

TESTIMONY OF REAR ADMIRAL JEFFREY M. GARRETT,
U.S. COAST GUARD (RETIRED)

PROTECTING U.S. SOVEREIGNTY:
COAST GUARD OPERATIONS IN THE ARCTIC

BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD
AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION

DECEMBER 1, 2011

Good morning Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in today's hearing.

As a Coast Guard officer, I spent much of my career serving in the nation's multi-mission polar icebreaker fleet, operating in both polar regions as well as supporting these operations in staff assignments ashore. For most of my career, polar operations only occasionally involved the Coast Guard's better-known "bread and butter" missions—an infrequent icebreaker search and rescue case, or building navigational aids on Alaska's North Slope, for example. Instead, most icebreaker operations in the past 30 years have supported defense logistics and an increasing demand for scientific research from a variety of governmental agencies.

As the Subcommittee is aware, transformational changes in the Arctic are significantly challenging our national interests and eliciting the need to support them. Energy development activities, increasing maritime transportation, continuing research needs, expanding tourism, environmental concerns, services for communities in Arctic Alaska and intensifying geopolitical issues are driving an Arctic "awakening" that we can't ignore. As the Commandant has repeatedly emphasized, these trends all affect the statutory responsibilities of the U.S. Coast Guard.

I believe the Coast Guard has, within its resources, struggled valiantly to stay abreast of new Arctic challenges. Seasonal deployment of Coast Guard cutters, boats, aircraft and specialized teams to Arctic Alaska have tested equipment capabilities and procedures and enhanced Arctic operational experience. But the most critical—and effective—capability that the Coast Guard could apply to its expanding Arctic responsibilities is largely missing from the scene. At a time of growing need, our polar icebreaker capabilities are steadily drifting into obsolescence.

With only *USCGC Healy* in operational condition during the upcoming year, consequences of icebreaker disinvestment are beginning to emerge. The Coast Guard has been unable to deploy an icebreaker for Arctic multi-mission purposes for over two years, and planned science missions for *USCGC Polar Sea* have had to be cancelled. Perhaps most ominously, a Coast Guard icebreaker will not be available for critical U.S. Antarctic Program support two months from now, after the unexpected withdrawal of foreign contracted icebreaking services. When *Healy* is engaged in dedicated science support, or undergoing maintenance, the Coast Guard has no polar icebreakers for other Arctic or Antarctic missions or contingencies.

These mission gaps will be somewhat mitigated in 2013, at least for the short term, when *USCGC Polar Star* is scheduled to return to service. Although I was privileged to serve in both of the *Polar*-class ships, and am very proud of the 70 years they have collectively served the nation, the Coast Guard will nevertheless be depending on 1960's technology that is expensive to operate and subject to the risk of additional failure.

During the High Latitude Study, as we considered present and future Arctic demands on the Coast Guard, it became evident to me is that the Coast Guard's lower-48 "footprint"—geographically distributed logistics bases, boat stations, air stations and sector offices—would be an extremely expensive and inappropriate blueprint for needs in Arctic Alaska. Moving sea ice, shallow coastal waters and permafrost make vessel mooring facilities, for example, very difficult to engineer. Moreover, the seasonality of operational demand and long distances would also make fixed installations less efficient.

Instead, a polar icebreaker patrolling offshore provides an ideal Arctic mobile base. With helicopters, boats, cargo space, heavy-lift cranes, extra berthing, configurable mission spaces, and command, control and communications facilities, an icebreaker can respond to contingencies and be augmented with special teams and equipment as needed. This is not to deny that some shore infrastructure would be needed. But an icebreaker can move to where the action is, carry out Coast Guard missions, engage with local communities and other federal, state and local agencies, exercise response plans, and simultaneously provide a visible national presence.

What is clearly called for is a continued level of icebreaker capability to accommodate the developing Arctic demand for Coast Guard services as well as fulfill the need for broader national sovereignty and presence. We must maintain near-term capabilities, keeping *Polar Star* and *Polar Sea* available for polar operations, and move forward to build two new icebreakers that can meet future needs more effectively and more efficiently. These are among the recommendations of the National Research Council's 2007 report on icebreaker capability. The subsequent High Latitude Study and Polar Icebreaker Recapitalization Analysis further inform the issue, and provide a sound basis for an icebreaker acquisition effort.

A review of U.S. requirements would not be complete without examining how other nations are confronting developments in the Arctic. Our declining polar capabilities place us distinctly in the minority. The other four Arctic nations are actively acquiring new ice-capable assets, most notably the multi-vessel building programs of Russia and our Canadian allies. Non-Arctic nations, most notably China, are building icebreaking ships and have announced plans for increased Arctic involvement. Even smaller nations, such as South Korea, South Africa and Chile, have recently acquired or are planning new polar ships.

In summary, I believe that if the United States is to protect its Arctic interests and retain its leadership role in both polar regions, we must have the ability to be present in those places, today and in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for considering these important issues and for the opportunity to be here today.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Truth in Testimony Disclosure

Pursuant to clause 2(g)(5) of House Rule XI, in the case of a witness appearing in a nongovernmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include: (1) a curriculum vitae; and (2) a disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. Such statements, with appropriate redaction to protect the privacy of the witness, shall be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness appears.

(1) Name: Jeffrey M. Garrett, Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard (Retired)

(2) Other than yourself, name of entity you are representing: None

(3) Are you testifying on behalf of an entity other than a Government (federal, state, local) entity?

YES

If yes, please provide the information requested below and attach your curriculum vitae.

NO

(4) Please list the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by you or by the entity you are representing:

High Latitude Study (subcontract as subject matter expert with the study team), funded by USCG R&D Center, \$36K in FY10

Polar Icebreaker Recapitalization Analysis (subcontract as subject matter expert with the study team), funded by USCG R&D Center, \$66K in FY10 & FY11

Signature

Date

11/28/2011

Jeffrey M. Garrett

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

31 years of service as a U. S. Coast Guard officer, retiring with the rank of Rear Admiral in September 2005. Expertise in a wide range of U. S. and global maritime operations, plus significant experience in agency planning, program analysis, budgeting and performance evaluation. Broad maritime consulting experience, with a focus on polar affairs, since retirement.

EDUCATION

Graduate & research fellow, Industrial College of the Armed Forces (1991-92)
Master of Science in Management, U. S. Naval Postgraduate School (1980-81)
Bachelor of Science, U. S. Coast Guard Academy (1970-74)

ACHIEVEMENTS

Consultant in Maritime Affairs, Seattle, Washington

2005-Present

Provide consulting assistance in maritime operational, legal, acquisition and security issues. Consulting projects include maritime accident investigation, evaluation of ice-capable vessel support for oil and gas exploration, coastal surveillance and security for the Indonesian Navy, icebreaker crewing, and Antarctic tourism industry policy. Experience as an ice pilot for the Northwest Passage and Antarctic cruise ship operations. Member, U.S. National Research Council studies on *Polar Icebreaker Roles and Future Needs* (2007), and *National Security Implications of Climate Change on U.S. Naval Forces* (2011). Chair, U.S. Coast Guard polar operations and policy reorganization work group (2007-08) and contributor to studies of U.S. Coast Guard high latitude missions (2009-2010) and icebreaker business case analysis (2011). Member of the board of *SeaFair*, Seattle's community summer festival since 2005.

Commander, 13th Coast Guard District, Seattle, Washington

2003-05

Managed Coast Guard operations in Northwest U.S. and offshore waters, including execution of search and rescue, homeland security, drug and fisheries enforcement, vessel and waterways safety, environmental protection and aids to navigation missions. Led 1800 active-duty military personnel, 500 reservists, plus civilian employees and auxiliaries during a demanding period of post-9/11 change. Engaged other military, federal, state, local, Canadian and non-governmental agencies and forged increasingly complex organizational linkages. Managed successful but controversial state ferry system security enhancements, oil spill responses and drug seizures. Reorganized northern border units to meet new security demands efficiently.

Director of Resources, U. S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, DC

2001-03

Responsible for Coast Guard policy, long-range planning and annual budget development. Supervised execution of service-wide Operating Expenses and Capital Acquisition appropriations (\$6 billion). Oversaw staff interaction with the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Management and Budget, and congressional authorization and appropriations committees. Managed a significant

increase and re-direction of the Coast Guard's budget in the aftermath of 9/11.

Chief of Operations, Coast Guard Pacific Area, Alameda, California

2001

As the senior staff officer for all Coast Guard operations, coordinated operational plans and scheduled major ship and aircraft employment throughout the Pacific. Managed operational funding and shifts in mission emphasis. Supervised execution of major cases involving search and rescue, fisheries enforcement, drug and alien interdiction and polar icebreaking.

Commanding Officer, USCGC Healy (WAGB 20)

1998-2001

Assigned during construction of the first U. S. polar icebreaker built since 1976, developed processes to operate with one-half the crew of previous icebreakers. Oversaw final construction and crew training, accepted delivery of the ship, coordinated shakedown operations with the Canadian Coast Guard in northern Baffin Bay, and commanded the ship through challenging but ultimately successful trials in the Arctic. Maintained close working relationships with individual and organizational science users, resulting in significant demand for the ship and highly productive science cruises since 2001.

Commanding Officer, USCGC Polar Sea (WAGB 11)

1995-98

Commanded one of two U.S. polar icebreakers then in service (permanent crew of 134), providing critical annual channel break-in and ship escort in Antarctica, and science support/multi-mission patrols in multiple deployments to both polar regions. Operations included drift-net fisheries enforcement action in the North Pacific and a multi-national oil spill exercise near Sakhalin Island in the Russian Far East.

Coast Guard operational and staff assignments

1974-1995

Afloat assignments include service in the polar icebreakers *Polar Star* and *Burton Island*; commanding the Great Lakes icebreaker *Mobile Bay*; and as Executive Officer in the patrol cutter *Active* and again in *Polar Star*. Served as a watch officer at the Vessel Traffic Service in Prince William Sound, Alaska, monitoring vessel movements and waterways safety. Headquarters staff assignments included ice operations program management and program analysis/budget development.

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

Joint Services Capstone Course (joint service doctrine, planning and geo-political familiarization for flag and general officers), U.S. National Defense University, 2003

Revolution in Business Practices, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, 2002

Coast Guard Command and Operations Course, U. S. Coast Guard Academy, New London, Connecticut, 1995 and 1989

U. S. Merchant Marine License, Second Mate, all oceans, unlimited tonnage, first issue 1980

Article: *Ending Arctic Reluctance*, Second Line of Defense, July 2011:
<http://www.sldinfo.com/?p=20640>