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General Comments to the Colloquium



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Comment by: Dr. John S. Gardenier, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S.A.

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This first international colloquium on Ship Collisions with Bridges and Offshore Structures is a technical success, but it leaves an administrative vacuum. Sufficient information has been documented to create two agendas: one for research and another for formal codification of guidelines for good practice in analysis and design for protection against ship collisions.

IABSE should form one or two working groups. One should formulate a well-defined and justified priority research list. Difficult and expensive projects (such as full scale ship tests of sand islands) should be proposed to a consortium of private/governmental research sponsoring agencies.

An administrative group of IABSE should work with the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities (for aids to navigation and structure, lighting/marking) and other societies to arrive at a code of practice marking for siting, design and navigation management relevant to structures in and over navigable waters. Such practice must consider geographical problems such as scarcity of certain materials in some areas.

Once codified, the guides should be proposed to one or more United Nations agencies (such as the International Maritime Organization - IMO) to be incorporated into an international convention.

Needless to say, the code should be so formulated as not to preclude general technological progress or beneficial local innovation. Failure to institutionalize guidelines for good practice will perpetuate bad practice by the many individuals, interests and bodies politic which are not represented at this meeting and are unlikely to read, or to care about, a set of technical papers.

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Comment by: Mr. Thomas R. Kuesel, Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade & Douglas, U.S.A.

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The objective of this colloquium has not been to make bridges and structures more efficient, nor to reduce their first cost, but rather to enable them to endure extraordinary events that threaten their longevity. At the Copenhagen Stock Exchange we were presented not only with extraordinary hospitality from our Danish hosts, but also with a spectacular challenge from King Christian IV - can we today build structures that will endure for 350 years?

Engineers around the world are subject to great pressures from owners to reduce the first cost of their works. In responding to these pressures, engineers have developed ever more efficient designs, approaching ever more closely minimum compliance with the specified design criteria. Inherent in this process is reduction in the capability to resist extraordinary events and the ravages of time.

At this colloquium we have considered one class of extraordinary events -- ship collisions. It would be appropriate for IABSE to devote its attention at a future colloquium to measures for improving the durability of structures, particularly to considerations to be included in the formulation of design criteria for resistance not only to rare extraordinary events, but also to the long term deterioration from inexorable environmental factors such as erosion and corrosion.

If we do not give attention to the preservation of structures beyond their immediate economic life, the record of our civilization will indeed be ephemeral, and King Christian's monument may yet outlive ours, even with a 350-year head start.

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