ADM Loy: Well that's a very hard question. I would like to think that there is a sincerity index that varies among people and that I've worked very hard to hone my approach to such things on a very personable, as well as personal level. First of all you'll be seen as coming off as phony or coming off as just a passing VIP or something unless you take a concerted and legitimate and follow up kind of an interest in the well-being of those people.

One of the things that was amazing at Ground Zero was the services of Coast Guard chaplains, and among the first things I did was talk to Captain Leroy Gilbert; our Service Chaplain, and encouraged him to establish a rotation that was going to get as many as nine or ten, at least on a daily basis, for months on end, cycled in, because I knew our chaplains had struck up a very positive relationship with the NYPD and the New York Fire Department during TWA-800 and during a couple of the other terrible tragedies that we had up there. They had just become brothers of a kind; some kind, and as you know, the only folks allowed into Ground Zero were Coast Guard chaplains; an amazing nurturing, caring group of people who I just think the absolute world of. But in those kinds of circumstances, if you're perceived to be the political guy going by for the value of the microphone or whatever, you will get absolutely nothing out of the guys that are there to do what truly needs to be done. And in [Rear Admiral Richard] Dick Bennis we had the right guy at the right time at the right place.

I went on boat rides with Auxiliarists. I went on boat rides with Reservists, and I was on the boats of the PSU that was initially sent up there as well as on the pilot boats and on the tug boats associated with . . . I mean the day and half or so that we spent up there on the water was all about appreciating what these guys were doing. We spent time on the *Tahoma*. She was at anchor just south of Manhattan. It was astonishing what those guys were doing, and to let them know how damn proud you are of those kind of contributions in those kind of crisis moments is what it's all about, and at the same time you are seeking from them what is it that will ease their burden. You know, how do logistically, policy wise, or any other ways get the hurdles out of their way and get the things to them that they need to do their jobs better.

Q: Did you observe or did you feel in the reactions of the Coast Guard men and women there, similarities with those that you had seen in Vietnam; the kind of stresses, combat shock types of reactions?

ADM Loy: Absolutely. Vietnam; the difference was in the focus. Vietnam was long periods of almost boredom, interspersed with shear moments of panic, and 9/11, and thereafter for weeks on end in New York, was a constant unrelenting requirement for service from across our spectrum. There was humanitarian dimension to it. There was an efficient operational dimension to it. There was a no-nonsense military dimension to it, and all of those things were



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mixed into this incredible depth of focus that was, as I say, unrelenting, and that went on for days and then weeks. So you'd have to measure what's half way between the moments of panic and the moments of boredom from the Vietnam experience, unlike in it, until the constancy over time. That was probably the difference. But yeah, there were many similarities to the looks on people faces; in the aftermath of the specific incident and the aftermath of an incident that we might have had; a firefight or something in Vietnam.

Q: One of the YN1s [Yeoman, First Class] who's still up there, or was last month, with the Strike Team doing work with the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency], grew up across the river in Hackensack I think, or Hoboken, said, in those first days and weeks, and even still, every time he sees it he just gets angrier and angrier. Did it make you angry?

ADM Loy: Oh absolutely, embittered. I was very angry, yeah. But anger is a passion that has to be controlled in those kinds of times. So we didn't know. We suspected Bin Laden. We didn't even know what Al Qaeda was as a phrase.

Q: Sure.

ADM Loy: So as a Nation there was certainly a huge dimension of anger to it, but it's how you channel and tailor your anger to positive accomplishment that makes the difference in those kinds of moments. So I never talked much about who did it or whatever. Our challenge was to take care of the consequence management piece at the moment and immediately, as quickly as we could, get to the future prevention piece. You know I'm of the mind that this prevention response consequence management paradigm that we've lived in for a long time didn't really fail us on 9/11. What failed us was that over the course of the previous decade we'd lost the bubble on the awareness piece and there was a lot of finger pointing at the Intelligence community and that kind of thing, and in the Post, which is always the case in the aftermath. You can connect dots that you might have, would have, should have, could have connected before and done something about the true prevention; the front end of the prevention piece. But over the course of the '90's, I think as a Nation, we had largely lost the edge that was always there with the nuclear confrontation realities of the Cold War and we just sort of lost the human edge. We lost the SIGINT [Signals Intelligence] edge. We lost the ELINT [Electronic Intelligence] edge. We lost all those things that could have, would have, and should have been telling us what was going on in the domains in which we work. For us our domain is the maritime sector. So Maritime Domain Awareness is the front piece of this five piece architecture that we're trying to build for the Nation's future.

Q: Do you think we're close, in speaking of intelligence, that we're close to knowing now what we don't know?

ADM Loy: We know an awful lot.

Q: I'm sorry. I mean, many folks speak of the things that we don't know what we don't know. Are we closer to 'knowing what we don't know?'



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ADM Loy: Yes we are. I think there are some very real things that we have (A) have done; (B) are doing, and (C) can do, to enhance this Maritime Domain Awareness piece, and for Governor [Tom] Ridge [then-Office of Homeland Security Advisor] and the President for example, they can't just be satisfied with the Maritime Domain Awareness. They have to go Domain Awareness all the way across.

Q: Yeah, sure. Speaking of Governor Ridge, when I came on active duty in December it seemed like the whole building was holding its breath wondering where we were going. That there was going to be some big announcement in the State of the Union and then Governor Ridge had this big plan. There's a couple of interesting aspects of this: (1) I want to ask you, you're both Pennsylvanians. So when you met for the first time you had something to break the ice with I guess. I don't know if you had known him previously. When you met with him the first time were you prepared or did you prepare an answer in advance if he said, I want to take the Coast Guard and I want to move it to "X", "Y" or "Z"?

ADM Loy: Well it was interesting. I did go up to see him in Harrisburg. I wasn't trying to take advantage of my Pennsylvania residency. But I just saw this guy coming to Washington and if there was anything I could do to help him think a little bit about what his challenges were going to be, I think I owed that to him. I got an opportunity through a mutual friend to go visit him, and we did have an icebreaker. We found out that his high school beat my high school for the semi-finals at the state football championship.

Q: I guess that's better than having lost to you!

ADM Loy: Right, and we beat them this year by the way. But past the icebreaker, what I was trying to share with him were several things. There are a lot of organizational models in this town. You know there's the drug czar model, the National Security Council model and other such things. So I had picked three or four of those and taken out of them the things that I thought were the most important aspects of that and assembled those and basically said to the Governor, you know, there's somebody down there, I don't know, some major or some GS whatever, writing a job description for you, otherwise known as an Executive Order, likely. That it will be forthcoming from the President, and here's a little checklist for you. If you don't see these things in that Executive Order you might either stay on your side of the Mason Dixon Line or encourage some of those things to be part of it. I think he has appreciated that conversation that we had. I was certainly not trying to tell him how to do his job.

What came across immediately to me was the enormous capacity of the man. You know a Vietnam Vet. He left law school to volunteer to go to Vietnam. Not a normal thing to be happening in those days.

Q: That puts him in a unique class right there.

ADM Loy: You betcha it does. A multiple term Congressman, multiple term Senior Executive in a very challenging state. So this guy had all the credentials necessary and an amazing capacity



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that I value very highly and that is to listen. He's a very good listener and hears what you have to say and exchanges commentary with respect to that. So I was deeply impressed with Governor Ridge as an individual and thought, boy, the President could have not made a greater selection here. But then having set that aside, I looked at this just unbelievable array of what he was potentially going to become responsible for. So one of the things we talked about there was that, I likened it to a puzzle, you know, that there were going to be puzzle pieces called bio-terrorism, da da da da, and if I could take . . . I let him know that I was going to be working very hard by the time he got to town to take the maritime security piece of that puzzle out, work it for him, and deliver it back to him as a piece hopefully that would fit into his overall puzzle. So that conversation was, I think, a very solid one. Then when they came down and began work, it was important to me that I did everything I possibly could do to help him succeed for our Nation in this challenge that he had taken on. And of course as you know he walked into town and immediately was confronted with a phalanx of . . .

Q: The swamp...

ADM Loy: Well no, of Anthrax.

Q: Yes.

ADM Loy: I mean it was the issue *de jour*, and whether or not he was a biochemist at the PhD level and that was what was expected of him in those news conferences and what have you. But beyond that, this prioritization process of understanding that yeah, if you have 25 different pieces to that puzzle you have to prioritize that. Again that's that Coast Guard competency thing that I spoke about earlier that I think we've really developed as a service. And as you've seen since leading up to the State of Union, the Governor had gotten from the President pretty clear direction on four major areas; bio-terrorism, first responders, border security and intelligence information sharing and analyzes. Those were the four areas that he was to take on. The business about organizational, which was the question that you asked, was directly hinged to the border security piece. So he was already aware of the Hart-Rudman Study, and interestingly enough, of course, it was about the only thing on the shelf of recent vintage so it was that set of recommendations including the idea of a National Border Administration or whatever it was to be called with not only INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service], Customs and the Border Patrol, but also Coast Guard and FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency]. That was the hard core kind of thing that Hart-Rudman was recommending, and I've talked to Senator Hart several times. I've been on panels with him since. That was the core of a border security thrust. But what's likely now I think to occur, at least we've seen it in the press, that the Office of Homeland Security is carried to the President a recommendation of just Customs, INS and Border Patrol being joined, and the notion that a lot of people don't understand is that it's a matter of what it is that you're trying to fix and those are the three organizations that are fundamentally responsible for port of entry inspections; both primary and secondary. So what I've tried to push through the course of all these discussions is what is the criteria set that we're going to use to make these judgments? If we're going to get to be more efficient, more effective, if we're going to improve customer services, if we're going to enhance security at our ports of entry, lets use



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those criteria as a, you can almost quantify them, and if things add up to doing it then lets be about the business of doing it. So it sounds to me like the resultant Cabinet level discussions offering the President an option here now is to just do those three. And if that's the case it'll be because they have, I hope, walked through that criteria set and found port of entry inspections to be the issue that would be best served by an organizational adjustment right now and to press forward with that.

Q: If I could just ask two more questions, Sir?

ADM Loy: Sure.

Q: Since 9/11 it seems everyone's been waiting for the other shoe to drop in some form. First it was Anthrax. Then that didn't turn into the full-blown disaster that it was apparently planned to be. And of course one of the prime events people have been looking at is somebody parking a ship in a port and just irradiating it or something like that. If that were to happen, given that we're standing up all of these new . . . we're in sort of an intermediate time here between . . .?

ADM Loy: On our way to capability.

Q: Exactly, yes Sir. What would your response be? Have you thought about what kinds of things the Coast Guard could do in that situation?

ADM Loy: Well first of all what I have been trying to point out is how valuable and vulnerable our ports and waterways are to the Nation. This goes right back to my notion of economic underpinnings to the prosperity of the Nation. What did we do on 9/11? We shut down commercial aviation for days, weeks and really months until it came back to what we had before. If we had such an incident in our ports and we shut down our ports we would bring to a screeching halt not only the United States' economy, but the global economy. I mean that's what's on the table.

Q: What seems to be, at least in certain quarters, the goal of these attacks?

ADM Loy: Oh sure. I think international terrorism; if it had a headquarters somewhere would have that as its signboard. You're absolutely right. But it's important for us to acknowledge that vulnerability and therefore be doing something about it, and that's where this five-point maritime security game plan that we've constructed and I have a very good feeling about it at this point. Once resourced properly, we will have done, I think, what we should be doing and what we could be doing as our contribution to the Nation's security. Having said that, a long way to go before we have actually developed that capability to the point we want it to be developed. But there are real practical things here also that say we should go about this methodically one step at a time and looking over our shoulder as to whether or not, or trying to predict where the bad guy is going to try to strike next. I don't think it's necessarily a . . . while we build Maritime Domain Awareness, to be sure that we see it and recognize it when it seems to be occurring. That's a clear part of the game plan. But to say Houston is going to be next or the Golden Gate Bridge is



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going to be next or whatever, there's no point in going there because we don't have intelligence capability to specify such things.

Q: Did it surprise you that 19 guys without guns were able to pull this off?

ADM Loy: Looking back it certainly surprised me that day. Looking back, no, I'm not that surprised.

Q: Why not?

ADM Loy: Well I'm not surprised because I think I've come to the conclusion that we really did let our guard down, quote unquote, in this awareness piece, and therefore, if we were in the process, you know, if you just sort of mentally look at it, if you were in the process of gradually degrading your ability to see such things, put the dots together and do the action you need, then to have looked back at it six months later and say, are you surprised they were able to do it? No. Now I can say I'm not at all surprised they were able to do it, because we literally did as a Nation, I think, lose the edge.

Q: We're in a unique kind of battle space here, both as a Service and as a country now because we've got sort of this two front war and we're sort of a two front Service in our military and law enforcement dichotomy in essence, so we've straddled both sides of this. It was sort of made visible when I visited the Strike Team because we have another role and I've heard over and over again, that one of the great things about our response was that we had a Coast Guard cutter at the Statue of Liberty very quickly, and that that was very reassuring to the public, and yet there's a downside, at least as I was talking to some of the Strike Team folks. I have a list here of what they were dealing with at the World Trade Center; asbestos, PCBs [polychlorinated biphenyls], Freon, aerosolized blood from people destroyed and all the rest; some 20 different nasty things they were dealing with and yet at the same time I was struck that they weren't wearing their full suits. What they called decontamination stations; washing stations, and that was an effort to sort of reassure the public that . . . not to say that this wasn't serious, but that we didn't have all these bad things floating around. I guess my question Sir is, in future battle space, will our forces, like the Strike Teams, these maritime safety and security teams, do they have to reassure the public on the one hand, and yet by doing so go into this battle space less than fully . . . ?

ADM Loy: Oh, endangered?

Q: In essence, yes.

ADM Loy: Well, when you are the first responder or when you are the follow-on to the first responders there is a . . . that's all about the ethos of being in that work. So you go do it with whatever assets, training, equipment and what have you that you have to get it done at the moment of the crisis. But on the other hand, the Service Chiefs, including myself, are challenged to organize, train and equip the forces to do what the Nation needs done. So it is my obligation to be pointing out in our budgetary processes and everything else the CBR [Chemical, Biological and Radiological] equipment that is necessary, the training that is necessary to put people who



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we know will go in harm's way as completely outfitted and trained properly to do that work. So it is amazing in the bio thing. Of course our Strike Teams don't have nuclear capability or didn't at the time, but they had some of the training, certainly some of the equipment necessary to do Level A biological and chemical kind of work. So between them and others, there are a couple certain specialty units in the Army and in the Marine Corps and that is a huge thrust. And one of the four things I just mentioned that the President picked off of Governor Ridge's long list; the bio-terrorism piece for first responders, we must perceive ourselves as one of the few Federal first responders on the domestic side of the house. Obviously the Department of Defense services are first responders over there and the mental set is always, and has been for a long, long time, since the War of 1812, "over there." So that adjustment process is for them to take domestic defense, and that's why you see NORTHCOM [U.S. Northern Command] being stood up. That will gradually adjust the cultural mindset of the folks in the Pentagon to be responsible for the things they are as well. But it is my responsibility as a service chief to organize, train and equip the troops necessary to do the job and do the job well. At points in time events dictate lessons to be learned. So you learn those lessons and re-outfit, re-equip, re-train and re-focus as necessary the force, to be ready for whatever you perceive to be next.

Q: Do you see us as different in that sense, that people perceive us differently?

ADM Loy: Well I think even inside the Coast Guard. You know a kid who joined the U.S. Coast Guard because of his boating safety experiences as a little guy on the lake somewhere who joins the Service to do humanitarian work in search and rescue all of a sudden finds himself doing something different. That is a communications challenge that we have. But I think our Services' history - and that's really why I wanted so badly to get *Pub One* [*Coast Guard Publication No. 1*] printed and out - gives people an understanding that over time what's the greatest value of our service is that we meet the Nations' need de jour, whatever that is, and shift dramatically in that direction if necessary and then re-gain the balance of our full mission spectrum whenever we can. But first and foremost the protecting of Americans is what our Service is all about, and to be the maritime guardians of America, which is what that book is all about; is to recognize that, and intellectually readjust the priorities of this multi-mission spectrum, both as an individual, as a unit, as an organization, and toward whatever the Nation needs at the time.

Q: Admiral, Sir, I want to thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW
