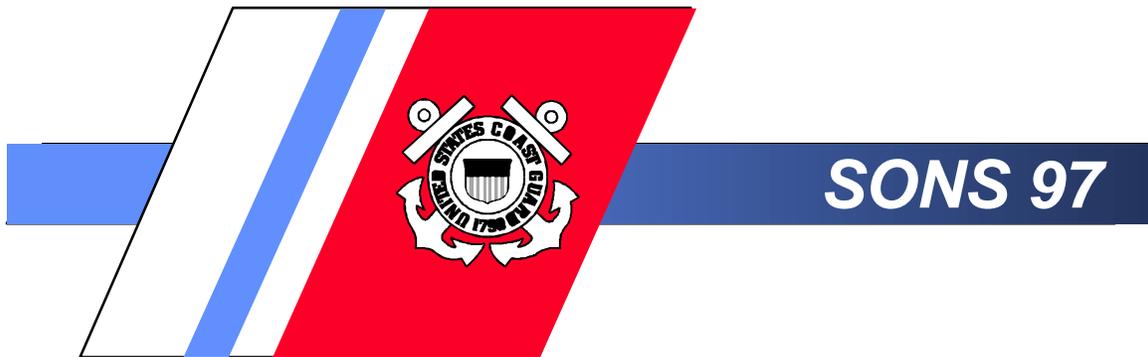


SPILL OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE 1997

INTERACTIVE SEMINAR



16 - 18 SEPTEMBER 1997

**USCG MARINE SAFETY OFFICE
PHILADELPHIA, PA**

**HEADQUARTERS, USCG
WASHINGTON, DC**

QUICKLOOK



**Sponsored By:
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SONS 97

Quicklook Report

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SONS 97

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Spill of National Significance 1997 (SONS 97), an interactive seminar, was part of the United States Coast Guard's National Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP). SONS 97 was the first in a series of seminars developed to examine various levels of government, and the maritime industry's readiness to respond to the consequences of a catastrophic oil spill. The scenario for this seminar was a series of spills caused by nearly concurrent ship collisions along the mid-Atlantic coast of the United States.

OBJECTIVE

SONS 97 was designed to examine and develop agency specific, interagency, and industry critical issues, decisions, and options at senior executive and senior staff levels in responding to a catastrophic maritime oil spill. Within this general objective were several specific objectives, including:

- Gather senior executives from a wide spectrum of interests, responsibilities, and jurisdictions to discuss individual issues, discover commonalties, and plan for an orchestrated response to a Spill of National Significance.
- Exercise the integrated policy development process in a complex and dynamic incident environment involving the employment of private and public resources to resolve the outcome of a SONS.
- Introduce and evaluate the use of the National Interagency Incident Management System Area Command Concept for use as the Coast Guard response management organization for responses that exceed one Captain of the Port zone.
- Assess the inter-relationship of three or more organizational levels (Commandant, Incident Area Command, FOOSC) and the aspects of authority, communication, and effectiveness in administering and mitigating the events involved in a Spill of National Significance.
- Develop an effective method for formulating operational guidance to field units and the elevation of recommendations to senior executives.
- Examine the operational implications of the protocol defining the responsibilities and roles to a SONS response.

- Develop a coordinated response to a nationally significant event and explore the problems of transitioning from immediate to sustained response, to demobilization from the event.
- Introduce participants to the techniques of interactive seminars as a method of decision making, education, and issue exchange.

SCENARIO

Spill of National Significance 1997 explored the challenges related to responding to a multi-incident maritime economic and environmental disaster. The scenario provided the context for this examination.. The following is an overview of the scenario used for this event:

Late Monday night in calm seas at the mouth of the Delaware Bay, the Tanker Vessel TROMSO RELIANCE experienced mechanical problems and rammed the Tanker Vessel KNOCK AN in the port side rupturing number 2 and 3 cargo tanks of the KNOCK AN. Shortly after the collision an explosion on the TROMSO RELIANCE ruptured the vessel's number 1, 2, and 3 cargo tanks. Oil from both ships is leaking into the open sea.

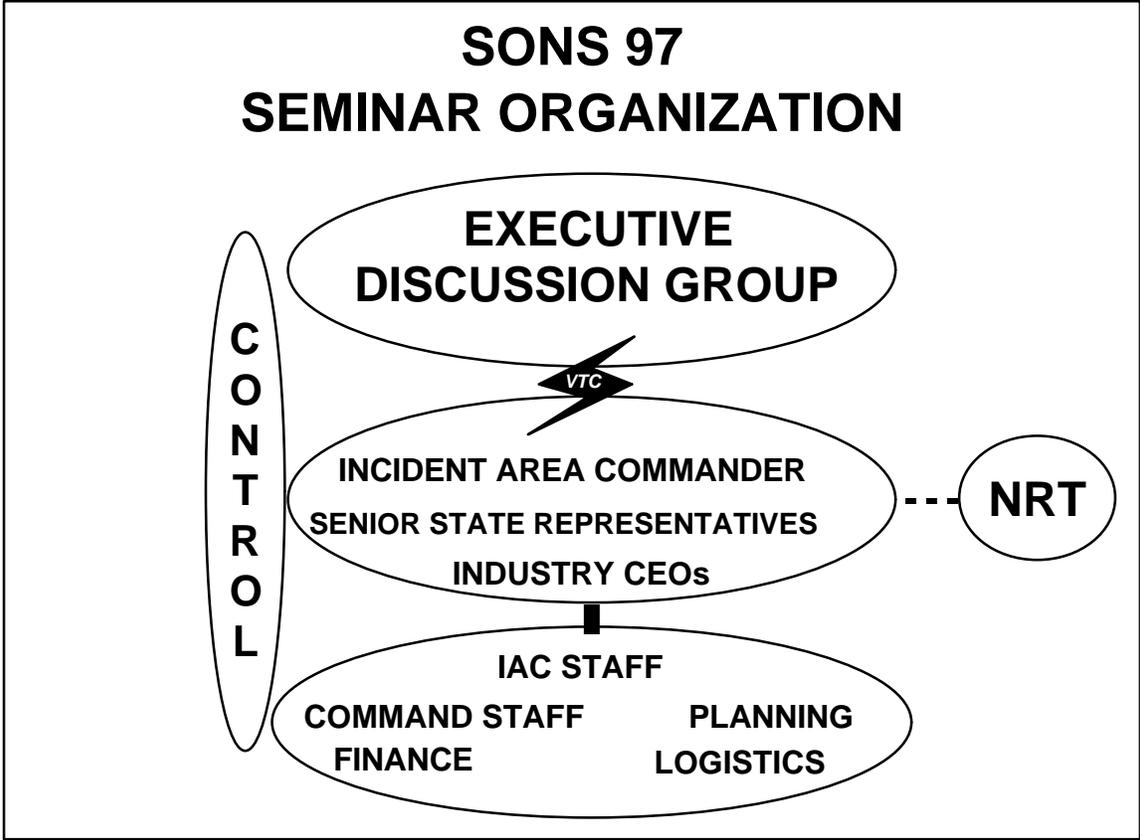
KNOCK AN is presently anchored at the collision site and TROMSO RELIANCE is drifting south-southwest from the site. Total cargo capacity for both vessels is 1 million barrels. Cargo in the KNOCK AN is Northsea Brent Crude. TROMSO RELIANCE is carrying West African Cabinda Crude.

Six hours later, at dawn on Tuesday morning, a barge carrying 105,000 barrels of Arabian Crude oil towed by the Tug RHEA was struck on the port side by the fishing vessel JANET C while the tug-in-tow was transiting south in Barnegat Traffic Lanes 80 miles south of New York City and 10 miles off the New Jersey coast. Minor injuries were reported on the fishing vessel.

Over 8000 barrels of crude have leaked into the sea from the barge's number 1, 2, and 3 port tanks. This could increase to possibly 12,000 barrels. The integrity of barge is questionable, and assistance was requested by the tug's master. Heavily damaged, the fishing vessel is under its own power to Navesink River, NJ.

SEMINAR ORGANIZATION

The following diagram depicts the seminar structure during SONS 97. Throughout the seminar, participants were divided into different groups and tasked to address issues related to the movie's focus from their group's perspectives.



CONSTRUCT OF SEMINAR ACTIVITY

During two moves, each associated with a phase of the disaster — immediate response, and sustained response and recovery — participants addressed the issues associated with each of these phases and formulated options to integrate and coordinate resources and policies necessary to meet the public’s expectations of a satisfactory response and recovery.

The following is a summary of the major structural components of SONS 97:

- Introduction. The introductory session provided initial briefings that set the stage for the rest of the seminar.
- Move One. Participants addressed their immediate response actions to the crises and the command and coordination requirements regarding the first 2 - 10 days following the incidents.
- Move Two. Participants investigated sustained response and recovery issues occurring beyond 10 days following the spills.

Using information provided by the scenario and previous sessions, participants addressed issues focused towards the specific move and group. Driven by tasks and questions, groups worked through the issues to produce the outputs required at the end of each move.

SONS 97 was an interactive seminar in addition to a PREP exercise. Unlike a traditional exercise where participants respond to continuous event injects, all seminar information was provided at the start of each move so that participants had a big picture on which to deliberate and develop their actions. Time was “frozen” at the beginning of each move so that deliberations could remain focused on the issues and tasks detailed for the move.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES DISCUSSION

Washington

EXECUTIVE DISCUSSION GROUP NARRATIVE

The Executive Discussion Group (EDG) met to develop policy options and recommendations for the White House and to provide national-level guidance and considerations to the Incident Area Commander (IAC).

Issues and concerns discussed can be grouped into three general areas: Resource requirements, Information, and Media. Discussions related to these issues follow:

Resource requirements.

- **Specific shortfalls.** EDG stressed to IAC the need to provide specific shortfall needs. National resources can be tapped to fill shortfalls, but USCG HQ requires specifics. For both personnel and equipment IAC needs to provide what and when requirements.
Costs. While costs related to the cleanup of the oil spill are not a concern to the IAC, it is at USCG HQ level. EDG tasked IAC to provide assessment of cost, extent of carrier's liability, and delta (difference) between the two. USCG HQ will then provide White House will details. IAC was also tasked to provide various state's perspective of long-term cost of cleanup. A related issue was how to keep contractors involved in the cleanup when emergency funds are depleted. Other broader economic issues that also need to be considered are impact on fisheries, ocean resources, commercial maritime mobility and quality of life.
- **National resources.** EDG agreed they would coordinate access to national resources at their level. If access to international assets is required, they will request White House assistance.
- **National Remote Sensors.** EDG determined IAC would have access to national remote imagery. IAC will have direct coordination with tasking authority.

Information.

- **Common Situation Picture.** The EDG emphasized to IAC the need to provide a clear picture of their information needs. In particular, USCG HQ requires a coordinated situation assessment (picture). It was determined there is a need to ensure all (IAC, USCG HQ, and the White House) have the same operational picture.
- **Joint Information Center.** EDG determined that information coordination would eventually evolve to USCG HQ. USCG HQ will form a Joint

Information Center to coordinate information flow between IAC and the White House.

- **Access to data bases.** IAC and USCG HQ require access to various federal data bases (e.g., NOAA flow predictions) as well as to a common data base.

Media.

- **White House in front.** Emphasis by EDG focused on means to keep the White House out in front, of the media. Need information to equip the President to inform the nation why we are better off in our response capability today than in 1989.
- **Central Media Hub.** EDG determined early in the response the IAC will act as the central media hub. The IAC will have a media response team. EDG guidance to the IAC was that there would be no restrictions placed on where the Media could go. EDG also recommended IAC be pro-active and hold 3-4 press conferences a day. IAC was asked to make a conference call with USCG HQ just prior to press conferences. Later EDG discussions reflected that IAC could only be the central media hub for a short period. Need a determination from the White House on a common national level spokesperson.
- **Public Health Threat.** EDG directed IAC put together a realistic health picture for the public. Include in the assessment where they expect the oil to hit the beach, and what it will look like. Be pro-active. Include assessment of impact on fisheries, ocean resources, mobility, how long ports would be closed (if applicable), and impact on heating, etc. It was again emphasized the importance of being pro-active and not reactive.
- **USCG Web Site.** USCG HQ will establish a web site to keep the public informed on ongoing cleanup actions and health related information.
- **Overarching Goal.** EDG determined its overarching goal or aim is stay 10 minutes out in front of CNN coverage of the oil spill and cleanup.

Other Issues/Concerns. Other issues/concerns included:

- **Supplemental Funding.** Shortfall of emergency funds was an issue that needs to be addressed at congressional and White House levels. It was agreed that contingency legislation is required.
- **Future Litigation Protection.** Discussion on this issue focused on need to provide protection to carriers who are assisting in the cleanup process from immediate criminal investigations and prosecution. Concern is that such litigation or threat of prosecution may result in carriers withholding assistance.
- **Investigation.** EDG guidance to IAC on criminal investigation was to allow investigation to proceed as long as it did not interfere with cleanup. Priority is to proceed with cleanup and to stop additional oil flow.
- **Inter-Agency Coordination.** Need to set up means of coordinating activities with other national agencies.
- **Residue.** Plans need to be developed for longer-range disposal of oil residue.
- **Evacuation.** Potential evacuation will remain a sensitive issue. IAC needs to provide USCG HQ with alert of possible evacuation.

Philadelphia: Move One

INCIDENT AREA COMMAND GROUP

Approach. Several important points were made about the fundamental approach to be taken to these two oil spills. This topic is closely related to the public affairs and media dimension, but is significantly broader in scope. Players felt that the overall approach could be usefully categorized by using the three vectors employed in the opening briefings: political, environmental, and economical. Players felt that the most important public statement to convey was that they were dealing aggressively and proactively with all three vectors. Players wanted to emphasize the difference between these situations and EXXON VALDEZ, pointing out that we are much better prepared – from every standpoint – to deal with these kinds of major spills than we were in 1989. Thus, our approach should “exude confidence” that we can deal with this. Having said that, players also pointed out that it is necessary to portray reality – oil is going to hit the beaches. So despite our optimism, we need to ensure our approach strikes the right balance. The point was also made that we have some new technology to deal with this spill, and we can use this to our advantage in our approach. Using technology to convey images gives the public something they can see, something they can understand, something that should give them confidence.

Flexibility. This issue can be simply stated, but implementing it is undoubtedly complicated. The issue is that we need to develop an overarching response structure that will encompass and address all dimensions of a complex situation, but that will still allow for full play of state and local variations. For example, the New York FOSC wanted to separate “his” spill – at least for PAO purposes – from the other one, because it was smaller and less serious. But this shouldn’t translate into separate response programs for the two; greater efficiencies and other benefits should accrue from a single overarching response.

Media/Public Affairs. The media and public affairs dimensions of this incident are extensive and varied, and were discussed at lengths throughout Move One. Players felt they needed to “get out in front” in going to the media and explaining why more dispersants were not used and why in-situ burning was not employed. The media are going to ask about these, and in this case the best defense may be a good offense. Players also pointed out that issues that may not be especially significant in the overall scheme of things may receive disproportionate media attention. For example, a few birds with oily feathers and a few shellfish washing up on the beach may not be real significant from an ecological standpoint, but they will certainly attract a lot of media attention. Players also discussed a “coordinated effort that reaches out to all segments” -- getting the appropriate message out to such diverse groups as fishermen, tourists, business, politicians, etc. Perhaps the most significant media/public affairs issue discussed had to do with the location and focus of media efforts. For example, should the IAC be the information hub for all of this, with information flowing in from the FOSCs, or is it just one hub on a larger network? This is a challenging and complex issue. For example, a FOSC may want more than anything else to get the media out of his hair, and might be

delighted to have IAC or someone else help with this burden. And IAC might be willing to take this on, but these issues will remain local in interest, and no organizational rearrangements will change this.

Time. Several issues related to time were prevalent throughout the discussions. Several “windows of opportunity” were mentioned. There seemed to be consensus that if you can’t do what you need to do on scene within 24 hours of a spill, there is basically nothing different to be done until the oil hits the beach, and this would involve a different set of issues and requirements. There is a different window of opportunity for skimming, which might be as long as two weeks or even months. The question is this: If we can identify these various windows with some precision, and identify the associated variables, are there actions we can take in advance that will help us speed up our response? For example, if the window for using dispersants is very limited, worrying about obtaining dispersant assets from great distances may not be productive. Two other time issues will be mentioned here. First, while the immediate consequences of a major spill must be dealt with immediately, the longer term impacts also need to be addressed early. For example, tar balls may reach the North Carolina coast in a month, but the time to start preparing for that is now, not when the first tar hits the beach. Second, players asked the (perhaps rhetorical) question of when does response end and recovery (or damage assessment) begin? and some point we will need to declare the spill over, but there will still be oil around. How do we deal with this?

Financial Resources. No other issue received more attention and discussion from the player than matters dealing with the resources available or needed to deal with this kind of incident. A statement was made early in the move that “money is not an object”. This reflects some significant changes made since EXXON VALDEZ. There was consensus that this is true for the short term, but with a prolonged incident on the order of the one examined in this seminar, money will run out. It appears that the fundamental issue associated with resources is that there is a wide variety of limitations that impact on resources in various ways. For example, there are limits on the liability of the RPs, and once they reach that they can, if they choose, walk out the door. There are limits on the amount of money available; if a company has exhausted its assets, how can it be asked for more? There are statutory and legislative limits that impact this situation. If we estimate the total costs at \$4 billion, but if Congress has passed legislation limiting expenditures to \$1 billion per incident, we have a problem. Also, there appear to be regulations that serve to prohibit certain organizations from paying certain expenses. There are limitations relating to competing functional claims; if response and damage assessment funding must come out of the same pot, for example, there will likely be a major conflict. Whatever resources a RP devotes to damage assessment will take away from the resources available for the cleanup effort. There are probably also limitations that result from timing factors; as several participants stated, we have the resources to be very aggressive early, for crisis response but what about longer term recovery?

The implications of all of these resource limitations and tensions are varied and significant. Only enough time was available to scratch the surface here, and this is a fertile ground for

further investigation. Two implications are that there will likely be significant competition among a variety of claimants for the same pot of money. Who decides who gets what and how? Who is the national resource coordinator for all of this? Also, these tensions and competitions have the potential for converting an amicable and cooperative relationship – between RPs and the Coast Guard, for example – into a contentious one.

Non-Financial Resources: The group engaged in considerable discussion of non-financial resources, such as fire booms, skimmers, dispersants, reconnaissance assets, etc. Some of these issues have already been discussed in the section on “Time” above dealing with windows of opportunity. One point from that discussion is that in some cases, the fact that extensive resources are available at some distant location may not matter if they cannot be moved to the scene in time to do any good. Considerable time was spent discussing what we need to request from headquarters. In some cases it was concluded that these resource shortfalls are not the Commandant’s problem. The problem may be that these spills are simply so big that all the resources that exist, even if they could be made available, would not be sufficient. As someone said, “Even the Commandant can’t get more of stuff that doesn’t exist.” There was a discussion on whether it is better to work industry-to-industry or government-to-government to get, for example, skimmers from Russia. The consensus seemed to be that industry-to-industry was probably best. The only area where the IAC saw a need to request assistance from Washington was in obtaining national assets for reconnaissance. These assets can be made available through DOMS. After some discussion it was agreed that the IAC could request these assets directly from DOMS.

On considering and establishing priorities to get the IAC Group to focus proved to be a significant challenge throughout the move. There are requirements for this: the IAC should provide guiding priorities to the functional groups; the Commandant wanted to know what he could do for the IAC, and this would involve setting priorities, etc. But this is a real challenge, for several reasons. For example, the IAC is a strategic group, and should be making choices and decisions, not responding to events. But getting ahead of the emerging incident is difficult. The focus was on asking the FOSCs what they need, and setting priorities from that input. But the FOSCs could respond (reasonably) that they are working with the RPs, and until the RPs tell them there is something they cannot do, the FOSCs can’t tell the IAC what they need. In spite of these kinds of obstacles, the following were established as the top three priorities, in order. First, capture as much oil on the water as possible. Second, for that oil that is not captured, disperse it, contain it, and keep it from spreading. Third, identify sensitive areas ashore and protect them.

National Response Team (NRT): Since the IAC was going to brief the NRT the following day, there was discussion on what their role is and what we might want them to do. Several issues were identified that the NRT might consider: the public health issues, and coordination of the joint information center from the federal perspective. Other possibilities raised were that the NRT might be able to perform a clearinghouse function, a coordinating function, and that they might be able to perform task-specific functions, such as R&D. They might also work with FDA on the issue of seafood contamination; if word

of “fish tainting” gets out, it will attract a lot of attention and will become a very emotional issue.

Roles and Missions of IAC: This may be the most profound and powerful issue raised by the IAC Group during Move One, but this issue also warrants extensive further examination. Very fundamental concerns are involved here, relating to such areas as access, influence, physical location of function, control of information, etc. For example: how much centralization should there be between IAC and the FOSCs? The general principle seems to be to pass as much as possible to the IACs, but if this is carried to its logical extreme, the FOSCs won’t have a job anymore. Second, it might be desirable to take much of the media pressure away from the FOSCs so they can concentrate on the immediate situation, but this simply won’t happen completely, because media stories are inherently local stories. Third, questions were raised during this move on whether the IAC is the appropriate forum to deal with certain matters, or whether the states would feel comfortable bringing a particular matter to the IAC for resolution. These are important questions that will require further investigation. Finally, there will be tensions such as those illustrated by the following example. A ship owner tries to decide where he should be to be most effective. On one hand, he wants to be on the scene managing the incident and being seen (by the media) on the beach with the Senator surveying the damage. On the other hand, the ship owner wants to be with the IAC because there is a 3-star there, and access to him is important to the ship owner.

PLANNING FUNCTIONAL GROUP

The planning team addressed the AAP with focus on refining those areas that have recently been developed/reviewed. They reviewed elements of the plan and discussed resource allocation issues, identifying particular planning elements that need further study or definition.

Getting stake-holders involved in the decision process. Players recognized that in most incident planning areas, there are many stake-holders. While it is a worthy goal to elicit full stake-holder participation, the sheer numbers may be overwhelming. It was pointed out that, in real-life incidents, the number of participants is necessarily limited to primary stake owners. Team members concluded that every effort should be made to address the concerns of the primary stake-holders, but the onus should be on them to come to the Area Command for resolution of issues, etc. This issue was unresolved. The Coast Guard position is to be proactive on stake-holder participation.

Providing a provision for protocol. In an incident of the proportion of this one, the team felt that protocol needs could quickly overwhelm the response teams resources, particularly at the MSO level. A mechanism needs to be developed to fill the void and shield/assist the FOSCs in protocol services.

Critical Issue Papers contained in the AAP. Participants saw the Critical Issue section of the AAP as providing useful information to help guide planning efforts during incident response. It was recommended that a format be developed and that guidance be administered to the effect that “any Issue Paper longer than two pages requires an executive summary”. It should be recognized that these papers will not provide answers, but will bound the alternatives or define consideration factors for particular topics.

Coordination within a Unified Command. Players pointed out that, in an incident of this size, all response levels will be composed of representatives from Cost Guard, federal, state, local, industry, and other representatives whose priorities may not all align. Coordinating conglomerate interests and the required response activities will present new challenges in an environment where priorities do not coincide among the participants.

Developing an overall incident response plan. Allocation of critical resources between these two spills requires a set of overriding guidance that includes establishment of overall priorities. Clear guidance for the overall incident (two separate spills) will help ensure best use of scarce resources.

Designating ports of refuge for damaged vessels. The team discussed the possibility of preselecting ports of refuge to allow safe harbor of damaged vessels. It was pointed out that no state/port facility would enter into such an agreement. Further, whether or not a damaged vessel is allowed to enter a port will be significantly impacted by the media situation at the time. One player suggest the possibility of using a Navy Graving dock to accommodate these vessels. No resolution was reached.

State and Federal response. Players pointed out that defining resource requirements beyond the Area Committee level is important. Incident protocol requires that the federal resources will not be made available until the resource demands exceed state and local availability. The Area command must define shortages early to trigger other federal response options. Changes may be regained in regulations to streamline the system for more efficient government, RP relationships in a crisis.

Time Phase requirements. Players pointed out that development of a General Plan based on extended trajectory analysis is important to define early actions that can mitigate longer term consequences. This plan would include Projected Actions over time, updated periodically over the duration of the incident. Players saw the format for these Projected Actions as being similar to the Response Actions contained in the current General Action Plan, but modified to appropriately reflect categories of future expectation (e.g. drift patterns, oil spill convergence on coast, etc.). This was not viewed as a directive document, but more to provide all concerned of the appropriate expectations over time and facilitate planning at all levels.

Identification of available area assets. Players identified the need to have resources identified before the incident. They saw the Area Committee as having this responsibility, to include total resources by area and defined shortages. There will be need to develop

this data for each area – each will be different. Careful consideration must be given to availability of those identified resources. One player pointed out that because an asset is in the area doesn't mean that it is available. There are a number of factors that could prevent available assets from being utilized.

Outside area response. Planners must engage early in the response phase to preclude ordering assets that will arrive after the window of opportunity for their use (e.g., a skimmer arriving after the spill is dispersed). There is a tendency to order all available assets early. This consideration is particularly important when coordinating international response resources that will generally fulfill longer term response options. Projected Actions (mentioned earlier) should help with this planning effort.

Flow of information. Players pointed out that the information flow defined in the Incident Area Command Field Operations/Process Guide clearly defines the appropriate authorities that require information. What is missing is the information needs of the various levels and the methods of reporting. One player suggested an “intranet” approach (perhaps HTML protocol), either open or gated, would provide an efficient means of disseminating information. Such an approach would require careful and dedicated management to ensure appropriate information is provided to various interest levels and that old information is purged from the system. No resolution was reached on the merits of such a system.

Public information flow and coordination. Players addressed the need to provide timely information to the public – to help build public confidence and support on response actions.

Economic impact. The most significant economic impacts were in the area of tourism, fisheries, and port closures. Planners must realize that these impacts will not be limited to the local area. In particular, the impact of port closures will likely be felt at the regional level and beyond – perhaps even at the international level. Short and long-term effects will have significant public reaction and may influence the degree of other federal support.

Presidential declaration of disaster. Players pointed out that a presidential declaration of disaster can have significant impact on available incident response options. Opportunities may arise in the form of additional priorities and resources and consequences may result in loss of authority or complications to the coordination requirements. Responders must be prepared for this possibility.

Legislative preemption. The Planning team addressed the issue of disagreements between federal and state participants. This factor must be understood and has potential for impact on elements of the response plan. Team work between federal, state and even RPs is required to solve problems.

Jones Act. Participants discussed the restrictions imposed by the Jones Act as it related to this incident. They considered the possibility of obtaining incident relief on the

restraints on foreign merchants imposed by the Jones Act (restricting foreign cargo transport between US ports). Perhaps some planning actions could improve chances to obtain a waiver during incident to mitigate its impact on response.

Intervention on the high seas. Players pointed out that any decisions to intervene in the destruction or removal of a vessel, against the Responsible Party's will, is outside the jurisdiction of the local or Area Commander. These decisions must be referred to the Commandant for national level resolution.

International resources. Request for international resources will require coordination with other agencies if they are required, It was an almost unanimous view that national and business assets could be brought to bear much faster and in quantities that would obviate the need for international resources.

Salvage/disposal. Decisions that relate to salvage and disposal will impact on political and environmental issues. Public sentiment, environmental concerns, and confidence in adequacy of response will all impact on decisions relating to salvage and response. This implies that both political and environmental organizations will influence desires, actions, and decisions. Players addressed the complexities associated with choosing between competing response options. It is important to consider consequences of response (e.g., using dispersants) on resource depletion, allocation between competing needs (in this case, two spills), and impact on the environment (effects on wildlife).

COMMAND STAFF

Before the team created their brief they discussed the public information questions in the participant handbook. Since most of the team was composed of public affairs/ information specialists, discussion focused on PA issues. The liaison representatives broke out of the group and worked independently. No legal representatives were present as captain Knee departed to advise the Incident Area Commander. No responsible party reps were present with exception of one brief appearance. Initial objectives for public information included disclosing as much information as possible and holding press conferences several times each day. Capt. Schneeweis foresaw the following initial difficult issues:

- **public affairs/information will quickly be overwhelmed,**
- **public affairs will need more resources (call on DoD, DoT, FEMA),**
- **will public affairs be grouped or separate for the two incidents?, and**
- **will public affairs operations be centralized?**

An additional public affairs concern was who speaks to the nation.

Players decided that the IAC JIC would coordinate National and OSC interaction, but would need representatives from the parties involved because you "can't speak with one voice without numerous voices." The number and location of JICs was a point of critical concern. Also of concern for the JICs was that they be attuned, agree on data, and have the appropriate agency speaking about data. Further issues of concern were timely data and JIC empowerment. It was deemed imperative that an individual be inserted into operations in order to feed information to the JIC(s) for the timely, unified release of information. The IAC cell thought PAO should be an integral part of the command operations. The notion of a uniform fax data sheet was deemed helpful in organizing and disseminating information. Information on personnel casualties would not be released until after kin were notified. One player suggested that a pre-approved list of the Incident Commander's strategic objectives would speed the initial PA process and facilitate early press releases/conferences.

The need for a local and or national spokesperson was discussed. It was concluded that an appropriate level representative would align with the appropriate press level (e.g. a Washington DC person for CNN, etc.). Later the Area Command group communicated to the team that Vice Admiral Rufe (the Incident Area Commander) would be the national spokesperson and would need to be "where the action is".

Players discussed the fact that the media should be welcomed and unrestricted (can't restrict them anyway in this situation). Players posited that the policy would be "speak to your area of expertise" so that misinformation does not abound. The Coast Guard policy of passing all information possible was also considered essential.

An issue of great concern to the team was coordination with the OSC's staff. It was suggested that a coordination office was necessary for PA staff. Players felt that it was of major importance that PA be taken into consideration when planning the location of the incident command post(s). Since the media would be attracted to the visual quality of the coast, players agreed that PA had to be there. Players discussed that the Coast Guard does not take media relations seriously enough with respect to funding the public affairs program.

It was widely asserted that the media should be treated as a helpful conduit to the public; i.e. don't shut them out, use them. Players posited that the Coast Guard would take the lead in public affairs vice the responsible parties and would be best suited to do so in a neutral position.

Consistency in the information released at different levels was a major issue to the players. They agreed that information needs to be coordinated; e.g. data on numbers of gallons leaked should be consistent across reporting units. Also, it was agreed that an information release policy needed to be formulated by the IAC staff to avoid a spokesperson releasing one type of information one day and then referring requests for the same information to the IAC the next day.

Finally, players agreed that VIPs seeking media reception would be handled by liaison officers because the PA personnel would be totally engrossed elsewhere.

LOGISTICS

Assumptions. In order to continue planning, the group made the following assumptions:

- Resources will be available, worldwide, for replenishment and sustainment.
- Resource data bases exist and will be effectively managed at Area level.
- ICS is an effective management and control tool for allocation of resources.
- The communications network for resource identification, acquisition and deployment remains effective.
- Funding for resources is adequate.

Resource Database. Competing and proprietary databases, which detail location of critical resources, exist in the public (NSFCC, FEMA) and private sectors. These systems are largely ineffective due to limited knowledge of location, accessibility, and who uses them (competing business interests). Resolution of this issue requires more willingness to share information, more education and awareness about these systems, and development of shared operations plans for timely mobilization of assets.

Area Command Post Setup. The principal issue here is that a lack of preplanned support and clearly defined responsibility for Area Command (AC) and Incident Command

(IC) will adversely impact initial effectiveness of the organization. In order to resolve this issue, the Coast Guard should be responsible for AC command post setup, with states and RPs responsible for links back to their own headquarters. The AC command post should be established in proximity to the spill, both to facilitate command and to positively influence public perceptions. The preplanned AC physical setup should be modeled on SONS 97, with separate rooms for separate cells, a common room for meetings, etc.

Logistics Protocols and Procedures. The lack of a preplanned AC protocol adversely impacts the initial effectiveness of the SONS AC. Several major areas have not been defined: the logistics role in development of the AC strategic plan, mechanisms for how AC cells communicate internally, and the planning cycle for AC. Resolution of this issue involves providing AC Logistics with timely access to resource requirements as described in IC's IAPs, and developing timely access to resource databases.

Strategy Options and Recommendations. The Logistics Functional Group developed the following strategy options and recommendations:

- Cross-pollinate functional areas.
- Develop a unified resource tracking database or develop a resource tracking database that is transparent between RPs and government agencies.
- The CG should develop a SONS equivalent to Field Operations Guide and an appropriate resource support plan, i.e., high volume internal/external communications support package, etc.

FINANCE

Responsible Party Liability. Players felt that responsible party cooperation was of top priority. In the Northern spill, the RP was expected to reach his limit of liability during the response. RP money will likely be not sufficient to address third party claims. The liability for such claims must still be addressed. In the Southern spill, sufficient funds are available for the short term costs because of the combined liability of the two representatives (assuming no negligence), however, if interim claims are paid out early they will reach their limit of liability before cleanup is complete. Players agreed that short term funds were not a critical concern.

Sharing of Information. One of the most critical aspects of working with a Unified Command is communication. The responsible parties were concerned that immediate and open lines of communication be maintained in order to avoid future problems concerning liability for cost of cleanup (e.g., government must coordinate with the RPs on all matters relating to resource allocation to ensure utilization is aligned with need). All RPs agreed to share claims information with the government to minimize any duplication of effort.

The finance group agreed that close monitoring the contracts is necessary to maintain resource utilization efficiency.

Finance Interfacing with RPs. Some discussion was generated regarding the coordination of financial obligations with the RPs. The communication between the government and the RPs is critical to ensuring timely identification of resources, obligations, and expenditure data. The RPs agreed to accept responsibility, at least up to the limit of liability, pending further investigation. Investigations would be conducted to determine further liability.

Cost Tracking. The players agreed that since these are two separate incidents and liability is shared three ways, the costs should be tracked separately. Players felt that it was important to maintain a long term projection to prevent budget overruns. Projecting costs is the most essential aspect of making sure all future claims are covered in addition to cleanup. Concern was expressed that the “big picture” of total cost be maintained. Keeping track of burn rates is essential to the overall cost management of the response effort.

Follow on Effort Study. Further study should concentrate on what to do when the limits of liability are reached. There were many questions raised regarding this issue, including, the ability to predict future costs and interim claims payments. More emphasis should be put on the timing of claims. The issue of what percentage of the budget should be applied to the incident response and what percentage should go towards the third party claims need to be addressed.

SONS PRESS STATEMENT TO THE NATION

Philadelphia, PA - As you all know by now there has been a major oil spill off the coast of Delaware and New Jersey. Unfortunately two crew members on board one of the ships involved are missing and presumed dead. We'd like to express our heart felt sympathies to the families of both individuals.

I'd like to assure the American public that we are bringing every available resource to minimize the impact to the people in the effected area.

I have designated Vice Admiral Roger Rufe of the US Coast Guard to lead the unified response to these incidents.

The Coast Guard is working closely with federal, state and local agencies as well as the responsible parties to ensure the safety of the American Public. Our objectives are:

- to minimize damage to our marine environment
- to effectively employ every response asset
- to minimize the economic impact of the spill

Text for Vice Admiral Rufe

At approximately 11:30 last night, the Liberian tanker *Tromso Reliance* and the Liberian tanker *Knock An* collided at the mouth of the Delaware River.

Our latest reports indicate that 13 million gallons of oil have been released into the marine environment as this result of this collision. This amount exceeds the quantity released by the Exxon VALDEZ in 1989. Due to the large amount of oil spilled the shore line from New Jersey to Virginia is threatened.

A second unrelated spill occurred approximately five hours later near Shark River, NJ. This 500,000 gallon spill was a result of a collision between the fishing vessel *Janet C* and *Brouhard barge 115*.

The spill is larger than any other suffered by our country. The environment will be impacted. We anticipate a lot of oil impacting the beaches. Our first concern is the health, safety and well-being of our families and communities. Clean up activities will mean that beaches will be closed.

I'm here to share with you the knowledge and confidence I have in the first responder's abilities to protect the citizens of our commentates. They have been trained to protect human health and our environment and solve the issue before us.

So far the following actions have been taken to protect the public and the environment:

- All three vessels have been stabilized and no more oil is being released into the environment.
- All the vessels have been surrounded by containment booms
- We are skimming oil off the surface of the water

- Surveys with wildlife organizations are being conducted
- Containment booms and personnel have been deployed to environmentally sensitive areas to minimize damage
- Thousands of gallons of dispersants have been applied.

The causes of these collisions are under investigation

The size of these two spills has put a drain on the nation's response capabilities.

I want to assure you that all the parties involved in this clean-up are working closely together to ensure the safety of the public and to minimize the damage to the environment and the affected economies. We remain committed to staying here on scene until the job is done.

Philadelphia Move 2

INCIDENT AREA COMMAND GROUP

Functional Issues. The most substantive discussions of Move Two concerned issues relating to the functions to be performed by the IAC and other organizations. It was agreed that the focus of the IAC should be at the strategic level, and that they should be engaged in such activities as strategic planning and establishing strategic objectives. In this context, there was recognition that the real job of the IAC is management, not oil cleanup. Players acknowledged that they had probably been paying more attention to cleanup issues than warranted, but this may simply reflect a fundamental tenet of human nature: it is always easier to deal with specific and concrete matters (like numbers of skimmers and boom placement) than it is to think conceptually and deal with broad issues.

Players agreed that one way to determine appropriate functions for the IAC is to look at the functions being performed by the FOSCs, identify those where the same discrete function is being performed separately at all (3 in this case) FOSCs, and see if there could be efficiencies achieved – with no loss of effectiveness – if these functions could be brought to the IAC level and performed there. Disposal was cited as an area where this might be possible, and setting up a Joint Claims Center at the IAC was another. If this approach is successfully implemented, it would result in the FOSCs within the incident area becoming essentially the Operations Section of the larger organization. In any case, it was agreed that these functional assignments need to be identified and understood before an incident, and not developed ad hoc while an incident is in progress.

While it was agreed that the IAC needed to focus at the strategic level and deal with strategic issues, this should not imply that the FOSCs don't have strategies to deal with incidents. They do. The IAC's role should be to look at the overall strategy for the area, which might include examining the individual FOSC strategies to ensure they don't conflict.

There was a strong consensus that the term FOSC carries a lot with it in terms of responsibilities and authority. Further, local/county/state and other officials are used to working with FOSCs and are comfortable with this. The IAC should not jeopardize these relationships by trying to move up to the area level functions that are more appropriately handled at the FOSC level. Having said this, players agreed that the FOSCs definitely need someone at a higher level to deal – in the words of one of the FOSCs in attendance – “with all the political elephants and that sort of thing”.

Organizational Issues. Discussion during Move Two focused on issues relating to the organization of the IAC and related entities. Some players expressed a concern that the creation of the IAC might just add another layer of bureaucracy to an existing process.

States, RPs and other organizations simply don't have enough people to send to a variety of locations. These organizations need to have their representatives go to the place(s) where their interests and needs can be best represented. An RP may feel a need/desire to be both at the FOSC and at IAC, but may not be able to cover both.

Players discussed the likelihood that the a flag officer (probably a 3-star) at the IAC would be designated the overall FOSC, and the other FOSCs within the incident area would essentially function like "component commanders", to use military terminology. While this made sense organizationally, a concern was expressed that this would make the Admiral and the IAC a "super spill manager", and this is not a function the IAC should have.

“Vector” Issues. In Move One, players used a diagram showing three vectors as a mechanism to focus their discussions. The three vectors were: political, economic, and environmental. Players returned to this device in Move Two, again as a tool to focus their discussions, although time did not permit a detailed examination of each of them.

On the political side, for example, players saw a major role for the IAC in handling matters of political protocol, such as arranging visits to the incident area by Governors, etc. There was some discussion here of issues associated with the potential for criminal investigation and prosecution – clearly a critical issue for RPs. The broad issue here was judged to be beyond the scope of this seminar, but should be highlighted for further investigation.

On the economic side, players noted that economic factors must be included in the strategy being developed. The objective here is to minimize the negative impact on affected sectors.

Extensive discussions were held on public information topics. Players agreed that they cut across all three vectors. Players saw a need to be proactive in public affairs matters. Advances made since EXXON VALDEZ should be highlighted. There is potential for many public education topics, for example pointing out that in some cases going in to clean up might cause more damage than leaving the oil there. Players also discussed the importance of managing expectations. We want to build public confidence in our ability to handle the problem, but we don't want to become spin doctors. We need to define the dimensions of the problem (the MOEs) and convey these, so the public knows what to expect. Its also important to tell the public what they need to know concerning their own behavior (don't eat the seafood, don't go to the beach, etc.).

Dissemination. The final major issue discussed concerned "getting the word out". The question was expressed as: "How do we institutionalize what we have done and learned in the last two days, so we're not the only ones benefiting from this experience?" Several options were discussed (an Appendix to the National Contingency Plan, putting information on the Internet, informal conversations, etc.). In any case, there was agreement that this issue of dissemination needs to be pursued further.

PLANNING FUNCTIONAL GROUP

In addition to developing the plenary products, the Planning Group addressed the topic -- "Looking at the Next Step of the Process -- Focused Primarily on Planning Functions."

How do we encourage interrelationships at the "Area level"? There is currently no mechanism for continued communication that will support follow-on coordination -- beyond this SONS Seminar event. The following actions were identified to further the process:

- As a start -- promulgate results to states of the eastern seaboard
- Promulgate critical issues to the Area Committee to facilitate continued engagement

Delineating the roles of the Area Command and the incident level. Players discussed differences between planning functions at these two levels. The major differences involve level of objectives and time horizon for planning. At the incident level, strategy directly supports operational planning across a timeline of one to two days. At the Area Command Level, strategy is overriding and spans a longer period -- perhaps to a month or beyond. It is the Area Command responsibility to conduct longer range projections and initiate necessary longer range actions. The following additional Area Command responsibilities were identified:

- "What if" planning
- Checking compatibility of objectives and de conflicting where necessary
- Comparing strategies at the incident level and initiating the necessary adjustments/direction

Information flow. The players agreed that a SONS follow-on working group should be established to deal with the specifics of information flow and information needs -- both up and down the structure. Specifics need to be developed to provide sufficient information to each level, yet not overwhelm the planning staffs.

Identifying critical resources. The following actions were identified for follow-on needs in the area of resource identification, tracking, and allocations:

- Identify critical resource categories for tracking
- Build the data base of available resources -- reinspecting ports was suggested, but other data bases are available. The challenge is locating the most reliable information -- the source of which may differ for different resources.

- Build a support tool to assist in tracking and allocation of resources ("Decision Support System")

COMMAND STAFF

Goal and Mentality. Discussions focused on gaining and maintaining public confidence. Players agreed that a mentality needed to be fostered and portrayed in the Coast Guard of empathy and credibility in order for the public to trust that their interests were being met. Accomplishments that would support this mentality were described as cooperation at all levels and managing expectations of the public and state and federal agencies. In their discussions players mentioned many strategic objectives necessary to move towards accomplishing their goal, however they realized that they were not going to fully win public support.

Strategic Objectives. The following highlighted bullets describe the strategic objectives, followed by elaboration on supporting methods:

Put situation in perspective. Using data such as the low percent of oil spilled compared to amount transported and reliance of our economy on oil, create a large, optimistic contextual setting. Point out the changes that have been instituted since the Exxon Valdez spill and have specific data available on these accomplishments. Use visuals to support the notion that advanced technology is being used and that people are onsite and working hard.

Gain and maintain trust. Use laymen's terms and be honest. Carefully select a spokesperson who the public will trust; someone who would get engaged in the situation and tell truths about it.

Present environmental thrust. Invite environmental groups (e.g., Sierra Club, Audubon Society) to voice their concerns and incorporate their interests. Present data that show an environmental concern in the Coast Guard (describe how the Coast Guard has actively participated in environmental protection/preservation).

LOGISTICS

Based on guidance from the IAC Commander that the Functional Groups should concern themselves with the political, economic and environmental aspects of the SONS as they relate to each group's functional area of responsibility during a 30 day time period after the initial spill, the Logistics Group first developed one or more specific objectives for each of these three areas, and then identified several logistics functions that need to be performed at the IAC level to support those objectives.

Political objective: Build public and political confidence in the AC's ability to accomplish the task. Two (of many) ways to accomplish this are by setting up an information clearing house and a good system of "VIP management."

Related logistics functions:

- Information Clearing House
- Provide Service and Support
- Maintain and sustain resources
- Expand communications to international, state, RP, and inter-agency levels.
- Provide support for national press corps.
- VIP Management
- Provide Service and Support
- Transportation
- Facilities (reception, briefing, rest, etc.)
- Security

Environmental objective: Maximize utilization of all available resources.

Related logistics functions:

- * Support phased demobilization/reassignment of resources
- * Estimate future service and support requirements

Economic objective: Minimize adverse effects on affected communities.

Related logistics functions:

- * Utilize fishing fleet for cleanup
- * Utilize community infrastructure to maximum extent possible for support functions

FINANCE

Objectives. The group began the morning with the assumption that the northern spill is under control. The P&I has taken over and costs are covered. The main focus is on the southern spill. Two main objectives were identified as the group focused on the end state of the situation. The first objective is to maintain public confidence by keeping funding issues under control. The second objective is to be good stewards and stay solvent.

The group felt that in order to maintain public confidence the exchange of information with the media is critical. It is important to re-emphasize to the media that the claims processing mechanisms are established. It is necessary to ensure that all of the people potentially affected will continue to receive information on the claims payment process. Stay one step ahead of the media to get the facts publicized.

The group concurred that in order to stay solvent the cost tracking is essential. They need to know on a real-time basis how much money has been spent.

Long-Term Impact. The group identified two “show stoppers” that would hinder the process with long-term impact. The first event addressed was exceeding the cap on recovery efforts and claims. The recommendations were to create a legislative plan which included: (1) increasing the cap on the Federal Emergency Fund, (2) increasing the per incident cap (recognizing two isolated incidents), (3) replenish the existing fund (e.g. re-establish borrowing authority and re-establish the oil tax), (4) coordinate with Trustees on possible legislation change to RDE cap, and (5) foster advocacy among the states’ politicians.

The second event addressed by the group considered what to do when the RPs can no longer sustain funding for third party claims. One course of action would be to expand the infrastructure to assume responsibility for removal activities and claims processing

adjudication. The group felt it was important to immediately set the wheels in motion for necessary legislative action in order to take a proactive position.

Damage Assessment. The Players addressed the need to balance the short term and long term financial impact. It is impossible to give an overall cost breakdown. As the situation changes, the financial needs change as well. Over the short term, described as the Emergency Phase, estimated to be up to 10 days, 100% of funds will go towards the response. The long term, described as the Project Phase, estimated to be 10 - 60 days, will have a shift in monetary allocation of which 85% will go towards claims and 15% will go towards response. The assumption was made that after 60 days the cleanup will be complete. Claims were projected to be paid through the next 3 years.