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The Honorable Efthimios Mitropoulos
Secretary-General
International Maritime Organization
4 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SR
United Kingdom

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

I commend the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV) for their pioneering efforts in the development of a worldwide radionavigation system for maritime interests.

I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate the United States Government's position regarding the Standard Positioning Service (SPS) of the Global Positioning System (GPS) for use by the international community pursuant to Assembly Resolution A.953(23). As the United States has made clear at the IMO as well as at the International Civil Aviation Organization Assembly (ICAO), the United States intends, subject to the availability of funds as required by United States law, to make GPS SPS available for the foreseeable future, on a continuous, worldwide basis and free of direct user fees. This service will be available on a nondiscriminatory basis to all users at the performance levels specified in the SPS Performance Standard, which exceed the requirements contained in the Resolution. The United States government plans to take all necessary measures for the foreseeable future to maintain the integrity, reliability and availability of the GPS SPS and expects to provide at least six years' notice prior to any termination of GPS operations or elimination of the GPS SPS.

The GPS SPS is already a component of the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) as supported by IMO, as well as ICAO. The United States believes that continuing to provide GPS to the international community will enable States to take full advantage of this valuable technology as a component of GNSS. The availability of GPS SPS, of course, is not intended in any way to limit the rights of any State to control the operations of vessels and enforce safety regulations within its territorial waters.

I would be grateful if you could confirm that the IMO is satisfied with the foregoing, which I submit in lieu of an agreement. In that event, this letter and your reply will comprise mutual understandings regarding the GPS between the Government of the United States and the International Maritime Organization.

Sincerely,

THAD W. ALLEN
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Commandant