

M/V Sergo Zakariadze Executive Summary Report  
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M/V Sergo Zakariadze

Incident Synopsis

26 November 1999

- 605 foot Russian freighter M/V Zakariadze runs aground 18 November 1999 - reported to USCG at 0940.
- Preliminary investigation suggests the cause of the accident was due to mechanical failure which led to steering failure in heavy weather associated with Hurricane Lenny.
- Vessel was loaded with:
  - 17,000 tons of Portland cement
  - 144,936 gallons IFO 180 in 6 separate tks
  - 22968 gal. marine gas oil in 2 tks - double bottoms
  - 28248 gal. slops
- Ship is hard aground in approximately 20 feet of water less than 100 yards NW of El Morro Castle, a 500 year old historic National Park Service fort, and 100 yards NE of buoy #1 at the entrance to San Juan harbor.  
appx. pos. : lat.: 18-28.32N : long.: 066-07.5 W  
approximately 2/3 of the vessel's hull is grounded with the aft 1/3 floating.

- Vessel damage consists of:
  - Probable breaching of all double bottom tanks
  - Extensive flooding in ship's engine room
  - Stress cracks btwn cargo holds 2 and 3
  - Warpage on the stbd hull btwn 5 and 6 cargo holds
- IFO 180 lightering commenced to Tug San Juan with 25,000 gallon capacity on 21 November at 1045. Lightering of all accessible diesel, IFO and slops is completed 26 November 1999.
- The Incident Command System was implemented and has provided for the effective coordination of 16 State and Federal agencies directly involved with this response. Approximately 90 personnel are participating in response efforts.
- Sensitive areas including natural, cultural and archeological resource protection have been a major priority. Protection priorities were identified early in the response and strategies to protect those sites were implemented.
- Dispersant capability has been part of the contingency planning for resource protection since the incident began. Both aerial and vessel delivery platforms were contracted. The dispersant aircraft was demobilized on 24 November after the risk of a major release of IFO was eliminated.
- Response equipment on scene includes:
  - 8 vessels
  - 2 helicopters
  - 1 fixed wing aircraft
  - 950 feet of deployed protection boom
  - 5500 feet of pre-staged protection boom
- Safety has been the Unified Command's prime objective. No injuries or illnesses have been reported for the incident to date.

M/V Sergo Zakariadze  
Unified Command Response Objectives

- Safety of Life and Health
- Stabilization of Vessel
- Containment of Pollution Sources
- Removal of Pollution Threat
- Removal of Cargo
- Identification and Protection of Sensitive Areas
- Coordination of environmental, cultural, archeological, and economic response actions

- Documentation of Response
- Maintenance of Positive Public Affairs
- Salvage of Vessel (due to navigational risk to channel)
- Coordination with Caribbean RRT

#### Unique Aspects of the Response

- Importance of cultural and archeological resources
- Language challenges of Russian crew and Spanish speaking gov.
- Logistics Challenges
- NTSB involvement
- Vieques political situation
- Cement viewed as potentially more of a resource threat than MGO

#### Response Phases

Phase I: Removal of ship's oils  
21 - 26 November 1999

After ensuring safe operations and stability of the ship and its cargo, the first order of business was to focus on removing the threat of an oil spill. A lightering plan was developed to remove the IFO first, and then continue lightering the marine gas oil and slops.

Phase II: Removal of Cement  
(27 Nov - Jan) projected

Once the greatest pollution threat from oil is eliminated, the Unified Command's focus will shift to removal of roughly one half of the ship's cement cargo. Off-loading options have been an important issue for the response organization. Efforts have been extensive to minimize any effects to environmental, cultural, and underwater archeological resources in the area while still planning within the limits of operational capability. It is expected that this phase of the response may take approximately one month. It is anticipated that there will be delays in operations during this second phase while necessary salvage equipment is brought in and set up. There are also windows for conduction of safe and attainable off-loading operations.

Phase III: Salvage of the Vessel  
(projected time - unknown)

The final phase of the response will deal with the refloating and extraction of the vessel itself. Plans must be developed to ensure minimal additional impacts to the resources in the area while at the same time planning for a safe operation. The risk of impacting the channel or the port will be a primary concern when deciding the disposition of the vessel once it is refloated.

## Incident Command for the M/V Sergo Zakariadze

### • Planning

- Assessment of amount and types of oil and cargo.
- Identification of resources at risk: natural, cultural, and. human use.
- Development of resource protection priorities and strategies.
- Assessment of oil dispersability and dispersant operations planning: vessel and aircraft delivery platforms and systems.
- Development of fuel off-loading plans to eliminate the threat of an oil spill as soon as possible.
- Evaluation of hazards associated with cement from an environmental, cultural resource protection, human health and safety standpoint.
- Coordination of cement off-loading planning with operations, state and federal stakeholders.
- Support for information management and public affairs.
- Support to safety for development of site safety plans and hazard identification and characterization.
- Development of cement off-loading plans.
- Development of vessel refloating, extraction, and disposition plans.
- Interpretation support between salvors, USCG and the Russian ship's crew for verbal and document translations.

### • Operations

- Safe transfer of over 188,000 gal. of vessel's lubrication and fuel oils.
- Staging, deployment, and monitoring of protective equipment for protection of environmentally sensitive and historic structures.
- Management of dispersant operations group including SMART monitoring capability.
- Testing and evaluation of operational techniques and strategies for off-loading the cement cargo.
- Vessel stability and structural integrity monitoring.

- Monitoring of levels in all tanks.

- Logistics

- Tracking of all equipment, personnel and services requests and management of all logistical needs of the response organization on a day to day basis. This has been a coordinated and unified effort between USCG and the RP logistics personnel.
- Coordination with USCG Seventh District for obtaining dispersants and dispersant delivery capability on-scene.
- Coordination with finance to ensure cost documentation reflects equipment and personnel requests and orders.

- Finance

- Federal Project Number (FPN) M00016
- Current Ceiling is 1.2 million dollars
- Spent to date from fund: appx. \$600,000.
- Daily avg. expenditure: appx \$22,000.\*
- Appx. \$100,000 contracted in PRFAs.
- RP spending: appx. \$35,000/day avg.

\* avg daily response cost for the USCG after demobilization of dispersant aircraft which along with dispersants was appx. an additional \$64,000/day

- Other Support

Safety

Developed all site safety plans for the incident covering general responder safety, asbestos operating and maintenance program, victim transport, hazardous substance handling. Also developing air monitoring strategies for cargo off-loading related to responder/public health and safety.

Legal

Explored issues related to using foreign flag vessels for cargo off-loading operations. Evaluate insurance/owner liability as it relates to vessel and cargo disposal/disposition.

Public Affairs - JIC

Media interest has been high to moderate locally. Two separate press conferences have been held to date. A third press conference is scheduled for 1200 today (11/26) at the MSO. Additional press conference and briefings will be scheduled as necessary. All press to date has been positive. National media interest has been low.

U.S. Navy SUPSALV

Providing salvage engineering support by monitoring the structural integrity and stability of the vessel. SUPSALV is also assisting in the development of

a cargo off-load plan.

#### Scientific Support

NOAA Hazmat is providing Scientific Support both on-scene and remotely to help address environmental protection issues, as well as other scientific and technical aspects of the spill. NOAA is also assisting with information management and documentation requirements.

#### Personnel and Agency Involvement

Personnel involved in the response to date totals approximately 90. 9 federal agencies are represented along with 7 state and local agencies actively involved with this response. Additionally, 8 commercial entities are participating in current response efforts.

#### Federal

- Department of Transportation
  - U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
    - MSO San Juan
    - Gulf Strike Team (GST)
    - National Strike Force Coordination Center
    - Seventh District Legal
    - Seventh District Safety
    - Seventh District Public Affairs
    - Russian Translator (MSO Miami)
    - Marine Safety Center
- U.S. Navy
  - U.S. Navy SUPSALV
- U.S. Department of Commerce
  - National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Admin. (NOAA)
    - Office of Response and Restoration (OR&R)
    - National Marine Fisheries (NMFS)
    - National Weather Service (NWS)
- U.S. Department of Interior (DOI)
  - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
  - National Park Service (NPS)
- National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- Army Corps of Engineers (COE)

#### State/Local

- Puerto Rico Department of Natural Resource (PRDNER)
- Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board (EQB)
- Puerto Rico Department of Public Health
- Commission of Underwater Archeology
- Department of Tourism
- San Juan Ports Authority
- Puerto Rico Emergency Management Agency (PREMA)
- Puerto Rico Fire Department (Marine Firefighting unit)

#### Commercial Entities

- Alexacos & Simpson
- Caribbean Environmental Services
- Antilles Cement
- San Juan Towing
- Titan Marine
- ASI
- ITOPF
- PCCI

#### Appendix

- Ship diagram
- Resources at Risk Information
- Press release and News Clips
- Photos

#### Area Contingency Plan Sensitive Area Site Protection Priorities

##### Oil transport into San Juan Harbor:

1. Palo Seco Peninsula - A7
2. El Canuelo and Park - B9
3. Constitution Bridge - A4
4. PREPA Puerto Nuevo - A5
5. Dos Hermanos & Condado - B3
6. Punto Catano - B6
7. San Juan Cruise River - B2
8. Batamon River - C8

##### Oil transport offshore to west:

1. Cocal River - A93
2. Cerromar & Dorado Beach - B12

##### Oil transport offshore to east:

1. El Morro & San Cristobal - B1
2. Torrecilla Baja - A79
3. Isla Verde Beach - A80

##### Additional Cultural Resources at risk along the coast:

1. Paseo Munex River Archeology Site
2. Tajamar Ruins
3. Reserve Officer Club Ruins
4. Escamoron Battery
5. Ft. San Geronimo
6. 1920 RR Bridge, Condado