



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Subcommittee Hearing Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)**

***Projecting Presence and Power in the Indo-Pacific:  
An Examination of the United States Coast Guard's Contributions to Maritime Security***

**September 28, 2023**

The Indo-Pacific region is increasingly critical to the efforts of the U.S. Coast Guard and its partners to secure the maritime domain and enforce an international rules-based order.

The region faces a variety of challenges, from rising sea levels as a result of climate change, to aggressive territorial claims and fishing tactics from malign state actors, including the People's Republic of China. Small island nations in the region have limited resources to respond to disasters and defend their territorial waters, and the Coast Guard's ability to provide support and partnership to those nations is key to advancing U.S. interests in the region.

The Coast Guard engages in valuable training, exercises, and personnel exchanges with partners in region to bolster maritime law enforcement, port security, search and rescue, disaster response capabilities, and enforcement of illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

The Coast Guard has limited resources, however, and the vastness of the Pacific makes it impossible for the service to deploy everywhere it would like to. Congress must invest in the Coast Guard's cutter programs and workforce to maximize its ability to deploy throughout the Indo-Pacific. The Coast Guard's coordination and collaboration with the Departments of Defense and State is also critical to ensuring limited resources are deployed optimally.

I am eager to learn more about how the agencies represented by the witnesses here today work in concert to support both military readiness and diplomacy. I must also note that the witnesses testifying today represent large workforces of civil servants who provide critical functions on behalf of the United States.

If the Republican Majority follows through on its threats to shut down the government, these workers will be forced to work without pay, jeopardizing their ability to advance U.S. interests at home and abroad. I hope the Majority will step back from the ledge and act quickly to avoid an unnecessary government shutdown which would undermine all of the critical efforts that will be discussed today.

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