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SECTION 01 OF 02
SUBJ: FINAL ACTION MESSAGE ON USCGC THEHTIS (WMEC 510) CLASS A MISHAP INVOLVING THE CAPSIZING OF A HAITIAN SAILING VESSEL


2. CLASSIFICATION. THIS MISHAP IS A CLASS A MISHAP DUE TO THE LOSS OF TWO HAITIANS PRESUMED DROWNED.

3. CAUSES. THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF THIS INCIDENT WAS THAT THE HAITIAN VESSEL WERE EXTREMELY OVERLOADED AND COULD NOT SURVIVE THE UNFAVORABLE SEA AND WIND CONDITIONS.

4. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS. THE FOLLOWING WERE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS IN THIS MISHAP:
   A. THE INSTABILITY OF THE SAILBOAT INCREASED OVER TIME DUE TO THE FOLLOWING: (1) THE VESSEL'S CENTER OF GRAVITY WAS RAISED AS PEOPLE CAME TO SIDE TO BE OFF-LOADED. (THE PROBLEM MAY HAVE BEEN AGGRAVATED BY THE FREE SURFACE EFFECT OF WATER IN THE HOLD). (2) THE VESSEL CHANGED COURSE TO MATCH THEHTIS HELD RECOVERY MANEUVER PUTTING IT IN THE "ROUGH." (3) ABOUT THREE HOURS AFTER THE INITIAL SIZING, WHILE ON THIS PARALLEL COURSE TO THEHTIS, THE SAILBOAT'S ROLLER BROKE, AND (4) NEXT THE SAIL WAS LOWERED. FURTHER REDUCING
E. THE THETIS CREW WAS VERY INEXPERIENCED IN AMIO. THEY CONDUCTED A GREAT DEAL OF TRAINING PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT WHICH PROVED TO BE VERY HELPFUL. THE ULTIMATE RESCUE OF 48 PEOPLE CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE MANY THINGS THAT WERE DONE CORRECTLY BY THETIS. THE CO AND CREW RECOGNIZED AND PREPARED FOR THE CONTINGENCY OF A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE WATER. THE COMBINATION OF R/A AND BOARDING BILLS REFLECTED A PROFESSIONAL AND FLEXIBLE RESPONSE TO THE MISSION.

C. AFTER AN INITIAL INTERROGATION ABOARD THE SAILBOAT, THETIS' PLAN CALLED FOR THE INTERPRETER TO RETURN TO THE SHIP, WHICH HE DID. MEANWHILE, HAITIANS ON THE SAILBOAT WERE AGGRAVATING THE STABILITY PROBLEM BY MOVING OUT OF THE HOLD. ARGUING OVER PERSONAL FLATATION DEVICES (PFD), AND GENERALLY ACTING RESTLESS. THE HAITIAN CAPTAIN, WHO COULD SPEAK SOME ENGLISH, COULD NOT CONTROL THE SITUATION. THEREFORE, AFTER WAITING THREE HOURS FOR THE INS INTERPRETER, HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN USED WHERE HE WOULD HAVE BEEN MOST EFFECTIVE. THAT IS, ABOARD THE SAILBOAT WHERE HIS LANGUAGE SKILLS WOULD HAVE BEEN MOST BENEFICIAL.

D. BECAUSE PFD ISSUANCE WAS USED AS A SORTING AS WELL AS A SAFETY TOOL, ALL THE HAITIANS WERE NOT GIVEN PFD'S. THE PASSING OUT OF PFD'S CREATED SOME ASSUMPTION AS TO WHAT THEY WERE FOR. THE OVERCROWDED CONDITIONS MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO PUT EVERYONE IN PFD'S. IT IS OFTEN MORE EXPEDIENT TO SIMPLY MOVE QUICKLY THROUGH THE TRANSFER PROCESS THAN TO WASTE PRECIOUS TIME TRYING TO MANAGE PFD DISTRIBUTION.

5. CORRECTIVE ACTION. THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS ARE ONGOING OR SHALL BE TAKEN TO PREVENT FUTURE MISSHAPS:

A. AN AMIO WORKSHOP WAS CONDUCTED AT THE LANTAREA CO'S CONFERENCE 16-19 APR 82. IT FOCUSED ON LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE Incident. ALONG WITH DISTRIBUTION OF SEVERAL EXAMPLES OF SHIP'S BILL OF RECOVERY OF LARGE NUMBERS OF SURVIVORS. A "LESSONS LEARNED" PACKAGE FROM THIS INCIDENT DEVELOPED BY CCGD7 HAS BEEN DISTRIBUTED TO LANTAREA WEC'S, WEC'S AND CO ACADEMY (PCG/PKG SCHOOL), AND RTG YORKTOWN IME SCHOOL.

B. WHERE POSSIBLE, THE PFD'S SHOULD BE USED AS A MEANS OF CONTROL, LIMITED IN NUMBER TO THOSE TO BE TRANSFERRED IN EACH SMALL BOATLOAD. THE SITUATION WILL DICTATE THE PROCESS BASED ON TIME OF DAY, WEATHER CONDITIONS, AND CONDITIONS OF AND ON THE VESSEL. INTERMITTENT GIVE-ME TIME, USING A NUMBER OF PFD'S EQUAL TO THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE TO BE TRANSFERRED IN THE SMALL BOAT HELPS TO CONTROL THE REMOVAL PROCESS. THOSE WEARING THE PFD'S WILL BE THE ONES EMBARDED ABOARD THE SMALL BOAT ETC. OTHERWISE, YOU RUN THE RISK OF CONFUSION AND EVERYONE TRYING TO SHIFT "O ONE SIDE OF THE BOAT" TO BE "THE FIRE "O GET OFF.

C. CCGD7 IS RECOMMENDING THE CHECKLIST PLAN TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE FOR SETTING AN APPROPRIATE BILL FOR MIGRANT INTERCEPTION. WITH SPECIFIC CONSIDERATION FOR THE POTENTIAL OF A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE WATER. LIKewise, GUIDANCE WILL BE PROVIDED FOR THE FOLLOW-ON CARE OF LANTAREA'S PEOPLE.

D. COM LANTAREA HAS DIRECTED CCGD7 TO ENSURE THAT ANY WME OR WME OPERATING IN THE WINDWARD PASSAGE OTHER THAN TRANSITING) IS EQUIPPED WITH AMIO PROVISIONS.

E. IN LIGHT OF THE INCREASE IN ENCOUNTERS SUCH AS THOSE OCCURRING IN OTHER PASSAGES (E.G., MCNA PASS). CCGD7 SHALL CONSIDER PROVIDING CUTTERS OPERATING IN THESE OTHER PASSAGES WITH AMIO PROVISIONS. CCGD7 SHOULD DETERMINE WHAT AREAS APPLY AS "HIGH PROBABILITY." CCGD7 SHALL ENSURE THAT THE APPLICABLE CUTTERS ARE EQUIPPED WITH AMIO PROVISIONS.

6. RELATED ACTIONS.

A. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT CONFRONTED THETIS, THE CO ELECTED TO RECOVER SURVIVORS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. GIVEN THE PROXIMITY...
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SUBJ: FINAL ACTION MESSAGE ON USCGC THELIS WMEC 8101 CLASS A TO THE VESSEL WHEN IT CAPSIZED, THE QUICKES AND MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO RECOVER THE SURVIVORS WAS SIMPLY TO STOP AND DRIFT DOWN ON THEM IN BOTH CALMER CONDITIONS (WHEN RAPID RECOVERY IS NOT ESSENTIAL) AND MORE SEVERE CONDITIONS (WHEN THE LEE OF THE SHIP WOULD HAZARD SURVIVORS IN THE WATER). MAINTAINING CONTROL OF THE SHIP AT SOME DISTANCE FROM SURVIVORS IN THE WATER, MAY BE A MORE PRUDENT COURSE OF ACTION.

B. CARRYING AND MOVING A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE ABOUT ON A SMALL BOAT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED EARLY AS A SEVERE CONDITION ON AMIO DUE TO THE INHERENT RISKS. IN THIS CASE, NO URGENCY TO THE SITUATION WAS EITHER COMMUNICATED OR UNDERSTOOD TO EXIST WHEN THE BOARDING PARTY WAS ON SCENE.

C. THELIS' DECISION TO AVOID THE ARRIVAL OF THE INS AGENT AND INTERPRETER PRIOR TO BOARDING NEITHER WORSENED THE SITUATION NOR CAUSED THE RESULT. THOSE RESOURCES WERE READILY AVAILABLE BY HELD AND COULD BE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE ON SCENE IN TIME TO ALLOW AN ORDERLY INTERROGATION AND TRANSFER OF PEOPLE DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS. NOTING THE RELATIVE INEXPERIENCE OF "THELIS" ON AMIO, THIS WAS A PRUDENT DECISION.


E. CO. 8 MUST MAINTAIN A BALANCE BETWEEN HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND THE NEED FOR POSITIVE CONTROL IN PROVIDING FOR THE FOLLOW-ON CARE OF LARGE NUMBERS OF SURVIVORS.