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The MARITIME EXECUTIVE

INTELLIGENCE CAPITAL FINANCIAL SERVICES

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The MARITIME EXECUTIVE

INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL FOR EXECUTIVES

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Standing Up:

Office of Global Maritime Situational Awareness (OGMSA)

Commercial Shippers Will Soon Learn That Maritime Security Means Global Information-Sharing as Defined by OGMSA

IN LATE AUGUST, THE NATIONAL OFFICE OF GLOBAL Maritime Situational Awareness (OGMSA), in conjunction with the Department of Justice and the U.S. Fleet Forces Command, will sponsor a Global Maritime Information-Sharing Symposium (GMISS) at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) at Kings Point. If you don't know what any of those acronyms mean or who exactly the players are that will be involved, then you can for the time being be forgiven. In the world of ocean commerce, however, anyone who does not very quickly come up to speed on all of this will be at a severe disadvantage, both in terms of maritime security and commercial viability.

Standing Up OGMSA: No Small Task

When Tom Ridge first stood up the Department of Homeland Security a little more than five years ago, many observers said that his would be one of the most difficult tasks in the history of the United States government. Bringing together a wide range of players from other departments and marrying them into one cohesive force was a tall order. Arguably, Secretary Ridge showed himself to be an able leader and a more than competent manager. Almost four years after Ridge stood up the DHS, Rear Admiral Lee J. Metcalf, USN was designated to serve as the inaugural Director of the interagency Office of Global Maritime Situational Awareness. Although physically much smaller – and far more obscure in terms of international visibility – Metcalf's task in standing up OGMSA may actually be far more difficult.

So what is OGMSA and what does it do – and more importantly, why? In response, RADM Metcalf sums it up neatly: "Look, it took six or seven months just to get traction: staff, governance, processes in place. This first year has been consumed with learning what people are doing and educating people on who we are. Ask me in six months – if I don't have any big victories, then shame on me. We are on the front edge of being able to engage several important things." That having been said, the big picture is still more complicated.

In May, *MarEx* Managing Editor Joseph Keefe sat down with RADM Metcalf to get the full story on the most ambitious interagency information-sharing effort in more than fifty years. The success or failure of this broad-reaching endeavor will have a profound effect on the commercial shipping world, here and abroad. Follow along to find out why.

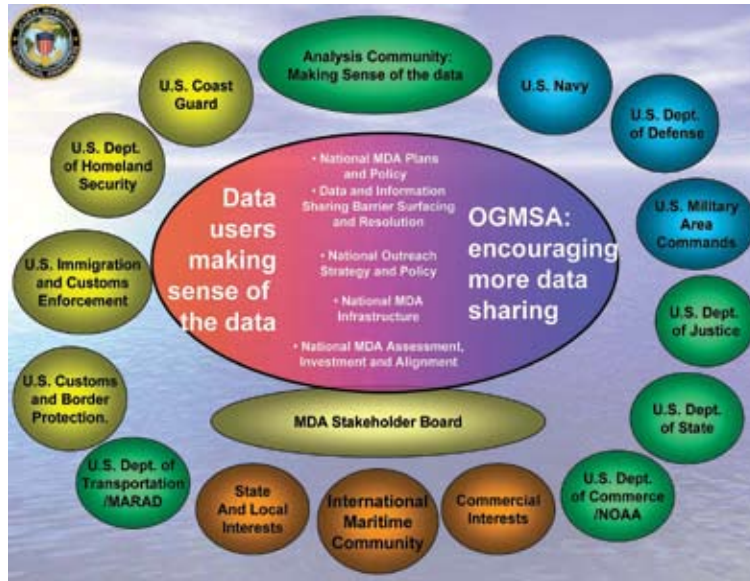
Missions and Players

According to the Web site of OGMSA, the Mission of the Director of Global Maritime Situational Awareness is to facilitate the creation of a collaborative global, maritime, information-sharing environment through unity of effort across entities with maritime interests. Achieving global maritime situational awareness will increase the discoverability and share-ability of information relevant to those engaged in managing the security, safety, environment and commerce associated with the maritime domain. OGMSA additionally says that this mission is broadly defined by the following strategic goals:

- *Make maritime-related information available to enable accurate, dynamic and confident decision-making.*
- *Make information searchable.*
- *Facilitate development of a dynamically tailorable, network-centric virtual information grid.*
- *Facilitate the improvement and alignment of resources, capabilities, and activities related to global maritime situational awareness.*
- *Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA): An effective understanding of anything associated with the maritime domain that could impact the security, safety, economy, or environment of the United States. (Source: National Plan to Achieve MDA)*
- *Global Maritime Situational Awareness: Results from the persistent monitoring of maritime activities in such a way that trends and anomalies can be detected. (Source: National MDA CONOPS)*
- *Office of GMSA: Acts as catalyst for and among all maritime entities to make information available and searchable, by*

advocating standards and protocols.

To be fair, OGMSA's first year was more about gaining credibility than anything else. But Metcalf quickly put the real situation into perspective for *MarEx* readers: "The first thing was to set up the infrastructure itself. So we stood ourselves up; right on the heels of that, we set up the interagency structure, taking the whole range of players and framing them under the National MDA Stakeholder Board." Metcalf goes on to say, "We've seen the evolution



"We've seen the evolution of – we call them centers of gravity – that have emerged and are increasing cooperation across the U.S. government."

of – we call them centers of gravity – that have emerged and are increasing cooperation across the U.S. government. Now you have single points of contact, Executive Agents, talking about their enterprise. It makes the process better, much more effective. as we try to isolate what the priorities are." And Metcalf says that the latter process is moving right along.

The Secretary of the Navy is designated as DOD MDA Executive Agent and is implementing a broad reaching MDA framework that enables Navy missions and is helping close national MDA gaps. Metcalf says that this work is something that OGMSA is clearly linked to. He continues, "At DOT, where Sean Connaughton is the MDA Executive Agent, they are integrating a ton of information that's coming out of maritime sources. They are trying to enable decision-makers as well and have put a lot of time and effort into a system that went live in July and your readers will have access to, called MARVIEW. Additionally, at DHS, where the Coast Guard Commandant is the designated MDA Executive Agent, there are a wide range of MDA initiatives. But there are twenty-something agencies...we're all trying to get to the same spot: 'a highly collaborative, effective information-sharing construct.' This inter-agency effort is addressing info sharing issues for cargo, people, vessels and infrastructure. More importantly it is helping decision makers make sense of the data and use it to make good decisions.

Getting Specific: Real Results Through Economy of Scale

Metcalf sees no end to the possibilities for OGMSA, but he is also realistic about how to get there: "There are not enough resources around for everybody to do everything that we want. And there are different perspectives, depending on the vantage point." But Metcalf and his relatively small group also feel that the use of a common office is the perfect way to gain real economy of scale both within and outside government.

Within the government, the potential for leveraging different assets across many areas is gathering steam. And while some would question why a fairly benign outfit like NOAA is involved with OGMSA, the partnership is ultimately a very logical one. Metcalf outlines the strategy nicely by explaining, "Part of what I think we have an opportunity to accomplish is to look at the resources that various government agencies bring to the party. One of the objectives is to increase our ability to see what's out there on the oceans. In our efforts to

encourage information-sharing, you need to understand the motivating force for international partners as well as other U.S. agencies to buy in."

A country in the Caribbean might be most interested in, say, early tsunami warning and the sensor systems that provide that safety net. Although the technology guys in the U.S. are talking to them about that, another agency that's interested in safety and security on the high seas may not even be thinking about the crossover application. On the surface the two missions have little to do with one another, but better communication links might open up the possibility of greater payback with the same system.

Taking it one step further, part of the OGMSA mission down the road might be to find out who has the information and where that information could be shared. Along the way, Metcalf says it is not uncommon to find that more than one agency in the government is working on the same thing. In the end, having two people collecting the same data where one person or agency could do it and then share that information interagency-wide is a colossal waste of time.

Metcalf takes it even further. The Integration Ocean Observation System has the unenviable acronym, "I-OOS." But that IOOS structure, just around North America, has some 44,000 sensors. In the Caribbean alone, there are 5,000 – most of them "wave-height indicators" and that genre of device. The budget for this infrastructure is estimated at two to three billion dollars, spread across some 13 different agencies. The standardization issue alone cries for help. The variations in the category of the "date-stamp" are simply unbelievable. There are some 23 different ways to do that date stamp. Standardizing a little of this would make the information more easily shared. In the end, says Metcalf, "OGMSA aims to help the IOOS community hook up with other stakeholders and realize how to better leverage their data." And as equipment comes to its retirement age, the

overarching interagency investment strategy has to be defined.

Outside government, OGMSA is partnering with companies like Maersk, which are getting more inquiries from more U.S. agencies – in some cases, for the same data – than they can handle. “At the very least,” says Metcalf, “that kind of thing is a distraction. So how do we help them manage the demand signals that come out from across the breadth of the U.S. government?” Eventually, and sooner rather than later, Metcalf’s OGMSA hopes to streamline that process so that information is only given once and never again. The concept of eliminating redundancy is very much what OGMSA is all about.

A “Need to Know”: But Who Decides?

A common complaint often heard from the commercial maritime community is that it has a lot to offer but the government doesn’t seem interested. The marine information exchanges, in particular, have been particularly vociferous about this. But it is not quite that simple. While some commercial entities do have a wealth of data and information, these cargo and logistics databases are proprietary in many cases, ad hoc and stovepiped in others. The question arises: Who is entitled to the information and why?

Any ship that’s coming in and out of the United States has a lawful obligation within 96 hours of arrival to show that data to specific agencies. Accordingly, there are agreements associated with what CBP, as the recipient of that data on behalf of the United States government, can do with it. CBP, in turn, is required to ensure that the other federal agencies who get that data act in kind. Metcalf’s OGMSA therefore works with both the lawyers and the risk managers to mediate options without breaking the law or contracts. He adds, “We’re bringing groups together to focus the expertise to discover solutions that have been overlooked in the past.”

What’s in It for ME?

Virtually every department of the U.S. government is looking at its mission and ensuring it doesn’t get inadvertently tasked with something it wasn’t budgeted to do in the first place. Metcalf is aware of the friction but also says, “Yes, there are concerns. But all participants have signed that document – the National MDA CONOPS. It talks to the need and the commitment to do exactly what it describes. It’s not going to be without bumps as people try to figure out how to blend priority sets within different agencies.” The stage, therefore, just might be set to do this far better than in the past.

OGMSA is also actively involved in helping the U.S. government take a more comprehensive look at a National Strategy for engagement with AIS (Automatic Identification System). With countries around the world collecting AIS data and sharing that data at no cost, OGMSA finds itself at the beginning of a framework similar to what happened in the aviation arena. In that case, the International Civil Aviation Organization eventually stepped up to help coordinate air IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) worldwide. Metcalf claims, “What will happen now with ocean commerce is exactly the same commercial steps.”

The government’s use of AIS extends to being able to track down ships that make illegal discharges. Reports come in about an oil plume in the water. The Coast Guard gets a sample of the oil, fingerprints it, then uses the AIS to find all the ships in the area and track them to the next port. By matching this ‘fingerprinting’ pier side, they nail the culprit.

Metcalf sends a signal of caution, however, when he says, “We don’t know where this information sharing is going, but if we are good stewards of this information, we are going to discover huge advantages, and part of our role is to explore the opportunities.”

Structure, Chain of Command and Funding: Showtime for OGMSA

OGMSA’s billet structure now allows for 32 individuals. Metcalf reports formally to the Navy and Coast Guard – the MSPCC, the interagency body that oversees the policy for maritime security. Additionally, a key role is played by the National MDA Stakeholder Board, Executive Steering Committee, which includes the Departments of State, Justice, Transportation (MARAD), Homeland Security (specifically, the Coast Guard), Defense (the Navy) and Commerce. This interagency group grades OGMSA on whether it is living up to its directives.

Housed at Coast Guard headquarters in Washington, OGMSA takes funding from a multitude of organizations, including Coast Guard, Navy and the Maritime Administration which are currently providing resources out of hide. Metcalf adds, “We are so new that they are still structuring a game plan right now as to how to manage this long term.

In a town where the roadside is littered with good ideas that Beltway players had no patience to bring to fruition, this is a critical moment for OGMSA. When asked if he felt pressure to show immediate dividends in the face of that kind of scrutiny, Metcalf replied, “To be blunt – yes. But that’s just how everything else is looked at every year too. When you are something new, they are looking at you twice as hard. Trying to establish collaborative, effective relationships is a day-to-day effort, and we are making headway. Some would say that we’re not moving ahead fast enough, and still others are amazed at the pace we are going.”

Metcalf hopes to leverage the energy coming out of DOD, DOT and DHS and create synergy between these groups so that the level of security, safety, environmental protection and commerce that we all aspire to can be a reality. But he also denies being interested in creating another Washington-based monolith. He insists, “I made the decision early on that it is not productive for us to either go after major authorities or budget frameworks. If I can’t show the merits to the current organizations that are authorized to do certain things, then shame on me. We’re trying to help the resources become aligned across government and use the authorities that they have.” He might be on to something here: responsibility, accountability and economy of scale. Doesn’t sound a lot like Washington to us, but it does sound like a good idea.