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**Opening Remarks to the 26<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the IMO**  
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Thank you Mr. President, Secretary General Mitropoulos, and the distinguished delegates here today.

I am grateful to the IMO under the leadership of the Secretary General for advocating the maritime issues that affect all of our nations, most notably climate change and air emissions. The Secretary General's participation in the recent World Maritime Day Parallel Event in New York City highlighted the need for the world to take action on climate change.

The people of the United States heard his message and appreciate his support and the support of all members for the North American Emission Control Area which will hopefully be adopted in March 2010.

Recently, I testified before the United States Senate regarding President Obama's Ocean Policy Task Force. This multi-agency group is creating a collaborative governance framework for managing our oceanic resources. During my testimony, I stressed

the importance of the IMO's role to ensure our national policies are aligned with our international partners.

I also highlighted the IMO's unique ability to bring the maritime community together to address shared concerns. This is essential because today's transnational threats exceed the grasp of individual nations. By working together, we can bring the light of governance to the darkest regions of the maritime domain.

Piracy is a menace to individual ships but the economic ramifications ripple throughout the marine transportation system. The threat of piracy has endured, in part, because individual pirates have eluded our existing legal system.

I applaud the Secretary General's leadership and support his draft resolution regarding piracy off Somalia. And we support IMO's continued progress to implement the Djibouti Code of Conduct. Building inherent capability within nation states and facilitating regional coordination are critical first steps.

However, we must also remain vigilant to deter pirate attacks and develop the legal frameworks to prosecute these criminals after they are caught. I am hopeful that the Memorandum of

Understanding between the United States and Kenya can serve as a model for future legal agreements that can disincentivize acts of piracy.

Small vessel security is another global challenge. If you look at piracy, the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, as well as the use of self-propelled semisubmersible vessels to smuggle narcotics, the common thread is the use of small, unregulated, and unmonitored vessels.

Finding a small vessel amidst the busy backdrop of a typical coastline is a needle in a haystack proposition. That needle has the potential to pierce the fabric of most port security operations and tear at the efficacy of maritime transportation.

We must raise awareness of small vessel movements so we can identify the few hostile vessels from the thousands of legitimate recreational and work boats that ply our shores. I am grateful to the IMO for developing guidelines on the security of small vessels that are not covered under SOLAS or the International Ship and Port Facility Security Codes.

I also applaud the individual nations which have focused their resources against this potential threat. I often cite the effectiveness of the international community's efforts when explaining the need for broader applicability of Automatic Identification Systems within U.S. waters.

The Copenhagen talks next month will put a spotlight on the profound impacts of climate change. The IMO has led the global response to climate change in the maritime domain – a leadership role we strongly support. The IMO is the right body to develop common guidelines that will help preserve our maritime environment.

Nowhere are the effects of climate change more apparent than the Arctic. There is now water where there was once ice and it is inviting more shipping, exploration, and human activity. We will continue to work with the other Arctic nations to manage our common interests in this pristine yet resource-laden environment.

In the past, the oceans were barriers that separated us. Today, the oceans are the last global commons that connect us. Our collective challenge is keeping the maritime environment safe for shipping, secure from dangerous threats, and clean for our children to enjoy

long after we are gone. This is our obligation to the next generation and we proudly stand with the IMO to accomplish this goal.

I applaud the IMO's diligence and the Secretary General's leadership. I look forward to working with you to develop global solutions to these global challenges.

Thank you.