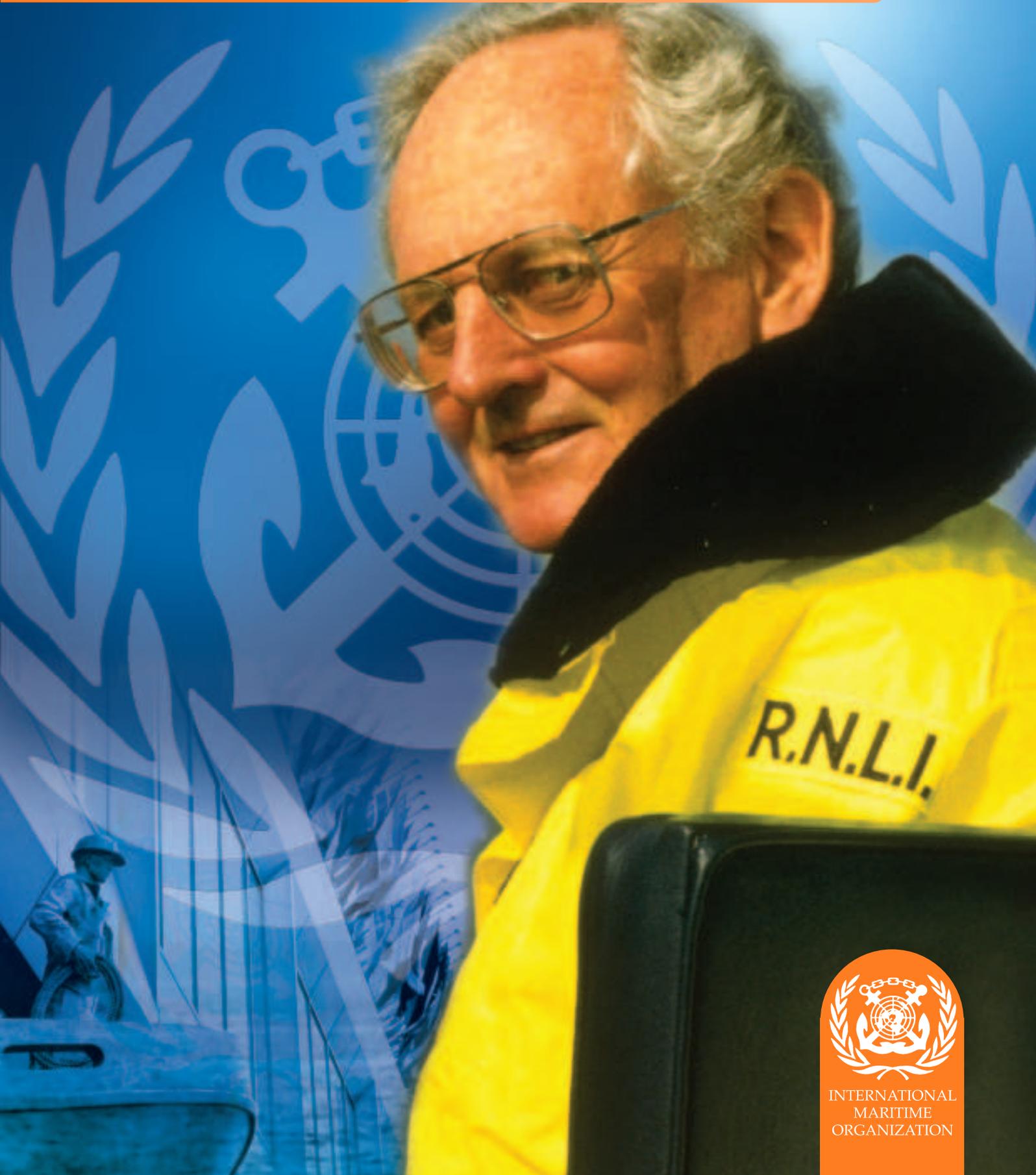


# IM NEWS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION

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INTERNATIONAL  
MARITIME  
ORGANIZATION

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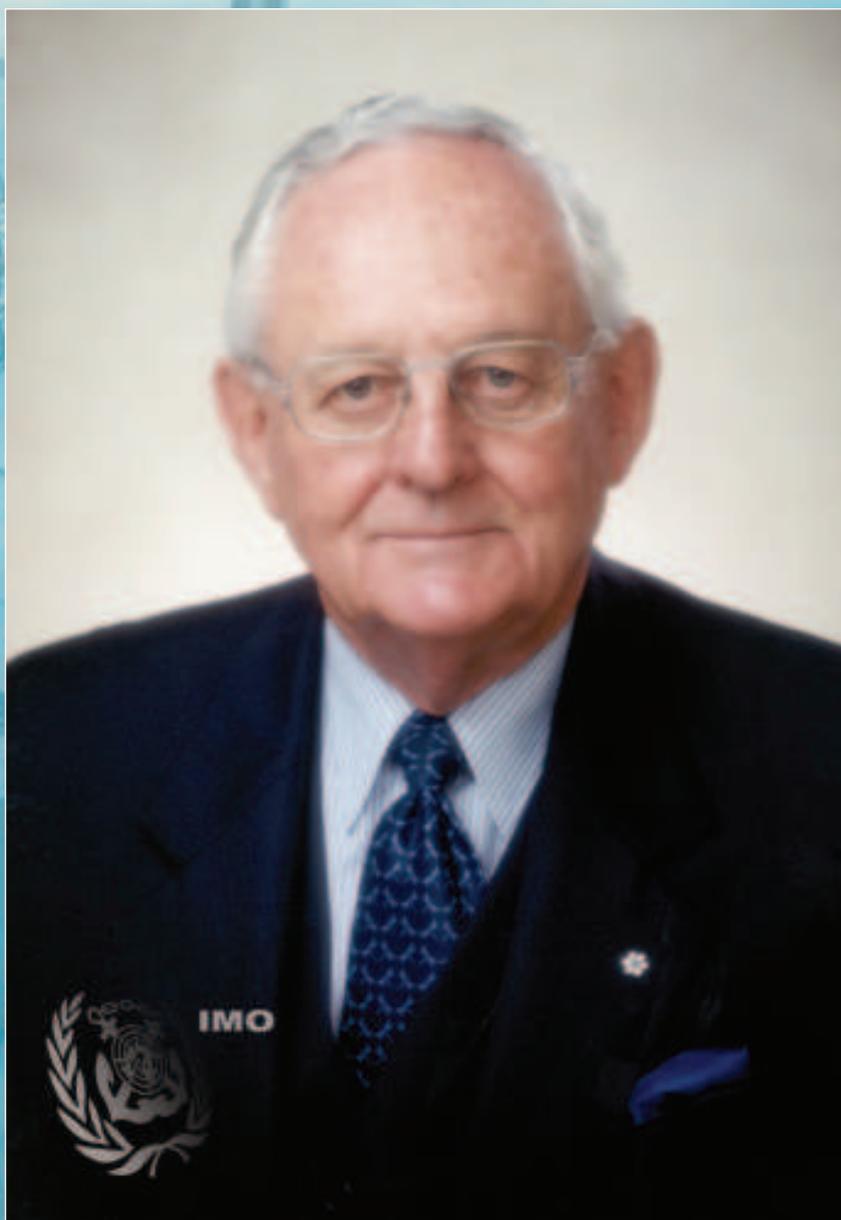
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## **William A. O'Neil**

In this special edition of IMO News, we pay tribute to the career of Mr William O'Neil, who moves on from the Organization at the end of 2003 after a record 14-year tenure in the post of Secretary-General.

## Foreword

by Dr. C.P. Srivastava, K.C.M.G.

I have had the privilege of a close association with Mr. William A. O'Neil for nearly thirty years now as a friend as well as a colleague in diverse capacities in the service of the International Maritime Organization and the wider world maritime community. For me, this has been an enormously rewarding, indeed elevating experience. As a friend, Mr. O'Neil has been most kind, considerate, helpful and affectionate. As a colleague he has always displayed clarity of vision, firmness of resolve and strong support for all initiatives for the purpose of enhancing the efficiency and efficacy of the International Maritime Organization.

Mr. O'Neil began his long association with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) (then called the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization – IMCO) in 1972 as the delegate of his great country, Canada, to the IMCO Council. At this time IMCO was engaged in the development of new global technical standards for maritime safety and for the prevention of marine pollution from ships. A new Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers was also on IMCO's agenda. This important task was being accomplished with excellence under the overall guidance of the Council. Mr. O'Neil was deeply involved in the ongoing work of the Organization and had given it full support.

In 1980 Mr. O'Neil was elected as Chairman of the Council, a post which he held with acclaimed distinction until his election as Secretary-General of the Organization with effect from 1 January 1990. During this decade several fundamental developments took place in the Organization. Emphasis was shifted from the development of new standards, conventions and protocols to the effective global implementation of the comprehensive standards which had been adopted already. Under the leadership of Mr. O'Neil, the Council

ensured that new standards or amendments to existing instruments were proposed only when there was well proven urgent and essential need. This policy was greatly welcomed by maritime administrations throughout the world.

Recognising that the developing countries were unable to participate effectively and meaningfully in the technical committees of the Organization due to an acute shortage of advanced maritime expertise, the Council, under Mr. O'Neil's

“Under Mr O'Neil's leadership, IMO has undergone a sea change. It is functioning at a much higher level of efficiency and effectiveness than ever before.”

leadership, gave strong and unanimous support to the establishment of a new global institution as a centre of excellence for post-graduate education in maritime affairs and for the transfer of advanced maritime technology from the developed to developing countries. This proposal was approved by the Assembly of the Organization in 1981, resulting in the establishment of the World Maritime University at Malmö in Sweden in 1983.

The name of the Organization was changed in 1982 from Inter-Governmental Maritime Organization to International Maritime Organization (IMO). This simpler and more expressive name was widely welcomed.

In the formulation and implementation of new policies and programmes in IMO during the years 1980 to 1989, Mr. O'Neil played, in his capacity as Chairman of the Council, a very sagacious and decisive role. I say this from personal experience because I was the IMO Secretary-General at that time and was working very closely with Mr. O'Neil.

On 1 January 1990, Mr. William O'Neil succeeded me as Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization. With the experience of 8 years as the delegate of Canada and nearly 10 years as IMO Council Chairman, Mr. O'Neil was extremely well prepared and equipped for his new responsibilities. Under Mr. O'Neil's leadership IMO has since undergone a sea change. It is functioning at a much higher level of efficiency and effectiveness than ever before. Mr. O'Neil has, from the very beginning of his tenure, given the

highest priority to the effective attainment of the principal objective of IMO, namely maritime safety throughout the world. Recognizing that the “human element” plays a crucial role in this regard, he promoted the concept of even higher standards for shipboard personnel than those laid down in the STCW Convention of 1978 coupled with an appropriate and effective arrangement for ensuring strict compliance with all the enhanced requirements. Member States of IMO found these ideas in consonance with their own wishes. Preparatory action for this purpose was set in motion and eventually resulted in the adoption of comprehensive amendments to the 1978 STCW Convention. These far-reaching amendments have come to be known as ‘STCW 1995’. A novel and far-reaching provision included in these amendments was the requirement that all acceding Member States would submit to IMO a detailed and authentic report on their national legal and administrative arrangements for ensuring effective and complete compliance with all of the amended STCW requirements, for scrutiny by



Panels of Government nominees and approval by the Maritime Safety Committee. The names of all Member States whose arrangements for implementation were found to be fully satisfactory, would be made known. The implication was that ships under the flag of a “non-complying” State would be naturally subjected to strict and detailed port State control procedures with all the attendant delays and adverse financial consequences.

This new arrangement is already in force and is yielding the desired results. And IMO is now regarded as an Organization which not only produces rules and regulations but also ensures compliance. For this historic achievement I wish to express my sincerest admiration to all IMO Member States and to IMO’s Secretary-General, Mr. William O’Neil.

The adoption, during Mr. O’Neil’s tenure, of two other crucially important instruments – the mandatory International Safety Management (ISM) Code and the more recent International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code also calls for prolonged applause. These two Codes, together with STCW 1995 will go a long way towards ensuring maritime safety globally and thereby creating a new ‘safety culture’ of Mr. O’Neil’s vision.

Before finishing, I wish to refer to two other developments. During his tenure as IMO Secretary-General Mr. O’Neil has, in his capacity as Chancellor of the World Maritime University (WMU) and as Chairman of the Governing Board of the IMO International Maritime Law Institute



(IMLI), provided strong leadership and determined support to these institutions with the result that both WMU and IMLI have won global renown for the exceptional excellence of their programmes. The graduates of the World Maritime University have changed the scene in IMO. Thanks to them, all Member States of IMO, developed and developing, are now participating in IMO’s activities on equal terms. All Member States of IMO now have maritime specialists of high calibre. And I must refer also to another of Mr. O’Neil’s admirable

creations – the Seafarers Memorial – an overdue acknowledgement of the crucial role of seafarers in the safety of international shipping.

When Mr. William O’Neil retires from the service of IMO on 31 December 2003 after an association of 30 years – 8 years as the delegate of Canada, 10 years as IMO Council Chairman and 14 years as IMO Secretary-General, he will leave behind an unmatched and unsurpassable record of exceptionally meritorious service to a highly respected Specialized Agency of the United Nations – the International Maritime Organization. I offer him my warmest felicitations and congratulations.

I conclude by wishing him many, many happy years in retirement.

“He will leave behind an unmatched and unsurpassable record of exceptionally meritorious service to a highly respected Specialized Agency of the United Nations.”

## IMO's Secretary-General - a demanding role in a vital industry

The 23rd meeting of the IMO Assembly will close just a few short weeks before Mr William O'Neil's fourteen-year tenure as Secretary-General of IMO comes to an end. It will be asked to pass a resolution recording with deep appreciation the outstanding contribution made by Mr. O'Neil to the purposes and functions of the Organization during the period of his stewardship from 1 January 1990.

The resolution recognises with gratitude Mr O'Neil's commitment to the ideals and mission of the IMO in improving the safety of life at sea, the protection of the marine environment, and enhancement of maritime security, as well as to fostering and promoting global acceptance and effective implementation of IMO's safety, security and environmental treaty instruments. It also refers to his leadership, his counsel, his clarity of vision and purpose, as well as his strong and effective advocacy of the adoption of an effective global maritime safety culture.

In doing so, it reflects the almost unique nature of the position of IMO Secretary-General, a job which has two quite distinct elements. On the one hand, the incumbent is responsible for effective running of the IMO secretariat, with its staff of about 300 people based at the



*Visit to Peru*

Organization's London headquarters. The secretariat provides the 162 Member States and 3 Associate Members with a host of services including interpretation, translation and the production of documents, as well as offering technical guidance whenever it may be required. Some 46 nationalities are represented on the secretariat staff, which is structured in six divisions: Maritime Safety, Marine Environment, Technical Co-operation, Legal and External Relations, Administrative and Conference. It is a job not unlike that of managing director of a medium sized company. Targets have to be met, budgets have to be drawn up and adhered to, management and career structures

must be devised and implemented and the whole Organization must function effectively on a day-to-day basis.

But, perhaps even more importantly, the Secretary-General of IMO must be an active, indeed pro-active participant in the pursuit of the aims and goals of the Organization. Whether it be behind the scenes, such as in private meetings with industry groups or governmental delegations, or in the full glare of the public eye, such as the high-profile speaking engagements undertaken all over the world, the Secretary-General of IMO is constantly playing his own, significant part in moving forward the international agenda on maritime safety, pollution prevention and security.

There is perhaps no better example of the importance of this latter role than the intense round of diplomacy and lobbying that was undertaken by Secretary-General O'Neil earlier this year in the wake of the sinking of the tanker *Prestige* off the coast of Spain. This incident had caused a wave of public and political indignation throughout Europe and, as a result, the threat of unilateral action that would be outside the terms of the MARPOL Convention – the international treaty that deals with pollution from ships – seemed a very real one.



*Opening of GMDSS laboratory, India*



With UK Transport minister Mr. Alistair Darling

In January, anxious that any move to change the regulatory framework concerning oil tankers should be directed through IMO and thereby gain the appropriate international imprimatur, Mr. O'Neil and Assistant Secretary-General Mr. E.E. Mitropoulos went to Greece for talks with Mr. George Anomeritis, then Minister of Mercantile Marine of Greece and President of the European Union Maritime Transport Ministers' Council, to discuss the matter in detail. The thrust of this initiative was to confirm to Mr. Anomeritis and, through him, to the European Union, that IMO was the appropriate forum to consider and decide on any measures which the EU Members might feel were in need of additional regulatory action at the international level, and that the Organization was prepared to act expeditiously in this regard.

Mr. O'Neil invited Mr. Anomeritis to ensure that any proposals in the context of the Prestige accident calling for action at the regulatory level would be submitted to IMO and assured Mr. Anomeritis that he would, in consultation with Member Governments, see that prompt action for their consideration would be taken in the most expeditious manner. At the end of the meeting, the two sides were able to express satisfaction for the positive and constructive manner and outcome of their consultations concerning action in the context of the Prestige accident.

Then in March, Mr. O'Neil followed up this mission with a meeting in Brussels with the Vice-President of the European Commission, Mrs. Loyola de Palacio, to further discuss what action should be taken in the aftermath of the Prestige accident. After the meeting, both were able to express their satisfaction with the positive and constructive manner and outcome of their consultations, and concurred that the opportunity should be seized, as soon as possible, for IMO to further enhance the prevention of pollution from tankers at the world-wide level.

Furthermore, Mrs. de Palacio stated that as soon as the EU Institutions had formulated their position in response to the Prestige accident, appropriate measures would be proposed to IMO by the EU to revise the MARPOL Convention. Since then, proposals have subsequently been submitted to IMO and the matter is currently being dealt with by the Marine Environment Protection Committee.

This successful example of proactive diplomacy is typical of the role that an IMO Secretary-General must undertake. Intense, high-level negotiations to co-ordinate efforts in a particular direction, or engaging in



Meeting with Capt. Wei of COSCO

public debate to highlight the key issues of the day, form a central core of the Secretary-General's work.

In the case of Secretary-General O'Neil, there is a strong track record of personal intervention in the work of IMO that speaks of a man with a passionate and genuine interest in the values that the Organization seeks to promote. In his early years in office, for example, there was a sharp and, in his view, unacceptable increase in bulk carrier accidents. Mr O'Neil's response was to present the IMO Assembly with a resolution on the matter, the first time such an initiative had come from the Secretary-General. It was not to be the last.

Throughout his career with IMO, Mr O'Neil has taken a detailed interest in all the work of the Organization, as



Receiving ship model from Mr. Mohammed Al Gilani from Vela International

one would expect. But certain issues have prompted his particular attention and, over the years, the Organization has benefited from his personal intervention in major work items such as ro-ro safety, large passenger vessels, the shift in emphasis onto the human element and, more recently, the massive efforts undertaken by the Organization to establish a regulatory framework for an effective security regime to cover international shipping and port activities.

That the Organization has the scope and the resources to deal with these and all the myriad other issues that are brought before it is due in no small measure to the solid foundation provided by the permanent secretariat from the Organization's headquarters in London. Yet, when Mr O'Neil took up the reigns as Secretary-General, it is no exaggeration to say that the Organization was facing a financial crisis. While the cost of providing the services to the Members was naturally increasing, the financial contributions from the Members at that time were falling dramatically short of what was needed. Secretary-General O'Neil undertook to resolve this situation and, since then, his commitment to improving the Organization's financial framework has led to the achievement of contribution levels of 98 per cent,



*Visit to naval school, India*

which now rank IMO as amongst the best in the United Nations system in this respect.

In return, the Members have witnessed prudent management of the Organization's resources and consistent delivery of the Organization's work programme and budget. Moreover, there has been a strong commitment to increased transparency, innovation, and management of change which is helping the secretariat keep pace with the fast moving, commercial world of industry with which it interacts on a daily basis.

Over the years, the scope of IMO has increased significantly from its original role as a consultative body focussed primarily on maritime safety to its current manifestation, which embraces issues such as marine pollution, maritime security, legal matters, compensation and the facilitation of maritime traffic.

During his period at the helm, Secretary-General O'Neil has also worked hard to broaden the participation in the Organization to reflect its expanding role. The Membership, for example, now stands at 162 Member States and three Associate Members, one important consequence of which is that that almost all the nations of the world that have a significant interest in shipping, whether as shipowning countries, coastal states, suppliers of maritime services or simply as trading nations, now have a voice in the Organization's work. The most important IMO Conventions, such as SOLAS, MARPOL, STCW, the Collision Regulations and the Tonnage Convention, now apply to more than 90 per cent of the world fleet.

Mr O'Neil has also given strong encouragement to the active participation in the Organization's work by all sectors of the industry. As a result, there are now more than 60



*Signing technical co-operation agreement with minister Sung K. Huh, Republic of Korea*



non-governmental organisations and over 30 intergovernmental organisations that enjoy consultative status with IMO and which regularly attend meetings and participate in the Organization's decision-making process. Bodies representing all facets of shipping's many and diverse participants, from naval architects through ship builders, ship operators, ship suppliers, terminal operators and many more, all play their part, as indeed do interests from outside the industry, such as environmental, legal and financial organisations.

In developing the scope of the Organization and expanding the base of those who actively participate, the Secretary-General has also sought to pursue new sources of extra-budgetary funding to support the Organization's technical co-operation programme which, over many years, has made a massive contribution to the ability of the Membership, and of developing countries in particular, to adopt and implement the Organization's instruments.

To this end, Mr O'Neil has taken a notable, personal interest in strengthening the relevance and capacity of the Organization's educational institutions, which have become firmly established global providers of maritime training and education. Mr O'Neil has served as



*Floral greetings from Korea*

Chancellor of the World Maritime University in Sweden and Chairman of the Governing Board of the International Maritime Law Institute in Malta, and he will continue in both positions after his departure from IMO.

Turning to wider fora, the Secretary-General pursues a relentless and punishing schedule of speaking engagements and personal appearances worldwide. It would not be unusual to find, for example, a keynote speech on aspects of marine electronics in the Far East to be followed days later by the inauguration of a new wing at a training centre in South America. It is an energy-sapping schedule that reflects both the extensive geographical spread and the diverse range of topics that are included within the ambit of this truly international and multi-faceted Organization.

William. O'Neil himself has been associated with IMO since 1972, when he attended the IMO Council as Canada's representative. In 1979 he was elected Chairman of that body and held the post until his appointment by the Council to serve his first four-year term as Secretary-General, which began in 1990.

An engineer by training, Mr. O'Neil came to IMO from the Canada's St Lawrence Seaway Authority, where he had been President and Chief Executive Officer since 1980. After graduating from the University of Toronto he had joined Canada's Federal Department of Transport. In 1955 he became Division Engineer in charge of bringing the Welland Canal up to the St Lawrence Seaway standards and subsequently held other senior posts with the Authority including being in charge of the Welland Canal. In 1964 he became responsible for all Seaway construction and major maintenance work.

In 1971 he took up the position of Deputy Administrator, Marine Services, of the Canadian Marine Transport Administration and, four years later, became first Commissioner



*Visit to Trinidad and Tobago*

of the Canadian Coast Guard. In addition, he was a Director of Canarctic Shipping Ltd and a Director of several intra-provincial and international bridge corporations.

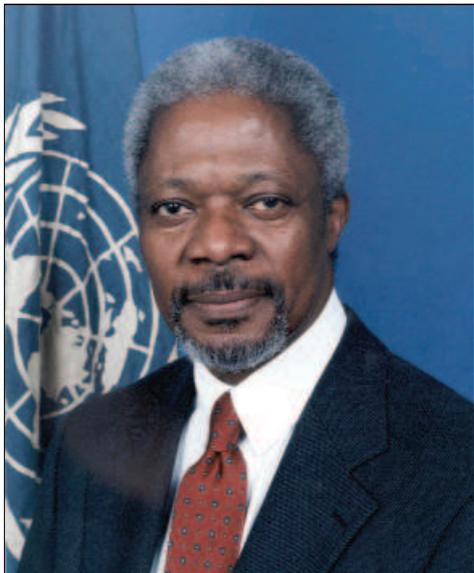
Mr. O'Neil was unanimously re-elected to serve a second four-year term as Secretary-General beginning in 1994 and was again re-elected for a third four-year term beginning in 1998. He was elected for a further two-year term, beginning in 2002.

Mr. O'Neil's contribution to international shipping activities has been recognized by the world maritime and engineering communities through the award of many decorations, honours and memberships of professional institutions.

But, perhaps most importantly, and as the IMO Assembly will be asked to recognise formally later this year, during his tenure there has been a material and sustained reduction in both the loss of life at sea and marine pollution from ships. It is in the immense efforts that lie behind these simple statistics that William O'Neil will draw his greatest satisfaction. The satisfaction that comes from knowing that a job which, although impossible to declare finished, has been carried forward with dedication and distinction throughout his fourteen years at the helm.

## William A. O'Neil: an appreciation

by Mr. Kofi Annan  
Secretary-General of the United Nations



It is hard to imagine a world without shipping. Directly employing some 1.25 million seafarers, and transporting the majority of the world's commerce, shipping is a pillar of the global economy and a leading example of a globalized industry with the potential to make a direct contribution to many of the primary goals of the United Nations. The International Maritime Organization is a key player in this realm: its resolutions carry global legitimacy, its standard-setting facilitates international cooperation, and its programmes bring expert assistance to rich and poor countries alike.

“His commitment to co-operation has forged strong ties between the IMO and its partners, both within and beyond the UN system.”

The IMO's efforts to prevent marine pollution offer one example of valuable work that furthers the wider UN agenda and complements that of other UN specialized agencies in their response to the 'Earth Summit' of 1992 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002. The IMO has adopted regulations for the prevention of air

pollution from ships, as well as a new convention to prevent the use of harmful anti-fouling systems on ships. It has raised levels of compensation for victims of incidents involving oil pollution and other hazardous substances. And in 2004, it is expected to adopt a new convention for the management and control of ships' ballast water, which may contain harmful aquatic organisms that can settle as 'harmful alien species' in new regions of the world, threatening biodiversity and causing tremendous economic damage as well.

The IMO's long-standing work to ensure the security of shipping has taken on new urgency in the wake of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States. Like the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly, which immediately condemned the attacks and set in motion a variety of steps designed to intensify the fight against international terrorism, the IMO Assembly acted quickly, calling for a review of all procedures aimed at preventing acts of terrorism that threaten the security of passengers and crews and the safety of ships. That led in turn to a maritime security conference in December 2002, which

adopted new measures, including the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code). The work on security is also focusing on capacity building in developing countries, on seafarer issues (in co-operation with the International Labour Organization), and on strengthening security in the transport of containers (in co-operation with the World Customs Organization).

There has also been good co-operation between the IMO and the UN system in dealing with persons rescued at sea, such as refugees and/or asylum seekers.

I am pleased to pay tribute to William O'Neil for his role in these and other initiatives over the years. His commitment to cooperation has forged strong ties between the IMO and its partners, both within and beyond the UN system. His engineering background has served him well on critical technical issues. And his concern for the individual seafarer carrying the burden of this often difficult work led to the adoption of a new, mandatory International Safety Management Code and of revised, stringent, standards of competencies for seafarers.

It is fitting that one of his legacies will be the International Memorial to Seafarers: those serving today, often in dangerous circumstances; those who have given their lives in the line of duty; and to the seafarers of the future, who will bring new energies and ideas to an age-old profession and without whom the global economy would not be able to achieve its objectives. The statue of a seafarer on the bow of a ship, standing outside IMO headquarters in London, reminds us all of the pivotal role shipping plays in world trade and development. As Mr. O'Neil's tenure draws to an end, I would like to express my great appreciation for his achievements and wish him well in all his future pursuits. I also pledge my commitment to continue working closely with the IMO in our common quest to help people everywhere build better lives for themselves and succeeding generations.



## William A. O'Neil: an appreciation

by Mr. Jean Chrétien  
Prime Minister of Canada

I am pleased, on behalf of the Canadian Government, to contribute to this special issue of the IMO News that honours the contribution of William O'Neil, the departing Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization.

The IMO has a mandate that is central to Canada's well-being, and to the well-being of all other countries whose citizens venture on the oceans. It is a fine example of a multilateral organization in which the membership comes together to address global issues in its field of expertise. As a nation profoundly dependant on maritime trade and a healthy ocean environment, Canada has long supported the critical work of the IMO including Bulk Carrier Safety initiatives, implementation of Safety Management Systems, the drive against sub-standard shipping and environmental issues such as air pollution from ships.

by amending the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, and adopting a code on International Ship and Port Facility Security. The Organization also intervened promptly in response to the sinking of the Prestige off the coast of Spain. Mr. O'Neil has never lost sight of the most important issue, namely the safety of the people who dedicate their lives to the sea.

Canadians are proud that one of their own has served this organization with such distinction over the past fourteen years. Mr. O'Neil became Secretary-General after serving as the first Commissioner of our Canadian Coast Guard and then as President of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority. When a Canadian such as William O'Neil goes to serve in a senior position at an



“Mr O'Neil has never lost sight of the most important issue, namely the safety of the people who dedicate their lives to the sea.”

Throughout Mr. O'Neil's leadership, the IMO's objective of 'safe, secure, and efficient shipping on clean oceans' has continued to serve as the Organization's hallmark. Mr. O'Neil's legacy includes the revision of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers and the adoption of the International Safety Management Code. The IMO undertook significant reviews on the safety of passenger ships, bulk carriers and tankers. Mr. O'Neil's tenure has also seen the increase of the IMO Council from 32 to 40 members to more adequately represent the marine population around the world and he established a Seafarers Memorial Trust Fund to pay tribute to seafarers upon whom the shipping industry relies. After the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the organization responded swiftly

international organization, he or she, of course, is no longer a Canadian public servant, but rather a servant of the international community. The Government of Canada is happy to have made Mr. O'Neil available for such eminent service, and wishes him the very best as he departs with such a strong record of achievements.

## William A. O'Neil: an appreciation

by the Rt. Hon. Mr. John Prescott MP

Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland



In the 14 years since he became General Secretary of the IMO, Bill O'Neil has made an outstanding contribution to shipping safety and to the protection of the marine environment. His work will be remembered for many years to come. There have been so many significant developments and achievements in the past 14 years that it is difficult to know where to begin.

### *Bulk Carriers*

Take bulk carrier safety, for example. In the past, losses of these carriers have resulted in a significant and tragic loss of life and Bill has been a driving force in getting the safety requirements for these ships re-examined. In 1991 he

“There have been so many significant developments and achievements it is difficult to know where to begin.”

proposed that the IMO adopt a resolution to improve bulk carrier safety. And while improvements were evident after the adoption of the resolution, further cause for concern resulted in Bill recommending to the IMO that it reconsider the whole issue of bulk carrier safety. I am pleased to say that the United Kingdom report, which resulted from my re-opening of the inquiry into the loss of the

Derbyshire, made a significant contribution to the IMO's deliberations. The resulting revised requirements that have been agreed in principle represent an important improvement in the safety of these ships. I have no doubt that Bill's work has helped to save lives.

### *Human Element / ISM Code*

As many of you will know, I am a passionate believer in the importance of high quality training for seafarers. It is something I have constantly worked and campaigned for over many years. During Bill's tenure, the IMO has produced two important publications to address this area, the International Safety

Management Code (ISM Code) and the 1995 amendments to the 1978 Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW 1995). The ISM Code requires ship owners to establish a safety and environmental-protection policy to ensure safety at sea, prevention of human injury or loss of life, and avoidance of damage to the environment. STCW 1995 has greatly improved seafarers standards and, for the first time, gives the IMO itself powers to check Government actions in this area. Both these measures are already improving safety and pollution prevention and will continue to do so for many years to come.

### *Seafarers Memorial*

Another milestone is the International Memorial to Seafarers, which I had the honour and pleasure of unveiling on World Maritime Day in 2001. The Memorial is another example of Bill's commitment to the world's seafarers. Inspired by him, the proposal to erect this monument was first mentioned in 1998. It now stands, not only as a tribute to Bill, but to all at the IMO,

and to those individuals and organisations around the world who continue to dedicate themselves to improving safety at sea.

### *Large Passenger Ships*

During the Maritime Safety Committee meeting in 2000, Bill raised the issue of large passenger ships and questioned whether the current requirements were adequate, not only for the large ships of today, but for the even larger and more luxurious cruise ships of tomorrow. What has followed is a significant milestone in the history of the IMO. Not only is the IMO conducting one of the largest ever studies of the safety-related aspects of a particular ship type, but this work is being conducted on a pro-active basis. This is a major cultural change for an organisation that was previously reactive and that based almost all of its decisions on actual events.

### *Security*

Another crucial piece of work for the IMO has been the promotion of security at sea. None of us will ever forget the tragic events of 9/11 in the United States of America. As a result, Bill proposed that the IMO should carry out a review of measures and procedures to prevent acts of terrorism that threaten the security of passengers and crews and the safety of ships. It is to Bill's and the IMO's credit that amendments to SOLAS were agreed in a little over a year. The most far reaching of these enshrines the new International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code). Together, the reforms will greatly enhance the security and safety of those on the high seas.

### *Conclusion*

The IMO plays the leading role in setting and maintaining high standards for the seafaring community and is continually striving to improve safety at sea and to protect the marine environment. Bill O'Neil, in his leading role at the IMO, has made a very substantial contribution to that process and I wish him well in his retirement.



## William A. O'Neil: an appreciation

by the Honorable Mr. Blas F. Ople  
Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines

On behalf of the People and Government of the Philippines, I wish to convey sincere appreciation for the outstanding service you have rendered to the International Maritime Organization. During your fourteen-year stewardship of the Organization, the international community witnessed wider acceptance and effective implementation of the IMO's safety, security and environmental treaty instruments. Under your leadership, the IMO gained unprecedented recognition as an effective international organization for improving the safety of life at sea and protection of the marine environment.

The Philippine Government is particularly grateful for your invaluable assistance in helping the Philippines in the implementation of the provisions of the International Convention on Standards of Training,

Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended in 1995 (STCW 95) and the consequent inclusion of the Philippines in the IMO STCW 'White List'.

We deeply appreciate the various technical assistance the Organization extended to the Philippines during your watch that helped the country in its compliance with other conventions and multilateral instruments in respect of the IMO. We thank you in particular for the decision to establish an IMO regional office in the Philippines.

We convey our best wishes for your good health and future endeavours as you conclude your term of office in the IMO at the end of this



year. We look forward to a similar fruitful collaboration with your successor, Admiral Efthimios E. Mitropoulos.

“IMO has gained unprecedented recognition as an effective international organization for improving the safety of life at sea and protecting the marine environment.”

## William A. O'Neil: an appreciation

by Mr. Zhang Chun Xian  
Minister of Communications of the People's Republic of China



Over the past 14 years, with the accelerated development of economic globalization and science and technology, maritime transport has played an increasingly important role in the ever buoyant international trade. In the face of new developments in international politics, economy, science and technology and trade, and to meet the demands of maritime industry development in the course, International Maritime Organization (IMO) has adjusted its strategy in a prompt and practical manner by putting in place a series of major initiatives, contributing positively to safe navigation at sea and marine environmental protection.

“In particular, IMO has brought into highlight the dominant role played by the human element in safety at sea and environmental protection.”

IMO, as a specialized agency within the United Nations responsible for maritime affairs, has brought into full play its distinctive role as an international forum and successfully coordinated the effective response to many thorny major issues confronted by the international maritime industry,

and thus effectively safeguarding the universal action across the globe. During the past 14 years, IMO has established and improved many international maritime legal instruments and technical standards, which as a result, has pushed forward the enhancement of a harmonized international maritime legal framework. In this process, IMO has actively promoted the nurturing of maritime safety culture and building up of environment consciousness. In particular, with adoption of the ISM Code and International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers,

1978, as amended in 1995, IMO has brought into highlight the dominant role played by the human element and management in safety at sea and environmental protection.

In parallel, taking into account the various needs of different countries, IMO has taken initiatives to carry out technical cooperation and provided technical assistance tailored to developing countries with a view to maximizing the effective application of conventions and standards of IMO in the world.

China, as a category-A council member of IMO, has always committed itself to strengthening

international cooperation. China has been actively engaged in the discussion of the issues like maritime safety, security, environmental protection and facilitation of maritime transport and made constructive suggestions in the development and amendment of legal instruments

concerned. Meanwhile, China has ratified or acceded to virtually all major conventions and protocols adopted by IMO and faithfully discharged the obligations under those instruments. In China, legal, administrative and technical measures have been employed to strengthen flag state implementation and port state control so as to effectively safeguard safety of navigation and environmental protection.

As an active player at the international stage, China has always promoted and stood by the principle of IMO to address maritime disputes as well as issues of common interests within the multi-lateral legal framework and opposes to any unilateral action in whatever form against international shipping by any country. Over the past 14 years, China has cooperated with the other states with a view to maximizing international harmonization in the establishment of international standards.

Looking back at the past 14 years, we fully appreciate the outstanding contribution made by IMO at the helm of H.E. Mr. William A. O'Neil to the international maritime industry. While looking forward, we are also confident that in the consistent spirit of cooperation of the Organization, and with the concerted efforts of all member states, IMO will surely have one glory after another in the future and approach more closely to the goal of 'Safer Shipping and Cleaner Oceans', thus making greater contribution to safety of navigation at sea and marine environmental protection.



## William A. O'Neil: an appreciation

By Mr. Censu Galea  
Minister for Transport and Communications, Malta

A very important highlight of the fourteen-year tenure of Mr William O'Neil as Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization is undoubtedly the relentless drive by the Organization towards the universal adoption and implementation of IMO conventions.

While international maritime law relating to safety and security of shipping and the protection of the marine environment from shipping sources of pollution, clearly the remit of IMO, has continued to develop at a fast pace, the Organization, has at the same time devoted a great deal of attention and resources towards ensuring a global implementation of these standards.

Mr O'Neil as Secretary-General of IMO, as a true leader, throughout his term of office has garnered the support of a highly competent and dedicated Secretariat. Besides that he has also developed the necessary co-operation of both the member States of the Organization and of the maritime industry to update and renew international maritime law and to ensure that the right mechanism is in place for its worldwide implementation.

The undoubted considerable success achieved would not have been possible without a comprehensive technical assistance programme drawn up and continuously developed with foresight and vision. This programme had to be vigorously executed by the IMO Secretariat with the guidance and under the leadership of Mr O'Neil.

Malta is proud with its close association with this programme that has also served to strengthen the ties between Mr O'Neil and the Malta maritime administration.

Malta hosts the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea and the IMO International Maritime Law Institute. These two institutions were set up before Mr O'Neil came to office. However, during his term as Secretary-

General they have been given a new lease of life and have become instrumental in IMO's programme for regional and international co-operation and assistance.

Operating on the basis of the decisions of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and financed by the Mediterranean Trust Fund, REMPEC was the first such Regional Centre in the world. Administered by the International Maritime Organization REMPEC is a tangible proof of what regional cooperation can achieve and IMO has used the successful REMPEC model in other regions of the world. Mr O'Neil was, inter alia, instrumental in finalising negotiations and concluding the 1990 host country agreement between the Government of Malta and IMO on the location of REMPEC in Malta.

Malta also proudly hosts the IMO International Maritime Law Institute. IMLI has the principal objective of providing suitably trained personnel in maritime law for the effective implementation of the maritime programmes of governments in accordance with international regulations and standards. The Institute is yet another proof of the foresight and vision of IMO. IMLI is an investment in the future providing maritime Administrations with the means for a sustainable development of their maritime law infrastructure and the means for its implementation and enforcement.

During the recent years IMO has not only consolidated but also increased its support towards this Institute. On the other hand the Malta government sharing this strong belief in the role, function and potential of the Institute and, working hand in hand with the IMO Secretary-General has consistently been actively involved in providing financial and other support.



Certainly IMLI would not be the sustainable project it is today were it not for the determination of Mr O'Neil in ensuring, inter alia, a worldwide support for the Institute. Every year, at the end of the academic year, despite a very heavy schedule, particularly at that time of the year, Mr O'Neil, as IMO Secretary-General and as Chairman of the IMLI Board of Governors makes the time to lead at the graduation ceremony of the IMLI students. He takes personal interest in progress of the students and continues to enquire about their work and career development long after their graduation. He is particularly delighted when he sees WMU and IMLI graduates forming part of delegations from member States participating at IMO meetings.

However important REMPEC and IMLI are they still remain a very small part of the initiatives and work of Mr O'Neil. For fourteen years at the helm of one of the most dynamic, efficient and cost effective inter-governmental organizations Mr O'Neil has successfully steered IMO through dangerous and stormy waters never losing sight of the need that international maritime law must be continuously developed but fully aware that such progress can only be meaningful and can only be sustained

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if it is complimented by a universal acceptance and global enforcement and implementation of these standards.

In recognition of his leadership and achievements several governments have bestowed honours on IMO Secretary-General. The University of Malta has conferred a Directorate of Laws Honoris Causa on Mr O'Neil. However, the best tribute paid to Mr O'Neil is the universal acknowledgement of the international maritime industry of the achievements

of IMO that he has led for such a long period of time. Now he is handing over to his successor a healthy and forward looking Organization. IMO, with the cooperation of the world maritime community and under his leadership has worked relentlessly and successfully towards ensuring safer shipping and cleaner oceans. Mr O'Neil is handing over leadership of an Organization which now aims towards a safer, a more secure and efficient shipping and clean oceans.

The Government of Malta pays tribute to Mr O'Neil for his success and achievements as Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization and augurs him further success in his continuing leadership role at the World Maritime University and the IMO International Maritime Law Institute.

“During recent years IMO has not only consolidated but also increased its support towards this Maritime Law Institute.”



## William A. O'Neil: an extraordinary voyage

by Admiral Thomas H. Collins  
Commandant, United States Coast Guard

After years of distinctive service, we must now bid fair winds and following seas to Secretary-General William O'Neil and congratulate him on his extraordinarily successful navigation through raging storms and high waters as he guided the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to safe harbor. Secretary-General O'Neil's leadership has exemplified the IMO's objectives of safe, secure, and efficient shipping on clean oceans. He has raised the bar to unprecedented levels in the maritime industry that have resulted in improvements to environmental protection, safety and security for crews, ports, and ships at sea. He has increased educational and employment opportunities for personnel in the maritime sector and has greatly expanded our Technical Cooperation programme.

For fourteen years, Secretary-General O'Neil's vision has led the IMO to surpass both short and long-term goals of improving the safety of life at sea worldwide. His personal involvement and commitment to seafarers everywhere is a tribute to his character and his success as our Chief Executive. Since taking office, Secretary-General O'Neil has been a catalyst to increase recognition of the importance of maritime safety and security around the world. Truly, the IMO has risen to meet the high expectations of the international maritime community, through the dedicated efforts of Secretary-General O'Neil.

All segments of the maritime community have been called upon by the Secretary-General to continue to improve worldwide standards. A good leader must show excellent managerial ability; a great leader, like Mr. O'Neil, possesses the foresight and ability to rise to challenges. Secretary-General O'Neil exhibited an introspective outlook on the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS) requirements when he recognized the need to re-evaluate the regulations for the large passenger cruise ships being built today.

This foresight has reduced the risk of potential catastrophes. In May 2000, under Secretary-General O'Neil's direction, the IMO launched a comprehensive review of the SOLAS requirements to make certain that they ensured the safety of large passenger ships. The initiative addressed the protection and safety of ships carrying thousands of passengers and crew members on the open seas.

Secretary-General O'Neil demonstrated his awareness of the need to balance industry and the workforce improvements in personnel related issues when he led the development of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW). Established in 1978, the STCW Convention required seafarers to meet minimum standards relating to training, certification, and watchkeeping. Countries were obliged to meet or exceed the minimum standards, but different interpretations of the regulations made consistency and administration difficult.

In 1995, the STCW Convention was amended to impose strict obligations to be uniformly applied. The amendments translated the STCW Convention into initiatives currently being implemented.

International co-operative efforts were integrated into the establishment of the International Safety Management Code (ISM) for the Safe Operation of Ships and Pollution Prevention. Secretary-General O'Neil guided the development of the Code to stimulate a culture of safety within the shipping community. The adoption of common sets of rules and regulations to protect the environment and increase safety and security are a tribute to the Secretary-General. The introduction of the ISM Code is a result of the leadership and management system he established, which is genuinely devoted to reducing the number of marine disasters.



In the wake of the September 11, 2001 and other tragic terrorism attacks, Secretary-General O'Neil led the IMO to increase maritime security measures on an expedited basis. The adoption of the International Code for the Security of Ships and Port Facilities has established a benchmark for future co-operative development. Bulk carrier safety has improved, thus reducing carrier casualties, and it remains a priority on IMO's agenda.

The United States Coast Guard takes great pleasure in extending our warmest appreciation to Secretary-General William O'Neil for his personal involvement and commitment to raising world standards in the maritime industry. His value of international co-operation in achieving maritime safety and security improvements have marked his exceptional career, and his zeal, dedication, and professionalism have raised maritime standards. His spirit and determination leave us with the momentum to continue our IMO voyage, continuing our quest, by way of international co-operation, for safe, secure, and efficient shipping on clean oceans. The United States Coast Guard bids farewell to Secretary-General O'Neil, and wishes him a safe and successful voyage on his next adventure.

## The Honorable William O'Neil - A friend of the Panama Canal forever

by Mr. Alberto Alemán Zubieta  
Administrator, Panama Canal Authority



After 14 years of unwavering service, Mr. William O'Neil will retire as Chairman of the International Maritime Organization. The Panama Canal family wants to express its admiration and respect for such a remarkable gentleman, and commemorate his distinguished career in the maritime industry.

Mr. O'Neil's tenure at the helm of the IMO has been characterized by very wise, yet practical decisions which led to safer shipping and cleaner oceans. Under Mr. O'Neil's leadership, the IMO developed a proactive approach to maritime legislation, offering viable solutions and encouraging more hands-on participation by all Member States. With his guidance, the IMO's technical initiatives focused on the training and development of the national administration's human resources in order to thoroughly implement international regulations. Mr. O'Neil also stressed the importance of establishing further strategic alliances with international governmental and non-governmental organizations. In co-operation with the IMO, these groups assure regulatory compliance by all Member States.

As Secretary-General of the IMO, Mr. O'Neil established international

standards to address the safety of bulk carriers and ro-ro ferries, and developed the International Safety Management (ISM) Code. The ISM Code emphasizes the importance of quality in operations aboard ship and has made management directly responsible for safety and environmental compliance. In addition, a reduction in navigational accidents, which in turn saves lives and diminishes pollution, has been attained through implementation of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW). The STCW recognizes the importance of training and education in reducing accidents. The International Code for the Protection of Ships and Port Facilities (ISPS Code) establishes international standards and regulations to enhance ship and port security.

Mr. O'Neil has been uniquely sensitive to the industry's responsibility to the public and has guided efforts to reduce marine pollution and minimize accidents. The recently ratified instruments that tackle marine pollution caused by anti-fouling paints (International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships) reflect his strong stewardship.

These initiatives have all had a positive impact on the Panama Canal. More than 13,000 ships transit the waterway every year and the majority of the crossing is made through the pristine fresh waters of Gatun Lake. The Lake provides drinking water to Panama's most populated cities, so it is imperative for our country that the ships adhere to the strictest measures and regulations to ensure safe operations. In fact, the very low rate of transit-related accidents, reflects the responsible operation and reliable management of these vessels.

Mr. O'Neil is a great friend to the Panama Canal. His personal and professional involvement with the waterway's operation and its future reveal a deep understanding of the important and critical role the Canal plays in the maritime world. His pragmatic, well-balanced approach to new issues and his clear understanding of the Canal are hallmarks of his holistic view of the connection between shipping and the broader economy. This is perhaps due to his own professional background and experience while in charge of the Canadian Saint Lawrence Seaway Authority before being elected as Secretary-General of the IMO.

Mr. O'Neil will also be remembered for his ability to bring together opposing views while exercising a gentle but firm leadership. Under Mr. O'Neil's stewardship, the IMO led the industry's response in security matters after the September 11 attacks.

Appointed in 1999 as the first of eleven members of the Panama Canal Advisory Board, Mr. O'Neil was also elected as the first Chairman of this Board. His appointment as Chairman took place at the crucial moment when Panama was taking full charge of the Canal and needed to show the world it was capable of running the Canal in an efficient and reliable manner.

Mr. O'Neil's guidance was instrumental for the Canal's success.

Mr. O'Neil maintains very close ties with Panama and the Canal, always lending his support to ensure the long-term success of the waterway. His guidance and commitment are a great asset in our on-going quest for a more efficient, competitive and safer waterway.

As Mr. O'Neil prepares for new endeavors, we express our best wishes to him.



## IMO and its grown-up maritime university

by Mr. Illmar Reepalu  
Chairman of Malmö City Executive Board

It feels natural for me to talk about the World Maritime University in connection with IMO and Mr. O'Neil's period as Secretary-General. Being a representative of the host city of the university I am proud to say that both WMU and the city have had an interesting and exciting development from 1990 and up till now.

The city of Malmö has transformed from a traditional trade and industry environment to a modern European city with new enterprises in high-tech branches like ICT and biotechnology. Malmö's character has also changed radically since the establishment of the new university. We have also during this period made the city much nicer through different beautifying measures in the physical environment. New residential areas have been built close to WMU and covering the waterfront. I am convinced that all these changes both physical and knowledge-based have made Malmö a more attractive city for WMU's students, teachers and researchers.

As I have followed the development of WMU during many years now, I can also say that the university has changed in many ways since 1990. And it is also obvious that the university is needed more than ever as we demand competence to run well-managed ports and ensure that our marine areas and coastlines are healthy and ecologically sustainable.

This means that the real number of students over a year is more than 500. I must say that I find this to be a very impressive figure.

Other examples of new or increased activities regard research and consultancy. A special research unit has been created. Together with consultancy this means that WMU generates income on these activities. This income makes a nice contribution to the budget of the university.

I would also like to point at the important fact that WMU has positioned itself in the educational and scientific international community. Why is that the case? The answer is that the university has exposed itself to external audit. This is of course a way of increasing the credibility of the university, but also a way to open up for improvements. In the long run this makes it possible to raise the status of WMU as an international institution for education and research in the maritime field.

Since 1990 WMU has sought new international contacts and co-operation to develop its education programmes. In its hometown, Malmö University, which is important both for the two parties and the city. By increasing co-operation between the universities,



Because of that it is very satisfying to look back to the beginning of the 1990s and establish the positive development that WMU has experienced so far. Of course we can feel still more proud than before. And this is a result of a joint effort by IMO under the leadership of Secretary-General Mr. O'Neil and also to a large extent the present rector of WMU, Mr. Karl Laubstein.

“By increasing co-operation between WMU and Malmö University, Malmö's new profile as a knowledge-based city is enhanced.”

During the current period new programmes for education have been introduced. The number of special courses has increased. Now WMU offers many short courses dealing with specific and important issues facing the maritime world of today.

Malmö's new profile as a knowledge based city is strengthened. This is something that I really welcome and support.

To conclude, I would like to stress that I myself and the city have always been very proud to host WMU.

## The Bill O'Neil legacy

by Mr. Chris Horrocks

Secretary-General, International Chamber of Shipping/International Shipping Federation



The first time I remember meeting Bill O'Neil was back in the dark ages when he was still head of the Canadian Coast Guard. He will have no recollection of that occasion, because heads of Coast Guards receive courtesy calls on a daily basis. But for me, accompanying the then ICS Secretary-General, Rear Admiral Bill Graham, on a trip to Ottawa at a time when Canadian pollution legislation was proving worryingly innovative, it was a special event.

I guess that Bill O'Neil was already attending IMO meetings at that time (or IMCO as it then was), no doubt as head of the Canadian delegation to the Council. But it must have been in 1980 or thereabouts, by which time he was running the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, that he was elected chairman of the Council, a post he filled with great distinction for ten years.

There is arguably no better training for an outsider aspiring to the post of Secretary-General of IMO than a spell as chairman of the Council. As the elected senior body of the Organization, the Council is not only its principal decision-making forum but also its political weathervane, influenced as much by external factors as by the immediate regulatory and legal issues of the moment. The chairman needs a firm hand, a way with people and good

judgement to retain the confidence of the Council for a full decade.

UN organizations are inevitably associated with the Secretary-General of the day and take on the persona of the current incumbent. Fairly or unfairly, even the United Nations itself is remembered as much for who was in charge as for what it was doing at the time.

So it is with IMO. Those with long memories will recall Sir Colin Goad, urbane directing an efficient and largely apolitical organisation in the days when the traditional maritime nations not only called all the shots but also controlled most of the ships. CP Srivastava brought the organisation into the modern world, developing IMCO's consultative role into today's fully-fledged UN agency, IMO, and doubling its membership as the developing maritime nations were

“IMO established itself as an effective standard-setting body. If in the process it became more political, that was an inevitable sign of the times.”

encouraged to play a full part in its discussions. The Organization grew in stature, it moved to splendid new premises more appropriate to the only UN agency in the United Kingdom, and it established itself as an effective standard-setting body. If in the process it started to become more political, that was an inevitable sign of the times.

Bill O'Neil was elected Secretary-General after a Srivastava era of 16 years. It must have been a daunting act to follow. But in succession to CP's consummate diplomatic skills he brought with him not only a thorough first-hand knowledge of the organisation but also the pragmatic approach of a qualified engineer and very successful manager, aware of the regulatory demands on IMO but equally familiar with both the commercial constraints

on the shipping industry and the political pressure points of his new responsibilities.

When standing for election in 1989 Bill O'Neil might have hoped that consolidation would be his principal objective, following the successful world-wide implementation of the core IMO maritime conventions – SOLAS, MARPOL and the like. If so, it was not to be. The Exxon Valdez disaster that year stirred up a political storm in the United States which was to give rise to the US Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90). The pros and cons of OPA 90 have been exhaustively discussed. But there is no getting away from the fact that it damaged the widely-held principle that IMO must be the single standard-setting body for the shipping industry, and set the example for the recent predations by Brussels following the Erika and Prestige incidents.

When the history books are written

Bill O'Neil's great achievement will be recognised to be the skilful way in which he has managed not only to argue the case for universal recognition of the role of IMO, but also to deliver the promises he has made. It has been a bruising few years for the Organization and the threat of regionalism has certainly not gone away. But despite the evident tensions between members and the difficulties created by politicians looking for whipping boys, senior officials attending IMO meetings are arguably more aware than ever before of the need to hold hard to the line that it is IMO which must establish the international rulebook for shipping. It is Bill O'Neil who must be thanked for that.

If holding the Organization together under threat has been his greatest achievement, there have been many



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“If the concept of Flag State audit comes good, it will stamp the authority of IMO even more clearly on the international maritime community.”

others during Bill O'Neil's 14 years in office. IMO watchers will all have their own favourite examples. For me, there are five that stand out.

First, the successful adoption of STCW 95, which not only provided a much needed shake-up of seafarer training and certification, but also saw IMO take its first tentative (and arguably overdue) steps towards assuming an executive role, with the appointment of teams of 'competent persons' to assess member states' readiness to join the STCW 'white list'. This sort of role, initially controversial, is surely one which will become increasingly commonplace for the Organization in the years ahead.

Next, of course, the positive and direct way in which IMO responded to European demands to phase-out single-hull tankers in the wake of the Erika

incident. The speed of that response, and the way in which the Organization rose to the challenge, showed great determination and leadership.

Thirdly, improvements in bulk carrier safety, a campaign in which Bill O'Neil vested a great deal of personal commitment and energy. Bulk carriers can quickly become the forgotten sector, ignored in the face of glitzier issues such as pollution incidents and passenger vessel safety. The evident determination of the Secretary-General to progress a programme which would give bulk carrier safety the attention it deserved was a major contributor to a successful series of regulatory enhancements.

Fourthly, never to be forgotten, the rapid response to United States demands for heightened maritime

security in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 2001. From blank sheet of paper to ISPS Code in 14 months was clear evidence of an organisation trained to deliver.

And last, but by no means least, his plan of action to address the most important question of flag state responsibilities. This is unfinished business, and has been perhaps the hardest nut to crack during Bill O'Neil's tenure. If the concept of flag state audit comes good, as we must all hope it does, it will not only improve regulatory accountability, but it will also stamp the authority of IMO even more clearly on the international maritime community.

Furthermore, it will become a lasting testimony to a Secretary-General determined to ensure that he hands on to his successor an Organization properly empowered to take the responsibilities which properly fall to it.

The Bill O'Neil era has provided a fascinating and stimulating 14 years for everyone involved in this most fascinating and stimulating of industries.

## Tribute to Bill O'Neil

by Mr. David Cockroft,  
General Secretary, International Transport Workers' Federation



The ITF, which participates in IMO activities as the representative of the ICFITU, has enjoyed an excellent relationship with Secretary-General O'Neil since his election. Our co-operation has been beneficial both to the seafarers we represent and to the maritime community as a whole. Bill O'Neil's tenure has been during a difficult time as many issues have come to the centre of public attention which have required an urgent response from the IMO. Included in this are bulk carrier safety, ro-ro ferries, single hull tankers, persons in distress, maritime security and the general issue of Flag State Implementation. His tenure of office has also seen a move away from hardware issues with more attention given to the human element which is fundamental to maritime safety and the protection of the environment.

The ITF appreciates the leadership Bill O'Neil has shown on critical issues such as bulk carrier safety and the safety of large passenger ships. While more still needs to be done to improve the safety of bulk carriers, the ITF welcomes the reduction in the number of casualties and the needless loss of seafarers' lives.

Bill's tenure has seen a major revision of the IMO instruments and an improvement in international

minimum standards. Although, as he has frequently stressed, the enforcement of these standards is still far from universal.

During his period of office, the STCW Convention underwent a comprehensive revision. While the process did not fully meet the high and, perhaps unrealistic expectations we all had, it was a significant achievement and introduced new and innovative oversight provisions and provided a sound foundation for work to address the widespread problem of fatigue amongst seafarers.

The human element is of course much wider than training and certification or even fatigue. Other more sensitive issues have also been addressed in close cooperation with the ILO, the UN agency with responsibility for social questions. Of particular note is the work of the Joint IMO/ILO Ad Hoc Expert Working Group on Liability and Compensation Regarding Claims for Death, Personal Injury and Abandonment of Seafarers and Assembly Resolutions on Financial Security in Case of Abandonment and on Shipowners' Responsibilities in Respect of Contractual Claims for Personal Injury or death.

The most recent period has been dominated by maritime security, and the ITF is pleased that the IMO was able to find a carefully constructed balance between the real concerns for better security and the human rights of those working on the world's ships. The new provisions in SOLAS and the related Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS) should provide additional protection for both society and for seafarers.

The ITF has always attached considerable importance to co-operation between international organisations and believes that bringing their special expertise to bear on issues can be beneficial, as can

using the overlapping competencies to address issues in a holistic manner. We therefore welcome the involvement of the IMO in the inter-agency Consultative Group on Flag State Implementation, which the United Nations has established.

The ITF has always supported the World Maritime University, both politically and financially. Early in its life, our Seafarers' Trust was able to make a substantial donation towards the establishment of a chair in human factors, and we have continued to sponsor WMU students. It is gratifying to see the real progress the WMU has made under Bill O'Neil's tenure.

The ITF exists to protect seafarers and to ensure that the interests of those who work at sea are reflected in international instruments. In Secretary-General O'Neil, we have always found a receptive ear. It is clear that he has always had the interests of seafarers at heart and perhaps the most long lasting manifestation of this will be the Memorial to Seafarers which stands by the IMO entrance and which reminds all those who enter or leave the building of the central role of the Organization.

We wish Bill well for his well earned retirement, which comes at the end of a distinguished career. We also look forward to working closely with his successor to build on the firm foundations he has built.



## IMO and fourteen years of William A. O'Neil

by Mr. Michael Everard  
President, BIMCO

The International Maritime Organisation that Mr William O'Neil took over as Secretary-General in 1990 seems, in retrospect, very different to that which he leaves fourteen years later. To those at the 'coal face' of the industry, operating ships in one of the most commercially challenging periods in living memory, IMO in 1990 often seemed remote, its committees and sub-committees inhabited by regulators detached from the business of operating ships.

Bill O'Neil seems to have made a conscious decision to bring industry into the IMO loop, and he quickly set about this task. We in the industry were soon made aware of his presence. He attended industry functions assiduously and seemed anxious to try and understand our problems. For his part he was able to communicate what IMO was doing and how it was going to affect us, in our particular shipping sector. Perhaps we didn't quite appreciate it at the time but this friendly and efficient Canadian was bridge building between the industry and the IMO and over the years these links have strengthened. Due to his intervention, the organisation has seemed more relevant, and the regulators have become less remote. It has been a two-way traffic that surely must have resulted in better regulation and regulators more attuned to the practical realities of the shipping industry.

“Bill O'Neil made a conscious decision to bring industry into the IMO loop and he quickly set about this task.”

The industry has also undoubtedly appreciated the very personal commitment to marine safety that Bill O'Neil has brought to the Organization. There were elements of the maritime world that he found quite unacceptable and in his speeches he

was able to draw attention to these. His attachment to the causes of sinking of bulk carriers was notable in this respect, when he in the early 1990's took the unprecedented step to submit a paper to the Maritime Safety Committee requesting it to adopt a new agenda item Bulk Carrier Safety. The item is still on MSC's agenda, but likely to be taken off after its next meeting in 2004. A large number of safety measures has been and some remain to be, implemented for new as well as existing bulk carriers. The effect of this can already be seen in the very improved casualty statistics for this ship type. The Secretary-General lending the weight of his office to such a problem clearly has done much to accelerate the process of finding solutions to this highly complex problem.

The pedestrian nature of IMO's working was also something, which we have seen changing markedly during Bill O'Neil's time in office. As an organisation of more than 150 sovereign states and a commitment to action through consensus it has scarcely been IMO's fault that years would sometimes pass between an agreement for a technical amendment to a convention and its implementation. Governments have different priorities. But without a doubt we have seen IMO speed up the

processes, often due once again to the persuasion and diplomacy of the Secretary-General. Difficult matters where there was an element of sovereignty at stake - one thinks of Flag State Implementation - have been challenges that IMO has not shrunk



from. And when there was a real crisis of public confidence - following the tragic loss of the Estonia - IMO and its members showed that it could move fast and effectively to make passenger ro-ro ferries safer.

Throughout the past fourteen years, IMO and the industry have worked closer together than ever before, and to good effect. The International Safety Management Code is a perfect example of industry and regulators working in harmony, producing a dynamic document designed to make the seas safer and cleaner. The STCW Convention has been another instance of the useful co-operation between IMO and industry, arguably more important than almost any other regulatory process in that it has addressed the human element that we now know to be so essential.

Maritime events and regulatory milestones inevitably encourage recollection. One thinks of the concern in tanker operating circles after the US Oil Pollution Act 1990, provoked by public and political outrage after the Exxon Valdez and the challenge that this provided to the organisation as it strove to develop international solutions for tanker construction and operation that would prevent unilateral action. We see this

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pattern of events; of an accident provoking political action and threats of unilateral or regional regulation repeating itself in Europe, after the Erika and Prestige incidents, and the Secretary-General providing serious leadership skills in preventing what has been described as a 'regulatory patchwork' spreading over the world's seas. Also, after both these accidents, BIMCO has been pleased to be invited to participate in the Group of Experts on Impact Assessment, providing vital and factual information to ensure that the subsequent regulations were based on the best available facts. An added dimension has been produced

by the awful events of 9/11 and here once again, the IMO and industry has been able to collaborate fruitfully to produce the ISPS Code, in a timely manner, to answer an urgent need. There is a system here that clearly works well.

As observers to IMO over the years, we at BIMCO have done our best to bring a practical industry perspective to the regulatory process. We have appreciated the warm helpfulness of the Secretary-General and his secretariat and the approachability that is not always present in large international organizations. We have been very conscious that we have

been part of a team hopefully producing better regulations, relevant to a shipping industry that continues to change fast from a technical point of view.

The proof of the pudding, so it is said, is in the eating and despite all the present problems, the statistics of ship and personnel loss and the incidence of pollution demonstrate clearly that under Bill O'Neil's leadership the seas are safer and pollution much reduced. This is a matter for both pride and satisfaction and we at BIMCO will applaud the substantial contribution of the Secretary-General during his fourteen years at the helm.



## William A. O'Neil: the man of destiny

by Dr. Gamal El-Din Ahmed Mokhtar

President, Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport

We cannot, as a rule, do without conventional standards which, at least, ensure regularity and systematically. But a rule is said to be a rule because it allows for exceptions. And surely a man of destiny is an exception whom conventional standards are too narrow to encompass. 'Nature made him, and then broke the mould'.

The 'man of destiny' is the one and only inclusive term that could recapitulate His Excellency W. O'Neil's leadership of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in the capacity of its Secretary-General. Through O'Neil, many of the great expectations placed on IMO have come true. But in this short article I will confine myself to two of his greatest achievements, namely the selection of the leaders of WMU and the Technical Co-operation Division. The two leaders have made an outstanding turnabout in their fields. I will, here, refer to a couple of situations that may give us insight into the visions of this great man and how his mind works.

“A man of destiny is an exception whom conventional standards are too narrow to encompass. Through Mr O'Neil, many of the great expectations placed on the IMO have come true.”

1. When Karl Laubstein applied for the Rectorship of the World Maritime University (WMU), all conventional standards coalesced against him. He was of German origin and so was Professor Zade; he was a Canadian and so was Mr O'Neil: two facts that could not be very much welcomed by an institution based on the balance of as many nationalities as possible.

Before Karl was appointed, the Selecting Committee had unanimously nominated a candidate, who rightfully believed, according to the UNESCO Declaration, in the autonomy of the University, thus asserting that WMU should be independent of

IMO. It occurred to me that such a concept in the case of the embryonic WMU would mean detaching the umbilical cord that connected it to its parent, which could mean an abortion. I was really concerned because I firmly believed that separating WMU from IMO would be destructive. Moreover, Dr Laubstein had been chosen by Canada to run a fishery project of two billion Canadian dollars, a choice that must have come out of something since 'nothing will come of nothing' as Shakespeare puts it.

I intimated my meditations to the Secretary-General, asking him to exercise his authority, as stipulated in WMU Constitution, by overruling the decision of the Selecting Committee. It takes a man of destiny to identify another man of destiny, and thus Laubstein became Rector of WMU.

Now, WMU presides at the apex of postgraduate maritime institutions worldwide due to the support of the Nippon Foundation which is becoming the largest donor of the annual Fellowship Programme, which could not have succeeded without that generous support. It suffices to say that the Nippon Foundation finances four Professorial Chairs (US\$ 100,000 each). Reference should be made to the Agreement between WMU and the University of Wales (500 years old) to jointly confer the Ph.D. Degree.

We should never fail to pay homage to O'Neil as one of the main founding fathers of this great



institution along with C.P. Srivastava.

2. O'Neil believes that co-operation between maritime organizations and institutions as well as between developed and developing countries is not a luxury. This is reflected by his support of all initiatives in WMU, the African Association of Maritime Training Institutions (AAMTI) & the International Association of Maritime Universities (IAMU). "The benefit is mutual", he always reiterates. Receiving assistance helps those who receive to ensure their existence; providing assistance helps those who provide to satisfy their moral obligations.

The choice of Edwards to lead the Technical Co-operation Division marks an essential transformation in the performance of the Technical Co-operation Committee (TCC) and the delivery of the Integrated Technical Committee Programme (ITCP).

## William A. O'Neil: an appreciation

by Mr. Peter Swift

Managing Director, International Association of Independent Tanker Owners (INTERTANKO)



The Exxon Valdez oil pollution disaster in Alaska 1989, and the tough, unilateral OPA 90 legislation that came out of it, together sent a powerful wave of change rolling over the tanker industry. Enter the politician into a major role in the world of tanker shipping. Enter a growing mistrust in the fundamental way the industry organises itself. Enter a new intensity of global environmental awareness. And enter William O'Neil as Secretary General at the International Maritime Organization.

The timing of IMO's change of leader and the choice it made turned out to be impeccable. O'Neil has helped the Organization to maintain its relevance as the regulating body for the international shipping industry, while at the same time increasing the respect it attracts by ensuring that its machinery works as fast as possible with flexibility and understanding.

This Canadian engineer was called a 'builder of bridges' in a Seatrade profile written ten years ago. And that is exactly what he has done. Bridges between the IMO and its member governments as it works to gain their confidence. Bridges between the IMO and ship owners and ship operators. Bridges between the IMO and the non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

As one of the principal NGOs at the

IMO, INTERTANKO has felt the effects of O'Neil's challenge to all the NGOs to justify their existence at and involvement with the IMO by being active participants in the regulatory process. The result is that the committees and working groups value greatly the input of industry experts, who help to bring about a regulatory end result that is workable in practice.

O'Neil is not an extrovert. However, his willingness to attend every sort of function as a tireless ambassador for the shipping industry has been remarkable, his personal commitment unflagging. But this pleasant, gentle exterior hides a steely determination, which has been very much in evidence in his uncompromising desire to maintain an international view on regulation. He has given no support to taking the path to unilateral, regional solutions.

During his fourteen years of office, O'Neil has championed the ISM Code, moves against piracy, an international solution to the post-Erika legislation to name but three key issues. He has tirelessly supported the seafarer. He has shown a genuine concern about the proliferation of inspections on ships. His response to the issues of the day is always a responsible, practical, pragmatic approach - he is a man who doesn't promise what he cannot deliver.

He has also shown a keen awareness of the contrast between the great achievements of the shipping industry and its huge potential for disaster. The iron (finger) ring worn by Canadian engineers (including O'Neil) has its origins in the Quebec Bridge. This became the world's largest cantilever span, an engineering triumph. But it also became Canada's most spectacular structural failure when it collapsed twice during construction. Moving that into tanker terminology, the tanker industry has seen its successful quest for safety and environmental soundness severely hit by the tanker disasters of the last 15 years, from Exxon Valdez to

Prestige, via Braer, Aegean Sea, Sea Empress and Erika.

The 1990s saw environmental issues take a growing share of the IMO's work programme. Pollution prevention and pollution response; tanker design; ship recycling (it used to be called scrapping); ballast water management; anti-fouling coatings; air pollution; the designation of Sensitive Sea Areas. As these issues proliferated, so they also grew in importance as the 'green' lobby showed politicians a great way to impress the general public by getting tough on shipping.

The IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee has moved mountains, comprehensively raising international standards to prevent marine pollution by ships. O'Neil's observations at the opening in July of the 49th session of MEPC encompassed the fundamental aspirations of the whole organisation. Delegates facing one of the largest numbers of crucial issues ever packed into one working week were urged to ensure that their decisions were realistic, pragmatic and well balanced so as not to lead to any negative repercussions which might damage the concept of universality in the regulation of shipping.

These aspirations remain for O'Neil's successor to nurture in the future. But the legacy of 15 years of increasing political involvement worldwide is a situation where governments, anxious to impress the voter with tough action on environmental issues, get impatient with the international process at IMO and take unilateral action. This threat to the authority of the IMO won't go away. Dealing with it will be one of the major tasks of the Organization over the next decade.

O'Neil has worked tirelessly and conscientiously for the IMO and has been a dedicated servant of the international maritime community - his legacy will be long appreciated by that community.

## Oil pollution liability and compensation

by Mr. Måns Jacobsson

Director, International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds 1971 and 1992

The relationship between Mr William O'Neil and the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds) goes back to the time when he was working within the Canadian Administration and his interest in IOPC Funds' matters has always been a great encouragement to the Funds and their Directors.

The Torrey Canyon incident, which occurred off the south west coast of England in 1967, made it clear that the rules on liability and compensation for oil damage caused by oil spills from tankers were inadequate. Shortly after that incident, the IMO (or IMCO as it was known at that time) commenced work to develop a regime governing liability and compensation in this field. This work resulted in the adoption of two international Conventions some thirty years ago, the 1969 Civil Liability Convention and 1971 Fund Convention. In his position within the Canadian Administration, Mr William O'Neil contributed to Canada's

victims of oil pollution, and he was clearly very pleased when the 1992 Protocols entered into force as early as 1996, a remarkably short time frame in the context of international conventions. Mr O'Neil's unstinting efforts to promote the 1992 Conventions contributed greatly to this success.

Several major oil pollution incidents in recent years, the Nakhodka (Japan, 1997), Erika (France, 1999) and Prestige (Spain, 2002), have given rise to criticism of the international regime. It has been suggested in particular that the amount of compensation available under the 1992 Conventions, some US\$180 million per incident, is insufficient. In the light of the Nakhodka and Erika incidents, the IMO Legal Committee adopted in October 2000 two Resolutions increasing the limits applicable to the shipowner and the 1992 Fund by some 50% with effect from 1 November 2003. As a result,



continuing development of the international compensation regime. In 2001, the Working Group elaborated a Protocol that would create a Supplementary Fund which would provide additional compensation when the amount available under the 1992 Conventions was insufficient. The Protocol was adopted by a Diplomatic Conference held under the auspices of the IMO in May 2003. The Supplementary Fund will make available some US\$1050 million per incident for pollution damage in States Parties to the Protocol, including the amount payable under the 1992 Civil Liability and Fund Conventions. It is expected that the Protocol will enter into force in the near future. Also in this regard, Mr O'Neil has shown great personal interest and given his strong support.

During Mr O'Neil's time as Secretary-General, two other Conventions linked to the activities of the IOPC Funds have been adopted under the auspices of the IMO. In 1996 an IMO Diplomatic Conference adopted a Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea (HNS Convention). This Convention, which has not yet come into force, is to a large extent based on

“Mr O'Neil's personal efforts were crucial in enabling action by the international community to take place in such a short space of time.”

ratification of these Conventions.

Experience of some serious oil pollution incidents in the late 1970's and early 1980's showed, however, that the 1969/1971 regime needed updating. As a result, the regime was amended by two Protocols adopted in 1992 at a Diplomatic Conference convened by the IMO. The Conventions resulting from these Protocols (the 1992 Conventions) ensured that levels of compensation were available and also enhanced the scope of application. Mr O'Neil took a great personal interest in the efforts to amend the Conventions so as to ensure better financial protection of

an amount of US\$270 million per incident will be available for compensating victims for incidents occurring after this date. Again Mr O'Neil's personal efforts were crucial in enabling action by the international community to take place in such a short space of time.

At the same time, the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund 1992 set up an intersessional Working Group to consider the adequacy of the international regime so as to ensure that it meets the needs of society in the 21st century. Mr O'Neil has followed the work very closely and has emphasized the importance of the



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the model of the Civil Liability and Fund Conventions and will set up an HNS Fund to compensate victims. In 2001 the Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage was adopted.

As set out above, during Mr O'Neil's tenure as Secretary-General, the IMO has, in addition to its great efforts to enhance the safety of navigation and protect the marine environment, taken major steps towards creating a comprehensive system covering liability and compensation for damage caused by all types of substances carried by sea which threaten the marine environment. This is in the fulfilment of the IMO's motto 'Safer

shipping, cleaner oceans'. As Mr. O'Neil continually emphasizes, however, it is not enough that Conventions are adopted at Diplomatic Conferences; they must also be ratified and implemented by IMO Member States in order to be of value. It is important, therefore, that the HNS and Bunker Conventions as well as the Supplementary Fund Protocol receive widespread ratification by States in order to give the intended protection to victims.

Although the Funds are independent organizations, their close links with the IMO made it attractive for the Fund Secretariat to be located in the IMO building and the Funds

and their staff always felt part of the IMO family. However, as the Secretariat of the Funds expanded over time so did its requirements for office space and in 1999 it became necessary for the Funds to move into new premises. Mr. O'Neil has nevertheless assured the Funds that he attaches great importance to the maintenance of the close links between the IMO and the Funds and the Funds remain deeply grateful that the IMO enables the Funds to continue to use the facilities in the IMO building during meetings of its governing bodies.



## William A. O'Neil: an appreciation

by Mr. Roger Holt

Secretary-General, International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners (INTERCARGO)

When he first assumed office in 1990, Mr O'Neil made it clear that a central tenet of his mission would be to actively deploy the global authority of the International Maritime Organization to rectify deficiencies in international shipping standards. This led almost immediately to one such campaign being waged in the dry bulk sector of the industry.

At that time dry bulk carriers were sinking at the rate of more than one a month, in many cases disappearing without trace with the loss of all on board. A number of remedial measures had been taken by the Organization to improve the safety of this type of ship but it was clear from the extent of the losses that much more was required. The situation certainly exercised the conscience of Mr O'Neil because he decided to take the then unprecedented step of presenting, in his name, a set of proposals to enhance bulk carrier safety directly to the Assembly in 1991. It was the first time a systematic approach had been taken to bulk carrier safety and the Resolution was adopted unanimously.

“The success of Mr O'Neil in enhancing the safety of bulk carriers could be regarded as as probably the most praiseworthy of his many achievements.”

The Resolution served to mobilise the Organization, governments, classification societies, shipowners, shipmasters and terminal operators into observing the prescribed rules and recommended practices then in force, and this resulted in a considerable reduction in bulk carrier losses. Unfortunately the pendulum then began to swing the other way and, acting again on his own initiative, Mr O'Neil, proposed to the Maritime Safety Committee in 1994, a thorough review of the safety of this type of ship, looking into those issues which

had not been actively pursued before because of their longer-term implications and others which had only recently surfaced. Specifically, he suggested the investigation should cover design, structural and operational standards, the ship/shore interface, management and training, and survey. Having set this work in motion he carefully shadowed and actively monitored its progress. It led eventually to another Assembly Resolution in 1995 containing a series of recommendations to all those involved in the operation of ships carrying solid bulk cargoes and to a Diplomatic Conference in 1997 to enact amendments to the SOLAS Convention.

The successful conclusion of this Conference was not taken by Mr O'Neil to be the end of the road. He went on to urge that careful consideration be given to the lessons drawn from the Derbyshire Inquiry and to encourage the setting up of a fundamental and wide ranging investigation into bulk carrier safety using the disciplined approach of a

Formal Safety Assessment. This phase culminated in further wide-ranging action by the Maritime Safety Committee on bulk carrier safety. It may well mark the final milestone in the quest to make this type of ship safer.

All this activity over the years has borne fruit. It has led to a steady improvement in constructional, operational and cargo-related standards and this in turn to a sustained decline in the number of bulk carriers lost each year. The latest Intercargo Bulk Carrier Safety Report

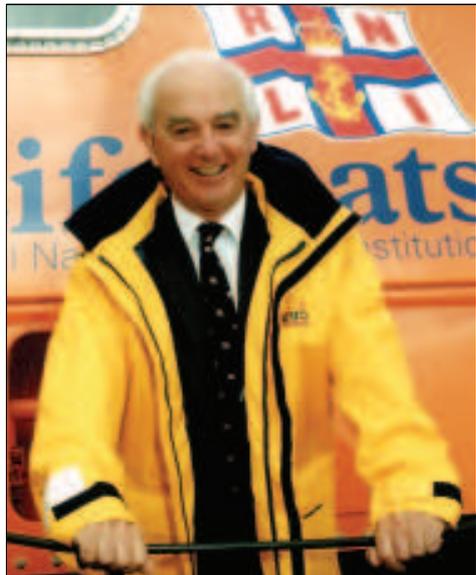


provides evidence of this over the last ten years where the trend lines clearly show that the number of ships, lives and tonnage being lost continue to fall.

In many ways the success of Mr O'Neil in enhancing the safety of bulk carriers could be regarded as probably the most praiseworthy of his many achievements during the tenure of his office as Secretary-General. In presiding over fundamental changes to the regulation of ships in other sectors of shipping, such as ro-ro passenger ships, he had the backing of strong public pressure. But this was conspicuously absent in the case of bulk carriers. Public opinion was largely indifferent to their fate and few politicians chose to champion their cause, despite the fact that these ships represent a very considerable percentage of the world's tonnage and thousands of seafarers man them. Mr O'Neil had therefore to make the case for change on his own assessment, sense of duty and powers of persuasion. The extent of what has been achieved is a measure of his commitment, tenacity and dedication to ensuring the safety of life at sea. His contribution to the safety of bulk carriers cannot be over estimated.

## At the helm of maritime safety

by Mr. Peter Nicholson  
Chairman, RNLI and Trustee, International Lifeboat Federation



At the end of his stewardship as Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization, William O'Neil can look back with pride on a career of achievements, which leaves the world's seafarers sleeping more comfortably in their bunks. His period of office at the head of the world's premier maritime safety organisation has brought many great improvements, not the least of which has been the practical introduction of GMDSS and quantum steps taken toward implementing the IMO Global SAR plan.

Organization, in the immediate aftermath of the Estonia disaster, in which 852 people tragically perished, before they could be rescued. More recently, Mr O'Neil inspired the Maritime Safety Committee to institute a review of the SAR capabilities and strategies, in view of the trend toward the ever-increasing capacity of large passenger vessels. The International Lifeboat Federation is proud to play an active role in this very worthwhile exercise, which is already highlighting key issues requiring further attention.

A true pragmatist, William O'Neil recognised that the advance of technology alone could not bring about safer and cleaner oceans. "No matter what wonders technology produces in the next millennium, they will still depend on people for their implementation – and it is people, the seafarers, who will suffer most if something goes wrong", he said.

In spite of his busy personal schedules, William O'Neil has always found time for the men and women of the world's Search and Rescue services. He has often expressed his personal admiration for the selfless

Community", he said.

When he addressed the 18th International Lifeboat Conference at Bournemouth in 1999, he told delegates that "the International Lifeboat Federation has played a major part in assuring that our safety and environmental objectives have been met and the commitment shown by your members, often at the risk of their own lives, is legendary" He went on to add "It would be a pious hope indeed, because of the risky nature of seafaring, to think that one day in the future we shall be able to celebrate a year in which no ships have been sunk and no lives have been lost at sea and as a result no lifeboats have had to be launched".

A visionary aspiration indeed, but one which has moved steadily closer to becoming a reality, thanks to the inspirational leadership of William O'Neil, in a period of particular change and challenge within the maritime world.

“In spite of his busy personal schedules, William O'Neil has always found time for the men and women of the world's Search and Rescue services.”

A visionary leader, he has skilfully helmed the often-lethargic processes of global democracy, yet astutely recognised the need for rapid and decisive action in response to the immediate situations. In response to questions raised by delegates at the 17th International Lifeboat Conference in Montevideo in 1995, Mr O'Neil described the initiatives taken by the

dedication of SAR crews to their humanitarian cause. In 1999 Mr O'Neil presented the IMO's International Maritime Prize to the International Lifeboat Federation. "This is the first time that the prize has been awarded to an organisation rather than to an individual and I think that this indicates the great esteem in which the ILF is held by the Maritime



## William A. O'Neil: an appreciation

by Mr. Epaminondas G. Embiricos  
Chairman, Greek Shipping Co-operation Committee

Shipping transports ninety five percent of world trade and is consequently of fundamental importance to the health of the world's economy. Shipping is an international industry and it follows that its regulation and the task of raising standards can only effectively be accomplished on an international level, through the IMO.

The IMO has been remarkably successful in this endeavour and a great part of its accomplishments have occurred during the fourteen-year tenure of William O'Neil, as Secretary-General. The Enhanced Survey Program, for tankers and bulk carriers, the Revision of the STCW Convention, the ISM Code and the new Security Measures are but a few of Bill O'Neil's achievements. IMO's major achievements are too numerous to mention here and, of course, include the SOLAS and MARPOL Conventions and the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage

It is difficult to over emphasise the great contribution of IMO to tanker and bulk carrier safety. The introduction, by IMO, of inert gas systems for tankers, combined with the Enhanced Survey Program, has resulted in a marked decrease of tanker casualties and consequently a very significant decrease in oil pollution. Inert gas not only minimises the risk of explosion in cargo tanks, but also significantly reduces the rate of corrosion in the tanks. This regime, when combined with the rigorous inspections of the Enhanced Survey Program, has made tankers some of the safest ships afloat.

The alarming increase in bulk carrier casualties was largely arrested through IMO's introduction of the Enhanced Survey Programme, although there is more work to be done in this field, particularly in relation to new building standards. Only IMO can ensure that Classification Societies cease to compete among themselves in

'optimising' vessels' scantlings – which really means reducing the scantlings – and adopt common standards for the construction of robust ships that are designed for the twenty five year life span during which they can be expected to operate.

Surprisingly, despite its success, IMO often finds itself under attack. Some say that IMO is slow to take action. A careful analysis of IMO's response to recent shipping casualties, however, shows that this criticism cannot be justified. IMO has not responded slowly, it has done so with deliberation, as is its duty, after full and sound technical, legal and economic analysis.

The greatest danger to the very existence of the IMO has been the European Union's threats, on each occasion, following the foundering of the Erika and the Prestige, to proceed with unilateral legislation.

After the Erika incident, in December 1999, the European Union made proposals for an accelerated phase out of single skin tankers. These proposals were made under threat of unilateral European Union action, were they not to be accepted. The practical effect of the proposals was studied by a Working Group of experts appointed by Mr. O'Neil, and they were debated at length by the MEPC. The proposals, as drafted, were rejected on the grounds that they were impractical and would damage

“Some say IMO is slow to take action. Careful analysis of IMO's response to recent shipping casualties shows that this criticism cannot be justified.”

the world economy. The IMO, however, succeeded in correcting the defective proposals and achieving general agreement to an amendment to MARPOL, which came into effect in



September 2002.

Following the loss of the Prestige, the European Union's submissions to the IMO, of 10 April 2003, were a resurrection, with minor amendments, of the phase out proposals, which it made after the Erika and which the IMO had previously rejected. Once again, the proposals were made under threat of unilateral action.

It appears that the IMO will, once more, succeed in correcting the defective European Union proposals and achieving a workable and efficient compromise. However the European Union is insisting on inserting an unacceptable, unilateral element in the agreement to the effect that: 'A Party to the present Convention shall be entitled to deny entry of oil tankers operating in accordance with the

provisions ... of this regulation into the ports or offshore terminals under its jurisdiction.' This would, of course, be an invitation for an international 'free for all' and for chaos to ensue,



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seriously undermining, if not destroying, the standing of IMO. It is not possible to have effective international regulation if any nation is free to ignore it.

The European Union, with its long maritime tradition, should know better. It appears, however, that certain politicians, who know little about the shipping industry and care more about short-term political gain, today govern the agenda within the Union. These politicians have not understood that if, inadvertently, they destroy the IMO, they will have occasioned irreparable damage to the

maritime sector, to world trade and thus to the world economy. It is also surprising and most unfortunate that the European Commission, as well, appears to lack in-depth knowledge of, and serious interest in, the shipping industry. Recently, and contrary to long-standing tradition, some European Union delegates to the IMO have shown more interest in catering to the political whims of their masters than in sound technical, legal and economic analysis. European politicians and the Commission must realise that their actions have the potential of not only harming the IMO,

but thereby also the European Union, the very constituency that it is their duty to protect.

All genuinely concerned people, who value and cherish the maritime sector, should strive to support the IMO in overcoming these difficulties, so that it can continue to perform its essential task with the same efficiency and success that it has achieved to date.



## Technical and scientific expertise unites IMO and IACS

by Mr. Ugo Salerno  
Chairman, International Association of Classification Societies

The International Association of Classification Societies and its individual member societies have shared with William O'Neil, during his 14-year tenure as Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, a profound appreciation of technical precision and the need to tackle complex risks in a scientific manner.

Mr O'Neil has campaigned tirelessly for the need to pay greater attention to the human element and the promotion of a safety culture in which people are encouraged to improve.

Although the traditional strength of the recognised classification societies lies with their technical expertise and capacity for detailed technical rule-making and associated ship inspection and survey work, all the IACS members have always strived to entertain a healthy awareness of the man-machine interface. Nonetheless, they, too, have had to adapt to new societal demands for improved ship safety and vessel-source pollution control, by committing themselves much more to people-oriented and functional rules and regulations, management and training systems.

“The radical shift from IMO's traditional emphasis on the purely technical aspects of ship safety has been a courageous, but highly necessary, initiative.”

Mr O'Neil has managed to confront these and many other challenges in partnership with the IMO member governments and the maritime community as a whole, bringing the necessary global perspective to the twin causes of safety of ships, cargoes, crews and passengers at sea and marine environmental protection. The IACS membership is privileged to have been very much part of this process.

Out of all the important initiatives developed during Mr O'Neil's tenure

with his personal encouragement and support, I should like to list just three that in my personal experience deserve a special mention, and to which IACS was able to make a tangible, and lasting, contribution. They concern, in no particular order of priority:

- the adoption, in 1993, of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code;

- the adoption of Formal Safety Assessment (FSA) in order to tackle in a scientific manner, using cost-benefit analysis, specific safety issues affecting particular ship types (eg passenger vessels, bulk carriers); and

- the adoption of an ambitious new work programme to improve the safety of both new and existing bulk carriers.

The hallmark of the ISM Code is its unequivocal focus on the human element with particular emphasis on the benefits that may be derived for safety from written procedures and a documented safety management system, shared between the company and each ship in its fleet. As I already

mentioned, this radical shift from IMO's traditional emphasis on the purely technical aspects of ship safety has been a courageous, but highly necessary, initiative.

The introduction of Formal Safety Assessment into the IMO decision-making process has been an equally brave move, which has not been without success, notwithstanding the absence of any previous experience. The use of the FSA methodology involves a complex and time-consuming



process and requires a longer-term commitment on behalf of those carrying out the research, with obvious financial implications. The FSA approach may, therefore, not be practicable for every safety issue under consideration at the IMO. However, the IACS membership is proud of its substantive contribution to this new IMO endeavour and which was vindicated by the unanimous decision of the Maritime Safety Committee, last December, to give the go-ahead to 16 [sixteen] new regulatory initiatives concerning bulk carrier safety.

Enhancing the safety of the bulk carrier, the 'work horse' of the shipping industry, is indeed another pressing issue that the IMO, in close collaboration with industry experts, has been able to progress with remarkable success. The results of extensive studies conducted by IACS, using its wealth of statistical data and surveyors' feedback, were critical to the successful conclusion of the 1997 Safety Of Life At Sea (Solas) Conference, which adopted the new Solas Chapter XII. The reward for these efforts has come in the form of a marked reduction in casualties and losses reported in recent years for this type of ship.

My wish for the future, then, is that many more achievements may follow

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the above mentioned ones! Far from being wishful thinking on my part, I firmly believe that maritime safety can be improved continuously - through co-operation of all the parties concerned:

- Owners/Managers - by maintaining good standards onboard their ships, renewing their fleet, and improving the crew/ship interface.
- Regulators - by being more scientific in the formulation of IMO standards, rules and regulations.
- Maritime administrators - by actively implementing mandatory instruments, rules and regulations, non-binding recommendations and other guidelines that have been agreed

internationally and by closely supervising delegated authorities.

- Port State Control officers - by observing uniform procedures for ship inspections and abiding by internationally agreed enforcement measures and by engaging in timely, full and transparent information exchange.
- Underwriters - by practising positive discrimination through the provision of economic incentives to high quality operators.
- Classification societies - by providing the IMO with the best possible technical support, by acting as responsible delegated authorities, and by assisting ship owners with high

quality services in the interests of improved understanding and implementation of statutory and class requirements.

In my capacity as IACS chairman, I am proud of the personal dedication of many representatives of the class world who have taken part in the activities of the IMO committees and sub-committees, working and drafting groups, and other informal and correspondence groups over so many years. Together with all of them, I am delighted to raise my glass to Mr O'Neil and to wish him a long and happy retirement!



## William A. O'Neil: an appreciation

by the Rt. Hon. The Lord Sterling of Plaistow, GCVO, CBE  
Chairman, The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company

Bill O'Neil has had a long and distinguished career, not only as a civil servant working for the Canadian Government, but also latterly as the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization where he has served with distinction for 14 years.

I met and had a long exchange of views with Bill within the first month of his taking up this appointment. He came across as a person of the utmost integrity and calmness who knew, almost instinctively, where he wanted to take the Organization. He was chairman of the IMO Council for 10 years prior to being elected in 1989 to be its Secretary-General so had immense knowledge of the Organization long before taking up the position.

During his 14 year tenure he has faced a number of challenges and overcome them with equanimity, always trying to move issues of safety and the environment forward. He has inspired the secretariat, and raised the IMO profile, at a time when the Organization was under attack from regional areas with their own agenda. The Secretary-General of any Organization such as IMO treads a very fine line between representing the interests of its many members, and being proactive in pressing forward with what he believes are fundamental issues that need resolution. In his case, Bill O'Neil has been implacably determined to progress matters relating to overall safety, whilst at the same time acknowledging the various safety and technical issues and views that evolve from differing administrations. He has, in my view, managed to lead IMO and his staff through these various minefields, and at the same time raised the profile and immensely increased the credibility of the Organization itself.

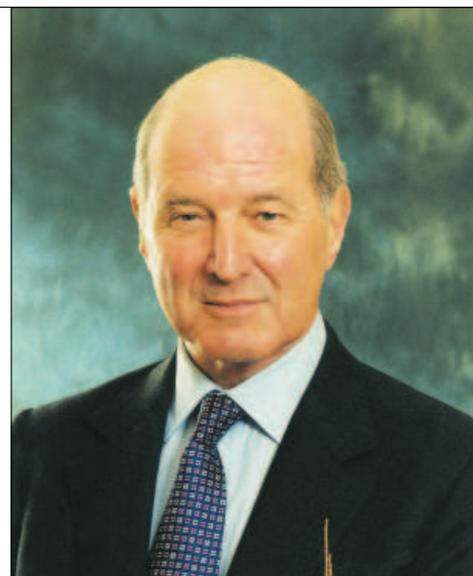
Bill has not been afraid to act quickly, particularly on safety issues, if he felt that unilateral action was appropriate. As an example, he took unilateral action to set up a Panel of

Experts to assess ferry safety in the early aftermath of the sinking of the ferry Estonia with its terrible loss of life. The distinguished group represented all aspects of the ferry community, and included an experienced senior manager with ferry command experience on secondment from one of my ferry companies. This group quickly developed technical proposals to ensure that the possibility of a ferry capsizing through the ingress of water to the car deck could not happen again. This was a commendable achievement.

STCW 95 will also be one of his major pieces of completed work. It has set a modern standard for seafarer training and competency and for the first time subjected national governments' training and certification to external audit by independent IMO experts. Due to the seriousness of the position existing at the time he set a very tight timetable to bring this convention into force, and by personal involvement ensured that this timetable was maintained.

The environment has always been close to Bill's heart. The sinking of oil tankers such as Erika and Prestige has brought to the world at large, through the medium of television, the horrors of oil pollution. He has overseen the update of MARPOL Annex I to take account of demands to reduce oil pollution by bringing forward the phase out date for single hull tankers. Whatever the rights or wrongs of the way the accidents were handled, he led IMO to develop revised world wide solutions which avoided regional action. That is the true sign of a statesman.

I would further mention his attention to the tragic loss of life through far too many bulk carrier catastrophes, and his persuasion of MSC to develop enhanced safety measures for these vessels. Equally his speeches highlighting perceived



safety issues with large passenger ships will ensure a fundamental debate at IMO into the safety of modern cruise ships. Whilst these ships have an excellent safety record, Bill has reminded the world that this must not be taken for granted. Finally, and most recently, he has led IMO to develop in quick time the ISPS Code to respond internationally to security concerns post 9/11.

He leaves the Organization in fine fettle under the capable hands of his loyal deputy. It is natural in an Organization such as IMO that there is work outstanding - on Formal Safety Assessment, Bulk Carrier and Large Passenger Ship Safety as well as environmental issues such as ballast water exchange. Their final completion will be testimonies to a glittering career.

## William A. O'Neil: an appreciation

by Mr. Nikolas P. Tsakos

Chairman of the Board, Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association (HELMEPA)



It is an honor, although tinted with a bit of sadness, that I was asked to write a few words about Mr. William A. O'Neil at the time of his retirement from the International Marine Organization.

Mr. O'Neil became Secretary General of the IMO at a very sensitive time in Marine history. The tragic accident of the Exxon Valdez in August of 1989 resulted over time in important new rules and regulations for Marine Safety beginning from 1990

when Mr. O'Neil took the helm. His tenure coincided with big changes in our field such as the United States' Oil pollution Act of 1990 and the position of double-hull vessels, which many feel is similar to the change-over from sails to steam-power in the 19th century. He has been quoted as being an 'interventionist', and without his pro-active style and strong leadership qualities, we wouldn't have the legislation we have today. The shipping industry is in a much better state from safety and pollution prevention standpoint than it was a decade ago. Over the last few years the IMO have achieved many of their goals, and I think

many will agree that Mr. O'Neil deserves much of the credit for those accomplishments.

As current Chairman of HELMEPA and member of the board for 10 years, I have had the pleasure of seeing first-hand the importance Mr. O'Neil places on fighting Marine Pollution as well as the emphasis on people. He has always been very supportive of our programs, working hard to ensure that the IMO and HELMEPA work together for cleaner seas. He has

visited us many times. And on one memorable occasion he invited the members of HELMEPA Jr. to join in on an IMO session. Afterwards the children made presentations to the IMO members, and the day can be marked down as a great success for all. I believe it will remain a fond remembrance for the children as well as for the adults involved. I would like to thank Mr. O'Neil for all his work and co-operation with HELMEPA on behalf of the board members and staff of HELMEPA with whom he worked. He will always be welcome in Greece with an open invitation to sit in on our board meetings and honor us with his advise, in our efforts to continue awareness of the human element in environmental issues.

On the other hand, we fell confident that from early next year, the 'big' shoes of Mr. O'Neil will be more than adequately filled by Mr. Efthymios Mitropoulos, with whom he has worked for several years. I'm certain he will continue Mr. O'Neil's strong efforts successfully. From all of us at HELMEPA, we would like to wish both these important shipping personalities all the bet in their future endeavors.

“I have had the pleasure at seeing first-hand the importance Mr O'Neil places on fighting maritime pollution, as well as the emphasis on people.”



## Cruise ships and the IMO

by Mr. George F. Poulides  
Chairman, The Festival Cruises Group

Of all the various type of ship afloat, cruise vessels undoubtedly have the highest profile. This is not purely because cruise lines carry the most precious cargo of all – human lives – but also due to the fact that we depend on public awareness of our ships for marketing purposes.

Consequently, it goes without saying that safety considerations are uppermost in the mind of cruise industry executives. On top of the fact that we have a simple moral duty of care for the safety and well-being of our passengers and crew, a company's reputation may not survive a serious accident.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has long been at the forefront of analyzing maritime incidents and absorbing lessons for passenger ship safety as well as translating them into legislation that has continually enhanced safety in our industry.

Over the years, IMO initiatives have spanned a variety of areas that come under the general umbrella of passenger ship safety, including but not limited to security, navigational safety, fire prevention and detection, evacuation procedures, better equipped lifeboats, search and rescue planning, onboard health and safety, and the structural capacity of ships to survive collisions or groundings.

Not all measures have been specific to cruise ships or even passenger vessels in general. Safety in our industry has also been promoted by umbrella legislation, such as amendments to crew training and watchkeeping standards, the introduction of the International Safety Management Code (ISM), and the IMO-initiated Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS).

When William O'Neil began his tenure as head of the IMO 14 years ago, passenger ship safety was already high on the agency's agenda. In the early years, this was largely as a result of several terrible ferry tragedies that

marred the late 1980s as well as the early 1990s.

In terms of the cruise industry in that period, special concern was attached to the subject of security measures following a couple of isolated but nonetheless tragic terrorist incidents involving ships. This is not to say that cruise ships were never involved in maritime accidents; there were a number of regrettable incidents. But whether by luck or by a capable response by the companies concerned, these had not resulted in tragedies of the scale that blighted the ferry sector.

No matter – cruise vessels were also included in the IMO's fundamental rethink of several basic areas of safety. Amendments to the Safety of Life at Sea convention – known as Solas '90 – enhanced the residual stability of passenger vessels in the event of sustaining collision damage through requiring additional watertight subdivisions. The changes also required additional smoke detection and sprinkler systems in ships that were starting to be built with grander spaces spanning three or more decks.

Among the latest new safety regulations, that came into force last year, are requirements for passenger ships to be fitted with a 'black box', or voyage data recorder, and the so-called 'AIS' or transponder that ensures automatic exchange of information between ship and shore at any time.

In addition, Solas Chapter V has been revised to require vessels – and particularly cruise ships that tend to routinely transit different search-and-rescue regions – to carry efficient search-and-rescue cooperation plans that are consistent with a common format developed by the IMO. Included is the principle that information between ship and emergency services in its area is exchanged beforehand so that cooperation can begin without delay in the event of a real emergency.

While there have been occasional mistakes of judgement, such as a



requirement for cruise ships to incorporate helicopter landing pads on deck (an idea that was later withdrawn), by and large the IMO's efforts to improve passenger shipping safety have been enlightened and successful. I am glad to say that on the whole they have been welcomed by the cruise industry and in some cases top companies have keenly adopted new technological advances well in advance of mandatory requirements. Individual corporate action, however, can only supplement and cannot replace the industry-wide initiatives enforced by the IMO.

If there can be any criticism at all of the IMO's historic approach to enhancing standards for the design and operation of cruise ships, it is that the approach to legislation through the 1980s and 1990s was a piecemeal one. Furthermore, legislators in general have struggled, and understandably so, to keep pace with the enormous changes that have occurred in the cruise industry, more than practically any other sector of shipping.

When Mr O'Neil became head of the IMO no cruise ship had a total passenger capacity of more than 1,900. With the sole exception of the **QE2**, the very biggest vessels being built were yet under 50,000 tonnes.

By contrast today there are quite a

number of ships double this size. Currently the largest cruise liner is 140,000 tonnes and this record will be broken next year by the Queen Mary 2 of 150,000 tonnes. Already the largest vessels carry 5,000 passengers and crew, and even bigger ships of 160-180,000 tonnes are on the drawing board.

To his great credit, Mr O'Neil has recognized the possibility that existing IMO regulations are not sufficient to cover the new mega-ships. Since 2000, he has proactively initiated what amounts to one of the largest and most intensive examinations ever carried out into the safety-related issues of a particular type of ship.

Involving issues that cut across several different IMO sub-committees, the effort is a global review of every possible aspect of safety as it applies to large cruise ships. It is also very welcome that the industry itself has been drawn into this process at a very early stage and has enthusiastically embraced the process.

The latest IMO initiative has spawned a host of specific tasks and objectives being looked at by various committees and work groups. These range from a myriad of navigational and crewing matters, to onboard equipment including lifeboats and fire systems, to sanitary issues affecting the healthy

“To his great credit, Mr O'Neil has recognized the possibility that existing IMO regulations are not sufficient to cover the new mega-ships.”

operation of kitchens and Jacuzzis.

But the organisation's approach hinges on a handful of major principles that are worth mentioning here.

They include:-

- Enhanced casualty prevention
- Improved survivability for large ships in the event of a casualty
- Improved evacuation procedures
- Greater self-sufficiency to ensure health, safety, medical care and security until more specialized assistance is available
- Minimising environmental impact

It is also welcome that the IMO's focus does not stop at the ship itself and evacuation procedures. It is also examining the difficulties that may jeopardize the rescue of passengers after they have been transferred to lifeboats. The Organization has recognized the fact that thousands of people in lifeboats and liferafts may pose a unique search-and-rescue challenge.

In my view, more needs to be done and new operating methods in the industry are in a number of cases offering the chance to do just that. For example, the almost universal adoption of key cards for cabins – usually combined with cashless credit card systems for onboard payments and use of the same card for identification by ship's security, should now also be combined with a passenger's muster station and lifeboat number. This would remove the need for a passenger to rush back to his cabin in the event of an emergency to remind himself of critical emergency information!

As yet, it remains to be seen what regulations may emerge from this latest initiative by the IMO. But I am very hopeful that the results will be among the most important legacies of Mr O'Neil's term in office – and a fitting testimony to the outgoing Secretary-General.



## William A. O'Neil: an appreciation

by Mr. J.M. Kopernicki  
Chairman, Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF)

The Oil Companies International Marine Forum is honoured to contribute to this special edition of the IMO News to recognise the enormous contribution made to the maritime world and especially for the safety of ships and the protection of the marine environment by Secretary-General, William O'Neil.

OCIMF has been actively and enthusiastically involved with the work of the IMO since being granted Consultative Status in 1971, this, coincidentally, being almost the entire period that Bill O'Neil has been an internationally known figure, initially as the Canadian representative to the IMO Council and latterly as the Organization's Secretary-General.

Throughout Bill's long tenure as Secretary-General he has taken great interest in the continued safe transportation of oil by sea and in the safety of those whose livelihood is the sea. We are grateful that Bill has often expressed his support for the work of OCIMF, and has on many occasions offered wise counsel as we have endeavoured to enhance the maritime safety guidelines and other requirements for the operation of tankers and oil terminals.

In 1993 OCIMF launched the SIRE Programme, an international vessel inspection database, which assists charterers to assess a vessel's suitability for charter.

The underlying framework of the SIRE Programme's 'Vessel Inspection Questionnaire' is based on MARPOL and SOLAS, two International Conventions that, under the leadership of Bill O'Neil, have continued to be developed and amended to meet the maritime world's changing needs. OCIMF has actively contributed to these various debates and discussions at the IMO and know just how significantly Bill O'Neil has quietly and with measured firmness steered the developments to internationally satisfactory conclusions.

In the last 14 years further (necessary) International Conventions have been successfully developed and introduced. The STCW Convention and the ISM Code, AFS Convention and the recent amendments to the SOLAS Convention, dealing with Maritime Security, are now international requirements and have, in most part, been brought promptly to the statute



safety and high international standards. IMO's international successes over the past 14 years are an enormous and lasting tribute to Bill O'Neil. OCIMF is proud to have been associated with him throughout that period and welcomes his successor, Efthimios Mitropoulos, to this leading international role.

“Bill O'Neil has quietly, and with measured firmness, steered developments to internationally satisfactory conclusions.”

OCIMF has been privileged to have Bill O'Neil endorse many of the publications it has produced, in particular the ISGOTT GUIDE (now in its 5th revision), a publication which provides the oil industry with unique and comprehensive guidance for the safe operation of both tankers and oil terminals. This publication draws heavily on the many International Conventions established by IMO in pursuit of the Organization's objectives.

book by the tenacity of Bill O'Neil. OCIMF applauds and supports the diplomatic efforts of the Secretary-General to ensure effective implementation of these important Conventions, having a successful international rather than regional outcome.

The relationship with IMO, indeed the active partnership that has been established between our two Organizations, continues to promote

## William A. O'Neil: an appreciation

by Mr. A.H.E. Popp, QC

Senior General Counsel, Dept. of Justice, Canada; Chairman, IMO Legal Committee



I have had the privilege and pleasure of knowing William (Bill) O'Neil for close to 30 years. I met Bill in 1975 when I was transferred to the Legal Services Unit of the Canadian Department of Transport, which, at that time, was the government department responsible for the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG). Bill had just been appointed as the first Commissioner of the CCG.

Some time prior to his appointment as Commissioner, Bill had joined the Canadian Department of Transport as Deputy Administrator, Marine Services. In that capacity he assumed responsibility for Canadian participation in the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) was known at that time. By some accounts, Bill did not know too much about this international organization and when he had to attend his first meeting at the Organization, rumor has it that he asked his executive assistant "what's IMCO?" Well, Bill caught on quickly. Within a few years he was elected chairman of the IMO Council for the decade 1980-1990, and in 1990 he became the Organization's Secretary-General.

Under Bill's guidance, the Organization made great strides in maritime safety and in protection of the marine environment. This is well

reflected in some of the major projects of the Legal Committee. During Bill's mandate, important international legal instruments aimed at protecting the marine environment have been adopted. The 1989 Salvage Convention, initially developed under the auspices of the Legal Committee, improved the lot of salvors by including economic incentives for them to intervene with preventive measures in respect of vessels that threaten the environment, even if the vessel and its cargo cannot be saved. This was an important departure from the traditional rule of salvage law known as 'no cure, no pay' and represented a significant step in improving the protection of the marine environment.

In 1992, and again earlier this year, important changes were made to the civil liability regime for pollution caused by oil tankers making very substantial increases in the amount of compensation available. Under Bill's leadership, the development of these instruments has demonstrated that the Organization can and will respond swiftly to crisis and that international regimes, developed under the auspices of IMO, are infinitely preferable to regional and national ones. The regime of liability and compensation for ship source pollution has been further enhanced, in 1996 and 2001, respectively, with the adoption of a regime for damage caused by the maritime carriage of hazardous and noxious substances (HNS) and a regime for oil pollution caused by ships bunkers.

Safety of life has also been a key concern of the Organization during Bill's mandate. Following a series of tragic ferry disasters in the 80's and the 90's the Organization responded with a comprehensive amendment to the 1974 Convention on the Carriage of Passengers and their Luggage by Sea for which the initial work was done in the Legal Committee. Those amendments were included in a

protocol that was adopted by diplomatic conference in October 2002.

Under Bill's leadership the Organization responded quickly to the tragic events of 9/11. While the bulk of the work on marine security has been accomplished under the auspices of the Marine Safety Committee, significant work is under way in the Legal Committee, where a comprehensive review of the 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA) has been undertaken.

Naturally, Canadian delegations to various bodies and committees of IMO were proud to have Bill as head of the Organization. In his quiet, low-key manner he has nevertheless been a decisive influence on all aspects of the work of the Organization, something that he had shown already in his years as Chairman of Council where, in recognition of his outstanding ability, he was re-elected no less than four times.

On a more personal note, Bill has been a great source of inspiration to me in my own endeavors in the IMO. He dispatched me to my first meeting of the Legal Committee in November 1975 (29th session) and later when I had become chairman of the Legal Committee he passed on to me invaluable tips about how to organize the Committee's work. I have also benefited from his advice when I chaired the Committee of the Whole at various diplomatic conferences.

After such a distinguished career in the public service, both of his country and of the international community, it remains only to wish Bill a long and prosperous retirement, after a job well done.



## William A. O'Neil: an appreciation

by Mr. John C. Lyras  
Former President, Union of Greek Shipowners

There is in the UK an institution that most exceptionally still survives, the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI). It epitomises what used to be Society's perception of shipping and seafaring. Namely, that the sea can be a hostile environment, that ships can succumb to perilous conditions and that when they do they require assistance which was granted voluntarily by men ashore who risked their lives in doing so. Today distressed ships are refused ports or areas of refuge and the Captains of ships that fail are often summarily imprisoned and detained without being charged and security for their release set at levels that do not apply even for suspected terrorists. The fact is that probably for the first time in history and since the Exxon Valdez incident society is alienated from shipping. How can this dramatic change in sentiment be explained?

No doubt modern ships can incidentally cause serious pollution or loss of life. This was not the case before fossil fuels became the major source of energy for the economies of the world, before cruising became a significant part of the mass commercialisation of leisure and before the spectacular growth in ship sizes became a, if not the, major determinant of economies of scale for the industry. Society today legitimately expects that all that needs

itself. It ignores the obvious possibility of maritime accidents, which result from human error or unpredictable and extraordinary circumstances. It also ignores the fact that the safety and pollution record of the shipping industry has been continuously improving. How in turn can this intolerance be explained as it does not apply to society's attitude to accidents in other modes of transport? I can only offer a political explanation.

Shipping is at a severe disadvantage in terms of a supportive political constituency because it is and has always been a distinctly international activity though nationally based. In addition today protection of the environment or local businesses are much more attractive political platforms than supporting a competitive shipping industry. Furthermore, commercial shipping is not publicly corporate, there are no brand names in commercial shipping. It is also not a consolidated sector but made up of thousands of predominantly private firms internationally. It, therefore, ordinarily means very little to consumers despite the vital role it performs for them. This makes it much harder for the sector to proactively engage society, the media and the political establishment as we



move forward in these circumstances?

If the real common objective is safer shipping and equally importantly if a maritime capability and maritime know how are to be maintained at a high standard then co-operative 'partnerships' need to be formed between the industry, its institutions, the regulators, the media, society and shipping's immediate clients, the charterers. Partnership and not confrontation, based on good will, mutual trust, a long-term view and free from tangential or irrelevant agendas. This and not more regulations will truly assist all stakeholders in reducing accidents and in dealing with the occasional inevitable failures in a rational and objective manner. It will also allow the industry to recruit new seafarers and entrepreneurs, which is currently a serious problem. It is worth remembering in this context that historically major shifts in maritime capability have led to major shifts in geopolitical influence.

These partnerships pre-suppose a fair hearing and an honest dialogue between the industry and its institutions and the authorities, the media and the public. Of course, pre-conceived ideas whether these concern the assumed unacceptability of all open registries, the assumed precarious condition of all

“Co-operative partnerships need to be formed between the industry, its institutions, the regulators, the media, society and shipping's immediate clients, the charterers.”

to be done to prevent maritime incidents is being done. Society has been led to believe that in the case of shipping this is far from true. They have consequently been led to believe that maritime accidents are exclusively the result of omissions on behalf of the industry and its institutions and are therefore intolerable. This 'zero tolerance' as it is called is striking in

live in a world dominated by giant globalised corporations with their particular and familiar operating culture. The fact is that shipping is isolated, invisible and misunderstood as a major feature of today's politico-economic reality and becomes visible only when there is an accident. Then it is inevitably placed under a hostile interrogatory spotlight. So, how can we

older vessels or the assumed deliberated lack of transparency in shipping, to name a few, do not help.

“I doubt whether the Organization was ever more active than during Bill O’Neil’s term of office and a lot was achieved in terms of prevention rather than cure.”

Neither is it encouraging when, for example, the results of the one and only public hearing into the causes and handling of the Prestige incident held by the European Parliament are completely ignored even though it showed that the extensive pollution caused was not due primarily to the vessel’s configuration or the actions of the captain but the lack of preparedness and misguided decisions of the authorities. We urgently need to move away from the current syndrome of confrontation and blame. The industry through its national and international organisations is more than willing to do so.

The shipping industry has always supported and continues to support the IMO, a major shipping institution. In a sense, since the event which led to the introduction of OPA 90, the IMO has had to face similar problems with the industry and for similar reasons. The IMO too is misunderstood and invisible, except when an accident occurs. It too

fulfils a vital international task which as a matter of fact cannot always fully satisfy all of its national constituents.

Furthermore many of its detractors especially in the EU wish to ignore the fact that their nations have failed to implement aspects of IMO conventions which they have nevertheless ratified (notably MARPOL) and even EU directives (most notably those deriving from the Erika I and II packages).

It is unfortunate that since the passage of the OPA 90 satisfying political and media pressures takes precedence over dealing properly with the substance of shipping issues. It is also unfortunate that major regional powers are becoming increasingly prone to unilateral or regional action rather than seeking international solutions to problems. The IMO has inevitably been affected by these trends and I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to outgoing Secretary-General Bill O’Neil’s efforts to uphold the status and the role of the Organization during his term of office

under undoubtedly difficult circumstances. I doubt whether the Organization was ever more active than during Bill O’Neil’s term of office and a lot was achieved in terms of prevention rather than cure (the ISM Code, revised STCW and FSI spring to mind). Bill O’Neil himself has repeatedly stated that more regulations are not the solution.

The IMO remains the most appropriate and effective forum for regulating shipping operationally, provided IMO Member States are willing to enter into an open and meaningful dialogue and address the real issues. When this occurs the IMO has shown that it can introduce effective solutions and reach a consensus very quickly.

In closing I would like to thank the IMO News for giving me the opportunity to contribute this article and I would like to wish the new Secretary-General E. Mitropoulos every success in his term of office. He is taking over the helm at the IMO at a particularly difficult and challenging time and his abilities and experience anchored as they are in the perennial maritime tradition of his birthplace, will prove invaluable.



## Transforming global shipping

by Rear-Admiral Sid Wallace  
Maritime Lawyer, Washington DC

**IMO** has been an important part of my life during Bill O'Neil's tenure as Secretary-General, and I am grateful for the opportunity to comment on the life and times of the Organization during that period. I offer here a highly personal commentary, opinions based on my following IMO proceedings for over three decades and participating in many of them.

Recently, I was a little startled by this statement made to me: "IMO's decisions in the last decade have changed the face of shipping and altered the fundamental ways that business is conducted in the shipping world." This was the observation of a valued colleague who has great depth of experience as a delegate at IMO and of late has been positioned to follow developments there closely, session-by-session.

After some thought and discussion, I realized that my colleague was right on target. The message is this: A major transformation has taken place because of the work at IMO since 1990, during Bill O'Neil's watch. The modalities and benefits for the shipping business and for governments will continue to evolve in years to come, but the pattern has been set and further change is inevitable. The transformation, though still resisted by some, is a historic, affirmative development.

“Acting quickly, he used the power of his office, coupled with his formidable diplomatic skills, to make things happen in a systematic way.”

The transformation of the shipping world effected by IMO stemmed largely from the approach to emerging problems taken while Bill O'Neil was Secretary-General. The process of IMO rule-making changed in fundamental ways. The reaction to casualties was oriented in new productive ways, and certain codes, developed to adapt old treaties to new problems, expanded

regulation into areas of ship management never before reached.

IMO, as virtually every other rule-making body, national or international, always has reacted to casualties, with timing often driven by political furore. Drawing on a deep understanding of how IMO actually works, and applying lessons learned through decades of tackling mixed engineering, operational and bureaucratic problems in the Canadian government, O'Neil did not sit back and wait for Member-States to react to a casualty. Acting quickly, he used the power of his office, coupled with his formidable diplomatic skills, to make things happen in a systematic way working toward an achievable goal. He identified trends, such as the need for improvements in bulk carrier safety, before the IMO body politic recognized the severity of the problem.

Typically, Bill convened panels of specialists or experts (variously organized and titled) to address the circumstances surrounding casualties that had profound safety or environmental dimensions. Estonia, Erika, Prestige, bulk carriers, passenger ships - all were among the

issues so addressed. He used a similar approach when persistent inconsistencies among flag states stalled effective STCW implementation (the STCW 'white list'). Moreover, he seized opportunities in public appearances and with the press to call for action and, beyond that, to suggest the form action should take and the result it should seek.



O'Neil's actions thus set the stage where Member-States were to meet, debate and decide. His opening statements at formal IMO sessions were distillations of ideas and positions he had previously conveyed in messages to governments and on the public record. Member-States could commence debate with a clear idea of where the collaborative effort was headed.

Some in industry and some government delegates have opined that the Secretary-General should not get out in front of the IMO process that way. He should wait for delegates to meet and express their views and then limit his efforts to helping seek solutions through consensus. I disagree. Perhaps so limited a role for the S-G was proper at some point in the past. But times change, casualties occur and the Organization evolves and matures. To be effective, a Secretary-General must deal with challenges in ways that match the times and conditions.

That applies to IMO bodies as well. The MSC recognized this in recent years by adopting new rules, the ISM Code and the ISPS Code, which in many respects come ashore. Traditionally, IMO has focused on ships in its rulemaking. IMO crossed the

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boundary between ships and shoreside when incorporating these codes into SOLAS. The implications long term are profound.

The ISM Code was first, of course, the product of years of work in the MSC, MEPC and sub-committees. In a new departure for IMO, the code forged mandatory links between the ship (including crew) and management ashore. Owners and operators were charged directly with responsibility for supporting operations at sea and the condition of the ship calling at ports. Documentation of this support was made a requirement, with failure to document constituting a violation subject to port state enforcement action.

Some owners resisted the ISM Code, and still do. No doubt its implementation in some cases is more paper than purpose. But the die is cast. As time goes on, enforcement will become routine and rigorous. Port and Flag States alike will find that the code

“The last 14 years have brought monumental changes in the way IMO conducts its business and the effect the Organization has and will have on world trade.”

suits their needs. It is a fundamental and permanent change, and constitutes the largest step toward assuring transparency and management responsibility that has ever impacted the international maritime community.

In many respects, the ISPS Code, developed under a totally different impetus and time frame, emulates the ISM Code in establishing links to management. Moreover, it goes ashore in other ways, daring to address terminals and ports. This code also works a fundamental and permanent change in the regulation of shipping and related activities.

All told, the last 14 years have brought monumental changes in the

way IMO conducts its business and the effect the Organization has and will have on world trade. The principal architect of the transformation has been Bill O’Neil, who showed exceptional leadership through many difficult times and trials. His successor, Thimio Mitropoulos, takes office through promotion from within, a ‘first’ I note with pleasure. I wish Bill fair winds and following seas in his new life. And I cast a vote of confidence in Thimio as he embarks on his voyage into unpredictable sea conditions, where the tools of transformation will help him steer the good ship IMO clear of rocks and shoals.



## Bill O'Neil: fourteen years of contribution at the IMO

by Professor C. Th. Grammenos, OBE, DSc  
Pro Vice Chancellor, City University, London

When I met William A. O'Neil – to his very many friends around the globe, Bill – over a lunch in January 1990, he had just undertaken his new job, Secretary-General of IMO, at the beginning of the month. It was then that he led our discussion on topics, such as maritime safety, pollution and seafarers training, while he emphatically pointed out the need for developing and cementing truly international standards. It was the period that OPA 90 was to create waves of negative criticism, and it was obvious that Bill O'Neil was not happy with the unilateral action of USA. “If there are substandard tankers carrying oil to the USA, they will stop and continue to do so elsewhere”, he said with a bitter smile.

For me and my staff at the Centre for Shipping, Trade and Finance of City University, the early 1990's was a period of increasing public activity. From the inception of the Centre in 1983, we set up three major objectives of equal importance, which at the period I met Bill O'Neil had been achieved at various degrees. These were teaching, research and the creation and strengthening of a platform for international dialogue.

Regarding international dialogue, it was Bill O'Neil, who wanted to communicate with the wider body of maritime communities and their satellites, and our major symposium in 1992 with the theme, 'Safety in shipping and protection of the Marine environment in the 1990's and beyond', which I organised at City University that led the way. It was the first of its kind on a global basis and Bill O'Neil accepted to be our keynote speaker, while speakers were a galaxy of leaders representing shipowning, insurance, classification societies, banking and the government. During the symposium different topics on maritime safety including OPA 90, required global international standards, flaws of the system and joint responsibilities were lively debated in the University's hall, with

an audience of over 500 participants.

In the years to follow, our Piraeus annual meeting, which we organise jointly with the Piraeus Marine Club, and a number of our public meetings that took place at City University or elsewhere were benefited from Bill O'Neil's presence and contributions. In 1999, when we introduced the first City of London Biennial Meeting, a gathering of world business leaders, policy makers and academics to discuss and debate 'hot business issues', he was not only a speaker but gladly gave his permission for the IMO building to be the venue of the meeting.

Bill O'Neil would reply kindly and positively to all my invitations to participate in the various functions as he wanted to foster and lead the dialogue, as well as extending it beyond governments and shipowners to every business section which serves shipping, such as, the classification societies, insurance companies, national registers and cargo interests. He pointed out that all of them constitute a risk chain, and “failure of any part to deal with risk will create shipping repercussions elsewhere”. This approach overlapped with our approach to deal with financial and banking shipping risk: same approach, different viewpoint.

“Bill O'Neil was always prepared to present and analyse his beloved concept of a new culture in the shipping industry, where safety and quality go hand-in-hand.”

In our meetings, Bill O'Neil was always prepared to present and analyse his beloved concept of a new culture in the shipping industry where safety and quality go hand in hand, and are shared unanimously by seafarers, shipowners, satellite



services and governments. The ISM code and revised STCW Convention are cornerstones in IMO's new culture concept. Both initiatives deal with human resources - the seafarers and the onshore management. ISM covers the issue of safety management systems and creates overall responsibility for safety and pollution in the heart of the shipping company; while STCW extends the training of seafarers into demonstrating competency and its measurement. In addition, the role of IMO is expanding for the first time, and undertaking the verification of measures taken by governments to create the seafarers' required competency.

The new concept of safety and quality in shipping also facilitated my teaching and research in Shipping Investment and Finance. In the second part of the 1970's I had introduced the five C's of credit, as a new method of assessing the credit risk – the



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probability that the loan and/or interest will not be paid by the borrower – of a loan to be granted for the purchase of a vessel. The five Cs are five words that start with C – Character, Capacity (Managerial), Capital, Collateral, Conditions – and my credit analysis concentrates in these areas. Either in raising funds from banks or from capital markets the five Cs put a great deal of emphasis on human element, quality management and safety. These topics attracted further the interest of bank

and capital markets analysts that use the five Cs of credit or similar type of analysis. This emphasis is partially owed to IMO's focus on these areas, which are vital for the existence of quality maritime transport: management, seafarers and vessels.

For the fourteen years that I have had the honour and privilege to be associated with Bill O'Neil, I have had the opportunity to witness the contributions of a true leader, who had ideas and targets, brought about

changes and led his organisation to new break through activities. To a large extent he persuaded the maritime communities and the government to realise the need for his new culture. He also fought for the creation of international standards under IMO. Bill O'Neil has achieved all this with his friendly smile, impeccable manners and inspiring firmness - I salute him.



## Tribute to Mr. Bill O'Neil

by Michael Julian

Former Chairman, IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee, 1998 – 2002

I first met Mr O'Neil during the 15th IMO Assembly in November 1987. As a member of the Australian delegation, this was my first meeting at IMO headquarters and therefore my introduction to the working of the International Maritime Organization. At this time Mr O'Neil was Chairman of the IMO Council.

At a luncheon arranged by the Canadian and Australian delegations I was privileged to sit next to Mr O'Neil and recall being struck by his sincere and friendly manner, particularly his welcoming of a newcomer to IMO and him providing me with a valuable insight to the Organization and the role of the Council and the Assembly.

My next meetings with Mr O'Neil were not until 1991. Firstly, when I became the leader of the Australian delegation to the Marine Environment Protection Committee and attended this Committee for the first time at MEPC 31 and secondly, when Mr O'Neil visited Australia to provide the Keynote address at Australia's International Oil Spill Conference SPILLCON'91.

It was my very great pleasure to accompany Mr O'Neil during his attendance at SPILLCON'91, on Queensland's Gold Coast, just south of Brisbane and to ensure his visit to Australia was both productive and enjoyable.

“His ability to lay the ground work and propose a means by which important issues could be dealt with at IMO became one of his successes as Secretary-General.”

During Mr O'Neil's stay we had plenty of time to discuss the then current priorities at IMO and in particular those of the MEPC. We also established a closer professional as well as personal relationship. Again Mr O'Neil's natural and inclusive style was demonstrated by the way he met

and spoke to the many conference delegates he met.

Over the period from 1991 to 1997, as leader of the Australian delegation to MEPC, I observed Mr O'Neil to be very successful in raising the profile of IMO in the international shipping community. He was particularly skilful in clearly identifying the key high level issues of the day for which IMO was responsible such as bulk carrier and ro-ro vessel safety, the role of the human element in maritime safety and marine environment protection as well as the need for a greater awareness of the marine environment.

Not only did Mr O'Neil identify the important issues but his ability to lay the ground work and propose a means by which they could be dealt with at IMO by the Member Governments became in my view one of his successes as Secretary-General. One example of this was his foresight and perseverance in encouraging the establishment of the Flag State Implementation Sub Committee.

My professional and personal relationship with Mr O'Neil became more formally established during the period 1 January 1998 to 31 December 2002 when I had both the honour and privilege to serve IMO as the

Chairman of the Marine Environment Protection Committee resulting in me working closely with Mr O'Neil. As well as Chairing MEPC I also attended meetings of MSC, Council and the Assembly. This gave me the opportunity to observe Mr O'Neil, his attributes and his dedication to the



work of IMO from a different as well as from a much closer perspective.

During this period Mr O'Neil provided very strong leadership to the Organization in continuing through his public engagements at conference and media releases to identify the key marine safety and marine environmental issues and how these could be dealt with, at the same time demonstrating his strong commitment to the protection of the marine environment from ship sourced pollution.

A number of issues come to mind when recalling Mr O'Neil's valued contribution to the protection of the marine environment these include:

- Mr O'Neil's very strong support for the work accomplished by MEPC at IMO Council and Assembly meetings,
- Mr O'Neil's initiative, after both the Erika and Prestige incidents, to establish the independent group of experts to review firstly the impact on the industry of bringing forward the phase out date of single hulled tankers and secondly reviewing the ability of the shipbuilding industry to cope with the newbuilding requirement as old tankers were phased out. Clearly, without this preparatory work MEPC would not have succeeded in reaching agreement in making essential

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amendments to MARPOL 73/78 at one session.

- Also in connection with resolving the many issues arising out of the Erika incident, Mr O'Neil's initiative to bring forward an MEPC meeting so as to ensure the minimum time to adopt and bring into force the necessary MARPOL amendments.

- Mr O'Neil's frequent public comments as well as his initiating meetings with European Union (EU) Ministers and senior officials establishing IMO's role as the sole international governmental agency responsible for the safety and marine environmental regulatory activity for international shipping.

- Mr O'Neil's dedication and personal interest in assisting developing countries, particularly through IMO's Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme

- Mr O'Neil's personal interest in facilitating completion of MEPC's key areas or work in recent years namely the OPRC HNS Protocol, regulating Anti-fouling paint used on ships, Ballast Water Management and bringing the entry into force date of MARPOL Annex VI on Air Pollution closer through his personal contact with Member Governments and industry organizations.

- Mr O'Neil's initiative of introducing the concept of the IMO Audit Scheme which he suggested in the course of

his Keynote address at an APEC Conference in Sydney in March 2001.

In conclusion, I would suggest that in addition to Mr O'Neil's vast experience and knowledge of the international shipping industry it will be for his personal qualities of complete dedication, thoroughness, leadership skills and his calm and friendly approach that he will be remembered.

We all owe Bill O'Neil a great deal of gratitude for his bringing the Organization to the high level of achievement and recognition it enjoys today in the world of international shipping, the United Nations and in the Governments of the 162 IMO Member States.



## William A. O'Neil: an appreciation

by Mr. Themis Vokos  
Founder of the Seatrade Organisation and Chairman of POSIDONIA

For as long as I can remember – and that takes me to the early sixties when I was working as a journalist in London – everyone associated with shipping has been complaining that the media and by extension the public and the politicians, did not understand or care for the maritime industry.

I always believed that the blame should not be attributed only to those that did not understand but also to those that did, that is to say the maritime community itself and its various bodies and institutions.

There was always the temptation to trade public exposure and a public image for the perceived benefits of enjoying 'privacy' and a low profile.

It is a universal fact that bad news make headlines while good news does not.

To turn good news into headlines needs effort, continuity and a professional approach.

I had the opportunity to discuss these thoughts with Bill O'Neil early on during his term as Secretary-General of the IMO. And I found his approach and sensitivity refreshing; he had a clear understanding of the need to educate and inform those in Government who, many times under pressure from the media and the public, had to make decisions with far reaching impact on the maritime industry.

It was in this context that Bill's encouragement and support helped establish the Annual Seatrade Awards at the Guildhall in London. It was a platform for showing the world the constant efforts of the maritime

community to improve safety, protect the environment and innovate in all spheres of the shipping business.

The presence of senior politicians and other officials and members of the non-maritime press, helped convey the message of a responsible and vibrant industry and cemented broader relationships.

I recall many occasions when Bill eloquently promoted the cause of shipping to the Awards' Guests of Honour at the Awards' dinner – to Secretaries of Transport, who came knowing that there were more votes in trains and cars than ships but left with a little better understanding of the issues; to Shipping Ministers, whose portfolio sometimes included the film industry and were therefore eager to learn about shipping; to members of the Royal Family who have a maritime tradition and have been constant supporters of the Awards' scheme.

During Bill's years as the head of IMO, the image of the shipping industry has undoubtedly improved and the issues that the IMO has promoted have helped create a safer environment. IMO's work around the world has steadily lifted the profile of the shipping industry.

The structures of the IMO have, over the last decade, also been strengthened thus increasing the effectiveness of the IMO facilitating the intergovernmental tasks of the Organization, at a time when different governments and regions are looking



to impose unilaterally regulations that would adversely effect the global nature of the shipping industry.

Bill O'Neil's efforts to ensure that the IMO continues to be the only forum where maritime regulations are formulated and adopted will be recognized as one of his most important contributions, a task that his able successor Admiral Mitropoulos will promote further.

“During Bill's years as the head of IMO, the image of the shipping industry has undoubtedly improved and the issues IMO has promoted have helped create a safer environment.”

## A steady hand on the tiller

by Mr. Basil Ph. Papachristidis  
Papachristidis Holdings Ltd.



**W**illiam O'Neil is sure to go down as one of, if not the, most successful Secretary-Generals of the IMO.

His tenure at the IMO occurred at one of the most turbulent times in modern shipping. It saw dramatic oil tanker disasters, passenger ferry sinkings, and bulk carrier losses. Many of these events were accompanied by tragic loss of life or pollution. They raised important questions on fundamental industry issues, from the design, maintenance and operation of vessels, to the competence of the men who sail in them, and the adequacy of the systems governing their navigation. They raised questions as to the role of governments in dealing with marine disasters, and as to the ability of the industry's institutions to safeguard the wellbeing of seafarers and interests of the communities to whose shores the world's seaborne cargoes are carried. The crisis in confidence in the industry and its institutions was unprecedented, and the world expected action.

In addition to dealing with these crises, the IMO had to carry on its important ongoing work, such as the revision of conventions and progressing the multitude of important regulatory tasks the world

looks to it to deal with. Not least of the IMO's challenges during this period was ensuring the adequacy and quality of the seafarers on whom seaborne transportation so vitally depends.

The IMO moves by consensus to avoid the pernicious polarization that can undermine the work of international agencies. The Organization must embrace the aspirations of distinct groups of nations and balance their divergent - and often diametrically opposed - interests. And in doing so, it must scrupulously adhere to the pursuit of rational solutions, vigilantly promoting measures of substantive benefit rather than those wrought from political expediency. No mean task - yet it is one that the IMO has carried out with remarkable success. And it is one that Bill O'Neil championed - despite the common refrain among the IMO's detractors that the process is too deliberate.

While the IMO was going about its work, politicians continued to seize dramatic marine disasters to further their political agendas. Anxious to appear decisive, these self-appointed champions of environmental causes incited public outrage and interfered with the regulatory process in ways that undermined the interests of their constituencies - not to speak of those of the world at large. And, as always, they showed their preference for vote-fetching unilateral or regional measures over ones developed through thoughtful international accord.

Unfortunately, one of the most momentous events to rock international shipping occurred on the doorstep of the United States, the country with the least interest in resolving problems through international cooperation. It is ironic that the Exxon Valdez accident should have occurred so soon after America's refusal to ratify important IMO protocols dealing with liability for

pollution damage - thereby leaving a vacuum to be filled by OPA90, arguably the most virulent example of unilateralism shipping has ever seen.

And the challenges to the world's regulatory establishment coincided with the ascendancy of the European Union, and the desire of its politicians and bureaucrats to build empires, legitimize their existence and perpetuate their jobs by carving out a role for themselves in this area of international rule-making.

Few will seriously contest the IMO is the only legitimate body for promulgating regulations affecting shipping - the most international of industries. Only through multilateral arrangements will the interests of the world's maritime and trading communities be advanced in step and through a set of consistent rules with universal applicability. And only thus will the safety of seafarers and the integrity of our marine environment be safeguarded.

Bill O'Neil stood for this ideal. By temperament and training, he was uniquely suited for the difficult role he undertook and challenges the IMO was to face. Notwithstanding all the turbulence during his watch at the IMO, he was a voice of rationality, steering a steady course with focus and resolve, using his vision and statesmanlike qualities to inspire and mobilize member nations and the community at large. He will be remembered with respect and gratitude for what he did for the institution and, more significantly, for his contribution to safety, the environment and the well-being of seafaring and trading nations.



## William A. O'Neil: an appreciation

by Captain Michel Pouliot

Immediate past President, International Maritime Pilots' Association

It has been written that “there is a tide in the affairs of men that when taken on the flood leads on to success”. Most certainly retiring Secretary-General William O'Neil has had his tidal predictions right. He has used the favourable tides of world maritime affairs to successfully guide the International Maritime Organization, thus making the seas safer and therefore the oceans cleaner.

I have had the honour and privilege of knowing Bill O'Neil for more than thirty years. The relations with Canadian pilots did get off to a rocky start in the early seventies with the coming into force of a new Pilotage act causing friction between pilots and the administration for which Bill had just taken over as Deputy Administrator. Pilots withdrew their services during the Christmas season, ruining Bill's first days in his new position and he has on occasion reminded me of this, although always with humour thrown in. His tenure as Deputy Administrator, Marine Services, Canadian Marine Transportation Administration lasted four years and coincided with his arrival on the International scene as Canadian Representative to the Council of the International Maritime Organisation. He then became Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard and then President and Chief Executive Officer of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority while at the same time assuming the Chairmanship of the Council of the International Maritime Organization. It was in 1990 that he was chosen as Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization and the rest is history.

He has been a source of support and guidance to me during the twelve years I served as President of the International Maritime Pilots Association. He privileged many of our International Biennial conferences by accepting to deliver the keynote address, always a source of inspiration on the many issues confronting safety in general and marine pilotage in

particular. He graciously had to sometimes modify his very busy schedule in order to attend IMPA functions. His concerns with the trends of the 1990s towards the deregulation of pilotage services most certainly caused potential disciples of this new approach to have second thoughts before embarking upon this dangerous path. Those who did not heed the wise advice of the Secretary-General and charged ahead blindly under the guise of pseudo-economic gain are now faced with a deteriorating pilot service where the sole victim is safety. In fact a number of examples show that these misguided experiments have created additional threats to safety whilst failing to reduce the cost of the pilot service.

Bill supported changes that were in his opinion conducive to improving safety but he was also quite vocal in exposing those whose proposed changes were but cosmetic attempts to create greater profit at the expense of safety.

In the numerous keynote speeches he made at our international conferences we felt a genuine support for our concerns with the unrelenting attacks on traditional pilotage. IMPA has consistently objected to the assault on marine safety through the introduction of competition in pilotage. In the last decade the move towards deregulation and competition has been one of the most dominant and worrisome trends, not just in respect of pilotage but much more broadly. In the maritime sector, the public interest is best served and protected when pilotage services are provided exclusively through independent public authorities. This is the best approach we have to ensure the safety and economic efficiency of the world's maritime system. The public provision of pilotage services ensures that pilotage standards remain rigorous and are not compromised by



competition. In turn, safety contributes to economic prosperity. Safe operations cost less because there are fewer assets lost, fewer disruptions to service and fewer users have reason to seek other alternatives. It is in the public's interest for the pilot's judgement to be absolutely free of economic pressure from the shipowner when piloting his vessel.

Most certainly Bill O'Neil's tenure at the IMO will have been marked by a dramatic change in the manner in which safety is now addressed. Having to deal with more than one hundred and fifty delegations as well as with a large number of non-governmental organizations whilst adopting a pro-active approach to the many important safety issues before the IMO has been quite an accomplishment.

Safer ships and seas and cleaner oceans will certainly stand as Bill O'Neil's legacy. His tireless efforts to improve maritime safety have not been in vain. I have had the honour of working closely with him on many occasions over the years and am particularly honoured to have him as a friend and fellow countryman.

## Bill O'Neil - a tribute

by Mr. Richard Sayer  
Chairman, Maritime London



Under the leadership of Bill O'Neil the progress that the IMO has made towards making shipping a safer, cleaner and more efficient business has been phenomenal. The facts speak for themselves. Since 1990, thanks to IMO initiatives, the number of ships sinking has dramatically decreased, from 0.4 per cent of the world fleet to 0.1 per cent, the number of large oil spills is less than a third of those during the 1970s and seafarer standards have

countries to adopt treaties is difficult enough, but implementing them can be even more complicated. The IMO's efforts to assist flag states and the establishment of regional port state control systems have greatly helped in making resolutions made in London a reality. Since the introduction of the 1995 amendments to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, the IMO has the ability to actually check national governments' actions.

Sadly shipping only makes the headlines when something goes wrong and recent high profile European pollution cases have put shipping back in the public eye for all the wrong reasons. This in turn has led to calls from some quarters to quick fix, local solutions to global problems. I believe that it is essential that the concept of a universal regulatory environment for shipping is maintained and that the IMO's authority is not undermined. Bill O'Neil's diplomatic skills have helped to ensure that this remains the case.

Bill O'Neil will be sorely missed by his many friends in the London maritime sector. He will be remembered for his 'can do' attitude. His pragmatic role in focusing attention on ship safety, whilst always emphasising the importance of the human element has made a real difference to the world of trade and transport.

“His pragmatic role in focussing attention on ships safety, whilst always emphasising the importance of the human element has made a real difference to the world of trade and transport.”

risen. The challenges facing shipping have been huge and the IMO has needed a strong leader to face them. The September 11 atrocities and continuing menace of terrorism have led to the development of a new security regime for international shipping. Reacting so quickly and comprehensively to this huge threat has been in no small way due to the diplomatic efforts of its Secretary-General.

Getting 162 countries to agree on a course of action is no easy task. Getting

As the chairman of Maritime London, the promotional body for London's comprehensive maritime services industry, I am proud that London has been home to the IMO headquarters since 1959. London is after all the capital of world shipping and it is only proper that the IMO as an organisation that works closely with the shipping community should be based here. It almost goes without saying that London's maritime community stands firmly behind the IMO's commitment to make shipping safer, cleaner and more efficient.



## Maritime regulator to the world

by Mr. Michael Grey  
Columnist, Lloyd's List

Technical, practical, pragmatic and most important, apolitical, the International Maritime Organization is a UN agency that undeniably works. Indeed we are able to assess its effectiveness by results, in the improvements to marine safety, measured year on year and the reduction of accidental and operation pollution to the marine environment. Hopefully, the success of the third strand of its endeavours, that of maritime security, will be similarly demonstrable in the future.

In the fourteen years in which Mr William O'Neil has been Secretary-General of IMO, the Organization has matured and arguably has become less remote from the maritime industry itself. In this development, the presence of practitioners, either as part of national delegations and the organizations with observer status, has helped to knit together the fabric of an IMO that is seen by industry and regulators alike as a businesslike and responsive Organization. Those in the industry who, at one time might have been sceptical of the direct relevance of the IMO to their businesses, are today appreciative of a Secretary-General who, as a professional engineer understands the blending of men and machinery that underscores successful shipping and is an able ambassador for an essential world industry.

“The speed of response of the IMO has been central to the changes that have taken place, materially altering the perception of the Organization as a somewhat pedestrian bureaucracy.”

Similarly, speed of response of the IMO has been central to the changes that have taken place, materially altering the perception of the Organization as a somewhat pedestrian bureaucracy in which

necessary regulatory amendments were undertaken, but too slowly for some. While still handicapped to some extent by the varying priorities of member governments, tacit amendment procedures, and the powerful persuasion of the IMO secretariat, and Mr O'Neil in particular, has done much to see the process between identification of regulatory need and final implementation greatly accelerated. In the rapid regulatory action that followed the tragic sinking of the Estonia and more recently in the 'post Erika' work, IMO has shown itself equal to the task. The fact that the Secretary-General has identified strongly with these critical matters in public, has been a powerful spur.

The greater 'democratisation' of IMO in recent years has been a feature of the organisation that it is impossible to ignore, with more member nations being prepared to increase their commitment and participate more enthusiastically in the sub-committees. During IMO's first thirty years, it was a fact that the lion's share of the work tended to be undertaken by the 'traditional shipping nations'. Today the burden is more evenly shared, with significant participation and technical

resource being contributed by newer shipping nations. The role of the IMO's Technical Assistance programme and indeed the work of the World Maritime University in promoting expertise must be recognised in this context.



The fact that the Secretary-General has been able to put his own considerable moral authority behind important 'causes' in marine safety, has itself been wholly positive. It is impossible to forget the frisson of surprise at London's Baltic Exchange in 1990 when Mr O'Neil made a powerful intervention about the disgrace of the bulk carrier casualties, then running at about a ship lost every week. The fact that the IMO Secretary-General himself actually introduced a paper asking for investigation and subsequent action, might not in 2003 be seen as surprising; in the early 90s it was the cause of many raised eyebrows!

Today, it is almost expected of the Secretary-General that he will speak his mind about issues in which he believes are important. Why, for instance, must IMO wait for a disaster before actually doing anything? Mr O'Neil's concern about the frightful consequences of a disaster to a very large passenger ship has been well catalogued, and has encouraged some original thinking on the subject.

There has been no shortage of serious challenges facing the IMO secretariat during the period Mr O'Neil has been in office. The worrying unilateralism represented by

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the US in the post-Exxon Valdez era and its important ramifications for tanker design. Financial crises, with this modestly financed UN organisation having to exhort prominent members to pay their dues. Fundamental regulatory changes such as that of the International Safety Management Code and the 'people-centred' STCW Convention update, that acknowledged beyond doubt the contribution of the human factor that was increasingly preoccupying IMO.

Facing up to the 'politically correct' issues surrounding Flag State Implementation and the fact that sovereignty begets responsibility, as much as rights.

The enormous time-critical issues of security which emerged post September 11, and the need to hold IMO together and produce consensual solutions. The threat of regional interpretations and the patchwork of regulations that the international shipping industry dreads. Many of

these remain live issues, but all of them have been confronted energetically. IMO, under Mr O'Neil, has never shrunk from its duty to the international maritime community.

Marine safety, clean seas and security are international responsibilities, and IMO does not see why they should be devolved downward into unilateral or regional conclaves. IMO is, as it has always claimed to be, a regulator to the world.



## A personal perspective

IMO News interviews IMO Secretary-General William A. O'Neil



**IMO News:** *Mr O'Neil, as you approach the end of 14 years as Secretary-General of IMO, how do you assess, in overall terms, the achievements of the Organization during your time in office?*

**W. A. O'Neil:** It's been a very interesting 14 years and I think that, with respect to the main objectives of the Organization – safety of life at sea and prevention of pollution from ships – we have made gains which are quite significant. Under IMO's leadership, standards in shipping have been raised to unprecedented levels. The world's fleet now consists of around 46,000 cargo-carrying ships, and the vast majority of these operate for their entire lives safely, cleanly and efficiently within the sound regulatory framework that has been built up over the years by IMO. The casualty rate for all types of vessels has dropped dramatically over successive decades and the amount of oil spilled into the world's oceans continues to diminish. If you look at the annual casualty statistics from Lloyd's Register-Fairplay, not only is there a distinct downward trend in the number of

ships lost annually, but also the number of lives lost at sea each year continues to decrease. And on the pollution side, figures from the International Tanker Operators' Pollution Federation, for example, show that the average number of significant oil spills over 700 tonnes has also dropped over successive decades.

**IMO News:** *When you look at the shipping industry today overall, are you happy with what you see?*

**W.A.O.:** The shipping industry provides the cleanest and cheapest method of transporting more than 90 per cent of the world's goods, and it is definitely not in as bad a shape as it is often depicted in the aftermath of a serious casualty. On the contrary, considering its achievements and its success in accomplishing its objectives, I believe that shipping is an industry to be proud of and that not a single opportunity should be missed to emphasize this. And today it is in a much better state, from the safety and pollution prevention viewpoints, than it was a decade ago.

However, I'd be the first to admit that we have not yet reached the end of the voyage and that more needs to be done if we are to create a safer, more secure and environmentally friendlier maritime world.

Overall, I see an industry that has a history and a tradition that few others can match, and yet which is as relevant to the modern world as it ever has been – perhaps even more so, because without ships to move raw materials, finished products, goods and foodstuffs around the world,

today's global economy simply could not exist. There is a tradition in shipping of pride in a job well done, of attention to detail, of skills diligently learned and painstakingly applied, of seamanship, and these are the sort of values that IMO is keen to promote throughout the whole of the industry.

**IMO News:** *How do you assess the changes within the IMO itself since you became Secretary-General in 1990?*

**W.A.O.:** One of the main things I wanted to do when I arrived at IMO was to try to bring the Organization closer to the shipping industry, and to respond to what the industry thought were the major issues and to ensure that any work that we did of a regulatory nature would be of some assistance to them.

I think something of a gulf had developed between the desires of the shipowners and the industry on the one hand and the IMO system on the other. That is not to criticise the previous system, because a lot of things were accomplished, particularly with regard to technical co-operation. But I felt it was important that the industry itself should be able to feel comfortable with the work that IMO was doing and that we were not in an 'us' and 'them' situation. And I think we have accomplished that. Certainly the industry now plays a very full role in the work of IMO, largely through the various bodies and associations that have consultative status with the Organization. Their contribution has been tremendously valuable and I am sure this will continue into the future.

**IMO News:** *Of all the myriad issues that IMO has dealt with during your tenure as Secretary-General, which are the ones that you feel personally most associated with?*

**W.A.O.:** Well, I am obviously concerned about all the issues that IMO deals with, but I suppose if you go back to my early days, the first issue in which I took a direct

involvement was that of bulk carrier safety. There had been an unacceptable increase in bulk carrier losses in the late 1980s and into 1990 and 1991, which caused considerable alarm in the shipping industry. Several classification societies launched major research programmes and I felt that the situation called for immediate action. I therefore took what was then the unprecedented step of presenting the IMO Assembly with a draft resolution on this subject, in October 1991. This was unusual because IMO, like any other United Nations agency, is an intergovernmental organization and the normal procedure is for major policy initiatives to come from Member States. But I felt that the situation was too serious and too urgent to rely on normal procedures.

Another issue that has been very close to my heart has been IMO's conscious decision to shift the emphasis strongly onto the human element in everything it undertakes. That means addressing issues related to the people who are directly involved in the industry, and that starts with the seafarers. The fact that we were able to put in place a revised STCW Convention two years ahead of schedule, and to get the principle accepted of IMO examining the training institutions in order to establish the so-called 'White List', was a very important factor. The aim was to put some measurable level of quality into the training and skills required of seafarers and to make sure that the training institutions could in fact provide the services necessary to meet that requirement.

There was also a major concern about substandard management in shipping companies and shipping operations and the ISM Code was intended to deal with that. The Code has required that shipping companies focus on their operation in a more formalized and, in many cases, different way than they have previously. In this way they look at things that otherwise might be neglected and it has been successful.

Looking at other issues in which I have become personally involved, in 1994, following the Estonia tragedy, I proposed that a complete review of the safety of roll-on/roll-off ferries be carried out by a specially selected panel of experts. This led to a special conference being held at IMO headquarters in November 1995, which adopted a number of amendments to SOLAS, including important changes concerning the crucial question of stability.

Later, I became very concerned that questions of safety surrounding the advent of huge cruise ships that began to emerge during the 1990s should be properly addressed and, in 2000, I asked the MSC to add a review of the safety of large passenger ships to its work programme. There was no suggestion that the new generation of giant cruise ships did not all comply meticulously with IMO requirements, rather that we had to make sure that the standards and operating procedures themselves had kept pace with the changes in design and operations that characterised the cruise ship revolution. I thought that the time had come for IMO to make an extensive examination of all safety issues pertaining to large passenger ships and this has developed into a major piece of work that is being carried out across several of IMO's committees and sub-committees.

**IMO News:** *You also took action personally after the September 11th terrorist attacks in the USA. Could you say something about this?*

**W.A.O:** In the aftermath of the attacks on the United States it became obvious that the global transport infrastructure was extremely vulnerable, not simply as a target for terrorist activity but also, in the wrong hands, as a potentially highly destructive weapon. Although aircraft were the chosen weapon of the 9/11 terrorists, ships might just as easily have been selected and you only have to consider the

implications of one of the mammoth cruise ships referred to earlier falling into the hands of terrorists or of a laden chemical tanker being hijacked, or of even a conventional cargo ship loaded with explosives being blown up in a densely populated area or in a vital shipping channel, to see how serious the consequences of terrorist action involving ships might be.

I prepared and submitted a resolution to the IMO Assembly in November 2001, which was unanimously adopted, and as a result the Organization embarked on an intense period of work to develop a proper regulatory framework that would deal with the issues of ship and port security. December 2002 saw the culmination of this massive effort with the successful adoption, by a Diplomatic Conference, of new measures that provide the maritime community with a well-considered regulatory regime on which to build a suitable maritime security infrastructure.

Among the raft of measures that have been adopted, the most far-reaching is the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code), which will be implemented through a new chapter of the SOLAS Convention. In essence, the Code takes the approach that ensuring the security of ships and port facilities is basically a risk management activity and that, to determine what security measures are appropriate, an assessment of the risks must be made in each particular case.

I think it is really important to stress, however, that all the hard work and dedication that has been put into creating this regulatory framework in such a short space of time will be of little value if the same level of commitment and expertise is not brought to bear on its implementation. It is vital that all parties concerned should put all the necessary legislative, administrative and operational infrastructure in place as soon as possible, without waiting until the entry-into-force date of 1 July 2004.



**IMO News:** *Moving on to a different subject, how concerned are you about what appears to be an increasing threat of regionalism in shipping regulation?*

**W.A.O.:** To me it is clear that all measures to improve maritime safety must be taken at the international level, to avoid a 'patchwork' of different standards and regulations being applied in different parts of the world, which would clearly be unworkable for an international industry in which the principal assets – the ships – move between countries and between legal jurisdictions.

Having said that, there had been a great deal of speculation that the EU countries would take a regional approach to the introduction of new measures following the sinking of the *Prestige* in November 2002. However, they decided to submit their proposals to IMO and, in doing so, they have once again confirmed the vital role played by IMO as the only forum in which effective, global regulations for international shipping can be formulated, and reiterated their own strong commitment to this important principle.

I was particularly satisfied with this, because a great deal of effort had been put into removing any administrative or political hurdles that might have prevented these proposed measures from being processed by IMO. I personally had meetings earlier this year with the then President of the European Union Maritime Transport Ministers' Council, Mr. Yiorgos Anomeritis, and the Vice-President of the European Union, Mrs. Loyola de Palacio, during which I urged Member Governments to bring any safety and environmental issues relating to the *Prestige* incident to IMO for consideration and appropriate action.

The MEPC has agreed to proceed with these proposals at an extra session of the Committee, to be held in December, which again demonstrates the urgency with which IMO can address pressing issues and

the realistic, pragmatic and well-balanced approach that can be achieved within the framework of a truly international forum.

**IMO News:** *But surely the reality is that the Europeans have effectively pushed through their own agenda at the expense of true consensus?*

**W.A.O.:** I don't see it that way. IMO has accepted the fact that the Europeans want certain things done, and those items have been considered by the MEPC. Certain matters have been dealt with, and the balance will be addressed and, I hope, resolved later this year. The fact that the Europeans brought the issues to IMO is, I think, quite significant. They didn't, at that time, elect to go ahead alone. We'll have to see how this unfolds in the fullness of time. If the European Union wants to go beyond IMO's position and to establish certain other standards or regulations which are within the ambit of the MARPOL Convention, fine. But if what they want to do is not compliant MARPOL, and they are Parties to MARPOL, then there may be a problem.

**IMO News:** *Looking to the future, what do you consider to be the biggest challenges facing the shipping industry in the years ahead?*

**W.A.O.:** The shipping industry is effectively the facilitator for the new global economy and, as there is no obvious sign of any new technology on the horizon that will replace shipping as the most cost-effective means of transporting goods, components and raw materials in bulk around the world, it seems reasonable to assume that, as the 21st century progresses, shipping will have an impact on the lives of more and more people.

And so, in very broad terms, the overall challenge that faces shipping is to continue to supply what the people of the world want from it. People have always wanted a shipping industry which is inexpensive, efficient and

timely. And in the last 30 years or so, they have increasingly demanded that the industry improve its environmental credentials. To my mind, it goes without saying that you cannot achieve those features unless we have an industry which is also safe. And the concept of safety must extend beyond the oil tankers that capture the public imagination to embrace the bulk carriers, general cargo vessels and all the other ship types that rarely appear in the headlines.

On a more specific level, a key challenge will be to find an acceptable balance between the diverse demands made of the shipping industry which are sometimes contradictory. Measures to make ships safer and more environmentally friendly will cost money and that cost will inevitably be reflected in the price paid for goods and materials transported by sea. The world wants quality. It wants an end to foundering tankers and polluted coastlines, but it does not want a significant hike in transportation costs. These are both reasonable demands and I do not believe they are by any means mutually exclusive. But I do think that achieving them concurrently will be a considerable challenge.

We must seek to find ways of permitting those within the shipping industry who do recognise the importance and the value of quality in their operations and who are prepared to go that extra mile to deliver a safe and clean service to their customers and are not financially disadvantaged by less scrupulous operators who are able to undercut their prices by cutting corners.

**IMO News:** *You've already mentioned the human element. How important are issues such as training, education and social welfare for seafarers, now and in the future?*

**W.A.O.:** Seafarer training and social conditions have a crucial role to play in promoting maritime safety. Crew performance is a function of individual

capabilities, management policies, cultural background, experience, training, job skills, work environment and countless other factors.

In 1997, IMO adopted a resolution on the human element, outlining the vision, principles and goals for the Organization. It recalled a previous resolution which invited governments to encourage those responsible for the management and operation of ships to develop, implement and assess safety and pollution prevention management systems and another concerning fatigue factors in manning and safety, which aims at increasing awareness of the complexity of fatigue and encourages all parties involved in ship operations to take these factors into account when making operational decisions. It acknowledged the need for increased focus on human-related activities in the safe operation of ships, and the need to achieve and maintain high standards of safety and environmental protection for the purpose of significantly reducing maritime casualties.

As we moved from the last millennium into the new, IMO took the conscious decision to reinforce its emphasis on the human element in shipping in pursuit of the Organization's aims of a safer, cleaner and more secure industry. It was recognised that, while technical improvements would always be possible, the opportunity for major advances in the future would lie with the people in shipping. In this context, I think one of the big challenges for shipping in the 21st century is the creation of a genuine safety culture within the industry.

Logically, the most important prerequisite in the creation of a safety culture will be the human resource itself. Which means that recruitment, retention, training and education of the industry's manpower base must become a top priority. Shipping must attract people of the right calibre and it must make sure that they are treated in a way that encourages them to make their career in the industry –

which is especially difficult when so many choices are now available. With a serious shortfall in the number of properly trained officers in the industry widely predicted, the whole question of human resources for shipping will become a serious issue in the years ahead.

**IMO News:** *Many people in shipping have called for IMO to play a stronger role in the enforcement of standards. Is this possible or desirable?*

**W.A.O:** On the whole, I think that the proper implementation of existing standards is far more likely to yield positive results than the adoption of more and more new legislation. I'm not saying that new legislation isn't sometimes necessary but there is always a danger of burdening those operators who do routinely comply with standards with extra costs and thereby giving further financial advantage to those who do not comply.

IMO is already beginning to address the issue of implementation and whether or not the secretariat could play an expanded role. The first steps were taken with the revised STCW Convention, which gave the secretariat a part to play in co-ordinating the process whereby Parties to the convention were assessed as to their compliance, and the so-called White List published for all to see. I think that the Organization is going to have to look further at some form of control which will require countries that are Parties to Conventions to adhere to the commitment they make, and to adhere to whatever standards are developed or whatever the Convention demands. Of course, if the secretariat is to play a stronger role in that regard, there will undoubtedly be resource implications, which the Members would also have to address.

In this context, it is worth mentioning the proposed IMO Model Audit Scheme which is currently under consideration by IMO. This would be a means of auditing the performance

of governments – in their role as the Parties to the various IMO Conventions - to assist them to make sure that they, first of all, understand what the requirements of the Conventions are and then to assist them to apply them properly on board the ships that they have under their flag. It's a question of reflecting on what has been done and what is required and then to try to put in place certain arrangements which will assist them and ensure that the requirements of the Conventions are being complied with.

**IMO News:** *Finally, could you say a few words about your successor as IMO Secretary-General, Efthimios Mitropoulos?*

**W.A.O:** Mr Mitropoulos and I have worked together for a long time and I feel that we have built up a great rapport over the years. He has been a member of the secretariat since well before my time, and I first knew him when I was an IMO delegate coming from Canada. I respect his confidence and I respect his sincere interest in pursuing the objectives of the Organization. He has been very close to me in our thinking about safety at sea and, particularly, the welfare of seafarers. We both have been concerned about the problem of losses of bulk carriers and the loss of life of seafarers – which sometimes seems to take second place to the environmental issues. I think we have seen eye to eye on the way the Organization should respond to these topics and I feel very comfortable that he is going to succeed me. I think the future of the Organization is in very capable hands.

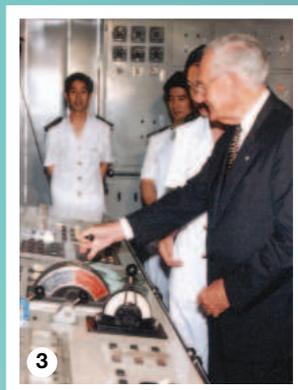


## An international figure on the world stage

Throughout his 14 years in office at IMO, William O'Neil has travelled extensively all over the world to promote the Organization's goals of safer, more secure and more efficient shipping on cleaner oceans. Whether shaking hands with royalty, in

conference with ministers, signing high-level agreements, visiting working vessels or just relaxing with maritime students, Mr O'Neil has made friends wherever he has gone and has left a lasting impression throughout the wide and disparate

maritime world. In these pages we provide a pictorial miscellany documenting just a small selection of the many missions, visits, conferences and meetings at which Mr O'Neil has pursued the ambitions of IMO during his period as Secretary-General.



1. With HRH Queen Elizabeth II at the opening of the IMO Headquarters in London  
2. Relaxing during visit to Maritime Cyprus  
3. Ship's engine control room, China  
4. Meeting - Prefectura Naval de Argentina  
5. With members of the Australian delegation to IMO  
6. The Onassis Foundation reception  
7. Welcome reception - Ghana





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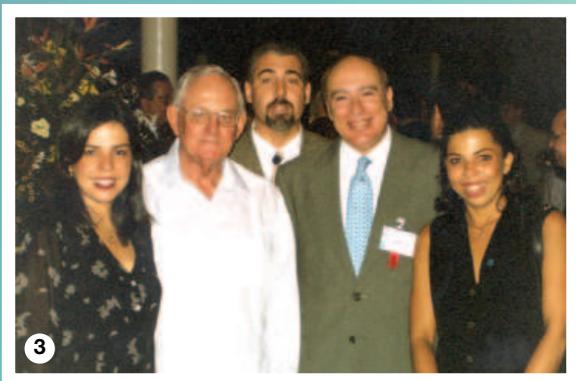


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1. Dinner with the Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa
2. Visit to Cuba
3. Receives Honorary Doctorate, Korea Maritime University
4. China – Yang Tse River tour
5. Welcome reception - India
6. With HRH the Duke of Edinburgh at the Seatrade Awards dinner
7. Tour of coastal navigation aids - Uruguay



- 1. At the Baltic Exchange
- 2. With Egypt's Minister H. E. Mr Hamdy Al Shayeb and Dr Mokhtar
- 3. With Dr Alcantara, professor, and IMLI students, Malta
- 4. Signing co-operation agreement with Mexico
- 5. SAR and GMDSS Conference, Republic of Korea
- 6. With his close collaborator and successor Efthimios Mitropoulos
- 7. With Dr K. Chikwe, former Minister for Transport, Nigeria





1. Signing MOU with Canada  
 2. Visit to port facilities, Peru  
 3. With members of the Greek Shipowners' Association  
 4. With Seafarers Memorial sculptor Michael Sandle  
 5. At Panama Maritime conference with President H. E. Ms Moscoso  
 6. World Maritime Day, London  
 7. Graduate from China at WMU, Sweden





## IMO's challenges and achievements

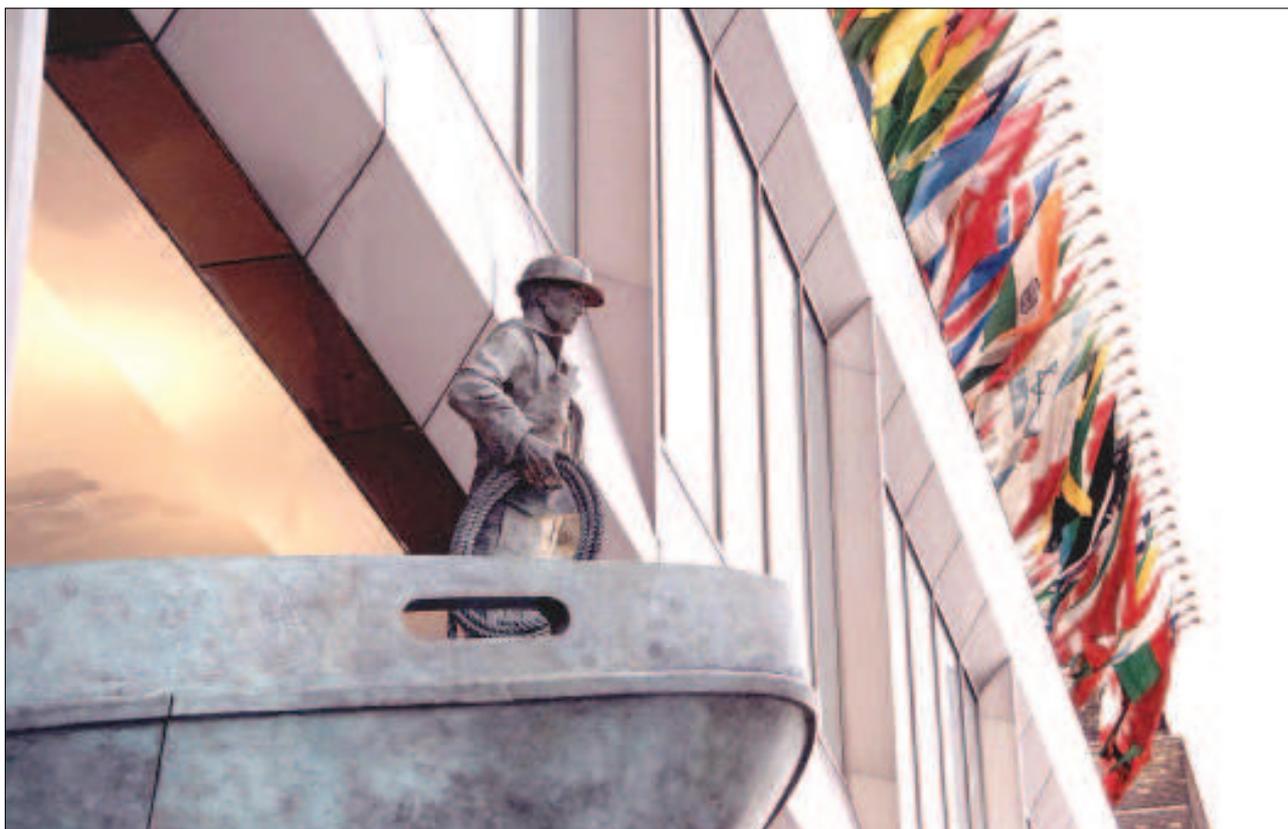
Some significant landmarks in William A. O'Neil's 14 years at IMO

1990 (January)	Mr. William A. O'Neil (Canada) becomes Secretary-General.
1990 (March)	Adoption of Protocol to Athens Convention increasing amount of compensation payable.
1990 (November)	Adoption of International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC). One of a number of measures adopted by IMO in response to the 1987 Exxon Valdez oil spill.
1991	Secretary-General became Chancellor of WMU and Chairman of IMLI Governing Board
1991 (March)	Although not yet in force, OPRC Convention gets its first test during major pollution incident in Persian Gulf. IMO sets up Disaster Fund and establishes Co-ordination Centre at Headquarters to help deal with threat to the environment.
1991 (May)	Secretary-General proposes five point plan of action to improve safety standards and reduce pollution from ships. SOLAS amendments adopted: Chapter VI extended to cover carriage of cargoes (previously just grain).
1991 (November)	17th Assembly. Interim measures to improve bulk carrier safety adopted following initiative by Secretary-General.
1991 (November)	Contracting Parties to London Convention adopt 'precautionary approach' which means that preventive measures must be taken when it is believed that a course of action may be harmful, even if there is no proof.
1992 (February)	Entry into force of GMDSS and beginning of seven-year phase-in period.
1992 (March)	Entry into force of 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation.
1992 (March)	Adoption of amendments to MARPOL 73/78 to improve safety of existing oil tankers by making double hulls mandatory for new tankers in a new regulation I/13F and also for existing tankers in a phase-in schedule, regulation I/13G.
1992 (April)	Adoption of amendments to SOLAS including intact stability of ro-ro passenger ships and fire safety measures for passenger ships. Applicable to new and existing ships under a phase-in schedule.
1992 (July)	Entry into force of MARPOL Annex III.
1992 (November)	Adoption of 1992 Protocols to 1969 CLC and 1971 Fund Conventions, intended to replace original conventions. Compensation available for victims of oil pollution greatly increased.
1993 (February)	IMO group of experts visits south east Asia to advise on anti-piracy measures.
1993 (April)	Adoption of Protocol to 1977 Torremolinos International Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels, intended to overcome difficulties preventing the parent Convention from entering into force.
1993 (April)	First meeting of new Sub-Committee on Flag State Implementation.
1993 (November)	18th Assembly adopts International Safety Management (ISM) Code.
1994 (February)	Adoption of amendments to London Convention to ban dumping of radioactive wastes and phase-out dumping and incineration of industrial wastes.
1994 (July)	Tonnage Convention becomes fully operational.
1994 (May)	Adoption of three new Chapters to SOLAS: ISM Code is made mandatory by the new Chapter IX; International Code of Safety for High Speed Craft made mandatory by Chapter X. New Chapter XI contains special measures to enhance maritime safety.
1994 (September)	Ro-ro ferry Estonia capsizes with the loss of more than 850 lives. Secretary-General calls for an immediate review of all aspects of ro-ro safety.
1994 (December)	Panel of Experts set up by MSC to study ro-ro safety. At the same time, the Committee forms a correspondence group to look into safety of bulk carriers following worrying increase in number of accidents. Adoption of SOLAS amendments to make Code of Safe Practice for Cargo Stowage mandatory.
1995 (May)	Entry into force of OPRC Convention.
1995 (July)	Adoption of revisions to the 1978 STCW Convention. The amendments completely revise the STCW convention, making mandatory a new STCW Code and giving IMO responsibility for checking compliance – for the first time.
1995 (July)	Adoption of International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel (STCW-F).
1995 (November)	Adoption of SOLAS amendments to improve ro-ro passenger ferry safety, based on recommendations of Panel of Experts set up after <b>Estonia</b> .
1995 (November)	19th Assembly adopts resolutions on ro-ro safety, bulk carrier safety and other technical issues.
1996 (January)	Entry into force of May 1994 SOLAS amendments (Chapters X, XI).
1996 (May)	Adoption of International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS). Adoption of Protocol to 1976 LLMC Convention
1996 (May)	Entry into force of 1992 CLC and Fund Protocols.
1996 (June)	Adoption of SOLAS amendments including revised Chapter III (life-saving appliances) and adoption of International Life-Saving Appliances (LSA) Code.
1996 (July)	Entry into force of 1989 Salvage Convention.
1996 (November)	Adoption of 1996 Protocol to London Convention. It incorporates the precautionary approach and bans dumping of all wastes with the exception of clearly defined categories.
1997 (February)	1995 amendments to STCW Convention enter into force (with phase in period to 2002)
1997 (July)	IMO awarded Onassis Prize for the Environment.
1997 (September)	Adoption of new Annex VI to MARPOL 73/78 containing regulations to prevent air pollution from ships.
1997 (November)	Adoption of new SOLAS chapter XII Additional safety measures for bulk carriers.
1998	Secretary-General established Seafarers Memorial Trust Fund
1998 (May)	Adoption of revised Annex to SAR Convention.
1998 (July)	Entry into force of ISM Code, application to passenger ships, including passenger high-speed craft; and oil tankers, chemical tankers, gas carriers, bulk carriers and cargo high-speed craft of 500 gross tonnage and above.

1998 (December)	Adoption of amendments to STCW Code aimed at improving minimum standards of competence of crews sailing on ships carrying solid bulk cargoes.
1999 (February)	Full implementation of GMDSS.
1999 (May)	Adoption of SOLAS amendments to make mandatory the International Code for the Safe Carriage of Packaged Irradiated Nuclear Fuel, Plutonium and High-Level Radioactive Wastes on Board Ships (INF Code).
1999 (July)	SOLAS chapter XII on bulk carrier safety enters into force.
1999 (July)	Adoption of amendments to MARPOL 73/78 making certain sized tankers carrying persistent oils (such as heavy fuel oil) as cargo subject to the same stringent requirements as crude oil tankers.
1999 (November)	21st Assembly. Adoption of Resolutions A.900(21) A.900(21) Objectives of the Organization in the 2000s and A.901(21) IMO and Technical Co-operation in the 2000s, amongst other technical resolutions.
1999 (December)	Erika incident off coast of Brittany, France
2000 (February)	Entry into force of harmonized system of survey and certification (HSSC) which was adopted in 1988 through Protocols to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS) and to the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966. Introduction of HSSC also applies to MARPOL 73/78 and relevant international Codes.
2000 (March)	Adoption of Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Co-operation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances, 2000 (OPRC-HNS Protocol).
2000 (October)	Adoption of amendments to CLC and Fund Conventions to raise by 50 percent the limits of compensation payable to victims of pollution by oil from oil tankers.
2000 (December)	Adoption of SOLAS amendments, including: revised chapter V (Safety of Navigation) to include new requirements for carriage of VDRs and AIS; revised chapter II-2 (Fire protection, fire detection and fire extinction) as well as new International Code for Fire Safety Systems (FSS Code); new high-speed craft Code (updating 1994 Code); prohibition of asbestos on new installations.
2001 (January)	<b>Castor</b> incident in which salvors were unable to find a sheltered place to effect cargo transfer and repairs for some 35 days. Subsequently, Secretary-General calls for IMO to undertake global consideration of the problem of places of refuge for ships in distress.
2001 (March)	Adoption of International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage, 2001.
2001 (April)	Adoption of amendments to Regulation 13G of MARPOL 73/78 Annex I brings in a new global timetable for accelerating the phase-out of single-hull oil tankers. The timetable will see most single-hull oil tankers eliminated by 2015 or earlier. Also adoption of condition Assessment Scheme for tankers.
2001 (August)	Tampa incident involving persons in distress at sea.
2001 (September)	Terrorist attacks in United States.
2001 (September)	Unveiling of International Memorial to Seafarers at IMO headquarters in London.
2001 (October)	Adoption of International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships.
2001 (November)	22nd Assembly. Adopts two resolutions proposed by Secretary-General on Review of measures and procedures to prevent acts of terrorism which threaten the security of passengers and crews and the safety of ships and Review of safety measures and procedures for the treatment of persons rescued at sea.
2001 (November)	Adoption of amendments to COLREGS relating to Wing-in Ground (WIG) craft.
2002	10th Anniversary of IMLL.
2002 (January)	Adoption of amendments to Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic, 1965 to add new standards and recommended practices for dealing with stowaways.
2002 (February)	Full implementation of the 1995 Amendments to the STCW Convention which entered into force on 1 February 1997
2002 (February)	Intersessional Working Group on Maritime Security produces recommendations, further elaborated in May 2002 MSC.
2002 (May)	Adoption of SOLAS amendments to make the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code (IMDG Code) mandatory.
2002 (July)	Final implementation date of ISM Code - Application of ISM Code extended to most ships trading internationally including mobile offshore drilling units of 500 gross tonnage and above.
2002 (September)	Intersessional Working Group on Maritime Security continues work on drafting new measures on maritime security.
2002 (November)	Entry into force of 1993 Amendments to IMO Convention enlarging the Council to 40 Members.
2002 (December)	Adoption of SOLAS amendments by conference on maritime security - comprehensive new measures to enhance maritime security, including new Chapter XI-2 (Special measures to enhance maritime security) and International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code). Also adoption of SOLAS amendments by expanded MSC - including new regulations to require bulk carriers to fit water ingress alarms. Also, MSC approves recommendations for future work on bulk carrier safety based on completion of FSA studies.
2003	20th Anniversary of WMU
2003 (May)	Adoption of Protocol to the 1992 Fund Convention to add 'third tier' of compensation.
2003 (July)	MEPC considers proposals on tankers (double hulls) in wake of Prestige incident - tanker sinks off coast of Spain.
2003 (September)	Entry into force of Annex IV (Sewage) of MARPOL 73/78
2003 (November)	23rd Assembly.



## The Memorial to Seafarers - a lasting monument



The advances made in safety at sea, particularly in relatively recent times, have been clear for all to see. Ships are now designed, built, operated and manned to standards more exacting than ever before. Nevertheless, every year several hundred people are injured or lose their lives in maritime accidents and usually their injuries and deaths go largely unrecorded. That is why, in 1998, to mark the 50th anniversary of IMO, William O'Neil established the Seafarers Memorial Trust Fund, dedicated primarily to education and training of seafarers, with the intention of helping to raise standards and at the same time save lives.

It was also proposed that the fund should finance the creation of a sculpture that would provide something tangible and lasting in recognition of the courage, dedication and the sacrifices of those who sail the

ships on which the world depends. Several internationally renowned artists were asked to put forward their interpretations of the brief and Michael Sandle's design was chosen by a steering committee from a short-list of three. Completed in 2001, the memorial today provides a continual reminder to delegates, IMO staff and visitors, of what will always be IMO's most important responsibility - the safety of life at sea.

The project is truly monumental in scale. The finished sculpture is a representation of a traditional cargo ship, with a lone seafarer standing at the bow, looking out towards the horizon. The whole thing stands over seven metres tall and is cast in 10 tonnes of bronze. At the Morris Singer Foundry near Southampton, United Kingdom, some 20 people worked for several months to bring the project to fruition. More than 100 individual

pieces were compiled into four major sections, which were transported individually to London, where the sculpture was completed in situ, ready for its unveiling on 27 September 2001.



To permit the artist greater scope in developing his work of art, modifications to the building housing the International Maritime Organization Headquarters on the Albert Embankment were required so that a suitable setting would be available for the sculpture.

The prow of the bronze ship sculpture projects beyond the face of the building, high over the pavement with the base of the ship resting behind the public footpath. Floodlighting has been specially designed to emphasise the scale and grandeur of the sculpture ensuring that this new monument will be visible to all – drawing attention to the role of the seafarer and highlighting the important work IMO plays in improving safety at sea and in preventing marine pollution by ships.

Unveiled at a VIP ceremony coinciding with World Maritime Day 2001, this magnificent sculpture is dedicated to seafarers throughout the world. Not only does it recognize the outstanding contribution of seafarers to the smooth operation of international seaborne trade, but at the same time it constitutes an overdue payment of tribute, at the international level, to the memory of seafarers from all over the world who have lost their lives in the service of maritime transport.

When he launched the Seafarers Memorial Trust Fund in 1988, William O'Neil called on all concerned - Governments, industry organizations and, in particular, shipping companies, shipowners, ship operators and other entities that had been associated with the work of IMO over the years - to contribute generously so that the objectives the Fund was set up to achieve might be implemented as soon as possible. The imposing memorial that now stands outside IMO headquarters is a physical manifestation that this generosity has indeed been forthcoming.





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