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Dear Toby

During the SS "Richard Montgomery" question for short debate on Wednesday 3 July, you asked about the paddle-boarder in 2015, who was pictured standing by the masts, and how long it took for authorities to reach him.

My officials have advised that this incursion was not noted by the Port Authority at the time, but the Maritime & Coastguard Agency found out about it shortly after the event. Subsequently, the two individuals were identified, interviewed and cautioned.

Lessons were learned from this incident. Since then, the Port Authority have installed a specialist camera, dedicated to the SS Richard Montgomery, monitored in the operations room, which should make it much harder for any incursions by personal watercraft to go unnoticed. The area is of course constantly monitored for larger vessels using radar and Automatic Identification System technology.

We are extremely mindful of the risk that the wreck poses and as I set out in the debate, management of the wreck of the SS Richard Montgomery raises many complex issues. We are committed to ensuring that all the action we take is with the safety of those in the area in mind, and we will continue to actively monitor the wreck, whilst we continue to also consider longer-term options.

You also sent me an e mail dated 7 July, asking me if a copy of "SS Richard Montgomery – Risk Assessment July 2001" can be made available. I am pleased to let you know that we will be placing the full report in the House library.

I hope this letter addresses the point you raised. I will also place a copy of this letter in the House library.

With very best wishes
Diana

BARONESS BARRAN

Lord Harris of Haringey
House of Lords