

which involve the possible use of force should not be made unduly rapidly. Nevertheless, the Committee notes that three hours elapsed after the ramming of HMCS *Saguenay* by the *Concordia* before External Affairs was contacted, another hour passed before the Ministers of Fisheries and Oceans and National Defence were consulted, two more hours passed before DND indicated it was prepared to use force, and another hour and 25 minutes elapsed, largely because of the unavailability of a PCO official, before a decision to fire warning shots could be transmitted to HMCS *Saguenay*. Almost 7 1/2 hours passed between the ramming of the *Saguenay* and the decision to fire warning shots. This seems an inordinate amount of time to make a decision that, according to DFO boarding procedures, could have been accomplished at Deputy Minister level if the enforcement vessel had been from DFO.

The Committee recognizes that, given the decision not to risk lives and the lack of options for stopping the American vessel, the time taken may not have made a difference in this case. However, other circumstances may well be time-sensitive and 7 1/2 hours may not always be available. In addition, not all interdepartmental coordination procedures are as well-established as the one relevant to the *Concordia* incident, and so delays can only be expected to increase. Also, the delay induced by the absence of representatives of the Privy Council Office for half an hour, even though that Office has only a consultative role, not a decision-making one, seems inexcusable. The Committee will have more to say on governmental organization for interdepartmental coordination; however, witnesses before the Committee suggested that the time taken during this incident may have been partly a result of the rarity of such incidents. Therefore:

- XIV The Committee recommends that the government institute a program of regularly exercising interdepartmental coordination procedures, particularly for emergency situations, with a view to identifying problems and reducing necessary consultation time. Such exercises should include all responsible individuals and their alternates.**