

WELCOME REMARKS BY RADM(NS) LUI TUCK YEW, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE (MPA), AT THE APEC WORKSHOP ON OIL SPILL RESPONSE AND PLANNING ON 25 MARCH 2004 AT THE SHANGRI-LA, SINGAPORE

Your Excellency, Mr Frank Lavin, United States Ambassador to Singapore, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning to all of you.

It is a great pleasure for me to join you this morning at the Workshop on Oil Spill Response and Planning jointly organised by the United States Minerals Management Service and the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore. Allow me to first extend a warm welcome to all participants who are here today, especially those who have come from abroad and to wish you a pleasant and enjoyable stay in Singapore.

We are pleased to be able to jointly organise this workshop with the United States' Minerals Management Service. This workshop will update us on the latest approaches and technologies adopted by maritime nations in preventing and combating oil spills. It is a subject to which we, in Singapore, attach great importance, and I trust that the discussions and sharing of knowledge and techniques at this workshop will be meaningful and rewarding.

Last year, we recorded some 135,000 vessel calls in Singapore, totalling 986 million gross tons. The narrow waters of the Singapore Strait in the midst of one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world dictate that we must be especially vigilant since a major maritime accident in this vicinity could significantly disrupt shipping traffic resulting in serious repercussions for the world's economy. Hence, we view the potential of maritime incidents seriously and have put in place comprehensive

measures to enhance security and navigational safety as well as well-tested procedures to clean up oil and chemical spills should they occur.

I will leave the topic of maritime security to another occasion. On measures to enhance safety of navigation in the narrow and busy straits of Malacca and Singapore and in our port waters, we have introduced several measures. To enhance the coverage and effectiveness of the state-of-the-art radar-based Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS), which has been in place since 1990, we have added 2 more radars to the existing network of 9 radars. 3 more Automatic Identification System (AIS) base stations will also be added by July 2004 to the existing 2 AIS base stations to help enhance the safety of navigation. The integration of the AIS transponder system with the VTIS, and the use of the Differential Global Positioning System enable MPA to identify and track ships for all AIS-equipped ships calling at Singapore.

Quality training is also an important feature to enhance navigational safety. Our Integrated Simulation Centre established in 2002, and run on a not for profit basis, is now widely used by the maritime community for high-end individual and team training. It has contributed immensely to equip mariners with the right mindset and skill set to respond to contingencies. Such training is an on-going aspect of the aviation industry and a key contributor to aviation safety. Pilots are put through stringent tests on a regular basis and the renewal of their flying licence depends in part on how well they perform in such examinations ashore. Is there something here that we can learn from the aviation industry?

Even with the best preventive measures, accidents happen with some resulting in pollution. MPA takes a co-ordinated approach towards combating pollution. MPA has developed a Marine Emergency Action Procedure to deal with various types of marine emergencies such as collisions, groundings and oil and chemical pollutions. Depending on the severity of the marine emergencies, a host of public and private sector organisations such as the Singapore Civil Defence Force, oil companies and the local oil spill response companies such as East Asia Response Private Limited (EARL) and the Singapore Oil Spill Response Centre (SOSRC) will be called upon to assist MPA in dealing with the marine emergencies. To enhance our readiness to combat oil and chemical spills, we carry out yearly exercises on our Oil Spill Contingency Plan and the Chemical Contingency Plan.

The use of MPA's Oil Spill Model is another important factor for MPA to successfully combat oil spill operations. Using a sophisticated and proven model to provide hourly updates on wind direction, tidal currents, and other aerial and ground inputs to track the movement of oil, we are able to accurately predict the movement of spilled oil, thereby allowing us to effectively deploy anti-pollution craft and equipment to expedite clean up operations.

The regular exercises and the Oil Spill Model helped us to manage two major oil spill clean-up operations. The EVOIKOS (in 15 Oct 1997) and NATUNA SEA (in 3 Oct 2000) oil spills were successfully cleaned up by the MPA with assistance from the entire community. The "EVOIKOS" spilled some 28,500 tonnes of marine fuel oil after colliding with another supertanker. This is a significant volume, especially so given the close proximity to shore. These accidents happened despite advance

warnings from the Singapore Vessel Traffic Information Service. During both these incidents, the shipping traffic was unaffected and the tourist resorts and the shore marine facilities remained open for business. The total clean-up cost and damages were of the order of \$15 million.

Another key component in the prevention and combat of oil spill is the use of legislation. Singapore has acceded to the IMO's Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation Convention in March 1990. We have also acceded to the Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Co-operation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances in October 2003. This OPRC-HNS Protocol aims to facilitate international co-operation and mutual assistance in preparing for and responding to HNS pollution incidents and to encourage states to develop and maintain adequate capabilities to deal with HNS pollution emergencies. To give effect to the OPRC-HNS Protocol in Singapore, a new set of regulations will be introduced in April 2004 although the protocol has yet to come into force worldwide.

Ensuring that Singapore remains one of the world's busiest port and a major hub port is critical in MPA's continuing drive to develop Singapore as an International Maritime Centre. Although we have done well in the area of oil spill response and planning, we cannot sit back and rest on our laurels. MPA can count on an experienced and tested team. We must however continue to improve on our preparedness and response to ensure the safety of navigation, the prevention of oil pollution and effectively manage and combat any future oil spill incidents to avert a major catastrophe.

On this note, I wish all of you will have a fruitful and interesting day ahead.

Thank you.

OPENING REMARKS

AMBASSADOR FRANK LAVIN

Thanks for that introduction Kathy. And thank you Rear Admiral Lui for Singapore's hosting and co-sponsoring this workshop with the United States.

It is good to see so many representatives here today from APEC economies and from the petroleum industry. For this is a true transnational issue, and it is a public-private issue as well. It is these two themes - cross-border and cross-sector -- that I would like to leave with you today.

As to the transnational point, the business of transporting petroleum and chemicals is about as globalized as you can get. I am reminded of the vessel Prestige, which sank off the coast of Spain in November 2002. Here was a Liberian tanker, registered in the Bahamas, managed in Greece, and chartered by a company in Switzerland. The oil spilled affected primarily the Spanish coast, but the effects on bird populations went beyond Spain. One of the sad lessons of this episode was that a ship in distress was turned away by authorities in Spain and Portugal because it represented a risk. As a result the ship broke apart on the high seas, resulting in a far greater environmental disaster. The Prestige could go on leaking its remaining cargo of 20 million gallons - approximately twice what the Exxon Valdez spilled in Alaska - until the year 2006 or beyond.

The public-private point is worth reflecting on as well. Regulators need to work with industry, which often has useful ideas and procedures in place. Industry realizes that spills represent an economic loss. By keeping in regular discussion with industry, regulators can devise approaches that are realistic and respect commercial logic.

For its part, industry also needs to work with the regulators. All of our citizens want a safe and clean environment. If industry does not respond to this fundamental law of human nature, they put their operations in jeopardy. What country can host a company that puts the environment at risk?

The point is that good prevention and response strategies can cut down on the costs of an oil spill. But no one country working alone, nor governments nor the private sector by themselves, can mount effective prevention and response efforts. In the case of the Prestige, lack of accountability turned a manageable bad situation into an unmanageable catastrophe.

This workshop has an important role to play in bringing authorities and the private sector together to identify best practices that we can then shape into our own local prevention and response strategies. We are all here to share ideas because we understand that there is no competitive advantage to keeping response measures secret.

APEC members include some of the leading oil refiners, shippers, and processors as well as the world's largest fleets and most vital sea lanes. There is no more appropriate gathering of talent and necessity to tackle this issue. Ladies and gentlemen, the United States is glad to join Singapore in co-sponsoring this conference. I wish you every success in your mission.

Thank you.