



SHIP-SHAPE?

While much media attention has been heaped on the increasingly stringent and multi-layered security checks in place at Europe's airports, the region's seaports have found themselves facing criticism for the comparative ease at which containers can enter and leave. But is this negative view of current marine security fair and, if so, what is the industry doing to reduce the potential risk of attack?

HSE brought together two experts in the field, **Steve Kroecker**, Director of Project Engineering, SeaAway, and **Tim Barker**, Managing Director of Hansard Security Services, to go head-to-head on this issue.

Would you agree that marine security is lacking? If so, what is holding governments or port authorities back from investing more heavily in their marine security?

SK. From the reports I have reviewed, I would have to agree with that criticism. The reason for this apparently weak security, is that none of the regulatory agencies that oversee port security have to date offered a plausible system that is deployable today, economic and that works for all involved.

TB. You should not consider checks in European ports to be lax. But it is important that security measures in place, including security checks, do not influence the commercial interests of the port and associated industry. Detailed and long-lasting checks would have that result; after all, we should bear in mind that the majority of global cargo transport takes place on ships. Therefore, before they impose stricter security measures in ports and on ships, including container ships, governments should consider the economical impact of those measures on the shipping industry.

So what security technologies are currently available and making an impact at ports? What is possible now that maybe wasn't 5-10 years ago?

SK. It is my belief and the industry's experience that the radiation monitors or portals now being deployed are effective for minute numbers. However, they will prove to be inefficient in terms of costs and more importantly in terms of the percentages of containers that can be accurately scanned in real time, without affecting port productivity and cargo velocity. Obviously, if a port can deploy many of these units these deficiencies diminish, but how many ports can afford this luxury? Customs agents are a human factor that can only process a finite number of issues in a given period of time. How many agents will be needed to be deployed for this effort to be effective? Customs agents perform a tough, necessary and much-required job, but can be influenced by outside environments beyond their control. Technological tools must be at their disposal.

First, will be the introduction of real Container Security Devices (CSDs) that meet all the requirements that the various regulatory agencies have 'standardised' and will impose in the near future. Second, will be the acceptance and deployment of a true 'prior-to-port' system that provides for not only 'port security', but the required 'infrastructure' protection that completes and validates any system that will be proposed.

TB. Important to development in the involved technology are certain drivers for change – attitude, awareness and price. The advent of digital technology has meant that the price of cameras and observation aids is being driven down. Meanwhile, the attitude of those in both the maritime and security industry has led to the development of other uses for existing technology. For example, the use of X-ray machines for examination of cargo. The increase in awareness of the security issues following 9/11 has convinced everyone involved that people, equipment and procedures must all change.

Whose responsibility is it to ensure marine freight is not used as a vehicle for terrorist attack? Should the departure port ensure nothing sinister leaves its docks or is it down to the receiving port to carry out thorough inspection of incoming containers?



Steve Kroecker

SK. The only answer to this question is a resounding ‘both’ must assume the responsibility for the system! Any freight that moves from one port to another

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is subject to mid-transit interception and tampering. Only a system capable of ‘prior-to-port’ inspections both at the departure leg and the receiving leg will prove to be effective.

TB. The responsibility of ensuring that nothing sinister leaves or enters docks should be that of both ports. However each port is different and so requires a different security approach. It is not advisable for the receiving port to rely totally on the security measures in place at the departure port, as it is possible that the security threat could have come on-board while the ship is at sea.

Considering the inter-port nature of marine freight, how important is it that port authorities, government and industry organisations work together to coordinate procedures and share best practices?

SK. Port authorities, governments and industry must realise that the solution to this will be a company that produces not only procedures and policies, but does so providing employment and profit; technology that is readily available and with a ‘business model’ that can make possible the inclusion of ports that do not have the necessary resources for this system but that need and will become a ‘beneficial’ participant of the system.

TB. It is essential that port authorities, governments and industry organisations work together to coordinate procedures and share best practice.

There has now been three years of working practice of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code), as adopted by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). The port facilities and shipping companies covered by the Code should now share the lessons they have learned with the appropriate governmental agencies. Doing this would facilitate governments in adjusting their security requirements and measures to the real security threats and to the needs of the concerned ports.

Only instant and close cooperation between port authorities, government and industry organisations can ensure a sufficient level of preparedness in case of a security threat or emergency. Relevant exercises and training are also highly advisable as a follow-up to those lessons learned.

To what extent is this the case today and what is being done to standardise the level of security and procedures across the region?

SK. The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) along with the World Customs Organisation (WCO), European Union, G8, the Far Eastern Maritime Organisations and the US Department of Homeland Security need to meet more often with private industry to begin the process of ‘standardisation’. It has been our experience

that properly motivated, private enterprise can produce the 1st foundation generation of this required system, and that it will take governments, port authorities and industry to cooperate towards this common goal. We can no longer believe that we stand alone in this effort but have truly become a world nation in these efforts to stem terrorism and their radicalism.

TB. The ISPS Code is the result of efforts by the United Nations to standardise levels of security and procedures among the IMO member states. The practice has shown that these member states have put in effort to adjust and unify the required security procedures in order to tighten up and meet the specific security requirements in the regions concerned.

For example, the EU has introduced a package of enhanced security measures on ships and in ports, soon to be followed by maritime security inspections. The legislative package includes a regulation on enhancing ship and port facility security, a directive on enhancing port security and a regulation that lays down procedures for conducting Commission inspections in the field of maritime security.

The most important changes, as undertaken by EU, include covering not only separate port facilities, but also a whole port and adjacent areas with security measures, and making the majority of non-mandatory part B of ISPS Code as mandatory requirements. They also extended security measures to domestic shipping and introduced maritime security inspections in the ports of member states and on ships flying EU member state flags in order to unify and tighten up security measures within the EU.

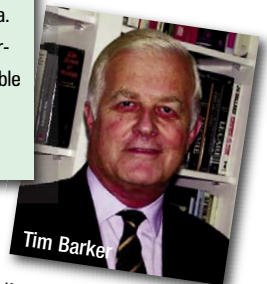
With increasing traffic of containers through the region’s ports, the risk of potential terrorist attacks is only going to increase. How positive are you about the ability of nations to cope and what role will companies such as your own play in this?

SK. Should we as a world community elect to continue to discuss this eventuality rather than begin to prevent it, I feel that we will be faced with a fate worse than what the US experienced after 9/11.

I invite you to consider SeaAway’s ‘Prior-To-Port’ solution, the Sea Sentinel System. A system that accounts for all transiting vessels, inbound or outbound,

container, crew and passenger security, benefits

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Tim Barker

the maritime industry in many forms, including economic and efficiency, allows for all ports to participate and finally provides for the required ‘business model’ that I’ve referred to.

TB. Because it is not possible to eliminate the security threat, the role of companies such as Hansard Security Services is vital. By the common efforts and vigilance of all those concerned – governments, public, industry and security companies like our own – we can stay prepared to respond to any emergencies.

Our role is to be prepared, to detect, react and enhance public awareness by appropriate training. The role of the security company in achieving these goals cannot be overestimated. ■