

## USS COLE, MUMBAI AND THE BIG THREAT OF SMALL VESSELS

The October, 2000 attack on the USS COLE sounded a threat ripple through the United States and the World, clearly establishing new capabilities and reach of terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda. A small vessel, heavily laden with explosives and designed to blend in with other vessels and harbor activities delivered a harsh message killing and wounding American sailors as they took on fuel in the port of Aden, Yemen. The small vessel has risen to international attention as a weapon directly capable of inflicting considerable damage and loss of life, even to the most protected and prepared seagoing vessels, such as a warship. Eight years later, in Mumbai India, the small vessel would once again rise to the fore and emphasize how vulnerable nations are to waterborne attacks. This time, the small vessel was employed in an indirect manner and used to ferry the terrorists past security forces and an unsuspecting population. A true asymmetric weapon, the small vessel attack is a big threat to our nation's ports, posing a risk to critical infrastructure, key resources, vital commerce and the safety and security of people.



Small vessel attacks have proven to be bona fide “game changers,” resulting in considerable review, assessment and revision of established security and operational procedures. Following the attack on the USS COLE; foreign port visits in the Middle East and even transit of the Suez Canal were suspended for U.S. war and supply ships. New requirements for ensuring the ship's leadership and crew possessed a solid understanding of the threat environment were put in effect, as were port force protection measures that integrated U.S. and Host Nation security forces. A short term impact to foreign engagement was a collateral result of the attack, isolating the U.S. from the very countries it needed to interact with. The same critical review has occurred in India and around the world following Mumbai. Coastal cities are viewing their approaches with a critical eye and assessing what vital targets may be within the striking distance of their port or coastal boundary. The city of

**ASIS 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Seminar**  
**Anaheim Convention Center**  
**Tuesday, September 22, 2009, 1:30PM**  
**Room 205AB**

New York, as recently as this August, conducted an extensive multi-agency exercise directed at identifying a small vessel, looking like any other small vessel in the surrounding waters, from entering with a radioactive device. As a result of the Mumbai attacks, the hotel industry, along with other public venue businesses, are re-evaluating their vulnerabilities to attack and enforcing stricter adherence to existing and new security measures.

These two dissimilar attacks have one thing in common, the use of the small vessel to successfully perpetrate an act of terrorism. While the United States has established national policies to enhance maritime domain awareness, federal regulations to make our ports and waterways more secure, and made considerable progress in detecting and identifying vessel's of



all types as they transit ports, coasts and inland waterways, the big threat of the small vessel is prevalent. The U.S. Coast Guard has held a series of Small Vessel Security Summit's across the country to develop with the maritime community ways to address this viable and dangerous threat. Other maritime organizations, as well as the port community and terminal operators, are taking preparatory actions to detect, deter, defend and recover from a potential small vessel attack.

This presentation will explore the similarities and differences between the attacks on the USS COLE and Mumbai, India. Discussion will focus on maritime security measures established as a result of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, as well as new initiatives being considered across the maritime community. The potential for a small vessel attack as it pertains to various maritime stakeholders and the magnitude of impact it can have on business will be addressed along with information, physical, personnel and technology security measures to protect your facilities.

Presenting Speakers:

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THE FOLLOWING OUTLINE IS FOR NOTE TAKING DURING THE PRESENTATION:

1. Attack on the USS COLE

a. The Incident

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b. The Immediate Response

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c. Terrorist Planning

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d. The Impact to Naval Operations

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e. The Long Term Response / Actions

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2. Attack on Mumbai, India

a. The Incident

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b. The Immediate Response

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c. Terrorist Planning

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d. The Impact to Naval Operations

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e. The Long Term Response / Actions

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3. The Use of the Small Vessel by Terrorist Groups

a. As the Primary Instrument

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b. As a Means to an End

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4. Vulnerabilities of our Ports, Coasts and Waterways

a. Small Vessel Detection

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b. Small Vessel Identification

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c. Small Vessel: Determining Intent

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5. Nature of the Small Vessel Threat

a. Inland Waters

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b. Dangerous Cargo

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c. Infrastructure

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6. Addressing the Issue

a. Small Vessel Security Summits

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b. DHS and Other Initiatives

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7. Small Vessel Terrorism Targets

a. Ships at Sea

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b. The Cargo – Supply Chain

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c. Security Procedures and Actions

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d. Private Sector: Decisions and Costs

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8. Summary

a. How Real is the Threat

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b. How Important is it to Act

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9. Open Forum Discussion – Questions and Answers

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