



Cleveland Peace Action

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EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
COUNCIL

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To: Docket Management Facility
USCG-2006-2567
US Department of Transportation, Room PL-401
400 Seventh Street SW
Washington, DC 20590-0001

October 18, 2006

USCG-2006-25767-581

Sirs,

Our organization is strongly against the proposed safety zones for weapons training and to the arming of vessels on the Great Lakes. The Rush-Bagot agreement of 1817 between the US and Canada is one of the longest existing disarmament agreements in history. Not arming vessels on the Great Lakes has served both nations well. The 2004 agreement to arm US Coast Guard vessels with light deck-mounted automatic weapons, the M240-B, was in bad judgment. It was not worth modifying the 1817 agreement.

From the homeland security standpoint these weapons are not appropriate or useful.

1. When approaching a small boat in any degree of Great Lakes chop the small rigid-bottom inflatable patrol boats are a very unstable gun platform.
2. If armed resistance is not anticipated they cannot be deployed quickly. It would be better to have one or more Coast Guardsmen cover the person interrogating the approached boat with a shoulder fired weapon that would require no special marine training areas.
3. Coast Guard personnel on these vessels are totally unprotected from automatic weapons or a surprise grenade attack at close range. These vessels were not intended to ward off armed attacks and these personnel should not be placed in this extreme risk.
4. There are no targets of opportunity for a terrorist "Cole style" attack on the Great Lakes. An attack on an ore boat is ludicrous, our ferries are small, etc. Even if there was a suicide style attack, no armed response is then appropriate and such an attack is extremely difficult to anticipate. If anticipated, other means are readily available that would not put the Coast Guard personnel at such risk.

When disarmament works, let's keep it in place.

James S. Diener
Cleveland Peace Action
Board Member

David Berenson
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Ordinary
people
working
together
for a
more
peaceful
world!