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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
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STATEMENT OF RADM. ROBERT W. GOEHRING, USCG, BEFORE THE LEGAL AND MONETARY AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, ON SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS FOR U.S. PRIVATE PILOTS MISSING IN FOREIGN AREAS, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 1969.

I am RADM. Robert W. Goehring, Chief, Office of Operations, United States Coast Guard. I am accompanied this morning by: Albert J. McCullough, Search and Rescue Liaison Officer, USCG; Ferris J. Holland, Deputy Director, Air Traffic Service, FAA; James F. Rudolph, Director, Flight Standards Service, FAA. I am happy to appear before this subcommittee to discuss the actions which have been taken by the Department of Transportation to put into practice the recommendations made by the Committee on Government Operations in its House Report No. 832, 90th Congress, 1st Session. The recommendation numbers which I will use in this statement correspond to those used in the House Report. With regard to recommendations 1, 2, and 3, which called for establishment of a plan of action for situations in which U.S. private pilots are missing in foreign areas, the Coast Guard and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) worked in conjunction with the Department of State through the Interagency Group on International Aviation (IGIA) to prepare the plan of action which is now outlined in IGIA paper 84/1.3, dated December 14, 1967, as amended by IGIA paper 84/1.3A, dated February 1, 1968.

To implement this plan of action, the Coast Guard issued Commandant's Instruction 3130.10A, dated March 5, 1968, a copy of which has been provided to this Subcommittee, and which directs Coast Guard Search and Rescue Coordinators to follow the procedures which were agreed upon in the IGIA papers. Similarly, the FAA issued implementing instructions by revision to the FAA manual entitled "Aeronautical Communications and Pilot Services," document 7300.7, pertinent excerpts of which have been provided to the Subcommittee.

In general, these instructions provide for action to be taken by Search and Rescue Coordinators and Flight Service Stations whenever information is received that a U.S. aircraft is overdue or missing in geographic areas of concern to these agencies and also provide a means for rapidly notifying the Department of State of the situation and of what action is being undertaken.

With regard to Recommendation Number 4, which urges the State Department to seek bilateral agreements or arrangements with other countries, the Coast Guard conducted a study of existing agreements and arrangements with respect to the countries of the Caribbean and Central America. As a result of this study, recommendations were transmitted by the Secretary of Transportation to the Department of State on May 24, 1968. Briefly, this transmittal pointed out that the existing policies of most of the countries of this region were such that bilateral agreements of a formal nature were not considered necessary. However, it was suggested that the Department of State determine through its foreign service posts whether the policies of the countries described were still effective and request comment on suggested procedures for entry of U.S. SAR forces into these countries when necessary. In those few countries, other than Cuba, where there are no established policies toward U.S. search and rescue activities exists, the Coast Guard made recommendations for rapid handling of situations on an ad hoc basis.

Recommendation Number 5 did not deal with this Department and therefore no comment is offered.

Recommendation Number 6 deals with a continuing listing of countries with search and rescue inadequacies. In this connection, the FAA has amended the International Flight Information Manual to include a new emergency procedures section, a copy of which has been provided to the Subcommittee. These procedures include information extracted from the Regional Plans of the International Civil Aviation Organization and indicate the status of implementation of ICAO search and rescue requirements in foreign countries. In addition to this, the FAA has amended the Airman's Information Manual, Part 1, to provide precautions for pilots planning flight in foreign areas. Excerpts of these precautions have also been provided to the committee.

With respect to Recommendation Number 7, concerning crash locator beacons, the FAA issued an Advance Notice of Proposed Rule Making, a copy of which has been previously provided. The comments received in response to the Notice indicated a wide diversity of opinion on the merits of the proposal. The lack of a low-cost, high-performance battery capable of operating at low temperatures constitutes one of the most serious problems we have in the crash locator program. Accordingly, Secretary Volpe indicated to you in his letter of January 31, 1969, that FAA expected to delay rule making action for at least one year as it pertained to small general aviation aircraft. However, FAA has since decided to issue a Notice of Proposed Rule Making that would require the installation of crash locator beacons on airplanes used in air taxi operations. The growth of air taxi and commuter operations may make the carriage of locator beacons necessary.

In addition to the specific responses to the recommendations, the Coast Guard has been working with the Department of State and the Department of Defense in attempting to establish better operational relationships with countries of the Caribbean area. The initial attempt in this respect has been with Venezuelan Search and Rescue Officials since that country is among the Latin American leaders in the provision of search and rescue facilities and organization. As a result of these efforts, exchange liaison visits have already been conducted between U.S. search and rescue authorities and Venezuelan search and rescue authorities. Further, as a result of joint agreement between representatives of the two countries, a somewhat broader type of meeting is being planned for later this year to include other States and Territories in the Caribbean region. The object of these meetings is to establish wherever possible, the same close operating relationships among search and rescue authorities as presently exists between the United States and Canada. It is our belief that such coordination at the operational level will improve the speed of response to distress cases in this area which is so critical to the safety of United States citizens. Thank you Mr. Chairman.