Observations, Concerns and Recommendations - 1995 International Loran Association Annual Convention

At the final session of the Conference, delegates expressed their individual requirements and concerns and made a number of observations and recommendations. These are presented in the paragraphs that follow, in no particular order of importance:

1. Government-Supplied Services

The many benefits that have accrued to a user community of millions over years of government (taxpayer) support of radionavigation services was acknowledged.

It was accepted that governments have a responsibility to provide services in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

2. Satellite Technology

It was recognized that satellite technology as applied to positioning, navigation and precise timing is providing significant worldwide social and economic benefits and that the technology offers capabilities not available from previous systems.

It was also recognized that a global, centralized satellite-provided positioning, navigation, and precise timing service was being planned by the United States to become an alternative to a multitude of currently operating terrestrial services.

3. Worldwide Systems

It was noted that most long-range terrestrial systems and all services based upon satellites are inherently international and have a direct impact on governments and users. It was recommended that international agreements in force must be respected.

4. Transition Plans

Attention was called to the need for the transition from terrestrial systems to a mix of terrestrial and space-based services to be based upon the provision of an assured service and not upon an arbitrary schedule.

It was noted that the transition to a satellite service from nationally owned, decentralized, terrestrial services raises substantial legal, financial, political, and technical issues that require time to resolve.

5. Government Competition

Attention was called to the issue of the Government competing with the private sector in providing differential satellite services.

6. Mix of Systems

It was noted that aviation associations including AOPA, NBAA, NASAO, EAA, HAI, and ALPA; Boat U.S. representing marine users; the European Union and international organizations: ICAO, IALA, IMO, IAIN, and other national organizations have all expressed a requirement for a mix of positioning systems to insure availability for all services and integrity for safety-critical applications. Many European and Far East states have already taken action to meet these requirements.

The provision of more than one independent means for deriving position information to ensure safe navigation was acknowledged as a mandatory requirement. The current activity within IMO to identify the requirement for a second independent navigation input to electronic chart displays (ECDIS) was also noted.

There was support for complementary satellite and terrestrial systems to ensure continuity, availability, and integrity of service.

7. National Plans

The regional and national activity around the world to develop long-term radionavigation plans was noted.

8. U.S. Federal Radionavigation Plan

In considering the 1994 Federal Radionavigation Plan, deep concern was expressed over the decision to transition to satellite technology in the short-term, and the decision to terminate all terrestrial services without input from the Department of Commerce and Department of State.

It was noted that the adverse impact on international trade, the weather services, and other non-navigation users had not been thoroughly assessed.

The lack of involvement and coordination with the Department of State throughout the FRP process was also noted. The announcement in the 1994 FRP of termination of Loran-C by the year 2000 in the United States has resulted in confusion and mistrust within those states (nations) which had, just one year previously, received encouragement from the U.S. government to take possession and financial/operational responsibility of Loran-C assets overseas.

9. Loran-C Service

The strong bipartisan support for continued funding and support for the Loran-C radionavigation system by the Authorizing and Appropriations Committees and by other key policy makers in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives, as reflected in statutory and other provisions advanced in H.R. 1361, H.R. 2002, and S 1004 was noted.

There was a strong recommendation that the Department of Transportation and its agencies, in active consultation with users, fully comply with the statutory provisions and Congressional

intent reflected in the above Bills as acted upon by the respective bodies during the first session of the 104th Congress of the United States.

It was also noted that Loran-C for the Coastal Confluence Zone was formally adopted through notice in the Federal Register. It was recommended that termination of the system should follow this same formal procedure.

10. Omega Service

Concern was expressed over the imminent termination of the global Omega radionavigation service. It was noted that some airline operators do not have time to reequip, and weather station operators throughout the world do not have an economic equivalent.

11. User Consultation

Users of current and proposed institutionally-provided services recommended that they be consulted and become intimately involved in matters concerning:

(a) The radionavigation planning process and the development of radionavigation plans.

(b) Establishment of a defined period of concurrent operation for any proposed service transition, based upon assured service.

(c) Development of a transition plan and schedule.

(d) Provision of complementary systems.

(e) Dissemination of technical and non-technical limitations of a centralized positioning, navigation and precise timing system.

(f) Exchange of information within the international community to facilitate international planning and setting of standards.

12. Government Intervention

The recommendation was made that no government departments, whether United States or any other states (nations), should obstruct by political, diplomatic, or commercial means, efforts to enhance peacetime performance of satellite navigation systems. Such enhancements were noted to include GPS augmentations, use of GLONASS, and the provision of an independent satellite constellation.