



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Transportation & Maritime Security Subcommittee

Hearing Statement of Rep. Troy Carter (D-LA)

Frontline Defenders: How the Coast Guard's Deployable Specialized Forces Combat Narcoterrorists and other Maritime Threats on the High Seas

February 3, 2026

Rear Admiral Barata, I recognize you are joining us amid a shutdown affecting the Coast Guard and other branches of the armed forces. To state the obvious, our military servicemembers deserve to be paid for their service, and I hope we will be able to come together quickly to pass the reforms and funding our country desperately needs.

Today, we are here to discuss the Coast Guard's Deployable Specialized Forces. These specialized forces comprise some of the Coast Guard's most elite, highly trained units. Their activities exemplify the Coast Guard's wide range of critical missions, as they deploy to carry out some of the service's highest risk operations within a variety of challenging environments.

Specialized forces' missions vary from advanced interdictions and boardings against hostile targets, to responding to oil spills and hazardous material releases. Specialized forces dive underwater to repair ships in the harsh environment of remote polar regions, chase down narcotics traffickers on the high seas, and help protect National Special Security Events like the United Nations General Assembly.

Last year, Maritime Safety and Security Teams were among the Coast Guard forces that deployed to my home city of New Orleans to help protect Super Bowl 59. I expect some of these teams will deploy again this weekend to help ensure another safe and successful Super Bowl. Most recently, the Coast Guard's Deployable Specialized Forces have conducted a series of high-profile, high-risk boardings of sanctioned oil tankers near the coast of Venezuela. I strongly disagree with the Trump administration's operations last month to deploy forces on land in Venezuela without congressional authorization, as well as its bombings of alleged drug boats, which are not only illegal but undermine the Coast Guard's efforts to encourage international maritime cooperation. In contrast, these oil tanker boardings represent a legal and effective way to enforce sanctions, enforce international maritime laws, and exert U.S. influence.

The Coast Guard should be commended for carrying out these high-risk boardings without incident, displaying the skill and training of the service's specialized forces. The Deployable Specialized Forces are critical to the Coast Guard's success as a service. We must ensure the Coast Guard has the resources, personnel, training, strategies, and authorities to utilize these units effectively.

The Government Accountability Office has done important work to help the Coast Guard grow smarter, leaner, and more effective across its many missions.

#

[Media contact](#)