



MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE
80th session
Agenda item 5

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MEASURES TO ENHANCE MARITIME SECURITY

Long-Range Identification and Tracking of Ships

Submitted by the United States

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document proposes a way forward toward adoption of an amendment to SOLAS to provide for long-range identification and tracking of ships

Action to be taken: Paragraphs 10 and 11

Related documents: COMSAR 9/WP.5, COMSAR 9/12/7, MSC 78/26, MSC 79/23 and Circular letter No.2595 of 10 November 2004

Introduction

1 This paper is being submitted for the purpose of proposing a way forward regarding amendments to SOLAS to provide for long-range identification and tracking of ships.

Background

2 The United States has submitted for the consideration of IMO Members and Contracting Governments a proposed SOLAS amendment with a view to adoption at MSC 80 (Circular letter No.2595 of 10 November 2004).

3 At COMSAR 9 (document COMSAR 9/WP.5, annex 1), the Sub-Committee proposed revisions to the preliminary draft amendments to SOLAS chapter XI-2 and forwarded them to MSC 80 to note as a basis for further discussion and development. COMSAR 9 has also asked the Committee to note, as a work in progress, the proposed performance standards (document COMSAR 9/WP.5, annex 2) for LRIT. Finally, the Sub-Committee established a Correspondence Group on LRIT to address outstanding issues.

4 Long-Range Identification and Tracking of Ships (LRIT) has been on the work programme of the Committee and subsidiary bodies since the 12 December 2002 Diplomatic Conference. Conference resolution 10 urges Contracting Governments to take, as a matter of high priority, any action needed at a national level to give effect to implementing and beginning the long-range identification and tracking of ships. The United States believes that LRIT is critical to global maritime security and that our proposed amendment is a balanced and

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reasonable approach to the needs of flag, port and coastal States. In particular, we solicit support from all Contracting Governments for coastal State access to LRIT information (ship position, date, and time) when the ship is within 2000 nm of a coastal State in order to identify, classify and determine if the ship is of further interest to the coastal State. Following the terrorist attacks of September 2001, the United States initiated a requirement for foreign flag ships to send a Notice of Arrival 96 hours prior to their arrival in a United States port. Based on our study of the processing of information related to this identification and classification of ships and crews, and correlating this information with other sources, 96 hours was considered necessary. Similarly, for vessels transiting a coastal State's waters, sufficient time is needed in order for that State to respond to a perceived threat. For a ship traveling at 20 knots, in 96 hours it will travel roughly 2000 nm. We are of the view that 2000 nm is critical to providing an Administration sufficient time to effect a response to a ship off its coast should a response be needed.

5 At MSC 78 (document MSC 78/26), the Committee agreed that LRIT providers should be approved by the Committee and that Contracting Governments should be able to purchase LRIT information directly from approved LRIT providers. The Committee further instructed the COMSAR Sub-Committee to develop and propose conditions which the Committee may impose on an LRIT provider when considering approval. The Committee also instructed COMSAR to develop a robust intergovernmental oversight scheme for the approved LRIT providers.

Discussion

6 Recognizing the importance and significance of long-range identification and tracking of ships, the United States is of the view that the Organization should adopt the necessary SOLAS amendments at MSC 80. Under the provisions of SOLAS Article VIII(b), the United States has proposed this SOLAS amendment for consideration and adoption at MSC 80.

7 In COMSAR 9/12/7, Cyprus *et al.* recommended that LRIT should take into account safety and environmental protection, and proposed to introduce the main principles of LRIT into SOLAS V. The United States opposed this position at COMSAR 9, citing the Committee's direction to proceed to finalize the work with respect to LRIT for use by Contracting Governments for the enhancement of maritime security. However, because of the significant support for the Cyprus *et al.* position and, based on the perspective that this would not delay adoption of LRIT, this issue was put to the maritime security working group for discussion. Two edits in square brackets in the COMSAR revision to the SOLAS amendment address the issue of applications of LRIT for other than security purposes. The United States supports adopting the LRIT amendment for security, which the Committee has directed has the highest priority, in SOLAS chapter XI-2. When consideration is given to adopting LRIT for uses other than security and SAR, the United States is open to consideration of the method of accomplishing that, including amendment to SOLAS V, by footnoting or referencing it in chapter V.

8 The United States recognizes that there remain certain outstanding technical issues concerning performance standards and the role of co-ordinating an oversight body for LRIT discussed at COMSAR 9. However, we believe that these technical issues need not and must not hold up adopting the amendment to SOLAS at MSC 80, while proceeding with work on the performance standards using the COMSAR correspondence group or possibly an intersessional meeting. It appears that IMSO may have some support as the intergovernmental oversight organization. In order to progress the LRIT effort, the United States is prepared to consider their participation in a limited, administrative oversight role.

9 To further enhance the LRIT efforts, the United States is prepared to offer to sponsor and pay for an intersessional working group to resolve those remaining outstanding issues related to the implementation of LRIT, including the performance standards.

Action requested of the Committee

10 The Committee is requested to consider the draft SOLAS amendment submitted under Circular letter No.2595 dated 10 November 2004 as revised in the draft SOLAS amendment edited by COMSAR (document COMSAR 9/WP.5, annex 1) for adoption at MSC 80.

11 The Committee is requested to consider the United States offer to host an intersessional meeting to resolve any outstanding issues related to the implementation of LRIT.
