2. INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANISATION

(a) COMSAR9 (Sub Committee on Search and Rescue 9th session) 7-11 Feb 05 and DE48 (Sub Committee on Ship Design and Equipment 48th session) 21-25 Feb 05.

COMSAR is a sub committee of MSC (the Maritime Safety Committee of IMO).

ISAF delegates attending: Alan Green, (COMSAR/DE), David Brunskill, Michael Devonshire (COMSAR), Henry Thorpe, Clive Evans.

(i) **NAVTEX**: the system was reviewed and some amendments agreed to the NAVTEX Manual.

(ii) **L-Band (type "E") EPIRBs:** confirmed that the service will be discontinued from 1st Dec 06. The unused radio channels (within two dedicated SAR bands at L-band, 1544-1545MHz and 1645.5-1646.5MHz) are reserved under a PSA (public service agreement) for applicable ship station services and systems. All type "E" users will be given free 406MHz replacement beacons.

(iii) **406 EPIRBs**: a review showed that the number of false alerts is not disproportionately large: no further action.

(iv) **IAMSAR manual:** a possible small-craft IAMSAR manual will be discussed by Alan Green (ISAF)/ILF (International Lifeboat Federation) later this year. There does not now seem to be an impending requirement for all ships to carry a copy of the IAMSAR manual.

(v) **LRIT** (long-range identification and tracking of ships): increasing interest was shown in the potential of LRIT as a surveillance system not only to enhance safety but also for security and anti-pollution. It seems likely to the ISAF delegation that in the long term there may be a confluence between LRIT and AIS. Details of LRIT data acquisition, ships to be included and parties entitled to (or to be denied) data, are yet to be agreed. A correspondence group was established (chairman William Cairns).

(vi) **SSAS** (ship security alert system): development in progress. SSAS is intended to enable a ship under attack from eg pirates or terrorists, to send a covert alarm to suitable authorities. There are many issues to decide including the priority and destination of SSAS messages which some delegations wish to be kept strictly different from the GMDSS (global maritime distress and safety system) protocols. MSC/Circ.623/Rev.3 refers.

(vii) **Rescued Persons**: a further review is to made on the status and handling of rescued persons with the object of relieving the master of his responsibilities as soon as possible.

(viii) **Passenger Ship Safety:** a number of concepts were discussed including Time to Recover (a 5-day maximum for which persons should be expected to stay in survival craft), Time to Rescue, Improved Survivability (so that after a given major failure or accident, the ship will be capable of reaching a port whilst keeping her passengers safe), and Time to Remain Habitable – a minimum of 3 hours to allow for safe abandonment. Design criteria may be agreed for new ships. The concepts may be of interest in leisure craft applications. A Correspondence Group was established (chairman David Jardine-Smith).

(ix) **IP (internet Protocol) over HF for email:** email and fax over HF is already used by long-distance cruising boats, as a less expensive alternative to satellite comms. Other developments in maritime HF communications are envisaged. Proceedings of ITU (International Telecommunications Union)- Working Party 8b to be monitored.

(x) **WWNS (World Wide Navigation Warning System):** following the recent Tsunami disaster the application of WWNS is under review by an IMO Correspondence Group on which a representation of *pleasure yachts not engaged in trade* will be welcome. ISAF will deploy a representative to this group.

(xi) **Voluntary carriage of Air Band VHF**: noting that rescue units are sometimes deployed which do not have marine VHF, MSC agreed to recommend voluntary fitment of air band radio equipment on SOLAS ships (already recommended in ISAF Offshore Special Regulations in category zero).

(xii) **High-Risk Oceanic Crossings by Adventure Craft**: this item was proposed by Chile last year in an effort to reduce the time, risk and cost to SAR units being called out to ill-prepared craft on long-distance voyages in the Pacific.

Alan Green and Michael Devonshire had both met the Chilean Navy in London on different occasions to discuss the problem. Helpful input was made by Peter Diamond of the UK Coastguard Agency MCA (Maritime & Coastguard Agency). A draft MSC Circular will be presented to MSC in May 05. The Circular will give guidance to national administrations recommending they ensure that craft about to undertake oceanic voyages are suitably constructed and equipped and the crew appropriately trained. Reference for “further details” is made in the draft Circular to ISAF Offshore Special Regulations.

(xiii) **Compatibility of Life-Saving Appliances:** document DE 48/8 submitted by Canada drew attention to the size and weight of personnel and how this related to the design of life-saving equipment. In offshore rating rules an assumption of 80kg body mass has long been made but in SOLAS lifesaving equipment the usual assumption is 75kg. The Canadians observed that more than 85% people have a body mass >75kg and noted samples of hip breadth and shoulder breadth. It was shown that 430mm seat pan allocation is not adequate for the Canadian seafarer population and recommended a shoulder breadth of 575mm be considered instead. The effect on body bulk of wearing immersion suits had been the original

point of interest, overtaken by the discovery of body mass and dimensions normally used in SOLAS compared with the current population. Further studies are expected.

(xiv) **Pyrotechics (visual distress signals):** in document DE48/24/1 the Japanese gave results of tests of parachute and hand flares and buoyant smoke signals. The products of five manufacturers, located in four countries other than Japan were tested.

Compared with the requirements of MSC.81(70) there were many failures, some in detail and some total. The Japanese point out that some types of hand flares and buoyant smoke signals may endanger the operators, and draw attention to LSA Code 3.1.1.4 and 3.2.1.4 requiring that visual distress signals shall be so designed as not to cause discomfort to the person holding the casing and not to endanger the survival craft by burning or glowing residues.
One manufacturer's rocket flares had 173 and 148m firing heights (criterion 300m) and average luminosity 20,000 cd (criterion 30,000 cd). In the case of hand flares, all those tested failed the "heptane test" (risk of ignition of survival craft). The products of four manufacturers were operated from the top but the operational safety delays were not enough (shorter than 2 seconds).

Administrations were urged to strictly instruct notifying bodies to approve only devices which comply with the test procedures and criteria laid down in the LSA Code.

Alan Green
Chairman ISAF International Regulations Commission.
28th February 2005