

More than security

Stephan V. Kroecker of SeaAway explains why a 'prior-to-port' data gateway provides more than just security



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The introduction of all the new legislation, regulations and standards being mandated throughout the world for required components of 'vessel, cargo and seaport security' will prompt regulatory bodies such as the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** and the **World Customs Organization (WCO)**, along with most governments, and the industries involved, to take a more in-depth and comprehensive look at the establishment of an international standard and cost-effective solution to these critical issues.

There must come a time in the very near future that the world's maritime supply chain, end-to-end, is deemed 'secure'. But only a business and system that has been designed from the onset to produce tangible results will produce the required outcome. The US agencies, the **European Union (EU)** organisations and the rest of the maritime nations must seriously consider a system that will provide this much-needed solution.

More importantly, can the following critical questions be addressed:

- Can any system be developed which solves the security concerns – but does not interfere with the flow of economies, vessels, cargo or on-going and efficient, existing operations?
- Can this all be accomplished without an adverse effect to the industry's 'bottom line'? Who pays for this system?
- Can a business model be developed to successfully equalise the associated costs of these issues – country to country, continent to continent?
- Finally, how do the economically-disadvantaged participants become part of this system?

Although these questions raise complex issues, the answer to all of them must be 'Yes'.

Data gateways

The structure to accomplish all of the above is as follows. We establish a permanent network of data gateways at major ports world-wide – each of which is located 12 nautical miles (nm) out to

sea. All vessels entering the port must first be scanned at the data gateway; and vessels leaving the port must also pass through the data gateway before continuing their journey. This provides for two-way supply chain security and ensures that problems are detected before the ships enter their port of destination.

The process will cover hull inspections; mechanical (acoustic) checks; cargo scanning, whether it be containerised (in which case, an advanced Container Security Device may be used), bulk or liquid; and, finally, verifying the identity of the crew and passengers. The vessels that have been deemed compliant and secure are afforded the fastest most efficient arrival and departures.

We believe that performing these checks at a data gateway 12 nm out to sea is the best policy – because screening or scanning a ship once it has *already* arrived at its designated port is like closing the barn door after the proverbial horse has bolted.

Furthermore, we believe that a 'prior-to-port' system must be considered and implemented. This is the only way to ensure the relative safety of our ports' infrastructure and our countries' security. And this system must be implemented equally across the board: with equal charges to perform the security assessments; vessel and crew validation and verification; cargo scanning. Above it, it must be embraced by the maritime industries. In order for this to happen, costs must be kept low and the system must offer real benefits for the industries and ports. Furthermore, there must be an insurance structure that is economical and applied equally.

It is at this point that a nominal fee structure for these services is applied and rendered through the various payment methods available. The on-time submission of fees will also determine further inducements for continuing in the system at these reduced costs and efficient levels of service. Along with these benefits, the industries involved are constantly reviewed for the most economic costs for insurance coverage. Further benefits will include fuel costs

efficiency, less down-time for hull repairs, mechanical diagnostics for engine maintenance, and less frequent required inspections.

How can all of the world's ports be included in this type of system when resources are not available? A business model has been designed to allow for financing of these ports over a standard-plus period of time. Minimal qualifications must be met, but overall they will not stand in the way of the system's availability. Furthermore, financing must be made mandatory. The ports that generally do not have these resources are the ones most in need of becoming a beneficial member of the system.

Ports themselves will derive both direct and indirect benefits from a prior-to-port system. Reduced insurance costs; reallocation of financial and manpower assets for security to various areas of

concern; Maritime Domain Awareness within the port as well as within the system becomes paramount as the newer IMO Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) standards become effective (see page XXX). Vessel Traffic Management efficiency in-port, as well as truck efficiency servicing the landside port, will become more predictable.

Now we must also consider the clients: what do they receive from this system? We'll start with regulatory compliance of an on-time, more efficient and secure supply chain; reduced costs via the increased velocity of shipments; knowledge enhanced supply chain tracking and asset management via Just-In-Time (JIT) and other various and successful methods; reduced inventory requirements and associated taxes; reallocation of resources to other critical areas, and this list continues to grow.

Having spent the last four years

studying these problems and the various solutions being offered, we have now to only pick the solution that makes the most sense for all involved. Complex and expensive technologies are very impressive and in the future they will become the standard – but what do we deploy now and for the next 20-25 years? It must be a system that is immediate, levels the technological playing fields to the 'now' roll-out; as well as the educational curve for operations and the real considerations for maintenance and durability. If we decide to await the technologies, the cost will be prohibitive to all but the few.

I now invite you to please take a moment to visit the SeaAway website (www.seaaway.com) to review and consider our solution to these problems. We do not presume to say it is perfect, or even the final version, but it certainly is a significant start.