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GCMA Report # R-325, Revision 1

SUBJECT: Maritime Terrorist Threat Assessment for the New Orleans Area

DATE: December 2, 2002

INTRODUCTION

The Gulf Coast Mariners Association (GCMA) prepared this document out of concern for the safety of the port of New Orleans and surrounding area. Our Association represents mariners working in support of America's offshore mineral and oil industry, her inland and offshore towing industry, and several other Jones Act Maritime trades. The original report was prepared for government officials to review and comment upon. The revised version will be distributed to our members who will soon find themselves increasingly surrounded by new security measures as a part of the nation's war on terror. We believe our members are the mariners that are most likely to come face to face with terrorist onsets seeking to harm our homeland. We must serve as the eyes and ears to protect our community day after day.

While this report may lie in the province of the Eighth Coast Guard District there has been a longstanding pattern where this agency has ignored the mariners it is supposed to superintend. At the National Offshore Safety Advisory Committee on April 25, 2002, the Chairman of the Prevention Through People subcommittee reported: "The GCMA members present at the meeting said they do not trust the Coast Guard to protect their confidence or to act upon their reports." This statement is correct.

Our members are patriotic Americans and are shocked by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (9/11). We are the "eyes and ears" who are on the water day and night. If properly motivated, trained and led and given the facts, our mariners can be an important asset to the national security apparatus. The GCMA is here to offer leadership. The Coast Guard needs to consider this and change their attitude and outlook when dealing with us.

It is the custom of a number of our senior members to carefully study maritime trade journals. Also, by virtue of

the nature of the work our members perform, we have a unique knowledge of what is really happening on our local waterways. All observations reported supporting our conclusions come from open sources, namely trade journals cited below, observations of our members, and our own local maritime knowledge.

We are concerned that the present views of the Coast Guard relative to the security posture at the port of New Orleans and vicinity and to our offshore oil facilities may not properly reflect the significant and immediate threat environment. Therefore, we respectfully present our views as to why we believe New Orleans should be viewed differently at this moment as well as in the future as well as on a seasonal basis.

We are not certain that during recent Congressional visits to Coast Guard facilities in New Orleans that visitors noted any contra-indications to the present official threat analysis that places New Orleans in a low-threat category. Therefore, we respectfully submit this alternative threat assessment and our suggestions for heightened security at New Orleans based on reports cited in the various trade journals and local "intelligence" reported by various members. Further, we ask that you urge the Coast Guard to consider our views and enlist the active support of lower-level working mariners in port security issues in the future. If we perceive any serious changes in our assessment we will notify you in an updated report.

HIGH-WATER SEASON

Today, (Dec. 2, 2002) hydrologic readings are normal. However, a prolonged high-water season is an anticipated as an annual event. High water enhances a terrorist opportunity to use the effects of this event as a force multiplier. Nevertheless, there appears to be an observable general diminishing of the security posture in the port recently for reasons stated below we believe a reduced port security posture may be ill-advised.

SITUATION

As we prepared the original report, the Port of New Orleans was at the lowest state of alert since the events of September 11, 2001. The Mississippi River was on the rise and reached 12.5 feet on May 20th. With continued heavy rainfall in the watershed, there was no prediction as to when the river would fall below the "high water mark" of 8 feet on the Carrollton gauge. The rise and fall of the river is seasonal but predictable.

Although the levees protect the city to 20 feet we saw no increase in the security posture since the river began its annual spring rise. We did not observe any 24/7 patrol boat with immediate response capability within the most urbanized section of the port. The vessel traffic control towers situated above and below the central business district of the port remain the manned 24/7 Coast Guard presence on this important section of the river. These towers were originally established to control vessel traffic

around Algiers Point one of the most dangerous bends in the Mississippi. Since September 11, 2001 the towers have proven their capability to detect small craft movements, and other phenomena requiring sight and/or hearing. Based on what our members have learned when in radio contact with the towers is that the Gretna, LA, tower will close in accordance with pre-9/11 plans to move the functions of both towers from the river to a central Vessel Traffic Control center (VTC) in a high-rise office building in the New Orleans central business district. Members touring the site reported that the video cameras at the new location do not offer the same 360-degree vision of the surrounding area that the towers offer.

Recently, tows requesting escort for specific hazardous commodities requiring escort by COTP directive proceeded without such an escort. Nighttime escorts appear to have stopped. We believe this indicates that the Coast Guard only decided to escort only a "percentage" of particularly hazardous tows. Based on recent unescorted passages, we believe that that percentage is low. In short, the port appears to be relaxing its security precautions compared to the period immediately following the terrorist attacks.

We also want to point out that the tows are pushed by uninspected towing vessels. We were informed at a recent Towing Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) meeting in San Francisco that the Coast Guard's Cooperative Towing Vessel Examination Program has been virtually eliminated. While this program was never funded in New Orleans, it means the towing vessels passing through this port are unknown quantities as far as the Coast Guard is concerned. GCMA previously presented this point to our members, the Coast Guard, and industry officials in GCMA Report #R-276, Revision 3. Since then we have petitioned the Coast Guard for a Legislative Change Proposal to ask Congress to institute a comprehensive set of vessel inspection regulations similar to those for small passenger vessels and, thereafter, to inspect all towing vessels using these requested regulations. Outside of this report we believe that inspection standards for towing vessels are a priority item from a security standpoint. In addition, remember that most towing vessel crew members and many other "lower-level" mariners, even some working in the offshore oil industry on vessels under 100 gross tons, have never required a "Z-card" for identification. We see the absence of this long-requested change as an Achilles heel of our nation's port and waterways security. Fortunately, and at our insistence, the Eighth District stopped the practice of issuing temporary Z-cards to new maritime employees effective May 1, 2002.

HIGH-WATER SEASON

We believe the threat assessment and related security measures should be strengthened as a result of increasingly important local developments and especially during the presence of high water. We also believe the threat assessment and related security measures should substan-

tially increase every high-water season. High-water conditions provide terrorists with a "force-multiplier" effect for any plans they may have to deploy an explosive device in the port area. Any high explosive discharge within the city proper on the riverfront would likely be designed to breach the levee, an effect our enemies would most likely plan for. River water entering the city would cause substantial physical damage in addition to blast effects and result in human suffering, misery, and civil unrest comparable to a direct hurricane strike without the possibility of an evacuation.

As described in the body of this report there is reason to assume that the enemy may have special interest in New Orleans as a target. There was recent evidence of scouting activity in the port area. Because high water provides an extraordinary opportunity for an attack we believe every high-water season should be a time of heightened threat assessment. Although any high-water season must not be ignored, we believe there is a heightened danger of attack in Spring 2003. This may be likely since there may have been limited time for planning and logistical arrangements for an attack coupled with recent news reports of the capture of several key enemy leaders. The Mississippi River's next high-water season, projected for Spring 2003, provides the enemy with ample planning time and an opportunity to take advantage of the force multiplier effect of the high river stages. A long wait may give a false illusion that terrorists have lost interest in New Orleans as a target.

REGIONAL TARGETS

Few if any areas of the nation have more high consequence non-naval maritime targets in such close proximity to each other as the area centered on New Orleans. Few other areas offer more than one target that would have the economic and psychological effects of a direct hit from a nuclear weapon, without the need for such a nuclear weapon. New Orleans presents the enemy with an opportunity, at the proper season to dramatically multiply the devastation of a conventional explosive device or even of large ship. The effects turn such a weapon at such a time into a weapon mass disruption. The toppling of the Twin Towers in New York devastated the financial center of the city, closing it for weeks and leaving that city with all sorts of festering "ground zero" problems and vast economic disruption and rebuilding expenses. However a conventional explosion at New Orleans during "high water" allowing the river to enter the city via a levee breach may leave us no ground zero. This could well be a city-killing event as the river enters the city and is trapped inside by the city's ring levees. Every hurricane season weather forecasters remind us that New Orleans resembles a saucer surrounded by the waters of the Mississippi River, Lake Pontchartrain, and Lake Borne. If the river enters the city through a river levee breach below the Bonnet Carre spillway, it will flow towards Lake

Pontchartrain but not into it. The river will become trapped behind the hurricane protection levees that surround the sides of the city on the sides away from the river, protection against storm surges from the lakes. The entire city including the parts destroyed directly by any explosive blast effect would be underwater and mud for weeks. Residents might well abandon the city after such a catastrophic event after the historical districts and the convention center that form the basis of the tourism industry were destroyed. There would be little other reason to rebuild a modern port city in a natural swamp. The loss of this city, even temporarily, would cause catastrophic economic loss in at least 18 states of the Mississippi, Ohio, and Missouri valleys. The snowball effect could throw the national economy into a major depression.

Unfortunately, the city proper is not the only available target for seriously damaging the economy of these states.

A conventional hit on the Corps of Engineers Old River Control Structure and associated facilities at LMR Miles 302-312 above Baton Rouge could permanently change the course of the Mississippi River and instantly diminish New Orleans' value as a port. It could render the present mouth of the river useless as an outlet to the sea. The movement of gasoline and heating oil east and north by barge would either stop or be seriously disrupted, as would outbound traffic in grain, coal, and other bulk commodities exported by water. There is no effective surface alternative capable of even marginally replacing this barge traffic.

A conventional hit of one of the "gathering platforms" near the mouth of the Mississippi River could disrupt the oil production from the offshore fields served by that platform for months, possibly a year or more, and seriously damage the commercial fisheries of southeast Louisiana, and impact the tourism-based economies of nearby coastal areas. Such a hit on the Shell Oil gathering platform that is located just a few hundred yards from the entrance channel at Southwest Pass could probably also close the river to ship traffic for an extended time, damaging the economy of all upriver states.

A major facility of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is located north of New Orleans. A significant part of the nation's petroleum refining capacity and chemical producing capacity is located on the river between New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Most of this capacity is heavily dependent on access to deep-sea tankers and barges at the river's edge. Anything that damages or delays navigation eliminates the effectiveness of our refining and chemical production capacity. A concerted attack by more than one attack element on more than one of these targets would be highly successful since success with even one target may have a devastating effect on the other targets in the general area either physically or by its economic impact.

Few areas of the nation offer such a variety of lucrative targets in such close proximity, and no other port directly services such a large interior bulk commodity market by direct water routes. The towboat and barge industry service this area by means of the Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio rivers; and they also serve Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida ports by the Gulf Intra-

coastal Waterway. A disruption of service near the waterway's New Orleans hub will affect a larger hinterland than any other single port in the United States.

LIKELY ATTACK SCENARIOS

One way New Orleans could be attacked to inflict the maximum and immediate psychological impact to the millions of Americans who have visited New Orleans as tourists over the years would be to ensure a levee breach in vicinity of the Riverwalk where the BRIGHTFIELD hit several years ago with a load of corn. If a similar ship were loaded with a substantial cargo of ammonium nitrate the effect would rival a weapon of mass destruction. You will recall that a vanload of the chemical destroyed the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. A shipload or barge load is a much greater order of magnitude...even in a much smaller vessel than the BRIGHTFIELD.

Ammonium nitrate is only one of a number of hazardous chemicals shipped through the port of New Orleans. So, it is instructive to consider the April 16, 1947 explosion of the SS GRANDCAMP that leveled Texas City, TX. This is a lesson many of our mariners learned by attending fire school...although fire training is still not required of all our mariners. The ammonium nitrate on the SS GRANDCAMP, a 437-foot Liberty Ship owned by the French government, detonated accidentally. The resulting explosion sank nearby ships, blew an airplane out of the sky, leveled Texas City (population 20,000 at the time), blew the ship's anchor inland a number of miles, and broke windows as far as 25 miles away.

A comparable explosion in New Orleans might result in hundreds of thousands of casualties since New Orleans is a very compact city. A blast effect would be enhanced by the fact that the central business district and French Quarter form a semi-circle around a bend in the river that is the New Orleans riverfront. A GRANDCAMP-size blast centered near the BRIGHTFIELD accident site would strike where the heart of the city is wrapped in a tight crescent only a little over a mile deep around the blast center. In such an event the Central Business District, French Quarter, Lower Garden District, and Lower Ninth Ward with a population of perhaps 300,000 most likely would be reduced to rubble. Much of the city adjacent to these areas consists of aging wooden homes easily destroyed in a firestorm. Masonry structures all the way to Lake Pontchartrain would be damaged and windows would be broken as far away as the north shore communities on Lake Pontchartrain, 25 miles away, and throughout the residential and industrial areas on New Orleans' west bank. If the attack came during high water and was directed at breaching the levee, the city would flood.

The GRANDCAMP explosion blew the hull of the ship down into the water and caused a huge wall of water 15 feet high to sweep through the nearby Monsanto chemical plant. Any such wave would sweep over the levee with force and drown hundreds or thousands de-

pending on the timing of the event. River water running through a breach in the levee would be trapped inside the city's ring levee system and could not get out until the river dropped back to below the level of the natural levee. The river does not fall below this level until the end of the high-water cycle, which varies in length from year-to-year. If the city were struck early in a long season of high water it would remain submerged for weeks, perhaps even months. With the port facilities out of commission and the city's historical districts destroyed it is unlikely there would be a strong effort to resettle it.

The city's location is an accident of history. Even in a heavy rainstorm New Orleans requires an elaborate system of levees and pumping stations to survive natural flooding threats. A blast that wipes out the historical treasures and critical infrastructure followed by flooding diminishes the logic for resettlement or full recovery. The major port complex, when the region again reopened to shipping, would probably be established on higher ground.

The effect of several attacks at once from multiple craft of opportunity, say a small boat attack against oil gathering platforms or exposed pipelines, a river-borne explosive attack against the Old River Control Structures, small plane against the Strategic Petroleum Reserve facility, and a leaking ammonia barge positioned upwind of the city, a small ammonium nitrate laden ship slamming the Riverwalk, a fully laden flag-of-convenience cargo ship in momentary control of a terrorist running full-speed downstream (as the BRIGHTFEELD was allowed by her pilot to do in violation of the spirit of the existing regulations at 33 CFR 165.810(b)(2)) and crash into a previously scouted and vulnerable part of the levee or cruise ship would assure the virtual disruption, perhaps for years, of a major portion of the economy of the American heartland.

The effect of the river barge industry on these economies is generally not fully appreciated by most Americans although details and statistics are readily available from the U.S. Corps of Engineers Office of Waterway Statistics. Our mariners, who man these towing vessels, have been largely ignored by both the Coast Guard and by employers who falsely claim to speak on behalf of the interests of their employees. One telling statement often repeated by Corps personnel is this: "the river carries more commerce today, in a single day than it did during the entire eighteenth century during the heyday of the steam packets." Another telling example of the impact of the loss of barge traffic is this. During several harvest seasons in the last two decades the harvest exceeded the carrying capacity of the barge system. Rail cars and trucks were pressed into service but grain rotted on the ground outside elevators all over the valley. We simply do not have the rail and truck capacity to make up for the loss of the barge system. While the barge system will not be physically lost it will be rendered nearly useless with no effective outlet to the sea. It also can be crippled for years by sabotage on one or more locks and dams. While it is true that there is an alternate route to sea through the Tennessee-Tombigbee waterway to Mobile, this system is

for tows of not much more than 6 barges compared to 35 barge tows (and overloaded tows of up to 40 to 48 barges) on the main stem of the Mississippi River. There are not enough towboats to move all the cargo to Mobile in smaller tows. Immobilizing the port facilities at New Orleans would place a chokehold on the movement of bulk commodities in and out of the entire valley.

So much is in print concerning the possibility of delivering a weapon of mass destruction in a shipping container that we need not repeat its dangers here...but note that steps are being taken to tighten security both here and overseas. However, we note that New Orleans has two container terminals. The safeguards of the container system and all of the checks being put in place against regular deep-draft ocean shipping can be circumvented by simply placing a weapon of mass destruction on a smaller vessel. The Louisiana coastal zone is crowded with offshore oil and mineral industry support craft of up to 1,600 gross register tons. Many of these craft, while routinely employed on short supply runs, are quite capable of crossing the ocean. The same is true of some vessels in the commercial fishing and tugboat fleets. In fact, there is so much of this coastal traffic that the Coast Guard pays scant attention to it. We know, for example, they do not even review logbooks from vessels returning from foreign voyages. These vessels do not have to give prior notice of arrival and are not generally participants in the evolving Vessel Traffic System on the Lower Mississippi River until they reach Algiers Point near river mile 95 above Head of Passes. This location puts them in sight of New Orleans' Jackson Square and St. Louis Cathedral crowded with tourists and just a stone's throw from the central business district. One of these craft loaded with a weapon of mass destruction from overseas has a high probability of penetrating all the way to the heart of New Orleans without encountering a challenge to its identity. Even the presence of a decrepit oceangoing tug (or a yacht) might not raise official eyebrows in Memphis, Cincinnati, Louisville, or St. Louis—all significant targets as well.

**IS A TERRORIST ATTACK A
LOW-PROBABILITY EVENT?**

The present implied official threat assessments appear to indicate that the national intelligence authorities and local Coast Guard officials believe that the various threat scenarios are a low probability event. However, we see the New Orleans east bank as a high impact target especially during the critical "high water" season. However, we see that based on national open source documents, and recent events observed locally, that there is an imminent, continuing, and periodically reoccurring probability of attack that will continue during periods of "high water". High water is recorded locally as 8 feet on the Carrollton gauge.

ENEMY CAPABILITY AND INTEREST

We should assume that unidentified terrorists have access to persons who have made serious studies of our history. A quick historical review indicates the strategic value of New Orleans to the British in 1814, the Union forces in the Civil War, and German submarines in the Gulf in WWII. The British sought to cut the westward expansion of the U.S. by occupying New Orleans. The Union forces sought to cut the Confederacy in half and succeeded. The Germans sought to sink shipping at the mouth of the river and block this outlet to the sea and failed. Yet, the Germans came closest to what may motivate the Al-Qaeda terrorists to attack American targets, namely a desire to damage the economy in a big way. They virtually shut down Wall Street for a while and, as a result, may understand that the economy is neither made nor broken on Wall Street. No goods or services are produced there. Wall Street is a place where capital is formed and distributed. Hammering the financial center affected the economy but did not stop the production of goods and services or even the flow of money. To launch a full-scale depression you must hit the economy at a choke point where real wealth in the form of commodities move. Any port qualifies for this but only New Orleans has direct waterborne connections to such a huge heartland through its waterway connections. Only New Orleans provides a target large enough to damage the whole economy in one blow.

Senator John Breaux, in a public speech, mentioned that "security experts" were tracking ownership records attempting to locate ships owned by Osama Bin Laden. Jim McCrown, Chairman and CEO of Trader Bridge (a U.S. to Puerto Rico shipping line) and Ralph Helm, President of Trailer Bridge echoed this information in a special edition of The Maritime Executive magazine as follows:

öThe U.S. Navy is currently searching the world for some twenty-three merchant ships owned by Bin Laden. We don't know much about these ships. However I can assure you that none of these ships are U.S. flagged.ö

Assuming this information is correct it is clear that terrorists have the means and the motivation to carry out our worst-case scenario, a multi-vessel multi-target attack using a large amount of low-grade explosives like ammonium nitrate. A fair amount of this material moves through the port of New Orleans. It is generally not handled in the port confines proper but it routinely passes through. A shipload of the commodity properly manifested and declared would raise few eyebrows...or would the same cargo bagged and mislabeled in some foreign port. With such a cargo, the enemy has an immediate capability to launch our worst-case attack scenario.

Because the enemy has an identity as a ship owner, it is reasonable to assume his command structure has access to commercial maritime expertise. Assuming he has expertise in shipping, it is more probable than not that our enemies have already identified New Orleans as one of the

most lucrative maritime targets in America. If this is so, we should expect scouting activity to precede an attack.

OUR ENEMIES HAVE SEAMEN

The March 2002 issue of Marine Log⁽¹⁾ reported that in June 2001 the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee established the scope of fraudulent practices related to Merchant Marine Certificates of Competency. A total of 97 maritime administrations were contacted but only 54 responded. Of the respondents, 39% reported a total of 12,635 cases of document forgery. Nearly 12,000 of these cases were reported from a single maritime administration in Southeast Asia. The registry of Cyprus, for example, posts on its web site the names of individuals detected with fraudulent documents. Of the 45 names posted in March, all but seven were identified as Syrian, Egyptian, or Pakistani nationals. It is reasonable to assume that the enemy may employ not only seamen manning its own vessels but also seamen to work as "sleepers" aboard a variety of merchant vessels from more than one nation. [⁽¹⁾*Ibid*, p. 2]

ENEMY ACTIVITY IN THE AREA

The Maritime Executive⁽¹⁾ reported this statement from an interview with Captain Timothy Brown, President of International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots: [⁽¹⁾*Ibid*, p. 89]

"In New Orleans, an individual aboard an outbound vessel was seen taking photos of bridges and waterways. He was reported to local police authorities that said that they could do nothing. However, the Coast Guard came immediately and that person jumped overboard and was found to have large amounts of cash as well as names of known terrorists."

Local marine radio conversations overheard last spring indicate that this was probably not the only person fleeing the scene of reported surveillance activity in port area.

Knowing the diversity of local police jurisdictions as we do, we doubt that every probable incident made it from the police blotter to the Coast Guard or from the local Coast Guard to the national intelligence authorities. We suggest that a check be made of New Orleans Harbor Police (and adjoining parish sheriff's officers blotters) reports reflecting such events, related Coast Guard logs, and national intelligence authority records. We believe that such a check may show that the number of reported incidents diminishes drastically as you trace the reports from local police authorities to the Coast Guard and national intelligence authorities. Failure to accurately report local events can influence national intelligence authority threat assessments. In our opinion it appears that the enemy subjects New Orleans to scouting activity but na-

tional intelligence authority threat assessments may not reflect the level of probable scouting activity.

PREDICTION

Given that the enemy has proven he has the capability to attack, and given the likelihood that the enemy understands the lucrative nature of the available targets, and given the evidence of recent scouting by the enemy it does not seem unreasonable to predict that an attack could be imminent. However, there appears to be a shortage of planning and logistics. Additionally, the enemy's ability to plan and conduct such operations may now be handicapped by the capture in March of Abu Zubaida, described in the Washington Times, as Al-Qaeda chief of operations outside of Afghanistan and more recently of the capture of the perpetrator of the attack on the USS Cole in the port of Aden in Yemen. Nevertheless, terrorists have windows of opportunity to strike during any high-water season. The next high-water season in Spring 2003 presents a particularly opportune time for an enemy. After scouting the area, there is ample time for planning and logistics. Any decrease in scouting activity over the next year may lull our security forces into believing terrorist interest has focused elsewhere making it difficult to assign a meaning to future scouting activity. In fact security precautions appear to have visibly decreased. Could an absence of scouting mean that scouting is largely complete and the enemy is moving into an attack-planning mode? Does continued scouting at the present level mean that the enemy has insufficient information to plan an attack? Would a sudden outbreak of intensified scouting activity signal an imminent attack? We believe that future official threat assessments should be based as much on river stage as on scouting activity. The area has been scouted, it is a reasonable presumption that the enemy has correctly identified the force multiplier effects of a high-water season attack.

SUGGESTED PRECAUTIONS

Official threat assessments should be increased in New Orleans both now and during every high-water period. Highly visible deterrent assets such as USCG patrol boats and other marine security assets should be moved into the region each high-water season until the threat subsides. The movement of such high profile assets should be fairly widely publicized to encourage the enemy to delay and re-scout. In addition, every effort should be made to capture scouting agents...meaning a heightened state of alert by persons on the waterfront at all levels including our mariners afloat and ashore. It is in this area that the services of our mariners need to be actively enlisted as the eyes and ears. Terrorist literature, such as the Urban Guerilla Manual, indicates a clear preference for soft targets. Suicide operatives may be a highly visi-

ble exception to the rule, but they don't want to die short of their target. Highly visible deterrent security measures such as the presence of elite units and an alert organization of mariners in the port, on the river, and in the oil patch would help encourage the terrorists to move on to softer targets of less consequence. Periodic changes in the security posture based on the additional theme posed by high-water conditions may encourage scouting activity. Increased scouting activity improves chances of capture of scouting agents with potentially useful information. The coordination and sharing of information between the various local police agencies, the Coast Guard, and directly with maritime workers including our mariners needs to be improved. Scouting incident response needs to be improved and coordinated. There needs to be an improved local Coast Guard intelligence effort with more information going up to the national intelligence authorities. The closure of the existing vessel traffic towers without establishing an effective 24/7 boat patrol capability deprives mariners of an asset that has been a fixture in the area for many years and seems ill-advised. Additionally, the location of the VTC in a high-rise office tower, adjacent to a hotel, appears to offer the enemy a lucrative and easy target. The location has little more "security" than any comparable civilian office building. The location is not only known, but after 9/11 the Coast Guard featured the site, complete with its address, in a local television news special. The former VTC was located down river from the present site in the F. Edward Herbert Defense Complex behind a perimeter fence with armed guards. The entire VTC/VTS concept needs to be rethought with an eye towards maximizing its contributions to tactical intelligence as well as traffic management. Its location needs to be rethought in light of terrorist targeting practices. The local port security committee should reflect wide membership most especially including "lower-level" pilothouse personnel and work with mariner organizations such as GCMA, as well as the "suits" from industry. It is time for true tripartite partnership between mariners (i.e., labor), industry, and the Coast Guard. The threat assessment should consider the exceptionally lucrative nature of New Orleans as a terrorist target, its special vulnerability during high water, and that the enemy has the means, and a will to exploit this target and already has scouted the target.

Our membership has heard absolutely nothing about physical protection of the offshore oil industry facilities off our coast. Gathering platforms as noted elsewhere in the report are especially lucrative targets. They exist elsewhere besides near the mouth of the Mississippi. If we visibly increase security on the Mississippi River and at its mouth these outlying targets become more attractive. Unfortunately, at this time when men, small craft, and small arms are needed in so many places we find the Coast Guard down-playing the threat and contracting out millions for studies. Some of the studies are quite legitimate but much of this isn't rocket science. Terrorists shy away from even the lucrative targets when guarded by armed men. Yet visible deterrent physical security is in short supply.

We urge you to take our alternative assessment seriously and to consider increasing the Coast Guard's security budget where it will do some good. This would be to direct the bulk of the increase to requisitioning additional small craft, use our existing mariners and the vessels they serve on as active assets, and to insure that south Louisiana gets its needed share. Failure to do so may result in more millions spent on study and too little on physical security.

UPDATE

For reasons outlined in this update we now believe that the high-water season of Winter 2002-Spring 2003 is most probable and highly likely time for an attack on New Orleans and for a major maritime cargo crime spree. Recently an individual identifying himself as Osama Bin Laden (and thought by some to be Bin Laden) was reported in the world press as issuing an edict urging all "true Muslims" to attack U.S. economic interests. We previously predicted that once economic rather than "symbolic" targets were selected that New Orleans would be near, if not at the top, of the enemy's maritime target list. The press reported that Al-Qaeda detainees at the U.S. military detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, stated that such an edict by Bin Laden would be indicative of a planned major attack in the near future. Al-Qaeda has ships and seamen, and probably has trained many more Islamic militant seamen that they currently employ aboard their own ships. We believe that such seamen are probably employed aboard a variety of "flag of convenience" ships around the world. Militants willing to learn a trade and commit vandalism or sabotage are easier to find and available in larger numbers than suicide bombers. By causing widespread cargo damage to U.S. cargos both import and export these well placed individuals can bring about a major rise in insurance rates for U.S. cargoes. This will cause a rise in prices for all commodities shipped by sea and their manufactured derivatives. We think it highly probable that such a crime spree will manifest itself shortly.

One reason we believe that the enemy may plan to focus on maritime economic targets is the apparent lack of mention of such targets in what appears to be an enemy campaign of disinformation. Eli J. Lake, writing the New Republic (11/04/02), writes of a growing belief by U.S. intelligence authorities that Al-Qaeda has an in-depth understanding of U.S. signal-gathering intelligence and makes use of that knowledge. The enemy appears to know when they are communicating on non-secure lines and modes. There is a growing feeling among some U.S. intelligence authorities (as reported in this article) that some communications that are intercepted are really deception operations designed to draw U.S. intelligence off the scent of the real intended targets. Among these deceptive intercepted signals are indications of Al-Qaeda bank robberies and shopping mail attacks. Although there was consider-

able intercepted traffic about such targets, there was no real manifestation of activity.

Of 77 materials that we must have to support our economy 66 come by sea according to the U.S. Navy Publication, Lifelines. Of these 66 materials many if not most come in the form of bulk cargos rather than in containers. The enemy is reported to possess 23 ships, none of which has yet been used as a floating weapon.

Why does the enemy have a maritime interest? What use will they make of their known maritime resources? Besides earning revenue for the cause, we believe that the Al-Qaeda fleet is a training resource preparing merchant seamen for roles as saboteurs. We believe it is more probable than not that Al-Qaeda intelligence operatives can plant communications where U.S. signal interceptors can find them, and watch for resulting shifts in security forces in the maritime industry trade journals. This would be no more difficult for them than it is for our interested members who contribute to these threat assessments to track news about possible Al-Qaeda disinformation campaigns in the general media and look for resulting effects in maritime security reported in the maritime trade journals.

It is a reasonable assumption that Al-Qaeda has a general knowledge of the economic importance of bulk commodities carried by ship to the base of our economy. It is a reasonable assumption that Al-Qaeda understands the effects of cargo insurance rates on the prices of all commodities, since they are ship owners. Assuming Al-Qaeda leaders are also students of U.S. history, they will not ignore the strategic and economic importance of New Orleans. They can easily determine the relative lack of port security in New Orleans; we believe it is more probable than not that they are already aware of it. Yet any mention of maritime targets is curiously absent from the intercepted signals if we are to assume the press coverage is reasonably accurate. If the press coverage were not accurate, we would presume that our members who transit or work in the Baton Rouge to the Gulf area of the Mississippi River would experience enhanced security requirements. Yet, they report just the opposite. In addition to these reasons, we believe that an attack on maritime bulk commodity transport is probably imminent within the next few months for these reasons.

The U.S. appears poised to attack Iraq if necessary most likely sometime early next quarter. If that happens major port security resources will be placed at the military outposts of the United States. This will detract the security resources from already under-protected bulk ports. According to November 2002 issue of WORKBOAT magazine, Coast Guard Marine Safety and Security Teams (MSST) are being established. Each MSST is designed around a waterside security section equipped with six armed Homeland Security Response Boats. The first unit was commissioned in Seattle in July. The second unit was commissioned in August in Chesapeake, VA, while the third unit was set up in the Houston-Galveston area in October 2002. Two more units will be activated in 2003 for the port areas of New York/New Jersey and Jacksonville, FL. The Coast Guard will create six more units in 2004 in as yet undisclosed locations. Each port that re-

ceives one of these units in addition to six specially designed and heavily armed high speed response boats obtains 104 Coast Guardsmen trained and dedicated to the physical security of the port. A total of 11 such units are projected. Unfortunately, the U.S. Coast Guard has port security responsibility for 361 U.S. ports. We look for Al-Qaeda to strike one of the 350 ports without sophisticated security in place.

A first principle of asymmetric warfare is to strike where your enemy is weak. Going after heavily guarded military loadouts would not be in keeping with the advice of such classics of terror as the Urban Guerilla Manual. Without any doubt, Al-Qaeda dealt with Iraq's regime of Saddam Hussein in the past to their advantage. But the hyper-religious Al-Qaeda does not really like or respect the secular regime of Saddam Hussein. We do not expect suicide attacks against our military loadouts. Rather we think it more likely that once U.S. forces are in contact with the enemy inside Iraq, Al-Qaeda will stage a major attack or series of attacks aimed at targets of economic importance inside this country. This would be their best opportunity to undermine public confidence and reduce the public's support of deploying our troops overseas. Their goal would be two-fold. First, our enemies seek to undermine the economy that supports our troops overseas. Second, our enemies seek to create a domestic demand for our forces to stay home to protect an increasingly vulnerable homeland. We cannot think of a more lucrative target to disrupt under the circumstances than the Port of New Orleans.

Clearly our assessment is based on known facts and deductive reasoning, not on specific intelligence, but we feel that our reasoning is sufficiently sound to warrant action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend the following actions. First, the U.S. Coast Guard should issue warnings to owners of Flag of Convenience (FOC) ships of the probability of a sudden, concerted, rise in cargo damage crimes. Coincidental with this measure Immigration and Naturalization Service Boardings of FOC and Middle Eastern vessels should be stepped up with an eye towards retaining on board and isolating from critical shipboard areas anyone even suspected of contact with Al-Qaeda.

Second, immediately before the Carrolton gauge reaches the 8-foot level, or before any announcement of a pending attack on Iraq, a recon in force by elements of the Louisiana National Guard of the levee system between Baton Rouge and Venice should take place. This recon in force should be preceded by publicity and followed up with a with a psy-op campaign to convince Al-Qaeda elements that it could happen again at any time and overall security is being drastically beefed up. The Coast Guard should dedicate one of the new MSST units slated to come on the line for 2004 to New Orleans and, in the meantime, increase waterborne patrols during high-water season by any craft of opportunity available aiming at

24/7 coverage of the area between river miles 88 and 106 above Head of Passes for the duration of high water. If the enemy can be forced back into its "re-scout mode" from the poised-for-action posture, their momentum may be lost. The enemy, if deprived of the force multiplication effect of high water, may move onto a different target if forced to regroup by a sudden and dramatic improvement in our security posture. We believe that it is more probable than not that if the Al-Qaeda economic attack takes on a maritime component a high-water attack on New Orleans will be one feature of such a campaign. We also believe it more probable than not that such an attack will be either preceded or followed shortly by a cargo crime spree.

We believe that it is more probable than not that such enemy actions can be deterred in the short term by a sudden and dramatic increase in the security posture of the Port of New Orleans just before the advent of high water and/or any military outloads in ports servicing a possible U.S. invasion of Iraq. We believe that strengthening security at New Orleans, America's largest bulk port, will give an impression that U.S. Forces are aware of the threat and may have strengthened security at any secondary targets the enemy may select. Such an impression would more probably than not force Al-Qaeda field operatives back into the scout mode on secondary targets as well. Even minor but visible improvements at the next largest bulk ports may drive the enemy into the reconsider mode. Whether one reads The Art of War, the Urban Guerilla Manual, or the Red Book, nowhere is the terrorist operative urged to strike where his enemy is strong. While we cannot protect every inch of American soil, we must take sufficient action to protect the very base of our economy and to deny the enemy targets of mass disruption. We urge all homeland defense authorities federal, state, and municipal to undertake the actions we suggest in this report without delay.

We also remind all public officials that when they follow the advice we offer, the most probable observable effect is simply that nothing happens. This should always be viewed as a tactical victory in employing necessary forces rather as "intelligence failure". In a shadow war with irregulars, any move that forces them off target, even with no discernible enemy contact is a victory. It is when the enemy correctly perceives and exploits our weakness that we have catastrophic events like the World Trade Center Towers and the Pentagon attacks. A war waged against terrorism where our soil is free of further attack probably is not possible. The test of our defensive success will be the value of the targets struck. If our enemy is in fact reduced to robbing banks and attacking shoppers in a mall we are doing at least as well as such experienced counter terrorists regimes as Great Britain and Israel.

REPORTING SUSPECTED TERRORIST ACTIVITY

The Maritime Administration issued an advisory to operators of U.S.-flag vessels and other maritime interests

on how to report actual or suspected terrorist incidents. The advisory provides the maritime industry with a single national telephone number, (800)-424-8802, to report actual and suspected terrorist incidents.

The National Response Center (NRC) is the central point of contact for all oil, chemical, radiological, biological and etiological releases (e.g., anthrax, smallpox etc.) in the United States. These substances may potentially be used in a terrorist incident, and given the existing capabilities, the NRC can also serve as an effective clearinghouse for notification of terrorism incidents.

While it may be difficult to predict and prevent a terrorist attack, mariners can take certain steps to minimize the chance the attack will disrupt vessel or port operations. Coast Guard Headquarters is working with industry, field units, and other law enforcement agencies to develop and communicate the best practices for prevention.

The FBI and the U.S. Postal Service published guidance on their websites that provide "tell-tale" signs for identifying suspicious packages. Further, some cruise ship companies have set up satellite mail processing trailers to minimize the impact of an anthrax threat on both the vessel and terminal operations.

If you call to notify the Coast Guard of a potential terrorist incident the National Response Center will connect you to the FBI's Strategic Intelligence and Operations Center (SIOC). They will coordinate with other agencies immediately assess the threat credibility.

In some instances, the FBI may be able to verify that the report is a false alarm or hoax and requires no response. Other cases may require an on-scene assessment by the FBI and other federal, state and local officials. In conjunction with the threat assessment, the NRC will also notify other response agencies.

In addition to oil and hazardous substance releases, the NRC may now be notified of any suspected terrorist incident, particularly an incident affecting our national transportation systems. Report all reports of suspected or actual terrorist incidents to the NRC at **800-424-8802**. This is the same phone number posted on every pollution placard on your vessel!

BEING ALERT TO POSSIBLE TERRORISM

For incidents at the local level, the Coast Guard has asked for the assistance of everyone in the maritime community to be especially alert to prevent possible acts of sabotage and terrorism. Currently, USCG personnel are fully engaged in protecting our vital ports and waterways assets and infrastructure. All Masters, Mates, Pilots, deckhands, engineers and dockworkers are being enlisted to serve as "eyes and ears" in the field as you go about your normal business. The Coast Guard provided the Gulf Coast Mariners Association with a list of suspicious activities...there may be others! If you observe these unusual activities, report them at once to the nearest Coast Guard

office at the numbers printed below. Please post this list on your vessel.

Suspicious activities:

- (1) Unknown persons photographing waterfront facilities. [*GCMA comments in are italics: "Facilities" includes docks, petro-chemical plants, power plants, all types of industrial installations, pipelines, etc.*]
- (2) Unknown persons attempting to gain access to facilities. [*Cases recently reported on the Ohio River.*]
- (3) Suspicious individuals establishing businesses or roadside food stands nearby facilities.
- (4) Suspicious persons loitering on or around bridges or bridge structures.
- (5) Suspicious watercraft tied to bridge piers or supports. [*Evaluate the importance of each bridge over your vessel's route.*]
- (6) Suspicious VHF radio transmissions or communications with other vessels.
- (7) Suspicious lack of VHF communications from vessels transiting the river or offshore. [*Terrorists are not limited to hijacking airliners!*]
- (8) Suspicious vehicles on the levee or the levee batture. [*Consider the impact of a hole blasted in a levee at high water.*]
- (9) Unknown persons loitering near waterfront facilities for extended periods of time.
- (10) Unknown persons calling facilities or facility personnel asking about security, personnel, or the standard operational procedures for that facility.
- (11) Vehicles with personnel in them loitering and perhaps taking photographs or drawing diagrams of facilities.
- (12) Small boats with persons on board loitering near facilities or offshore platforms, perhaps taking photographs, drawing diagrams, swimming or diving or other "recreational type" activities. [*Use your binoculars and call in the state registration number.*]
- (13) Small boats with personnel onboard loitering near tankers in transit, at anchor, or moored at petrochemical plants. [*Remember, what happened to the USS Cole last year cost 17 sailors' lives and \$250,000,000 of our tax dollars just to repair the damage!*]
- (14) Suspicious general aviation aircraft operating nearby waterfront facilities or offshore platforms. [*...or "crop dusting" a river towboat with an unknown chemical agents!*]
- (15) Any bomb threats to facilities, to offshore installations, or to your vessel. [*Workplace terrorism by disgruntled employees and former employees was on the rise before September 11th.*]
- (16) Unknown persons attempting to gain information about any facility by walking up to you or others and engaging them in a conversation. [*"Loose lips sink ships."*]
- (17) Suspicious vendors attempting to sell merchandise nearby facilities or to facility personnel.
- (18) Theft of company vehicles, company vehicle passes, company personnel identification, or personnel uni-

- forms. *[Master's routinely should check the credentials of all crew members and share any suspicions with your personnel office at once.]*
- (19) Theft of standard operating procedures documents. *[Example: Documents that deal with emergency planning.]*
- (20) Unknown, unexpected or otherwise suspicious workmen trying to gain access to facilities or to your vessel to repair, replace, service, or install equipment.
- (21) Suspicious e-mails on the internet that relate to the maritime industry. *[Also, internet chat boards can provide an easy access to information that could aid a terrorist and endanger your fellow mariners.]*
- (22) Suspicious package deliveries, or attempts to deliver packages that were not ordered by the facility, the vessel, or for delivery to work sites.
- (23) Suspicious activity around containers at terminals. *[Since it is not possible to examine every container, be suspicious of activity both inside and outside shipping containers wherever they may be.]*
- (24) Individuals proclaiming support for any type of terrorist activity, domestic or foreign.
- (25) Anti-American sentiment expressed by crew members on your vessel or any other vessel you come into contact with.
- (26) Anti-American pamphlets, posters, or other paraphernalia onboard your vessel. *[Where is it and who owns it? Some terrorists like Timothy McVeigh, are "home grown." Be vigilant!]*
- (27) Any or all suspicious activity involving port infrastructure (bridges, locks, wharves, and facilities).
- (28) Small pleasure craft operated outside normally transited offshore routes. *[After September 11, large parts of the port of New York were closed to all pleasure craft!]*
- (29) Ships or larger vessels operated outside normally recognized safety fairways.
- (30) Report anything not mentioned already that you find suspicious. *[Your eyes and ears are valuable because they may be the only ones for miles around. If you do not report what you see, vital input may be lost. Your role as a mariner is critical to our nation at war!]*
- (31) This list is not all-inclusive. Share your thoughts with GCMA.

956-546-2786
After-Hours/Weekends
Duty Officer

MSO Houston, TX 713-671-5100 24-Hours
VTS Houston, TX 713-674-8488 24-Hours

MSU Galveston, TX 409-766-3686/87
Business Hours
409-682-1264
After-Hours/Weekends
Duty Officer

MSO Port Arthur, TX 409-723-6501 24-Hours

MSU Lake Charles, LA 337-433-3765 Business Hours
409-723-6501
After-Hours/Weekends

MSU Houma, LA 985-857-8507/851-1692
Business Hours
985-380-5320/21/22
After-Hours/Weekends

MSO Morgan City, LA (985) 380-5320/21/22 24-Hours

MSO New Orleans, LA 504-589-6261 24-Hours

MSU Baton Rouge, LA 225-298-5400 Business Hours
504-589-6261
After-Hours/Weekends

MSO Mobile, AL 334-441-5121 24-Hours
334-441-5196 (Secondary line
for business hours only)

DDO Panama City, FL 850-233-0366 Business Hours
334-441-5121
After-Hours/Weekends

MSO Huntington, WV 304-529-5524 Business Hours
1-800-253-7465 After-Hours
(Group Ohio Valley)

MSO Louisville, KY 502-582-5194 24-Hours

MSD Cincinnati, OH 513-921-9033 Business Hours
1-800-253-7465 After-Hours
(Group Ohio Valley)

24-Hour Coast Guard Telephone Numbers for the Eighth District:

MSO Corpus Christi 361-888-3162 24-Hours

MSSO Port Lavaca, TX 361-552-7422 Business Hours
361-888-3162
After-hours/Weekends
Duty Officer

MSSO Brownsville, TX 210-546-2786 Business Hours

MSO Memphis, TN 901-544-3941 Business Hours
901-544-3912
After-Hours/Weekends (Group
Lower Mississippi River)

MSD Greenville, MS 662-332-0964 Business Hours
(901) 544-3912
After-Hours/Weekends (Group
Lower Mississippi River)

MSO Paducah, KY	270-442-1621 24-Hours
MSD Nashville, TN	615-736-5421 24-Hours
MSO Pittsburgh, PA	412-633-5808 Business Hours 1-800-253-7465 After Hours (Group Ohio Valley)
MSO St. Louis, MO	314-539-3091 24-Hours
MSD St. Paul, MN	651-290-3991 Business Hours 319-524-7511 After-Hours/Weekends (Group Upper Mississippi River)
MSD Quad Cities, IL	309-782-0627/28 Business Hours 319-524-7511 After-Hours/Weekends (Group Upper Mississippi River)
MSD Peoria, IL	309-694-7779 Business Hours 319-524-7511 After-Hours/Weekends (Group Upper Mississippi River)