

U.S. Department
of Transportation

United States
Coast Guard



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U.S. Coast Guard

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

U. S. COAST GUARD

STATEMENT OF REAR ADMIRAL JOEL D. SIPES

ON OCEAN GOING CRUISE VESSEL SAFETY

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND NAVIGATION

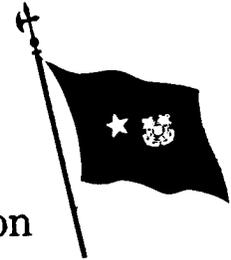
COMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 29, 1991



Rear Admiral Joel D. Sipes
Chief, Office of Marine Safety,
Security and Environmental Protection
United States Coast Guard



Rear Admiral Joel D. Sipes became Chief, Office of Marine Safety, Security and Environmental Protection at Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D.C., in May, 1988. He directs a coordinated federal port safety and security program; an active marine environmental protection program; a program for the construction, inspection and certification of merchant vessels; the development of comprehensive marine safety standards; the licensing and certifying of U.S. merchant marine personnel; and represents the U.S. in various related international maritime forums.

Since graduating from the Coast Guard Academy in 1959, Rear Admiral Sipes has served in a variety of assignments including the All-Coast Guard Rifle and Pistol Detachment; Deck Watch Officer and Student Engineer on the icebreaker Eastwind; Assistant Engineer on the U. S. Coast Guard Cutter Bibb, and Tactics Officer at the Coast Guard Academy. He compiled and published the text on military leadership used for a number of years in Coast Guard officer training programs.



Rear Admiral Sipes' assignments in the marine safety field have included Engineering Inspector at Marine Inspection Office, Baltimore, Maryland; Commanding Officer, Marine Inspection Detachment, Lake Charles, Louisiana; Branch Chief in the Marine Environmental Protection Division at Headquarters; Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection and Captain of the Port, Corpus Christi, Texas; and Captain of the Port, Houston, Texas. Rear Admiral Sipes also served on the Eighth Coast Guard District staff as Chief of Operations and Chief of Staff.

Rear Admiral Sipes was Executive Assistant to the Commandant from 1981 to 1983. Prior to this, he graduated from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) and later served on the Commandant's staff as Special Assistant.

Rear Admiral Sipes earned a Masters of Public Administration degree from the University of Rhode Island and was elected to Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society. His decorations include two Meritorious Service Medals, five Coast Guard Commendation Medals, and the Distinguished Marksman Badge.

He is a member of the American Society of Naval Engineers, American Bureau of Shipping, International Cargo Gear Bureau, Marine Index Bureau, Marine Engineering Council of Underwriters Laboratories and the Sealift Committee of the National Defense Transportation Association.

During the past 2 decades, RADM Sipes has represented the United States as a member of delegations to the International Maritime Organization, a U.N. specialized agency. He was delegation secretary for the 1973 International Marine Pollution Conference, and U.S. spokesman in negotiating MARPOL '73. He was U.S. Co-chairman of the U.S./USSR Bilateral on the Prevention of Pollution from Ships and the U.S./France Bilateral on Pollution of the Marine Environment. Currently, RADM Sipes heads U.S. delegations to meetings of both the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee of IMO.

RADM Sipes, a resident of Texas, grew up in Alexandria, Virginia where he now resides with his wife, the former Ruth Ann Gilbert of Wahoo, Nebraska. She is a graduate of the University of Nebraska. They have two grown children: Stephanie and Jeffrey. In his spare time, RADM Sipes enjoys hunting and fishing; also racquetball and jogging.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
U.S. COAST GUARD

STATEMENT OF
REAR ADMIRAL J. D. SIPES
BEFORE THE
HOUSE COAST GUARD AND NAVIGATION SUBCOMMITTEE
REGARDING
OCEAN GOING CRUISE VESSEL SAFETY

THANK YOU MR. CHAIRMAN, I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH YOU TODAY TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE COAST GUARD'S ROLE IN AN INTERNATIONAL SAFETY SYSTEM DESIGNED TO ASSURE PASSENGER SAFETY ABOARD OCEAN GOING CRUISE SHIPS. IT HAS BEEN JUST A LITTLE OVER A YEAR SINCE I APPEARED BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE, AND A GREAT DEAL HAS HAPPENED SINCE THEN. I WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO BRING YOU UP TO DATE ON THE COAST GUARD'S DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES. THE UNITED STATES PROVIDES A LARGE AND LUCRATIVE MARKET FOR PASSENGERS, NOT ONLY IN THE UNITED STATES, BUT ALSO IN MANY PORTS AROUND THE WORLD. THERE ARE NOW OVER 100 FOREIGN FLAG PASSENGER VESSELS OPERATING FROM U.S. PORTS, BUT WE ESTIMATE THAT OVER 80% OF ALL CRUISE SHIP PASSENGERS WORLDWIDE ARE U.S. CITIZENS. I EMPHASIZE THIS BECAUSE IT IS IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT PARTICIPATION IN A WORLDWIDE SYSTEM RATHER THAN A UNILATERAL OR DOMESTIC ONE CAN BEST ACHIEVE SAFETY FOR MORE OF OUR U.S. CITIZENS.

PASSENGER SHIP SAFETY IS A CONSTANT CONSIDERATION AMONG INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO) MEMBERS. IT HAS BEEN DISCUSSED DURING THE LAST SEVERAL SESSIONS OF THE MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE (MSC), AND THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FIRE PROTECTION (S/C ON

FP); AND, IT WILL CONTINUE TO BE DISCUSSED IN THE FUTURE. MANY AMENDMENTS TO THE SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA (SOLAS) CONVENTION, AS WELL AS INTERIM GUIDANCE TO ADDRESS MAJOR ISSUES, HAVE BEEN FORMULATED THAT GREATLY ENHANCE PASSENGER SHIP SAFETY. NEW AND REVISED SOLAS REGULATIONS, MSC CIRCULARS AND ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS HAVE PRODUCED INCREMENTAL SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS WORTH NOTING.

THE COAST GUARD REPRESENTS THE UNITED STATES AT IMO AND HAS BEEN QUITE SUCCESSFUL AT ACHIEVING U.S. GOALS. MANY OF THE PROPOSALS THAT HAVE RECEIVED THE ATTENTION AND SUPPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ARE THE RESULTS OF U.S. EFFORTS. SOME OF OUR INITIATIVES ARE THE RESULT OF LESSONS LEARNED FROM CASUALTIES INVESTIGATED BY THE COAST GUARD. SOME ARE BASED UPON NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS WITH WHICH THE COAST GUARD CONCURRED. OTHERS ARE THE RESULT OF ONGOING EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SHIPBOARD SAFETY BY ELIMINATING AMBIGUITIES IN THE SOLAS CONVENTION. ALL ARE GIVEN THE ATTENTION AND CONSIDERATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY BECAUSE WE HAVE HISTORICALLY "DONE OUR HOMEWORK WELL", AND WE PRESENT OUR PROPOSALS USING TECHNICALLY SOUND AND ACCURATE DATA.

THIS IS MOST IMPORTANT AT IMO BECAUSE WE ARE DEALING WITH WORLD EXPERTS. WE GAIN A GREAT DEAL BY ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING AT IMO... IN FACT, A WEALTH OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERTISE ON MARINE MATTERS, PARTICULARLY SAFETY, IS OURS JUST FOR BELONGING. THE U.S. HAS AN EXCELLENT RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT AT IMO AND WE CONTINUE TO DO WELL. THE IMO FIRE PROTECTION SUBCOMMITTEE'S

WORKING GROUP ON PASSENGER SHIP SAFETY DRAFTED OVER 25 NEW OR REVISED REGULATIONS DURING THEIR MEETING IN JULY 1990... VIRTUALLY ALL OF THEM ARE BASED UPON U.S. INITIATIVES. NOT A SINGLE U.S.-SUPPORTED PROPOSAL FROM THIS SUBCOMMITTEE'S WORKING GROUP ON PASSENGER SHIP SAFETY HAS BEEN REJECTED OR DISMISSED WITHOUT ACTION THROUGHOUT THESE DELIBERATIONS. TO THE CONTRARY, NEW INITIATIVES IN PASSENGER SHIP SAFETY HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED FOR CONSIDERATION AND WILL BE DISCUSSED FURTHER DURING FUTURE COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEE SESSIONS. MUCH HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED AND MANY PROJECTS ARE ACTIVELY IN PROGRESS. I EXPECT PROGRESS TO CONTINUE FAVORABLY IN BOTH THE NEAR AND LONG TERM FUTURE.

OCEAN GOING CRUISE SHIPS MUST COMPLY WITH THE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS EMBODIED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA, OR SOLAS. PRIMARY RELIANCE FOR COMPLIANCE WITH SOLAS AND OTHER CONVENTIONS AND REGULATIONS IS PLACED UPON THE SHIP'S FLAG ADMINISTRATION. THIS IS AS IT SHOULD BE. THE COAST GUARD ALSO EXAMINES THESE SHIPS WHEN THEY OPERATE FROM A U.S. PORT TO ASSURE THAT THEY COMPLY WITH THE NECESSARY REGULATIONS.

THE ACTIVITY AND INTENSITY OF THE CG'S REVIEW OF FOREIGN PASSENGER VESSELS HAS VARIED OVER THE YEARS. IN THE 1930'S THE U.S. ISSUED ITS FIRST REQUIREMENTS FOR NONCOMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS ON U.S. FLAG PASSENGER VESSELS AS A RESULT OF THE MORRO CASTLE FIRE. WHILE THE SOLAS CONVENTIONS OF 1929, 1948 AND 1960 CONTAINED REQUIREMENTS ADDRESSING FIRE SAFETY, THEY PROVED INADEQUATE IN OFFERING AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF PROTECTION. A

SERIES OF FIRES ON BOARD VESSELS IN THE EARLY 1960'S HIGHLIGHTED THE PROBLEM AND RAISED THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME COMMUNITY. THIS RESULTED IN TWO MAJOR ACTIONS: THE 1966 FIRE SAFETY AMENDMENTS WHICH PROPOSED ADDITIONAL FIRE PROTECTION STANDARDS FOR EXISTING PASSENGER VESSELS AND THE 1967 FIRE SAFETY AMENDMENTS WHICH PROPOSED STANDARDS FOR NEW VESSELS. EXISTING SHIPS WERE REQUIRED TO BE BROUGHT INTO CLOSE CONFORMITY WITH ONE OF THE METHODS OF FIRE PROTECTION SPECIFIED IN SOLAS 60. FOR PRE-SOLAS 1948 SHIPS, THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS NORMALLY INVOLVED MAJOR STRUCTURAL MODIFICATION. FOR NEW PASSENGER VESSELS A NEW SYSTEM OF FIRE PROTECTION WAS DEVELOPED WHICH REQUIRED THE MAXIMUM USE OF NONCOMBUSTIBLE MATERIAL AND THE APPROPRIATE USE OF AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER AND DETECTION SYSTEMS. NEITHER THE 1966 NOR 1967 FIRE SAFETY AMENDMENTS WERE RATIFIED BY THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF COUNTRIES TO BRING THEM INTO FORCE INTERNATIONALLY. HOWEVER, IN 1968, THE UNITED STATES UNILATERALLY REQUIRED THAT ALL FOREIGN PASSENGER VESSELS OF OVER 100 GROSS TONS HAVING BERTH OR STATEROOM ACCOMMODATIONS FOR OVER 50 OR MORE PASSENGERS MEET THE 1966 FIRE SAFETY AMENDMENTS, OR UNITED STATES PASSENGER VESSEL REQUIREMENTS. AT THAT TIME, AN EXAMINATION PROGRAM, COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS "CONTROL VERIFICATION", WAS STARTED. THE PROGRAM NAME REFLECTS ITS AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE: CONTROL ACTIONS FOR VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH SOLAS AND APPLICABLE REGULATIONS. YOU MIGHT ALSO NOTE THAT CONTROL VERIFICATIONS, THOUGH CALLED BY DIFFERENT NAMES, ARE PERFORMED ON ALL FOREIGN FLAG VESSELS OPERATING IN THE U.S. THEY VARY IN SCOPE DEPENDING UPON THE

CATEGORY OF THE VESSEL AND THE TRACK RECORD OF SAFETY THAT THE PARTICULAR VESSEL, ITS CLASSIFICATION SOCIETY, AND OTHER VESSELS OF THE SAME FLAG STATE HAVE DEMONSTRATED IN PRIOR CALLS TO U.S. PORTS. FOR A FOREIGN FLAG PASSENGER VESSEL INSPECTED AND CERTIFICATED UNDER SOLAS, PRIMARY RELIANCE IS PROPERLY PLACED ON THE FLAG ADMINISTRATION TO CERTIFY ADHERENCE TO THE APPLICABLE STANDARDS AND TO CARRY OUT THE APPROPRIATE ENFORCEMENT. AS REQUIRED BY OUR DOMESTIC LAWS, IT IS THE COAST GUARD'S INTENT ONLY TO VERIFY THAT SUCH A VESSEL IS IN COMPLIANCE BEFORE EMBARKING PASSENGERS IN THE UNITED STATES. AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, THE BURDEN OF MAKING SUCH A DETERMINATION ON A COMPLEX FLOATING CITY IN SUCH A SHORT TIME IS ENORMOUS. HOWEVER, WE EXPECT THAT THE BULK OF INSPECTION AND COMPLIANCE REVIEW WILL ALREADY HAVE BEEN DONE BY THE FLAG ADMINISTRATION'S REPRESENTATIVE.

THE COAST GUARD PERFORMS CONTROL VERIFICATION EXAMS ON EACH PASSENGER VESSEL OPERATING IN THE UNITED STATES, WITH EMPHASIS ON FIRE SAFETY AND LIFESAVING EQUIPMENT. WE KNOW THAT DESPITE THE PRESENCE OF VALID SOLAS CERTIFICATES, SOME SHIPS HAVE BEEN FOUND NOT TO BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS. WE HAVE DETECTED SOME DISCREPANCIES DURING FOREIGN FLAG PASSENGER VESSEL EXAMINATIONS WHICH HAVE CAUSED US GREAT CONCERN. UNFORTUNATELY, IN SOME CASES, BASIC VIOLATIONS OF THE SOLAS STANDARDS HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED. THIS ONLY POINTS OUT THE SOBERING FACT THAT THE FINEST STANDARDS IN THE WORLD ARE OF LITTLE VALUE WITHOUT EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT. ADMIRAL KIME ADDRESSED THIS GROWING PROBLEM AREA IN HIS SPEECH TO PARTICIPANTS

OF THE INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT ON SAFETY AT SEA LAST MONTH IN OSLO. SIMILARLY, DISCUSSIONS AT THE INTERNATIONAL MARINE SAFETY WORKSHOP, WHICH I WILL DESCRIBE IN GREATER DETAIL LATER, FOCUSED ON IMPROVING SOLAS COMPLIANCE THROUGH GREATER EMPHASIS ON QUALITY CONTROL OF FLAG ADMINISTRATION ACTIONS AND CLASSIFICATION SOCIETY ACTIONS ON THEIR BEHALF. IN THE INTERIM, WE WILL CONTINUE TO CONCENTRATE OUR CONTROL VERIFICATION EXAMINATION RESOURCES ON THOSE SHIPS THAT HAVE HISTORICALLY POSED THE GREATEST RISKS TO U.S. CITIZENS.

TO DETERMINE COMPLIANCE WITH SOLAS REGULATIONS AS ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE, THE COAST GUARD HAS INCREASED ITS INSPECTION EFFORTS BY ADDING HEADQUARTERS POLICY DEVELOPMENT PERSONNEL TO FIELD INSPECTION TEAMS. THE CONTROL VERIFICATION AUGMENTATION PROGRAM WAS ESTABLISHED BY THE COAST GUARD IN EARLY 1990. UNDER THIS PROGRAM, A SPECIALIZED TEAM OF EXPERTS SUPPLEMENTS THE EFFORTS OF THE FIELD INSPECTION FORCE, IN PARTICULAR ON OLDER SHIPS. CONTROL VERIFICATION TEAMS INCLUDE INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE HIGHLY SKILLED IN SPECIFIC AREAS OF CONCERN, INCLUDING SAFETY, FIRE PROTECTION, NAVAL ARCHITECTURE, HULL, AND MACHINERY. TEAM MEMBERS ASSIST THE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF MARINE INSPECTION (OCMI) IN INTERPRETING THE SOLAS STANDARDS AND REVIEW PROBLEM AREAS UNCOVERED THROUGH PLAN REVIEWS, ALTERATION HISTORIES, ACTUAL COMPLAINTS, OR AS A RESULT OF PREVIOUS INSPECTION OF SISTER SHIPS OR SIMILAR CLASS VESSELS.

IN THE PAST FIFTEEN MONTHS, WE HAVE PROVIDED U.S. COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS-BASED CONTROL VERIFICATION AUGMENTATION TEAMS TO ASSIST IN THE CONTROL VERIFICATION EXAMINATIONS OF 26 PASSENGER SHIPS. THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT. WE HAVE IDENTIFIED AREAS OF CONCERN FOR SOME OF THESE VESSELS. WE HAVE COMMUNICATED WITH THEIR OWNERS AND FLAG REPRESENTATIVES TO DISCUSS DIFFERENCES IN INTERPRETATION AND AREAS OF POOR MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE AND CONVENTION ENFORCEMENT. IN EACH CASE, WE HAVE RESOLVED THESE PROBLEMS THROUGH APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION AND FOLLOW UP INSPECTIONS. THIS HAS PROVEN TO BE SO SUCCESSFUL THAT WE PLAN TO CONTINUE THIS HIGHLY VISIBLE AND EFFECTIVE PROGRAM.

THE CONTROL VERIFICATION (CV) PROCEDURE IS STRAIGHTFORWARD AND, BY NOW, WELL KNOWN TO THE INDUSTRY. FOR NEW SHIPS OR SHIPS THAT HAVE BEEN AWAY FROM SERVICE IN THE U.S. FOR MORE THAN A YEAR, AN INITIAL CV IS SCHEDULED WITH THE LOCAL OFFICER IN CHARGE, MARINE INSPECTION (OCMI) AT THE SHIP'S FIRST U.S. PORT OF CALL. THE INITIAL EXAM NORMALLY TAKES AT LEAST TWO DAYS AND CAN REQUIRE HUNDREDS OF PERSON-HOURS. THE LENGTH OF TIME IT TAKES FOR THE EXAMINATION DEPENDS ON A NUMBER OF FACTORS; ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT IS PREPARATION. THE INITIAL EXAM IS CONDUCTED IN SUFFICIENT DETAIL TO ENSURE THAT THE VESSEL IS CONSTRUCTED AND FITTED AS DEPICTED ON THE PLANS SUBMITTED TO THE COAST GUARD. DISCREPANCIES THAT ARE CONSIDERED TO BE OBVIOUS VIOLATIONS OF SOLAS ARE BROUGHT TO THE OWNER'S IMMEDIATE ATTENTION FOR CORRECTION. IF DISCREPANCIES ARE MAJOR, THE OCMI MAY NOT ALLOW OPERATION UNTIL CORRECTIVE ACTION IS COMPLETED. INTERPRETIVE

DIFFERENCES ARE RESOLVED THROUGH DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FLAG ADMINISTRATION.

BESIDES EXAMINING THE SHIP, THE COAST GUARD REQUIRES THE SHIP'S CREW TO CONDUCT A FIRE AND ABANDON SHIP DRILL DURING EACH EXAMINATION. THESE DRILLS ARE WITNESSED BY COAST GUARD PERSONNEL TO ENSURE THE CREW IS FAMILIAR WITH THEIR DUTIES, WITH THE VESSEL, AND THAT THEY CARRY OUT THEIR DUTIES IN AN EFFECTIVE MANNER. THE DRILLS INVOLVE THE DEMONSTRATED USE OF VARIOUS FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT AND LIFESAVING GEAR, INCLUDING LIFEBOATS AND LIFERAFTS. MOST OFTEN, CREW COMPOSITION ABOARD THESE SHIPS INVOLVES NUMEROUS NATIONALITIES, WHICH CAN BE CAUSE FOR CONCERN. THIS CAN RESULT IN COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS, NOT ONLY BETWEEN THE CREW AND THE PASSENGERS, BUT AMONG THE CREW THEMSELVES. CREW MEMBERS ARE RANDOMLY QUERIED ABOUT THEIR DUTIES. THE DRILLS ARE PERFORMED, REPEATEDLY IF NECESSARY, UNTIL THE OCMI IS SATISFIED WITH CREW PERFORMANCE.

ALTHOUGH RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPLIANCE WITH THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME CONVENTIONS IS A FLAG STATE FUNCTION, SOME FLAG STATES DELEGATE THEIR ENTIRE REGULATORY RESPONSIBILITY TO ONE OR MORE CLASSIFICATION SOCIETIES. IN THE CASE OF PASSENGER SHIPS, A CLASSIFICATION SOCIETY MAY WORK FOR THE SHIPOWNER FOR SERVICES RELATING TO CLASSIFICATION AND ALSO ACT AS AN AGENT FOR A GOVERNMENT IN DETERMINING COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL TREATIES, SUCH AS THE SOLAS CONVENTION. THIS DUAL ROLE HAS CREATED SOME DIFFICULTIES. IN PARTICULAR, THERE ARE SOME PROVISIONS IN SOLAS

THAT ARE LEFT "TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE ADMINISTRATION." NON-UNIFORM ENFORCEMENT OF TREATY REQUIREMENTS COULD LEAD AN OWNER TO "SHOP AROUND" FOR THE MOST BENEFICIAL READING OF THE RULES. FURTHER, IF THE CLASSIFICATION SOCIETY DOES NOT PROVIDE ADEQUATE TECHNICAL REPRESENTATION (I.E., APPROPRIATE NUMBERS OF WELL TRAINED INDIVIDUALS) FOR THE SHIP INSPECTION, PROBLEMS GO UNDETECTED AND SAFETY ERODES. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF STEPS THAT THE COAST GUARD IS TAKING TO HELP SOLVE THIS PROBLEM.

FIRST, WE HOLD THOSE WHO ARE IN THE BUSINESS OF ISSUING SAFETY CERTIFICATES ACCOUNTABLE. THE ADMINISTRATION OR CLASSIFICATION SOCIETY THAT ISSUED THE SOLAS CERTIFICATE PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN ENSURING THAT THE OWNERS FULFILL THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES. A CERTIFICATE SHOULD NOT BE REISSUED WHEN A VESSEL'S CONDITION HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO DETERIORATE. FLAG ADMINISTRATIONS AND CLASSIFICATION SOCIETIES HAVE BEEN HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THESE DISCREPANCIES THROUGH DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH THEIR SENIOR REPRESENTATIVES. WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE ON PASSENGER VESSELS DURING CONTROL VERIFICATION, THE CLASSIFICATION SOCIETY IS OFTEN SCRUTINIZED INTENSELY. IF A PROBLEM INVOLVES POOR MAINTENANCE OR PHYSICAL CONDITION, THE COAST GUARD ASKS THE SOCIETY WHY IT MAINTAINED THE VESSEL'S CLASSIFICATION. ONE-ON-ONE DISCUSSIONS WITH THOSE WITH HIGH LEVEL RESPONSIBILITY HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS BOTH HERE AND ABROAD.

THE CLASSIFICATION SOCIETIES HAVE PLEDGED TO IMPROVE THE WAY THEY DO BUSINESS. TO ENHANCE THAT PROCESS, THE COAST GUARD SPONSORED

AN INTERNATIONAL MARINE SAFETY WORKSHOP HERE IN THE U.S. IN MARCH 1991. THE PURPOSE WAS TO BRING TOGETHER THE RESPONSIBLE KEY MEMBERS OF THE MARINE INDUSTRY TO DISCUSS INTERRELATIONSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TO FOCUS GUIDANCE REGARDING THESE ISSUES INTO THE NEXT CENTURY. AN IMPRESSIVE LIST OF MARITIME LEADERS ATTENDED, REPRESENTING NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS, CLASSIFICATION SOCIETIES, SHIPPERS, OWNERS, PROTECTION AND INDEMNITY (P&I) CLUBS, AND INSURANCE UNDERWRITERS. THEY ALL CAME TOGETHER IN WASHINGTON BECAUSE THEY RECOGNIZE THAT WE ARE ALL PARTNERS IN THE MARINE TRANSPORTATION SAFETY SYSTEM. THEY WANT TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE AND WORK TOWARD INTERNATIONAL SOLUTIONS.

WORKSHOP ATTENDEES EXAMINED THE ROLE OF CLASSIFICATION SOCIETIES IN MARINE SAFETY TO DEVELOP HOW THEY MAY BEST SERVE IN THE COMING YEARS AS EFFECTIVE PARTNERS IN IMPROVING MARINE SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT. THEY EXPLORED THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG ADMINISTRATIONS, OWNERS, CLASSIFICATION SOCIETIES AND UNDERWRITERS IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY AND RECOMMEND SOLUTIONS FOR THE SAFETY PROBLEMS WE CURRENTLY FACE INTERNATIONALLY WITH RESPECT TO ENFORCEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION REQUIREMENTS. THE UNIFIED APPROACH TO THESE ISSUES FORMS A BASIS TO BE PUT FORWARD BY THE CONCERNED PARTIES IN THE FUTURE FORUMS SUCH AS THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION.

BETTER COMMUNICATIONS WITH THOSE IN THE BUSINESS OF DESIGNING, BUILDING AND REGULATING THESE CRUISE SHIPS IS ANOTHER GOAL OF THE COAST GUARD. WE MAINTAIN EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER

ADMINISTRATIONS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES THROUGHOUT THE DESIGN STAGE OF NEW PASSENGER VESSELS. WE ENCOURAGE OWNERS, DESIGNERS, SHIPYARDS, AND PARTICULARLY THEIR FLAG REPRESENTATIVES, TO COME IN EARLY IN THE DESIGN STAGE TO DISCUSS NEW CONCEPTS OR INTERPRETATIVE ISSUES. WE HAVE CONDUCTED APPROXIMATELY 50 SUCH MEETINGS OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS FOR NEW SHIPS AND EXISTING SHIPS UNDERGOING MODIFICATION.

WE ARE CURRENTLY PREPARING A BOOK OF U.S. TECHNICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE SOLAS CONVENTION. THE CHAPTER ADDRESSING FIRE SAFETY ISSUES IS NEARING COMPLETION AND SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED BY THIS SUMMER. IT HAS BEEN REQUESTED BY OWNERS, OPERATORS, SHIPYARDS, ADMINISTRATION REPRESENTATIVES, AND U.S. COAST GUARD FIELD UNITS. WHEN COMPLETED, IT SHOULD DO MUCH TO ALLEVIATE MISUNDERSTANDINGS OF U.S. INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CONVENTION. WE ARE PLANNING TO SUBMIT THESE INTERPRETATIONS TO IMO WITH A VIEW TOWARD INTERNATIONAL HARMONIZATION OF INTERPRETATIONS.

WE HAVE ALSO BEEN ACTIVELY WORKING AT "GETTING THE WORD OUT" TO THE REST OF THE WORLD IN THE MARITIME COMMUNITY. WE HAVE PARTICIPATED IN INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC CONFERENCES, AND IN PROFESSIONAL FORUMS, STRESSING OUR FOCUS ON IMPROVED PASSENGER SHIP SAFETY. WE RECENTLY DEDICATED A SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MARINE SAFETY COUNCIL TO PASSENGER VESSELS, AND WE DISTRIBUTED THAT ISSUE THROUGHOUT THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL MARITIME COMMUNITY. INDIVIDUAL TOPICS ARE PRESENTED IN SHORT, EASY-TO-READ ARTICLES THAT EXPLAIN A WIDE

RANGE OF SAFETY-RELATED ISSUES TO A DIVERSE AUDIENCE. THEY COVER THE HISTORY OF PASSENGER SHIPS, U.S. INVOLVEMENT AT IMO, INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS THAT APPLY TO PASSENGER SHIPS, THE ROLE OF CLASSIFICATION SOCIETIES AND THAT OF THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD, AS WELL AS INDUSTRY VIEWPOINTS. WE HAVE RECEIVED AN EXCELLENT RESPONSE TO THE INITIAL DISTRIBUTION.

WE ARE OF THE FIRM VIEW THAT OWNERS MUST TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN THE SAFETY MANAGEMENT OF THEIR SHIPS. FLAG STATES HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO ENSURE THAT THEIR VESSELS COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF INTERNATIONAL TREATIES WHICH THEY HAVE RATIFIED...SHIP OWNERS HAVE THE SAME OBLIGATION. TO THAT END, SEVERAL MEETINGS HAVE BEEN HELD BETWEEN THE COAST GUARD AND THE INDUSTRY TO STRESS OUR CONCERNS AND TO HAVE THEM DEVELOP THEIR OWN REQUIREMENTS FOR ENSURING THEIR SHIPS ARE MAINTAINED AND THEIR CREWS WILL BE PREPARED IN THE EVENT OF A CASUALTY. THE OWNERS AND OPERATORS WERE NOT ONLY RECEPTIVE TO THIS, BUT HAVE MOVED FORWARD ON THEIR OWN INITIATIVE TO DEVELOP AN INDUSTRY MANAGEMENT STANDARD WHICH IS BASED UPON IMO RESOLUTION A.647(16), "IMO GUIDELINES ON MANAGEMENT FOR THE SAFE OPERATION OF SHIPS AND POLLUTION PREVENTION." THE CODE REQUIRES EACH COMPANY TO PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO: OPERATIONS AND SAFETY; EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS; SHIP REPAIRS, REFURBISHMENTS, AND CONVERSIONS; TRAINING; AND THE REQUIREMENT TO HAVE A SAFETY OFFICER ABOARD EACH VESSEL.

PASSENGER EDUCATION IS ANOTHER PART OF SAFETY THAT WE KNOW REQUIRES ATTENTION. THE COAST GUARD IS CURRENTLY WORKING WITH

THE CRUISE SHIP INDUSTRY TO PRODUCE A STANDARD BROCHURE TO INFORM PASSENGERS OF THE STEPS THEY CAN TAKE TO ASSIST THEMSELVES IN AN EMERGENCY. THE BROCHURE WILL BE SIMILAR TO THAT ISSUED BY THE HOTEL INDUSTRY, AND WILL OFFER AN EXCELLENT WAY OF COMMUNICATING APPROPRIATE SAFETY INFORMATION TO PASSENGERS.

AS ANOTHER PREVENTATIVE MEASURE, THE INDUSTRY IS DISCUSSING AND EXPLORING WAYS TO SHARE "MINOR" CASUALTY DATA AMONG THEMSELVES AND POSSIBLY WITH IMO. THIS IS INTENDED TO IMPROVE THE CASUALTY REPORTING SYSTEM CURRENTLY IN PLACE WHICH RECOGNIZES A REQUIREMENT FOR REPORTING FIRES IF THEY RESULT IN MAJOR ECONOMIC LOSSES OR DEATH. WORKING WITH THE COAST GUARD, THE MARINE INDUSTRY RECOGNIZES THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF SHARING INFORMATION ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS SIMILAR TO THAT DONE BY THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY. THAT IS, THE PURPOSE OF THE REPORTING SYSTEM SHOULD BE TO IDENTIFY POSSIBLE SHARED SOURCES OF PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS RATHER THAN ASSIGNING BLAME.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THIS LEADS ME TO A DISCUSSION OF A TOPIC WHICH I KNOW IS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THIS COMMITTEE: CASUALTY INVESTIGATIONS. I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT OUR EXISTING DOMESTIC INVESTIGATIVE MECHANISMS, COUPLED WITH THE RECENT INTERNATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS THAT ARE RESULTING FROM IMPLEMENTATION OF IMO INITIATIVES, ARE PROVIDING APPROPRIATE MEANS FOR GATHERING PERTINENT ACCIDENT INFORMATION ON FOREIGN-FLAG PASSENGER VESSELS.

THE COAST GUARD HAS BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT OF EFFORTS AT IMO TO IMPROVE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION AND COORDINATION IN CASUALTY INVESTIGATIONS. ON OCTOBER 19, 1989, THE FULL ASSEMBLY OF IMO FORMALLY ADOPTED RESOLUTION A.637(16), "COOPERATION IN MARITIME CASUALTY INVESTIGATIONS." THIS RESOLUTION WAS INITIALLY SUBMITTED BY THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND LIBERIA.

FOLLOWING A MARITIME CASUALTY IN WHICH MORE THAN ONE NATION HAS AN INTEREST, SUCH AS A CASUALTY TO A FOREIGN FLAG PASSENGER SHIP THAT HAS EMBARKED PASSENGERS AT A U.S. PORT, THE IMO RESOLUTION CALLS FOR EARLY INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONSULTATION TO DETERMINE WHICH NATION OR NATIONS WILL CONDUCT THE CASUALTY INVESTIGATION, TO PROVIDE FOR PARTICIPATION BY APPROPRIATE PARTIES, AND TO COORDINATE INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITIES TO MINIMIZE CONFLICTS OVER ACCESS TO WITNESSES AND EVIDENTIARY MATERIAL. THE COAST GUARD HAS RECENTLY PUBLISHED A NAVIGATION AND VESSEL INSPECTION CIRCULAR TO IMPLEMENT THE NEW RESOLUTION. WE ARE AGGRESSIVELY PURSUING PARTICIPATION IN APPROPRIATE MARINE CASUALTY INVESTIGATIONS UNDER THE RESOLUTION, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO FOREIGN VESSELS OPERATING FROM U.S. PORTS. WE HAVE USED THE PROCEDURES OUTLINED IN THE RESOLUTION TO COORDINATE THE INVESTIGATIONS OF FIVE FOREIGN FLAG VESSEL CASUALTIES SINCE THE RESOLUTION WAS ISSUED JUST A LITTLE OVER A YEAR AND A HALF AGO.

WE ANTICIPATE THAT FREQUENTLY, AS IN THE PAST, THE COAST GUARD WILL PARTICIPATE IN CASUALTY INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING FOREIGN-FLAG VESSELS, EITHER BY INVITATION OF THE FLAG STATE OR BY OUR

OWN REQUEST. WE HAVE EXPERIENCED EXCELLENT COOPERATION FROM OTHER NATIONS IN CARRYING OUT CASUALTY INVESTIGATIONS. WE HAVE ESTABLISHED FORMAL AND INFORMAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE CASUALTY INVESTIGATION AGENCIES AND PERSONNEL IN OTHER NATIONS. WE RECENTLY PARTICIPATED AND ASSISTED THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT IN ITS INVESTIGATION OF THE FIRE AND EXPLOSIONS ON THE T/V MEGA BORG IN THE GULF OF MEXICO, AND NORWEGIAN REPRESENTATIVES PARTICIPATED IN THE COAST GUARD INVESTIGATION OF THE FIRE ABOARD THE NORWEGIAN PASSENGER VESSEL M/V SOVEREIGN OF THE SEAS. WE FULLY EXPECT THAT COOPERATION IN CASUALTY INVESTIGATIONS AND SHARING OF CASUALTY INFORMATION WILL CONTINUE TO IMPROVE AS THE VARIOUS IMO MEMBER NATIONS GAIN EXPERIENCE WITH EACH OTHER IN JOINT INVESTIGATIONS.

LASTLY, WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT WITH VERY FEW EXCEPTIONS, A VESSEL ON THE HIGH SEAS IS SUBJECT ONLY TO THE JURISDICTION OF ITS FLAG STATE. CASUALTIES OCCURRING ABOARD FOREIGN VESSELS OUTSIDE U.S. TERRITORIAL WATERS ARE, AS A MATTER OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY, PROPERLY WITHIN THE FLAG'S JURISDICTION. WE MUST RELY ON COOPERATIVE EFFORTS TO OBTAIN THE CASUALTY INFORMATION THAT WE NEED. DOMESTIC LEGISLATION NARROWLY AIMED AT REQUIRING U.S. INVESTIGATIONS OF SUCH CASUALTIES COULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO OUR PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY INITIATIVES AT IMO AND WOULD LIKELY RESULT IN LOSS OF THE COOPERATION WE CURRENTLY HAVE AND NEED TO MAINTAIN.

SPEAKING OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION WITH REGARD TO CASUALTIES, LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT SOME RECENT INITIATIVES AT IMO THAT ARE THE

DIRECT RESULT OF A CASUALTY THAT OCCURRED ON A SHIP NOT OPERATING FROM A U.S. PORT, THE SCANDINAVIAN STAR. AS YOU KNOW, A TERRIBLE TRAGEDY OCCURRED ABOARD THE SCANDINAVIAN STAR WHILE IT WAS OPERATING IN THE NORTH SEA. THE MAJORITY OF DECEASED PASSENGERS WERE NORWEGIAN, AND THE MAGNITUDE OF THE TRAGEDY PROMPTED A MAJOR MULTILATERAL INVESTIGATION. THE RESULTS OF THAT INVESTIGATION HAVE SERVED TO BRING AN ISSUE TO THE FOREFRONT OF NEGOTIATIONS AT IMO - THE GRANDFATHERING OF SHIPS AND THEIR CONSTRUCTION.

AT ISSUE IS THE CONTINUED GRANDFATHERING OF EXISTING PASSENGER VESSELS. THE LAST TIME THAT EXISTING PASSENGER VESSEL STANDARDS WERE EXAMINED IN DETAIL WAS IN 1966. WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN INCREMENTAL CHANGES SINCE THEN, NO MAJOR REEVALUATION HAS BEEN UNDERTAKEN. AT THE 59TH SESSION OF IMO'S MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE, PROPOSALS WERE DISCUSSED WHICH COULD IMPACT FUTURE SAFETY LEVELS ABOARD EXISTING PASSENGER VESSELS. BRIEFLY STATED, THESE PROPOSALS WOULD REQUIRE VARYING LEVELS OF RECONSTRUCTION AND REFIT FOR PASSENGER VESSELS NOT BUILT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SOLAS 74 (AS AMENDED). MODIFICATIONS WOULD EITHER HAVE TO BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHIN A SET PERIOD OF TIME, OR THE VESSEL WOULD BE FORCED OUT OF SERVICE.

ONE SIGNIFICANT PROPOSAL WOULD REQUIRE SHIPS BUILT TO STANDARDS THAT EXISTED PRIOR TO SOLAS 1974 (AS AMENDED) TO UPGRADE AND MEET THE LATEST FIRE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW SHIPS BY SOME FUTURE DATE. ANOTHER PROPOSAL WOULD ELIMINATE THE OPTION OF REPLACING ITEMS/MATERIAL "IN KIND", SUCH THAT SAFETY WOULD BE INCREMENTALLY UPGRADED WITH EACH MODIFICATION.

SOLAS CURRENTLY "GRANDFATHERS" PASSENGER SHIPS BY ALLOWING SHIPS BUILT TO AN "OLDER" FIRE SAFETY STANDARD (PRIOR TO REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW SHIPS IN SOLAS 1974) TO CONTINUE IN OPERATION. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW SHIPS IN SOLAS 74 WERE A MAJOR CHANGE TO THE INTERNATIONAL FIRE STANDARDS BY REQUIRING ALL SHIPS TO BE BUILT OF NONCOMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS. PRIOR TO THAT, SHIPS WERE BUILT TO ONE OF THREE STANDARDS: METHODS I, II OR III. METHOD I, THE U.S. STANDARD, REQUIRED SHIPS TO BE BUILT OF NONCOMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS. METHOD II, THE U.K. STANDARD, PERMITTED SHIPS TO BE BUILT OF WOOD AND OTHER COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS, PROVIDED A SPRINKLER SYSTEM WAS INSTALLED. METHOD III, THE FRENCH STANDARD, PERMITTED SHIPS TO BE BUILT OF LIMITED COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS, PROVIDED A DETECTION SYSTEM WAS INSTALLED. A NUMBER OF PASSENGER SHIPS' FIRES IN THE EARLY 60'S CONVINCED THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO REQUIRE ALL NEW SHIPS IN SOLAS 1974 TO BE BUILT TO A SINGLE STANDARD -- METHOD I; I.E., NONCOMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS. HOWEVER, SOLAS 1974 ALSO PERMITTED EXISTING SHIPS TO CONTINUE IN SERVICE IF THEY MADE SOME MODIFICATIONS. THE MODIFICATIONS WERE INTENDED TO BRING ALL SHIPS UP A LEVEL OF SAFETY EQUIVALENT TO SOLAS 1960. SOME SHIPS COULD NOT MAKE THE REQUIRED MODIFICATIONS AND WENT OUT OF SERVICE; E.G., THE QUEEN MARY & QUEEN ELIZABETH. OTHERS COULD, AND DID, MAKE THE NECESSARY MODIFICATIONS, THUS ALLOWING SOME SHIPS BUILT OF COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS TO REMAIN IN SERVICE. IT WAS EXPECTED THAT ALL OF THE OLDER SHIPS WOULD PHASE OUT OF SERVICE WITHIN THEIR EXPECTED SERVICE LIFE, APPROXIMATELY 20 YEARS. HOWEVER, THIS HAS NOT HAPPENED. THE TWO PROPOSALS I

REFERRED TO EARLIER WOULD PLACE A MAXIMUM SERVICE LIFE ON THE FIRE SAFETY CONSTRUCTION OF THESE OLDER SHIPS. A TWO-PHASE APPROACH HAS BEEN SUGGESTED. THE FIRST PHASE WOULD REQUIRE SOME IMMEDIATE MINIMUM UPGRADES (RETROFIT OF SYSTEMS/MODIFICATIONS) TO ALL SHIPS. IF A SHIPOWNER CHOSE NOT TO UPGRADE IN THE FIRST PHASE, THEN THE SHIP WOULD AUTOMATICALLY GO OUT OF SERVICE. THOSE SHIPS THAT HAD BEEN MINIMALLY UPGRADED IN THE FIRST PHASE COULD CONTINUE IN SERVICE FOR APPROXIMATELY 15 MORE YEARS. TO CONTINUE IN SERVICE BEYOND THEN, THE SHIP WOULD HAVE TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW SHIPS IN SOLAS 1974 (AS AMENDED).

WE HAVE BEEN CONCERNED FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS THAT THE GRANDFATHER CLAUSES CREATE AN INCENTIVE TO BRING MORE AND MORE OLDER SHIPS BACK INTO SERVICE. THE DEMAND FOR MORE CRUISE VESSELS IS VERY HIGH AND IS PREDICTED TO CONTINUE ON INTO THE 21ST CENTURY. IT IS LESS COSTLY AND LESS TIME CONSUMING TO USE AN EXISTING VESSEL AND SIMPLY REFURBISH IT RATHER THAN BUILD A NEW SHIP TO THE LATEST REQUIREMENTS. WE ALREADY SEE AN AGING OF THE FLEET AND A RESURGENCE IN REFURBISHMENT WITHOUT SAFETY UPGRADING.

ON THE OTHER HAND, WE DO NOT WANT TO ELIMINATE A SHIP FROM SERVICE JUST BECAUSE OF ITS AGE. SOME OF THE OLDER VESSELS HAVE EXCELLENT HULLS AND WELL MAINTAINED MACHINERY, AND SOME HAVE STRUCTURAL FIRE PROTECTION AND FIRE SAFETY DESIGNS THAT, EXCEPT FOR SOME MINIMAL UPGRADES, COULD MEET THE LATEST STANDARDS. THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF INSTANCES WHERE THE U.S. HAS HAD INTERPRETATIVE DIFFERENCES WITH OTHER ADMINISTRATIONS OVER

GRANDFATHERING ISSUES. DIFFERENCES USUALLY STEM FROM WHAT CONSTITUTES A "MAJOR MODIFICATION." OF PARTICULAR CONCERN ARE SHIPS WHERE MODIFICATIONS ARE MADE OVER A NUMBER OF YEARS AND EACH INDIVIDUAL MODIFICATION MAY NOT BE VIEWED AS "MAJOR," BUT THE SUM OF THE CHANGES, HAD THEY BEEN DONE AT ONE TIME, WOULD BE CONSIDERED A MAJOR MODIFICATION. FOR EXAMPLE, IN A FOUR YEAR TIME PERIOD, ONE SHIP WAS RE-ENGINEED FROM STEAM TO DIESEL PROPULSION, A NEW BOTTOM WAS INSTALLED, AND SOME 40 STATEROOMS WERE ADDED TO TWO DECKS; BUT, THE FLAG ADMINISTRATIONS DID NOT TERM THIS MAJOR REBUILD OF THE SHIP "MODIFICATIONS OF A MAJOR CHARACTER." THUS THE ORIGINAL SOLAS 48 CONSTRUCTION REMAINS, DESPITE THE OBVIOUS EXTENSION OF THE SHIP'S ECONOMIC LIFE.

REQUIRING ALL MODIFICATIONS TO COMPLY WITH THE LATEST STANDARD WOULD SERVE SEVERAL PURPOSES. IT WOULD ELIMINATE THE PROBLEM OF PIECEMEAL OVERHAULS; IT WOULD SERVE TO UPGRADE SAFETY TO THE LATEST STANDARDS IRRESPECTIVE OF HOW MUCH OR HOW LITTLE IS CHANGED; AND IT WOULD MAKE IT SIMPLER FOR SHIPYARDS AND SURVEYORS WHEN PLANNING, INSTALLING AND INSPECTING MODIFICATIONS TO CONSISTENTLY APPLY THE REQUIREMENTS. IN GENERAL, THE U.S. SUPPORTS THE GOALS THAT WOULD BE ACHIEVED BY ELIMINATION OF THE GRANDFATHER CLAUSES FROM SOLAS 1974 (AS AMENDED).

IN SUMMARY, MR. CHAIRMAN, THE COAST GUARD PLAYS A PRO-ACTIVE ROLE INTERNATIONALLY IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY. THROUGH OUR CONTROL VERIFICATION EXAMINATION AUGMENTATION PROGRAM, THE COAST GUARD HAS SUCCESSFULLY DETECTED AND CORRECTED

SAFETY PROBLEMS ABOARD FOREIGN PASSENGER VESSELS EMBARKING U.S. PASSENGERS. WE RECENTLY ASSEMBLED SENIOR EXECUTIVES REPRESENTING ORGANIZATIONS WITH DIVERSE INTERESTS OF THE MARINE INDUSTRY WORLDWIDE. THEY DISCUSSED CURRENT PROBLEMS AND WERE ABLE TO DEVELOP CONSENSUS ON A NUMBER OF STRATEGIES TO ENSURE UNIFORM COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT OF SOLAS REQUIREMENTS. THESE PROGRAMS, COUPLED WITH OUR ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT AT THE IMO, ARE PART OF AN OVERALL STRATEGY TO IMPROVE PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY ON AN INTERNATIONAL SCALE.

OUR DOMESTIC ACTIONS AND OUR INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES ARE EXPLICITLY LINKED, AND I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT EFFORTS THROUGH INTERNATIONAL CHANNELS MUST BE THE PRINCIPAL ROUTE TO ACHIEVE IMPROVEMENTS. UNITED STATES CITIZENS BOARD VESSELS AS PASSENGERS WORLDWIDE. THEIR SAFETY HERE AND ABROAD WILL BE IMPROVED THROUGH INTERNATIONALLY AGREED-UPON ACTION. TO PURSUE A TWO-TIER APPROACH TO PASSENGER SAFETY BY TAKING UNILATERAL ACTION WOULD NOT BE IN THE INTERESTS OF ALL OUR CITIZENS.

THANK YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN. I WOULD BE PLEASED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS.