



THURSDAY, JULY 07, 2005

## During War On Terror, Bush Leaves Our Coastlines Unguarded

by Michael in New York on [7/07/2005 11:24:00 AM](#)

Think Bush will get a bounce from another terrorist attack? Keep in mind this very terrific, page one story in USA Today about [our crumbling Coast Guard](#). Yes, it's been underfunded for decades (most of their ships are almost 40 years old!), but Bush has been our President since 9-11. He's had *three years* to attack this problem.

The Coast Guard's ships, planes and helicopters are breaking down at record rates, which may threaten the service's ability to carry out its post-9/11 mission of protecting ports and waterways against terrorism.

Stunning details include radar systems that break down daily, to the point where some ships have no idea who is even a mile away when patrolling our coasts. (They buy store-bought radars with their own money just so they won't be completely blind.)

And what is Bush's reaction to this?

The Bush administration **wants to increase the amount of time it will take to replace a fleet that's among the oldest on the globe** — older even than fleets owned by nations such as Algeria and Pakistan. The "deepwater" replacement program, conceived in 1998 as a \$20 billion, 20-year plan to replace the fleet, could be increased to 25 years under a White House plan.

The strategy would **save the government money in the short term**. The White House budget office declined to comment.

That's right, we had a 20 year program to upgrade the Coast Guard **formulated three years before 9-11**. Then the US is attacked and Bush's instinct is to DELAY upgrading the Coast Guard's vital equipment needs from 20 years to 25 years! Republican Senator Olympia Snowe wants to speed this up to 10-15 years. But they're both out of their minds. \$20 billion to provide essential needs of the Coast Guard and BEGIN to secure our coastlines and ports? We spend \$5 billion a month in Iraq. And Bush wants to DELAY this? And why 10-15 years? It should be done in 2 years. This is a WAR and Bush is callously leaving our coastlines unguarded.

What are some of the duties of the Coast Guard?

The Coast Guard was moved into the Department of Homeland Security in 2003 and given primary responsibility for maritime security in addition to its regular duties. The added responsibilities include patrolling the nation's 361 ports and 95,000 miles of coastline, boarding and inspecting tens of thousands of cargo ships and recreational boats, and reviewing security at the nation's commercial

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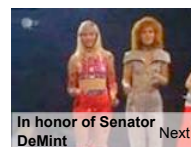
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