

13 – 15 Sep 2005

REPORT OF THE NAVTEX CO-ORDINATING PANEL

Submitted by: **Chairman of the IMO NAVTEX Co-ordinating Panel**

1. ACTION REQUIRED:

See paragraphs 4 & 5 below.

2. BACKGROUND:

The Terms of Reference of the NAVTEX Panel are in the NAVTEX Manual, Annex 1.

3. COMMENTS:

a. **NAVTEX INFRASTRUCTURE.** The routine work of the Panel is associated with the provision of identifying letters and time slots for approved additions to the NAVTEX infrastructure. Since the last meeting of the Commission, the following items have been processed by the Panel:

i. **International NAVTEX Service (518 kHz):**

- Ecuador, Ayora (Galapagos Islands), new station established.
- Germany, Pinneberg, discussions ongoing with respect to Service Areas.
- Iran, Chabahar, not supported as already within the Service Area of Muscat (Oman) and that station has adequate capacity for increased traffic.
- Iran, Fereydoon Kenar (Caspian Sea), approved in principle, but for further discussion under Agenda Item 3.4.1.2.
- Tunisia, not supported as already adequate coverage in this area from Malta and adjacent Italian stations.
- Algeria, Algiers, approved in principle but discussions are ongoing with the NAVAREA Co-ordinator and adjacent states with respect to Service Areas.
- Denmark, Faeroe Islands, approved in principle but discussions are ongoing with the NAVAREA Co-ordinator and adjacent states with respect to Service Areas.
- Italy, relocation of all NAVTEX stations and reduction from 4 stations to 3, discussions are ongoing with the NAVAREA Co-ordinator and adjacent states with respect to Service Areas.

ii. **National NAVTEX Service (490 kHz):**

- Uruguay, service in Spanish is now operational.
- Turkey, service in Turkish is now under trial.
- Romania, Constanta, new station established.
- Spain, Norway, Germany, Italy, Algeria, Denmark and Iceland, services planned.

iii. **National NAVTEX Service (4209.5 kHz):**

- Turkey, service in Turkish is now under trial.
- Vietnam, Hai Phong, service planned.
- USA, New Orleans, service planned.

b. **CURRENT OPERATIONAL ISSUES.**

i. **Management of transmission overruns and interference.**

- The B₁ character of Grimeton International NAVTEX station in Sweden was changed from 'D' to 'I' and the transmission time slot amended accordingly on 1 December 2004. This provides a group of three consecutive time-slots for the stations controlled by Stockholm Radio (Bjuroklubb, Gislövshammar and Grimeton) and allows the Baltic sub-area co-ordinator to manage NAVTEX transmissions better in this area where frequent and lengthy ice-warning messages are common during the winter. There has been no requirement to change any other B₁ characters and associated time slots in order to reduce interference during this period.
- Reports have been received regarding the regular reception of the NAVTEX broadcast from some Mediterranean stations by vessels in the Baltic, and reception of the broadcast from American stations by vessels off the Irish Coast. These cases have always occurred at night and so could be attributed to "Night Effect", but for each reported case the Panel confirms that power output is correctly reduced at night by the respective stations.

ii. **Data Formatting.**

- Data formatting concerns have been raised with the Panel both in terms of overall formatting of broadcasts from particular stations and also with regard to individual message formatting. The worst case of poor broadcast formatting reported was one administration issuing a weather forecast under B₂ character E which was followed immediately within the same message by 3 navigational warnings, two of which although different in content had been allocated the same number, the weather forecast was then repeated and that was followed by another navigational warning before the end of message function NNNN was transmitted. Apart from the obvious confusion on receipt of such a message, it is worth noting that had the receiver been programmed to inhibit reception of B₂ character E, none of the navigational warnings would have been received with the potential consequences for the safety of the vessel. In this case there was a problem with managing the messages and getting them broadcast correctly. Both the Panel and the appropriate NAVAREA Co-ordinator have attempted to assist the administration in conforming to the procedures in the relevant guidance documents.
- New guidelines and an abbreviations list for meteorological bulletins on NAVTEX have been agreed with the WMO JCOMM ETMSS and will be presented to the next plenary session of WMO JCOMM in September 2005 for formal adoption. Work is in hand by some administrations in Western Europe to start implementing these guidelines in advance of formal adoption by WMO.

iii. **NAVTEX Service Areas.**

- The issue of ensuring each station broadcasting on 518 kHz has agreed service area limits has been raised before at the Commission and at recent IMO COMSAR sub-committee meetings. IHO published a Circular Letter on the subject in 2003, and COMSAR Circ 34 also addressed this subject. In the western and central Mediterranean, proposals by Italy and Algeria for new or re-located stations have led to a requirement to re-examine all existing service area limits in this region. The Panel has now adopted a policy of not issuing B₁ characters for new stations on 518 kHz until service area limits are agreed with all concerned.

iv. **National Language Broadcasts on the International NAVTEX Service.**

- Administrations were reminded at IMO COMSAR 8 and again at IMO COMSAR 9 that IMO MSC 74 approved the recommendation of IMO COMSAR 5 that non-English language broadcasts should be migrated from the International NAVTEX frequency (518 kHz) to national NAVTEX services (on 490 kHz or 4209.5 kHz) by 1 January 2005. (This was promulgated by COMSAR/Circ 28). Notwithstanding this deadline that has passed, there remain more than 20 stations (in Greece, Argentina, China, Chile and Peru) where there are still national language broadcasts on this frequency, and no proposals for the transfer of these services to other frequencies have been received.

v. **Use of the WWNWS for promulgating other subject matter.**

- There is continual pressure on the Panel to agree the use of NAVTEX for promulgating new types of information. Whilst many of these requests are of significant value to the mariner, it remains the case that there is only limited capacity on the International NAVTEX frequency, and the Panel must therefore take a very strict view of such requests. Two particular subjects have come to the attention of the panel since the last meeting and these will be discussed under agenda item 3.4.2:
 - **WHO Advisory Messages.** The World Health Organization requires an effective means of rapidly broadcasting advisory messages to shipping world-wide. These messages should be few in number, will be of a general nature and will relate to significant outbreaks of

communicable diseases. Shipping will be particularly interested in messages relating to both ports recently visited and destination countries. Use of the WWNWS (through relevant NAVAREA Co-ordinators) has been suggested as a possible means of promulgating these messages. The issue for discussion is whether this is the correct channel for promulgation and, if so, which B₂/C₂ code should be used (perhaps a new one?). Any changes to existing policy may require an update to the Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on MSI and the parent IMO resolutions.

- **ISPS Code - Security States.** The Panel has received several enquiries concerning the possible use of WWNWS broadcast facilities for issuing messages relating to the ISPS Code. Promulgation of changes in the security state of major ports (which may have a significant impact on shipping operations and movement) and the associated territorial sea are a particular concern. France also raised this issue at IMO COMSAR 9. As above there are potential implications for guidance publications and IMO resolutions.

c. **ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**

i. **Publication of the new edition of the NAVTEX Manual.**

- Announcement of the new NAVTEX Manual which will come into force on 1st January 2006, was made in IMO MSC/Circ.1122. The full text of the NAVTEX Manual is attached as an annex to this circular.

ii. **Update of IMO Resolution A.801(19), Annex 4.**

- Following an ITU submission to COMSAR 9, IMO MSC 80 adopted a revised Annex 4 for Resolution A.801 (19) on 'Criteria for use when providing a NAVTEX service'. These changes primarily affect the method of calculation of ground-wave coverage from each station.

4. RECOMMENDATION(S):

It is recommended that the Commission:

- a. Considers raising the issue of national language broadcasts on 518 kHz (para 3.b.iv above) in an IHO CL.
- b. Considers the comments regarding other subject matter (para 3.b.v above) under Agenda Item 3.4.2.
- c. Considers WWNWS provision in the Caspian Sea (para 3.a.i.- 4th bullet, above) under Agenda Item 3.4.1.2
- d. Notes the remainder of the report.

5. ACTION REQUESTED:

See paragraph 4 above