

*Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2018*

**Remarks at the United States Coast Guard Change-of-Command Ceremony**  
*June 1, 2018*

Thank you very much, Secretary Nielsen. Great job you're doing. That was a wonderful introduction and your leadership as the Coast Guard's Service Secretary has been very much appreciated and respected. Thank you very much. Great job. Thank you as well to our great Vice President, Mike Pence—please stand up, Mike—for joining us today.

I'm thrilled to be here with the brave men and women of the United States Coast Guard. You are America's first line of defense, the best of the best. These are exciting times for America. We are being respected again. We're being respected abroad, and we are restoring our wealth at home. It's about time.

We have reached yet one more historic milestone, with 3.8-percent unemployment just announced, and another alltime record low—African-American unemployment, Hispanic unemployment at an alltime low in history. We're very honored by that. And by the way, for the women out there, the lowest unemployment in 19 years. And I'll be soon saying that will be in history also. Very soon. That won't take much longer.

We are honored to be joined for today's ceremony by Director Coats. Dan Coats. Where's Dan? Thank you. Thank you, Dan. Director Alles; Commissioner McAleenan; Administrator Long; and Acting Director Homan, who has done a fantastic job; along with many of our senior military leaders. General Dunford, General Selva, Admiral Richardson, General Goldfein, and General Lengyel. Where is everybody? Stand up. These are serious, powerful, incredible people. Please stand up. Great people. Thank you. Incredible people.

We're gathered together today for a truly special occasion. We are here to mark a change in command of the United States Coast Guard and celebrate the incredible career of its 25th Commandant, Admiral Paul Zukunft. Great job. We've got his family here. They're very proud. They should be. And, Paul, I have to tell you, on behalf of the American people, I thank you for a lifetime of noble service. Congratulations on everything you have achieved.

For nearly half a century—45 years—Paul has proudly worn the Coast Guard uniform. That's a long time. You don't look that old. Really. That's amazing. *[Laughter]* Forty-five years? Forty-five years? How good does he look? Forty-five years. Must be something awfully good happening in the Coast Guard. *[Laughter]*

In that time, he has led every kind of mission, and he has never backed down ever, ever, ever. He's never lost a challenge. For the past 4 years, Admiral Zukunft has led his brand and this brand of the United States Armed Forces as Commandant, and he has led with extraordinary skill and devotion and pride.

Today we also thank Paul's wife Fran for her own service over the years, including as a devoted mentor and representative for military families. Fran, please stand up. Thank you, Fran. I hate to tell you this, Paul, but she got a bigger hand than all of us, including me. *[Laughter]* I don't know if I'm happy about this, Paul. *[Laughter]* Thank you, Fran. And, Fran, we're grateful for everything you've done to advance the Coast Guard mission. It's been a lot.

We're also joined by the Admiral's mother Marge, his brother Erich, sister Karen, son Brett, daughter Heidi, and granddaughters Stella and Adelynn. That's—stand up, family. Come on. Paul is very proud of you. Thank you for supporting him in his mission, and bringing so much joy into his life.

Throughout the Admiral's tenure, he poured his heart and soul into the service of our Nation. And he brought remarkable vision to the task of ensuring the Coast Guard's rightful place at the forefront of American security and prosperity.

Everyone here today understands a crucial fact: America is safe because our Coast Guard is strong. And last season, during the hurricanes, I was in Texas; I was in Florida; I was in Puerto Rico. I saw the work that you did under the most adverse conditions. And I've said this to a lot of people, I don't think any brand has gained more momentum or has gained more of anything than the brand of the United States Coast Guard. People have tremendous respect for the United States Coast Guard. It's true. *[Applause]* Right? I've told you that before.

You are the elite force that defends our borders, patrols our waters, protects our cities, and keeps our enemies at bay. Paul sharpened the Coast Guard's focus on the Western Hemisphere, a crucial legacy that will long outlive Paul's tenure. This includes greater emphasis on drug interdiction and the formation of historic partnerships to stop this deadly poison—and that's what it is, it's poison—from reaching our shores and destroying our youth and others.

Paul also worked tirelessly to protect America's interests in the Arctic. His leadership helped launch the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, and he made a top priority to ensure that the United States military can project American might all the way to the poles.

One of the first times I met the Admiral last year, I asked him, "What do you need?" He replied, "Sir, we need icebreakers, and we need them badly." Well, now you're getting them. And to be specific, I'm pleased to report that the Coast Guard is now on course to receive its first new heavy icebreaker in more than 40 years and plenty other ships and boats and equipment and everything you need.

Our new budget—700—just passed—\$700 billion this year, \$716 billion next year. You're going to be very well taken care of. You're going to have to split that with a few others, but that's okay. I'm splitting up a little bit, but that's a lot. Never been anything like it. Going to have the greatest equipment in the world, and we make the greatest equipment in the world right here in the United States.

We're committed to a military and security budget that funds and recognizes the Coast Guard's vital role. There is no better investment than giving you the tools you need to keep drugs, criminals, and terrorists out of our country. Commandant Admiral Zukunft also spearheaded a new Coast Guard Cyber Strategy. So important. And he was at the forefront. He recognizes that we must harden our industry, ports, and waterways against cyber intrusion.

Paul's stellar record of achievement is a testament to his talent and to his leadership. But it's also a testament to the amazing talent of our Coast Guard men and women, who carry out their missions with excellence every single day. You chase down our enemies, track down our adversaries, and face down our greatest threats. Nobody like you. You secure our borders against traffickers, smugglers, criminals—some of the worst people anywhere on Earth—and we feel secure. And through driving winds and pounding rain and thundering seas, the Coast Guard is always there, doing what it does best: saving lives.

In last year's historic hurricane season, our Coast Guard—heroes they are—saved almost 12,000 American lives in that short period. It's an unbelievable number when you think of it. It's an unbelievable number. Twelve thousand.

And I got a little education. I asked the Admiral, "When that big monster is coming in"—in this case, to Texas. And it was coming in. They've never seen a water dump like that, I think, in history, in terms of water coming down. And it would come in, go out. Come in, go out. Three

times, four times. There's never been anything like it. And his guys and gals, they just followed that thing back and forth. And you were all over it.

I said, "How dangerous is it?" He said, "Sir, you don't want to know." [*Laughter*] I said, "Can the boats ever go down?" You know, we have great equipment. "Can the boats ever go down?" And he said, "Yes, sir." And that was when I decided I won't be joining the Coast Guard. [*Laughter*] But he said, "They go down." No matter how good you build them, they can go down with those big, powerful waves, can't they? So, great job. That was an incredible job you did. Thank you.

Many servicemembers left their own homes and families to plunge out of helicopters, wade through perilous waters, care for the wounded, and rescue the stranded, of which there were many. Your selfless courage has earned the gratitude of our Nation.

With this ceremony, we proudly pass the helm of the United States Coast Guard to the man who oversaw those emergency operations, Admiral Karl Schultz. Admiral. Stand up, Admiral. Stand up.

As Commander of the Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Admiral Schultz took responsibility for the Coast Guard response across the Gulf Coast, the Atlantic, and the Caribbean. I have complete confidence that Karl will carry out his new mission with the same talent, strength, and devotion that have characterized his entire career. He has had an incredible—and very brave—but an incredible career. Karl, we congratulate you and we thank you for answering this call to service.

We also thank your entire family for undertaking this journey with you. We are glad to be joined today by the Admiral's wife Dawn, his mother Elisabeth, daughters Kelsey, Lindsey, and Annaliese, and sons Eric and Zachary. Thank you very much. Stand up. Stand up.

As we observe this change in command, it is a great moment not just for the Coast Guard, but for our entire Nation. The Coast Guard record is unsurpassed anywhere in the world. From the courage of your heroes who manned the landing craft in the South Pacific, to the legendary prowess of your pilots, to the astonishing feats of your rescue swimmers, your service makes all of America proud. We are very proud of the Coast Guard. More so today—I will tell you—more so today than ever before.

And for that reason, America knows that we can always count on the Coast Guard because the Coast Guard is always ready.

Now, Admiral Zukunft, would you please step forward so we can formally recognize your accomplishments.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:17 a.m. at U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Director of National Intelligence Daniel R. Coats; Director of the U.S. Secret Service Randolph D. "Tex" Alles; U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin K. McAleenan; Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Brock Long; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Acting Director Thomas D. Homan; Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC, Chairman, and Gen. Paul J. Selva, USAF, Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John M. Richardson, USN; Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein, USAF; Chief of National Guard Bureau Gen. Joseph L. Lengyel, USAF; and Fran DeNinno-Zukunft, wife, Marge Zukunft, mother, Erich Zukunft, brother, Karen Zukunft McGuinness, sister, Brett D. Zukunft, son, Heidi Louise Diliberto, daughter, and Stella and Adelynn Diliberto, granddaughters, of Adm. Zukunft.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : U.S. Coast Guard, Commandant, change-of-command ceremony.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Alles, Randolph D. "Tex"; Coats, Daniel R.; DeNinno-Zukunft, Fran; Diliberto, Adelynn; Diliberto, Heidi Louise; Diliberto, Stella; Dunford, Joseph F., Jr.; Goldfein, David L.; Homan, Thomas D.; Lengyel, Joseph L.; Long, W. Brock; McAleenan, Kevin K.; McGuinness, Karen Zukunft; Nielsen, Kirstjen M.; Pence, Michael R.; Richardson, John M.; Schultz, Annaliese; Schultz, Dawn M. DeLaurentis; Schultz, Elisabeth; Schultz, Eric; Schultz, Karl L.; Schultz, Kelsey; Schultz, Lindsey; Schultz, Zachary; Selva, Paul J.; Zukunft, Brett D.; Zukunft, Erich; Zukunft, Marge; Zukunft, Paul F.

*Subjects:* Air Force, Department of the : Chief of Staff; Armed Forces, U.S. : Funding; Armed Forces, U.S. : Military families; Armed Forces, U.S. : National Guard; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Service and dedication; Defense and national security : Arctic security; Defense and national security : Border security; Defense and national security : Cybersecurity :: Strengthening efforts; Defense, Department of : Joint Chiefs of Staff; Drug abuse and trafficking : Illegal drugs, interdiction efforts; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment rate; Homeland Security, Department of : Coast Guard, U.S.; Homeland Security, Department of : Customs and Border Protection, U.S.; Homeland Security, Department of : Emergency Management Agency, Federal; Homeland Security, Department of : Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S.; Homeland Security, Department of : Secret Service, U.S.; Homeland Security, Department of : Secretary; Intelligence, Office of the Director of National; Natural disasters : Response and recovery efforts; Navy, Department of the : Chief of Naval Operations; White House Office : Vice President.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD201800391.