

# **A Concept from a Concern:**

## **THE ARCTIC EMERGENCY LIAISON OFFICE**

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# THE NEW ARCTIC

- Climate change being observed most dramatically in the Arctic
- Significant geographical/fossil fuel/economic advantages exist, plus potential presence of fossil fuel resources are drawing world-wide interest and action to exploit
- Increasing accessibility via land, sea and air
- Increasing human presence and activity
- Growing public interest in what the Arctic might hold for society.

## ARE WE ENTERING “THE ARCTIC AGE”?

# WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

- Arctic development raises the probability of various accidents and casualties
- People are generally unprepared and untrained for the Arctic
- Arctic emergency response resources and expertise are limited
  - Few ports and very little infrastructure
- Emergency response resources are also often widely disbursed:
  - Randomly throughout the Arctic
  - Often they are NOT in the Arctic
- Individual Arctic expertise often covers the entire Arctic area
  - An event-specific expert may well fill that role in several countries, not just his own (recall 'Red' Adair, the Texan, who put out oil well fires in Kuwait)

## MANY RELEVANT AND RECENT NEWS STORIES ON ARCTIC ACCIDENTS

- “International community needs to act before that window (of opportunity) closes . . . ” (UK/US)
- “Environmental researchers at UC Santa Barbara urge international cooperation on (Arctic) governance issues . . . ” (US)
- “Arctic ship disaster highly likely . . .” (CA)
- “Military rehearses for Arctic disaster.” (CA)
- “Oil spill accidents have to be prevented in advance .” (FI)
- “Cruise ships are so large that no country . . . is capable of mounting a sufficient rescue operation.” (DN)

# WHAT CAN HAPPEN?

- CASUALTIES.....all of which are more difficult to combat in the Arctic
  - **Man Overboard/ Search and Rescue**
  - **Serious Illness or Injury**
  - **Shipboard Propulsion Failure**
  - **Shipboard Fire/ Flooding**
  - **Collision/ Grounding at Sea**
  - **Oil Spill**
- Arctic weather or ice conditions can suddenly change
  - **The inexperienced will certainly challenge the “shoulder season”**
- As we learned in the EXXON VALDEZ spill, proper response must be:
  - **Prepared, timely and knowledgeable**

# WHAT WILL BE THE REACTION?

- The aftermath of a (serious) casualty in the Arctic, if the response is slow, poorly coordinated and / or ineffective will result in:
  - **Press coverage that won't stop**
  - **National and International outrage**
  - **Legal turmoil**
  - **Arctic development could well cease for a generation (particularly if oil is involved)**
- What happens in (or near) one country could well generate a response from other Arctic nations
  - **Proximity will demand it**

# THE ILULISSAT DECLARATION OF 28 MAY 2008

- The 5 Arctic Coastal States agreed to work cooperatively in the Arctic under existing international framework . . . Including the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
- They pledged to manage and protect the Arctic Ecosystem and Environment responsibly in face of:
  - **Increased Economic Activity**
  - **Increased Terrorism**
  - **Increased Resource Development**
  - **Increased Research**
- They committed to strengthen casualty / accident response capability

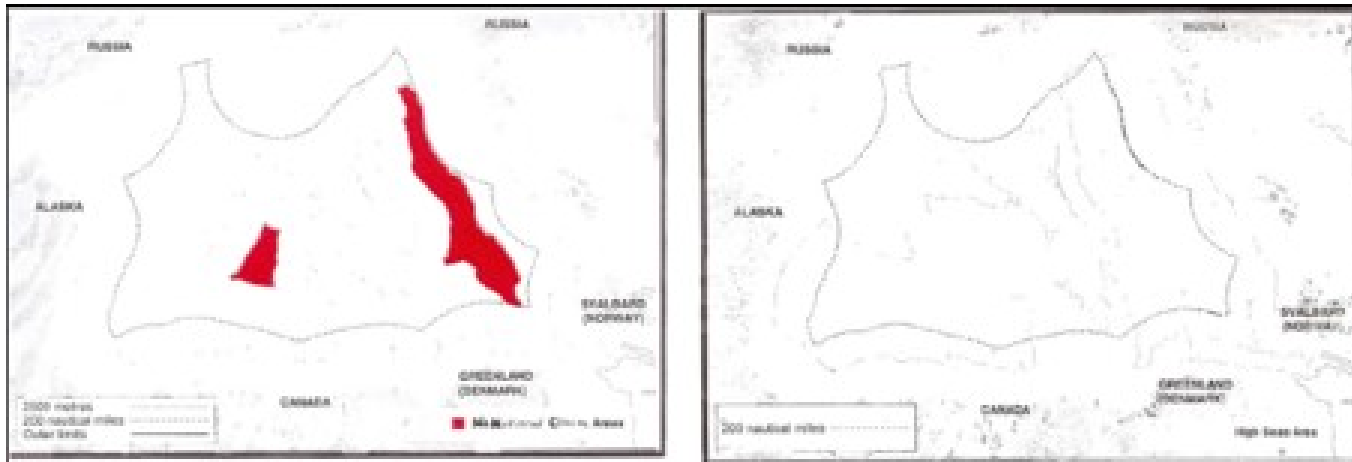
# WHO IS IN CHARGE ?

- Regional vs. International: Territorial Sea/EEZ vs “high seas”
- Worldwide Navigational Warning Service (WWNWS) coming to Arctic, 1 January 2011.
  - International system under IMO/IHO/WMO
  - System designed to alert all mariners to hazards
- UNCLOS sets rules and responsibilities
  - Articles 39, 98, 192, 194, 242, and others apply
- The future Arctic will include presence of many nations beyond the Arctic littoral states.



# REGIONAL vs INTERNATIONAL IN PERSPECTIVE

- EEZ and territorial sea – REGIONAL ?  
plus
- ECS and High Seas – INTERNATIONAL ?  
or
- High Seas, ECS, EEZ and Territorial Sea – INTERNATIONAL ?



***CAN IT HAPPEN?***

# POLAR\* CRUISE SHIP INCIDENT / ACCIDENT STATISTICS (1)

	Total	Since 2000
Cruise Ships Sunk (1979 – 2007)	8	5
Ship Groundings (1972 – 2007)	27	16
Pollution / Environmental Violations (1992 – 2007)	40	18
Disablings by Collision, Fire, Property Loss, etc (1979 – 2007)	28	22

\* Arctic and Antarctic

(1) Various Sources

# EXAMPLE: SIGNIFICANT OIL SPILL IN ICE

- Correct response now limited by a lack of research, plus few skilled personnel and dispersed material resources
- In such a spill, who loses?
  1. The Environment
  2. The Public
  3. The Host Nation (and perhaps other states)
  4. All the Oil Companies
  5. The Global Economy

...i.e., **EVERYBODY!**

# OBJECTIVE CONCERNS FOR ARCTIC CASUALTY RESPONSE

- **Opening the Arctic Seas** – Envisioning Disasters and Forming Solutions Workshop at UNH, Durham, March 2008
  - Report out - January 2009
- **Arctic Maritime Shipping Assessment**
  - Ship or Ship-caused Casualties
  - Released in April 2009
- **“InfoNorth”** in the Journal Arctic, June 2008
  - Focused on Arctic Cruise Tourism in Canadian Arctic
- **“Our Arctic Neighbors: Tanker Collision Tests Russian Readiness”**, Petroleum News, Oct. 26, 2008
  - Exercise in oil spill response at Varanday Terminal in Barents Sea
- **Ilulissat Declaration**, May 2008
  - Agreement between the 5 Arctic Littoral Nations
- **“Arctic Region Policy”**, NSPD-66/HSPD-2S, Jan 12, 2009
  - Focus is on SAR needs and international cooperation

# THE SOLUTION?

**An  
Arctic Emergency  
Liaison Office  
(AELO)  
(sometimes called: "Arctic 911")**

- **To Provide a broad international focus yielding coordinated responses.**

# ARCTIC EMERGENCY LIAISON OFFICE CONCEPT

- Located in any Arctic Littoral country with excellent, high-latitude international communications
  - Satellites, HF to UHF Radio, Telephones, Computer connectivity
  - Specific location does not have to be in the Arctic
  - Consider co-location with Worldwide Navigation Warning Service resources (coming to the Arctic - Jan 2011)
- All emergencies, not just SAR
- International staffing, 24/7
  - Internationally funded
- Knowledge of international Arctic resources: experts, material readiness, capability and location (where/who/what/how)
- A liaison/information office – NOT a management office
- An “Arctic 911” Dispatcher

# THERE IS PRECEDENT

- Loss of Russian submarine Kursk inspired the International Submarine Emergency Rescue Liaison Office (ISMERLO)
- Internationally manned in Norfolk, VA
- First real action was to enable the rescue of the Russian “MIR” submersible off Petropavlsk in Summer 2004 (Four countries involved: RU/UK/US/JA)
- Oil companies near Singapore/Straits of Mallaca have somewhat similar centers, also with a single focus



# EXISTING NATIONAL ARCTIC EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTERS

- All Arctic Nations have capability
- Some more developed than others
- Limited international linkage
- Noted National Assets:
  - U.S. Coast Guard / North Slope Rescue Coordination
  - Canadian Coast Guard / National Energy Board
  - Russian Ministry of Civil Preparedness and Response
  - Norwegian Coast Guard and Arctic Emergency Office
  
- BUT . . .

- An INTERNATIONAL AREA  
demands an  
INTERNATIONAL SOLUTION
  
- In conjunction with existing treaties and organizations:
  - UNCLOS
  - WWMWS
  - SOLAS
  - GMDSS
  - IMO/IHO/WMO

# GETTING STARTED

- International Maritime Organization (IMO): Create the requirement
  - They set the rules of the oceans
- The ARCTIC COUNCIL has directed their representative Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) to study the issue (Apr '09)
- Develop the concept: who/what/where/how and . . .how much??
- **THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW, NOT AFTER THE FIRST ACCIDENT**

# THE COST?

- Cost shared by those who STAND TO LOSE from a maritime casualty:
  - Arctic Nations
  - Ship Owners
  - Oil And Gas Companies
  - Arctic NGOs
  - Local Governments
  - Fees on Users of the Ocean and Land
  - Insurers
  - Environmental Groups (You Bet!)

# FINAL THOUGHTS

- AELO cost is small when compared to the safety-value-added
- The Arctic Emergency Liaison Office (“Arctic 911”) would be a low cost insurance policy for ALL who are interested in the Arctic region