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IF SMA

NEWSLETTER

The Shipmasters' International Voice

Hapag Lloyd Vessel *Seoul Express* entering
Port of San Francisco

See page 18

Illustration per www.hapag-lloyd.com

HAPAG-LLOYD ©



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Readers are reminded that the opinions expressed in the IFSMA Newsletter are those of the various authors and providers of news and are not necessarily in accord with IFSMA policy.

Secretary General's Message

We have a busy few months coming up at the IMO where we attend week-long meetings every other week starting with the Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping Sub Committee (HTW) with our particular interest in the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention where David Appleton, Nautilus International, will be representing us in the Working Group.

I will be busy in the margins discussing fair treatment of seafarers and detention without charge in a number of countries with events following the finding of drugs in cargo. This trend seems to be on the rise, particularly in Europe.

The new IMO Secretary General, Mr Arsenio Dominguez, has highlighted these as one of his key areas of focus during his four-year term of office. At a meeting with all the IMO observer organisations he stated his determination to hold regular meetings to discuss the impact with those at the front of this battle, including ITF, ICS, IFSMA and others.

At the BGA in Japan, it was agreed that the Mr Dominguez should be invited to become an Honorary Member of IFSMA, as has been our traditional invitation to the IMO S-G for many years. We are delighted to say that he has accepted. The Executive Committee has decided to hold a dinner during their next meeting on 21 February to present him with his certificate, with other available honorary members and at the same time celebrate the 50th anniversary of our formation. We are most fortunate that Julian Parker will be attending, as Secretary of The Nautical Institute he was very supportive of the initiative to form IFSMA and was an active member of the founding committee led by the Dutch Master Mariners' Association.

At the recent meeting of the bi-weekly International Chamber of Shipping Emergency Events group, which I am invited to attend, the security and threat levels in the Black Sea and the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden remain unchanged with ships constantly at high risk of attack.

Many shipping companies have decided to reroute their ships around the Cape and this has reduced the amount of traffic using the Suez Canal by over 50%.

A coalition force, led by the US has been created – known as Operation Prosperity Guardian - with over eight warships now operating in the region and some under the command and control of the Combined Maritime Force (CMF) from Bahrain. A large number of Houthi missiles and aerial drones have been neutralised although attacks continue and a recent return to Red Sea voyages by a container operator resulted in damage to the vessel from an attack. The coalition force is limited in assets and not all warships have the capability to defend against attack and cannot guarantee the safety of merchant shipping in the area.

With these dangerous times in my thoughts, I wish that you keep safe and enjoy fair winds.

Jim Scorer
Secretary General

From the News Editor

A review of some recent US National Transportation Safety Board reports of interest to Members

Anchor strike of underwater pipeline and eventual crude oil release

What happened

On 1 October, 2021, at 1610 local time, San Pedro Bay Pipeline controllers received the first of a series of leak detection system alarms for their underwater pipeline, which was located in San Pedro Bay, 4.75 nautical miles off the coast of Huntington Beach, California. Over the next thirteen hours, the controllers conducted seven pipeline shutdowns and restarts during troubleshooting of the alarms. At 0604 on 2 October, controllers shut down the pipeline for the eighth and final time. A pipeline contractor vessel crew visually confirmed a crude oil release at 0809, and Beta Offshore, the pipeline operator, then initiated an oil spill response. An estimated 588 barrels of oil leaked from the pipeline. Damage, including clean-up costs, was estimated at \$160 million. There were no injuries. A post-accident underwater examination of the pipeline found a crack along the top of the pipeline within a section of the pipeline that had been displaced from its originally installed location. Additionally, scarring consistent with anchor dragging was identified on the seafloor near the crack location. Post-accident investigation determined that the containerships *MSC Danit* and *Beijing* had dragged anchor near the pipeline months before the oil release, on 25 January, 2021.

What the NTSB Found

The Board found that the release of crude oil occurred as a result of fatigue failure that manifested over a period of time in an area of local deformation to the San Pedro Bay Pipeline caused by an external force that resulted in progressive cracks initiating and growing through the pipe wall until the pipe wall ruptured.

Post-accident examination of vessel traffic in the area determined that on 25 January, 2021, vessels anchored nearby were subjected to high winds and seas generated by a strong cold front. As a result, the containerships *Beijing* and *MSC Danit* dragged anchor, and the anchors struck, displaced, and damaged the San Pedro Bay Pipeline. NTSB determined that *MSC Danit* anchor's contact with the pipeline was the initiating event that led to the eventual crude oil release.

It was also found that, because of the proximity of the anchorage positions that *Beijing* and *MSC Danit* were assigned to and the pipeline, the crews had insufficient time and space to heave in their dragging anchors in high winds and seas before the anchors contacted the pipeline. The southeast boundary of the anchorage and the location of contingency anchorage positions southwest of the anchorage did not leave a sufficient margin of safety between anchored vessels and the pipeline.

Following the anchor dragging events, the pipeline operator was not notified by either the vessels or Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) Los Angeles-Long Beach. The VTS watchstanders did not recognize the danger presented to the San Pedro Bay Pipeline by *Beijing* and *MSC Danit* dragging anchors because they lacked a visual indicator of the location of the pipeline and they were attending to exceptionally high vessel activity due to weather; a visual and audible alarm when an anchored vessel encroaches on a pipeline would increase their awareness. Had the pipeline operator been made aware of the *Beijing* and *MSC Danit* anchor dragging, the company could have conducted an underwater survey of the pipeline, identified the damage, and made repairs, preventing the eventual release of crude oil. Further, defined procedures for informing pipeline and other utility operators when possible pipeline incursions have occurred within the VTS area of responsibility would improve the pipeline or utility operator's ability to identify and respond to any damage.



Crude oil in the Pacific Ocean off the California coast on October 3, 2021. Oil spill removal organization vessels are towing a skirted oil boom to contain the oil spill.

Source: US Coast Guard©.

NTSB also explored the reasons for the pipeline controllers' delay in properly responding to the pipeline leak following the first alarm. It was found that abnormal operating conditions contributed to the pipeline controllers' incorrect determination that the leak alarms were false. Had the controllers responded in accordance with company procedure for a leak by shutting down and isolating the pipeline, they would have significantly reduced the volume of crude oil released and the resulting environmental damage. The Board also concluded that the insufficient training of the pipeline controllers contributed to the fourteen-hour delay in stopping the pipeline's shipping pumps, which consequently increased the volume of crude oil released, following the first leak alarm.

Finally, as a result of this investigation, the NTSB found that Beta Offshore was not in compliance with regulations when the company did not drug-test the pipeline controllers following the accident. The Board also found that pipeline safety would be enhanced if pipeline companies implemented safety management systems, and that Beta Offshore may have further evaluated their operations, identified continuous improvement opportunities, and better positioned their staff to respond and react to a leak had they implemented a pipeline safety management system.

NTSB determined that the probable cause of the damage to and subsequent crude oil release from the San Pedro Bay Pipeline was the proximity of established anchorage positions to the pipeline, which resulted in two containerships' anchors striking the pipeline when the ships dragged anchor in high winds and seas. Contributing to the crude oil release was the undetected damage to the pipeline, which allowed fatigue cracks to initiate and grow to a critical size and the pipeline to leak nearly nine months later. Contributing to the amount of crude oil released was Beta Offshore's insufficient training of its pipeline controllers, which resulted in the failure of the controllers to appropriately respond to leak alarms by shutting down and isolating the pipeline. Contributing to the pipeline controllers' inappropriate response to the leak alarms was the water buildup in the pipeline, an incorrect leak location indicated by Beta Offshore's leak detection system, and frequent previous communication-loss alarms.

Recommendation

The NTSB recommended that the US Coast Guard implement the proposed VTS Los Angeles-Long Beach restructuring of the San Pedro Bay federal anchorages to increase the margin of safety between anchored vessels and the pipeline. In addition, it recommended that the Marine Exchange of Southern California, which jointly operates VTS Los Angeles-Long Beach with the Coast Guard, work with its vessel monitoring system provider to add audible and visual alarms for the system that alert the watch stander when an anchored vessel is encroaching on a pipeline. Further, the Board recommended that the Coast Guard implement this capability on all VTS vessel monitoring systems nationwide. Additionally, it recommended that the Coast Guard develop procedures for all VTSs to notify pipeline and utility operators following potential incursions on submerged pipelines within the VTSs' areas of responsibility.



Thorco Basilisk before crane wire failure.
Photo: NTSB ©.

To address the lack of drug testing of the pipeline controllers following the crude oil release, the Board recommended that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) audit Beta Offshore's drug-testing program to ensure compliance with post-accident drug-testing regulations.

Finally, to enhance pipeline safety, the NTSB recommended that PHMSA issue an advisory bulletin to all PHMSA-regulated pipeline owners and operators, promoting the benefits of pipeline safety management systems and asking them to develop and implement such a system based on American Petroleum Institute Recommended Practice 1173.

Crane wire failure on cargo ship *Thorco Basilisk*

What Happened

On 23 July 2022, about 1440 local time, the cargo ship *Thorco Basilisk* was discharging cargo at the Greensport Terminal on the Houston Ship Channel in Houston, Texas. While off-loading a wind turbine component, the hoisting wire rope on a shipboard crane failed, causing the component to drop onto the vessel's cargo hold tween deck. No pollution or injuries were reported. Damages to the ship and the component were estimated at \$3–5 million.

What the NTSB found

The Board determined that the probable cause of the failure of the hoisting wire on the cargo ship *Thorco Basilisk's* crane was undetected corrosion and wear in strand wires.

Lessons learned

Maintenance of wire ropes

Saltwater and humid ocean air cause corrosion of metals, presenting challenges for the maintenance of high-strength steel wire ropes on vessels. A deteriorated wire rope directly affects a crane's ability to safely and reliably handle loads up to the crane's rated capacity (safe working load). Therefore, diligent inspection, maintenance, and management of wire ropes are essential. Working wires should be changed at recommended intervals, or more frequently, depending on operating conditions and use.

Engine room fire aboard cargo vessel *Endo Breeze*

What happened

On 29 April, 2022, about 1913 local time, a fire started in the engine room of the 600ft loa chemical tank ship *Endo Breeze* while the vessel was transiting outbound from Linden, New Jersey, through the Raritan Bay West Reach channel, to Bay Ridge Anchorage. The crew extinguished the fire using the engine room's fixed carbon dioxide fire extinguishing system. As a result of the fire, the vessel lost propulsion and was anchored in the channel. No pollution or injuries were reported. Damage to the vessel was estimated at \$1.2 million.

What the Board found

It was determined that the probable cause of the engine room fire aboard the chemical *Endo Breeze* was a main engine fuel injector pump replacement that was not conducted in accordance with

manufacturer procedures, which resulted in a high-pressure fuel spray that ignited off the engine exhaust components.

Lessons learned

Diesel engine maintenance

The NTSB has investigated several recent casualties involving mechanical or fuel line fitting failures that led to engine room fires following maintenance of shipboard diesel engines. The engine room fire in this casualty illustrates what can happen when equipment manufacturers' recommended maintenance procedures are not followed. In this case, not following the tightening sequence described in the diesel engine manufacturer's manual led to the misalignment and failure of a high-pressure fuel connection on an engine's fuel injector pump's assembly.



Tanker Endo Breeze after the fire.

Photo: NTSB ©.

Due to the high risk of fire associated with pressurized fuel, when working with diesel engine components, it is critical to carefully follow manufacturer assembly procedures and review manufacturer manuals and guidance on a regular basis to ensure familiarity with correct maintenance procedures.

Containing engine room fires

The crew of *Endo Breeze* effectively contained the spread of a main engine room fire by removing fuel and oxygen sources and communicating effectively.

To prevent engine room fires and ensure they are effectively contained, operators should provide mariners realistic scenario-based training, including training that covers engine room emergencies. This training should also cover procedures for effectively shutting down machinery, fuel oil, lube oil, and ventilation systems, as well as boundary monitoring.

The IMO Digest

A summary of some of the news received with grateful thanks from the excellent IMO Media service in recent weeks.

Illustrations per www.imo.org ©

IMO S-G's New Year message

Hello, my name is Arsenio Dominguez.

And it is this time of the year when we look back in reflection and excitement of the things that we have done, the things that we could have done, and the things that we are yet to do. Here at IMO, we have a great trajectory of successes. But of course, we can always do more.



I do not need to tell you how vital the shipping industry is for the world. And IMO has done much to support its member states, seafarers, the industry and everyone who lives on the planet.

For example, during the Covid pandemic, we supported hundreds of individual cases of seafarers, we have greatly reduced accidents on ships in comparison to the 1990s. With a global sulphur cap introduction in 2020, we greatly increase air quality, and now we have a trajectory for the decarbonisation of the industry.

With me as the tenth Secretary General, I welcome you to join us in an era of progression of the organization, one that leads by example and with higher values from inclusion, diversity, and transparency. I look forward to working with you for the years to come into a new and exciting era to make this maritime sector a much better one.

Thank you.

Conflict-related attacks in the Red Sea area

General information

During the festive break the IMO Secretary-General expressed concern about the recent attacks and threats to commercial shipping in the Red Sea area.

This text provides (non-exhaustive) relevant information and links to further relevant information.

The Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC)/ Jeddah Amendment

The Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden was adopted in 2009. The Jeddah Amendment, adopted in 2017, extends the scope of the Code, calling on the signatory States to cooperate to the fullest possible extent to repress transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing and other illegal activities at sea. The pillars of the DCoC are: regional training; national legislation; information sharing and capacity building and coordination.



The DCoC signatory States are: Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates, the United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen.

South Africa is the current Chair of the DCoC Steering Committee.

Latest DCoC reports and statements can be found here:

Website: <https://dcoc.org/> Contact: dcoc@imo.org

Communications received from Member States

Communications from Member States and Associate Members are available on IMODOCS where there is need to login: <http://tinyurl.com/3n6p4w6m>

Latest communications received and circulated:

- Circular Letter No.4820 - Communication from the Government of the State of Israel (4 December 2023).

Related links

- BIMCO, ICS, CLIA, IMCA, INTERCARGO, INTERTANKO and OCIMF - Interim Industry Transit Guidance, Southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (24 November 2023): <http://tinyurl.com/yc4j4jek>

- United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations: <https://www.ukmto.org/>
- EU Naval Force - Operation ATALANTA: <https://eunavfor.eu/>
- Combined Maritime Forces (CMF): <https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/>
- International Chamber of Shipping: <https://www.ics-shipping.org/>
- International Group of P&I Club: <https://www.igpandi.org/>
- ICC International Maritime Bureau: <https://www.icc-ccs.org/icc/imb>
- Maritime Security Centre - Horn of Africa: <https://www.mschoa.org/>
- NATO Shipping Centre: <https://shipping.nato.int/nsc>

IMO S-G addresses UN Security Council

On 3 January Arsenio Dominguez, Secretary-General, IMO, issued a statement to the UN Security Council:

'Thank you, Mr. President, and distinguished members of the Security Council.

'Firstly, let me start by reiterating my condemnation of the attacks against international shipping in the Red Sea area and reiterate the strong commitment of the International Maritime Organization to protect seafarers, ships and cargoes, which is the utmost importance to ensure the safety and security of global supply chains.

'Attacks against international shipping in the Red Sea area are not acceptable.

'Ships must be allowed to trade worldwide unhindered and in accordance with international law.

'Since the beginning of November, a number of attacks have been launched against international vessels navigating in this vital shipping lane that records around 15% of international shipping trade.

'The initial target were ships linked to Israel, but the information we have received in recent events seems that this doesn't seem to be the case at the moment.

'The International Maritime Organization continues to closely monitor the situation and liaise with the industry representatives and navies.

'A significant number of companies, around eighteen shipping companies have already decided to re-route their vessels around south Africa in order to reduce the attacks on vessels and of course the impact this has on seafarers in particular.

'This represents an additional adds ten days to the journey and of course a negative impact on trade and an increase in freight rates.

'On Monday 18 December, an Extraordinary Meeting of the members of the Djibouti Code of conduct (DCoC) was held to discuss how to deal with increasing threats against international shipping in the

Red Sea Area. This meeting was attended by representatives from Signatory States of the Djibouti Code of Conduct and its Jeddah Amendment, international and regional naval forces, regional centres, and maritime industry stakeholders. The meeting called for enhanced security measures, including coordination among signatory States, navies, and the industry, and continuous meetings/reviews and submission of recommendations to the International Maritime Organization and the United Nations Security Council.

'The International Maritime Organization has an EU-funded regional programme for maritime security in the Red Sea area, and we use this as a major capacity-building project targeting the southern Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.'



'And through this initiative, IMO, INTERPOL, UNODC, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), we continue to engage in coordinated actions to develop capacities and promote adequate security and safety standards for maritime, port and land-based law-enforcement authorities across Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen.'

'I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the call for de-escalation to ensure safety of our seafarers, freedom of navigation and stability of supply chains.'

'The International Maritime Organization IMO will continue to monitor the situation in collaboration with our Member States, partners from the industry and navies.'

'I would like to express appreciation also for the work undertaken by DCoC Member States and encourage Member States to use it as a forum to ensure communication among all countries in the region.'

'Furthermore and as a practical exercise and following measures of safety of navigation I would like to encourage ships to continue sending an initial report when entering the Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA) to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operation Centre and other relevant centres in the region, as this covers the entire Red Sea and ships should send an initial report when clearing Suez or when crossing boundaries in the Indian Ocean.'

'Thank you for this opportunity, Mr. President.'

Video

The Secretary-General's address in video form is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/42ac3vtj>

Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) Extraordinary Meeting

The Extraordinary Meeting of DCoC National Focal Points to Discuss how to deal with

increasing threats against International Shipping in the Red Sea Area was held on 18 December 2023, and attended by representatives from Signatory States of the Djibouti Code of Conduct and its Jeddah Amendment, international and regional naval forces, regional centres, and maritime stakeholders.

The aim of the Meeting was to discuss and address the increasing threats to international shipping in the Red Sea area and a brief summary is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/5n7xu4uw>

Red Sea at UN Security Council

UN Security Council Resolution 2722 (2024)

Statement by IMO S-G

On 11 January the IMO reported that Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez had commented on the UN Security Council Resolution.

He said: *'I welcome and support the United Nations Security Council's resolution affirming the exercise of navigational rights and freedom by merchant vessels, in accordance with international law, must be respected.'*



'The entire world depends on international shipping. Seafarers, ships and cargoes should not be the subject of attacks. We must all work together to ensure safety of seafarers, freedom of navigation and stability of supply chains. And I join the calls for caution and restraint to avoid further escalation of the situation in the Red Sea and the broader region.'

'I wholeheartedly reiterate my strong support for the immediate release of the Galaxy Leader and its crew.'

'IMO will continue to enhance the safety and secure transit of vessels of all States through the Red Sea and will closely monitor the situation, in collaboration with Member States and partners from the industry.'

The Resolution

The UN Security Council adopted UN Security Council Resolution 2722 (2024) on 10 January 2024.

The document is available here:

<http://tinyurl.com/mrx2xt2x>

The 2024 IMO Honours for Exceptional Bravery at Sea

The IMO has invited nominations for the 2024 IMO Honours for Exceptional Bravery at Sea.



The Honours will be conferred on individuals or groups of individuals who, at the risk to their own life, perform acts of exceptional bravery in attempting to save life at sea or in attempting to prevent or mitigate damage to the marine environment. Such acts of bravery may also involve extraordinary seamanship skills in very difficult conditions or any other display of outstanding courage.

Guidelines for nominations are detailed in an IMO Circular letter to be found here:

<http://tinyurl.com/5bwast79>

The closing date at IMO is 15 April 2024.

It is essential that nominations from IFSMA Members are submitted in the first instance to the IFSMA Secretariat here HQ@ifsma.org

The Red Sea Seafarers

Seafarer safety paramount

Seafarer safety is paramount in the context of the Red Sea and attacks on international shipping. This was the message contained in a briefing by the IMO in week ending 20 January.

During a meeting with shipping industry representatives on 18 January at IMO HQ in London, IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez reiterated the message that seafarers are innocent victims in the volatile Red Sea situation.

Secondly, freedom of navigation must be upheld, to guarantee global trade and the flow of goods by sea.

Further, there must be caution and restraint to avoid further escalation of the situation in the Red Sea and the broader area, Mr Dominguez said, referencing the UN Security Council Resolution 2722 (2024), see footnote*, on the Red Sea.

Seafarer safety uppermost

Shipping industry representatives emphasized that the safety of vessels' crew is paramount.

Forthcoming IMO MSC May 2024

The meeting provided the opportunity to exchange views and look ahead to the steps that the IMO can take, including sharing information and potential future discussions during the next scheduled Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 108) to be held from 15-24 May.



Widespread representation

The IMO HQ meeting was attended by representatives of: International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), BIMCO, Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF), Association of Independent Tanker Owners (INTERTANKO), International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners (INTERCARGO), Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) and World Shipping Council (WSC).

Key areas outlined

Two days before the IMO meeting Secretary-General Dominguez had a productive meeting with representatives of the Member States of the Djibouti Code of Conduct to discuss the situation in the Red Sea. They focused on the need to enhance the maritime security capabilities of the countries in the region. Key areas of safety of seafarers, freedom of

navigation and de-escalation were reiterated by countries in the region.

* <http://tinyurl.com/bddrrnzn>

IMO and Morocco

Port facility security auditors' training

Senior officials from Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia completed a week-long regional training course in conducting port facility security audits, which are essential to ensure the security of ports and ships.

UK-funded

The IMO Regional Training Course for Port Facility Security Auditors was held in Casablanca from 15 to 19 January, hosted by the Direction of the Marine Marchande (Ministry of Transport and Logistics), in collaboration with the National Ports Agency of Morocco. The initiative was funded by the UK's Department for Transport.



Opened with a keynote address by the Director of the Marine Merchant in Morocco, Mr Najib El Karkouri, the workshop provided twenty-one participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively conduct oversight, in line with IMO maritime security measures.

SOLAS- and ISPS Code-related

The training covered relevant provisions of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS)¹ Chapter XI-2 and the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code)², which form the basis for a comprehensive mandatory security regime for international shipping. These include assistance on how to conduct port facility security audits and the effective preparation of reporting and follow-up actions those generate.

Maghrebian representation

Participants included representatives of the Designated Authorities (DA) of Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, which are specified organizations

responsible for maritime security nominated by the national Government.

¹ <http://tinyurl.com/mryd93vf>

² <http://tinyurl.com/266u8c9x>

Red Sea Area Security Training

IMO maritime security training support

Port facility personnel with designated security duties in Djibouti have received training to identify potential security threats and take action to prevent risks to port facilities.

A workshop held from 21-25 January was organised by IMO through the EU-funded Regional Programme¹ on Maritime Security in the Red Sea Area, bringing together 38 participants.

Participants, civilian and military, represented the Maritime Administration, the navy, the coast guard, Gendarmerie Nationale, immigration, and included port facility security officers, access control officers, training officers, port authority and relevant port facility managers.

The course (based on IMO model course 3.24) provided the knowledge required for staff to perform duties in accordance with key IMO safety and security instruments: the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS)²; chapter XI-2, the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code³; the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code⁴; and the IMO/ILO Code of Practice on Security in Ports.

This event fostered collaboration between agencies with an interest in port security – a cornerstone of the Red Sea Programme. The Programme, funded by the European Union, is delivered by IMO, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), INTERPOL and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

It is understood that with this principle IMO aims to assist participating countries in the Southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, to enhance maritime security and safety in the Red Sea Area, in line with the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy.

To find out more about IMO and the Red Sea Area readers are invited to see here⁵, and to read IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez' message 'Seafarer safety comes first in Red Sea' see here footnote⁶.

¹ <http://tinyurl.com/yt2e2m78>

² <http://tinyurl.com/mryd93vf>

³ <http://tinyurl.com/266u8c9x>

⁴ <http://tinyurl.com/3ypnr5et>

⁵ <http://tinyurl.com/mvcf68jv>

⁶ <http://tinyurl.com/4944b89b>

Say it for seafarers

By Michael Grey, IFSMA Honorary Member

We are terribly worried about our supply chains these days, now we realise that they stretch rather further than the delivery van. It is a concern that was illuminated in the past year, with the spectacular interruption to the westbound voyage of the *Ever Given*, followed by the revelation that the excitingly expanded Panama Canal was running out of water. Our reliance on global supply chains and globalism in general was strained to the utmost because of the pandemic, when people realised that the garden furniture they had ordered was not going to arrive before the onset of winter and possibly even the following one. The word “on-shoring,” which is not one I would have made up, became common parlance among thrusting City types. “Just in Time,” whether we are talking domestically about the non-delivery of Christmas cards, or that delayed shipment of time-sensitive goods, has become something of a redundant term.

Now the worriers are back with a vengeance, about what cargoes will not arrive in time because of delays and diversions caused by the Iranian-backed Red Sea pirates, which is the only appropriate word to describe those who fire upon passing merchant ships, or hold seafarers to ransom. Will the January sales fail to make their targets because the goods which ought to be in the shops are trundling all the way around the Cape of Storms, or lurking indecisively in the Arabian Gulf or Eastern Med, ship operators wondering what guarantees of protection might be afforded by the military escorts, if they press ahead into the Red Sea?

But we do not, in all the meaningful talk about extended supply chains and whether the goods will arrive in time to get the boxes unloaded and the empties despatched to the East again, hear anything very much about the effect of this violence upon the people who make it all happen. That’s the seafarers, who embark upon a new year in a very uncertain climate, with all the nastiness now loose upon our world, and which they cannot, because of their employment, avoid.

None of them would have taken up seafaring employment in the expectation that they would find themselves targeted by an explosive drone or guided missile, just because they happen to be passing within range, and some Revolutionary Guard analyst has detected that there might be some small link with Israel in the ownership of their vessel. It is not much comfort to realise that if the pirate at the controls of the drones succeeds in his mission, the seafarers, once again, become just the collateral in this conflict, as they always are.

It might be that these days there is rather more humanity being shown by ship operators, who have demonstrated their reluctance to see their ships and crews hazarded by high explosive. We have probably learned a bit since the 1980s “tanker war,” when the crews were the collateral when the heroic aviators of Iran and Iraq attacked their ships, but they were

expected to just keep on sailing into these hazardous waters, regardless. At least with these latest attacks, there has been something of a pause, as the navies got their protection together and people checked with their insurers.

There is rather too much in the way of man-made hazard facing seafarers as they sail into 2024. The Black Sea is no place for faint hearts, with mines, missiles and real danger in a trip to the ports of the Ukraine. The hostage takers seem to be gathering their forces in the shambles that is to be found in the Horn of Africa and they have never gone away in the Gulf of Guinea, despite the efforts of the coastal states. There are attacks by sea-robbers and maritime thugs in the waters of South-East Asia, a function, it is said, of economic deprivation in their coastal communities.

And something which seafarers in an earlier age never had to face is the insidious increase in the power of the narcotic gangs of South America, who treat merchant shipping as one of their favoured supply chains. Enormous quantities of cocaine and other hard drugs are being funnelled into the major European ports in legitimate cargoes, as well as in underwater hiding places.

Often the seafarers, whose ships are thus utilised, will have to prove that they are innocent of collusion; invariably there will be delay, inquisitions and grief, people held for months or even years, while investigations proceed. Ships crews will be just collateral in another sort of war. We ought to remember what they are facing when our supply chain lengthens in 2024 and wish them smooth seas, fast passages and freedom from all this man-made misery on their voyages.

This article first appeared in The Maritime Advocate Online Issue No 846 of 30 December 2023.

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Michael Grey is former editor of *Lloyd’s List*

Australian aids to navigation works projects

Cape Nelson and Cape Northumberland Lighthouses

Cape Nelson

At the end of November the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) announced that it had completed a major restoration project of Cape Nelson Lighthouse, south of Portland, Victoria.

AMSA undertook this \$2.13 million restoration to ensure the future safe operation of, and access to, the lighthouse.

Key upgrades undertaken in the refurbishment included:

- Restoration of the lantern room.
- Restoration of the stone structure, including new external coatings.
- Restoration of the internal access ways, including the removal, repair and reinstallation of internal staircases.
- Restoration of the powerhouse, including timber work repairs and new internal/external coatings.
- New electrical systems for both the lighthouse and the powerhouse.

Works took ten months to complete and required the removal of the entire staircase and balustrading. The staircase and balustrading were transported to Melbourne for refurbishment, before being reinstalled in the lighthouse.



*Cape Nelson Lighthouse, established in 1884.
Photo: Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) ©.*

AMSA Acting Executive Director Response Kevin McEvoy said the works were critical to preserving Victoria's maritime heritage. He commented: *'Cape Nelson Lighthouse has a rich history, and it holds a special place in the heart of the local community.'*

'AMSA takes the responsibility of maintaining heritage lighthouses very seriously, because we know they are important to the tourism economy and cultural identity of many regional towns.'

'With this refurbishment, the community will be able to appreciate the majesty and history of Cape Nelson Lighthouse for many years to come.'

McEvoy said AMSA has a history of maintaining the safety of Australia's aids to navigation network through in-house technical expertise and specialist contractors.

He continued: *'Australia's aids to navigation network has stood for over a century, evolving and expanding with the economic development of Australia and in response to advances in technological innovation, and growth in maritime trade and activity.'*

'AMSA has been the custodian of this network for the last 33 years, safeguarding the lives of seafarers and our precious seas and coastlines.'

'Together with our state and territory partners, we have ensured the maintenance, modernisation, and growth of this network through our work – today, it stands at more than 22,000 aids to navigation, of which about 450 are directly managed by AMSA.'

Works for Cape Nelson Lighthouse began in November 2022 and were undertaken by McElligotts Pty Ltd.

In conclusion McEvoy said: *'McElligotts have done excellent work on the restoration of the Cape Nelson Lighthouse, and we would like to thank them for preserving the heritage of the building while ensuring it remains safe for future use.'*

Cape Northumberland

In December AMSA reported that it had completed a major capital works project to restore the historic Cape Northumberland Lighthouse, located near Port MacDonnell in South Australia.

AMSA invested \$2 million to restore the lighthouse in response to unique circumstances, after local birds, attracted by the high salt content of the stonework, excavated and consumed parts of the historic structure, necessitating a comprehensive refurbishment.



*Cape Northumberland Lighthouse, first lighted in 1882.
Photo: Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) ©.*

The works included a refurbishment of the stone structure and replacement of the decayed limestone, a repaint of all internal and external surfaces of the lighthouse and ancillary building, a refurbishment of

the balcony and lantern room, and an electrical system upgrade.

AMSA engaged McElligotts VIC Pty Ltd as the primary contractor to undertake these critical restoration works.

AMSA Executive Director Response Mark Morrow highlighted the significance of the Cape Northumberland Lighthouse to the local community.

He commented: *'At South Australia's southern-most point, Cape Northumberland Lighthouse forms an iconic part of the Port MacDonnell coastline.'*

Addressing the unusual cause for refurbishment, Morrow expressed confidence in the effectiveness of the newly applied paint coatings to deter future bird-related damage ensuring the longevity of the historical landmark.

He added: *'This stunning piece of South Australian history is now bird-proof and ready to be enjoyed by future generations.'*

Morrow emphasised AMSA's commitment to maintaining the safety of Australia's aids to navigation network through in-house technical expertise and specialist contractors.

He added: *'Australia's aids to navigation network has stood for over a century, evolving and expanding with the economic development of Australia and in response to advances in technological innovation, and growth in maritime trade and activity.'*

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'Together with our state and territory partners, we have ensured the maintenance, modernisation, and growth of this network through our work – today, it stands at more than 22,000 aids to navigation, of which about 450 are directly managed by AMSA.'

Works on Cape Northumberland Lighthouse began in February 2023 and were completed before the end of the year.

New tonnage

Italian Navy

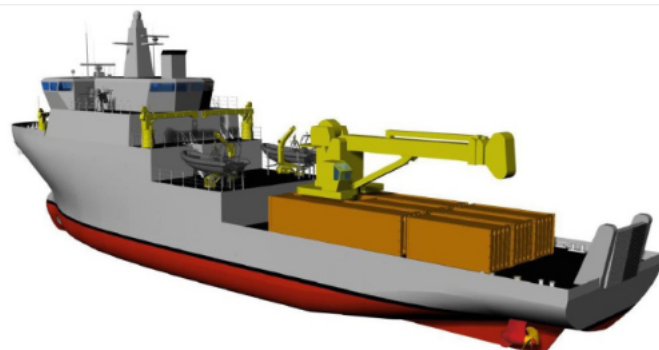
Genoa-based shipbuilder T Mariotti SpA has been awarded the public tender procedure in favour of the Italian Navy for the construction of two auxiliary units of the type Coastal Motor Transport and Lighthouse Servicing (MTC/MTF) and has signed the construction contract with the Naval Armaments Directorate of the General Secretariat of Defence/DNA.

The shipyard is currently engaged in the construction of the SDO-SuRS (Special and Diving Operations – Submarine Rescue Ship) the first military order won by T Mariotti, part of the Genova Industrie Navali

Group. It is understood that this achievement consolidates its presence in the defence sector.

The two new ships, part of a larger programme of acquisitions, will guarantee support to the maintenance activities of the Italian Lighthouse Service and maritime signalling, as well as the transport of vehicles, personnel, and solid and liquid cargo in national and international waters.

The two vessels will be characterised by a high degree of flexibility in use and modularity, with technical and construction features that will enable them to carry out the operational activities for which they will be intended, ensuring a set of functions that can be integrated and activated as required, through the embarkation of deployable modules in the aft working area.



Illustrations per Mariotti. ©

Hybrid ferry Iginia

In mid-2023 *Iginia*, a hybrid ferry of RFI Rete Ferroviaria Italiana (Gruppo FS Italiane) built by the Temporary Association of Enterprises between T Mariotti and San Giorgio del Porto, was commissioned for the Strait of Messina.

The ship was returned from Genoa, after undergoing hybridisation work and the required warranty checks over four months last year. *Iginia* was originally delivered to RFI with some equipment prepared for future hybridisation. Equipped with a photovoltaic system, the ship has been green-oriented since its first voyage.

Conversion to hybrid propulsion included installation on each propulsion unit of an electric motor powered via a converter by battery strings, sized to allow manoeuvres to berth and depart ports in electric mode, without the aid of endothermic propulsion motors. Battery strings are charged by the same electric motors, used in axis generator mode, during navigation and/or alternatively by the auxiliary generators or in port via the shore connection, it is understood.

The work of the ITF inspectors

At the ITF's Fair Practice Committee meeting in December the latest figures were presented highlighting the work of the ITF inspectors.

Key findings included that as of November 2023 they had conducted 9,785 inspections (up 1,688 on the corresponding period on 2022). Of which:

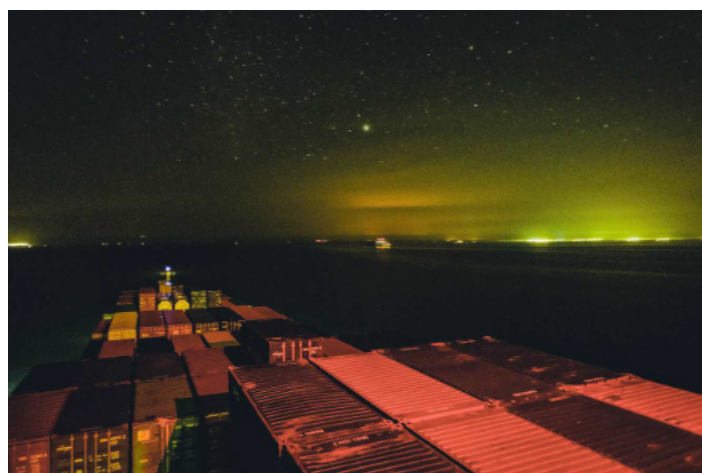
- 5,740 were routine inspections.
- 1,559 were following requests from seafarers/ crew.

The inspectors were most significantly responsible for recovering \$47,008,910 in owed wages, which again marked an increase of \$12,277,651 on the 2022 figure.

Inspectors have been responsible for submitting 117 of the 119 abandonments reported, with 1,795 seafarers on board vessels reported as abandoned.

Panama has the highest number of abandonments with 23 followed by Palau with 12.

As at the end of December the Federation had 138 inspectors, located in 120 ports in 59 countries.



ITF's inspectors police and enforce agreements with shipowners. They board vessels to check seafarers have decent pay, working conditions and living standards.

Steve Trowsdale, ITF's Inspectorate Coordinator, commented: *'It goes without saying that we are immensely proud of the work of the ITF inspectors. These men and women hold to account those shipowners who seek to exploit seafarers.'*

'All too often what we find are poor working and living conditions, seafarers being over worked and going unpaid for long periods. That is where the inspectors step in, to make sure the workers involved get treated fairly.'

For more on ITF's work with seafarers readers are invited to see here:

<https://www.itfglobal.org/en/sector/seafarers>

Singapore's annual vessel arrival tonnage

A record 3 billion gt

On 26 December the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) registered a record three billion

gross tonnage¹ in annual vessel arrival tonnage. The three billion gross tonnage mark was crossed with the arrival of the 98,799 gt Singapore-flagged containership, *One Olympus* (8,628 TEU), at the Pasir Panjang Terminal on 25 December.

The annual vessel arrival tonnage at the Port of Singapore for 2023 is expected to hit just over three billion in 2023¹, up from 2.83 billion in 2022.

Landmark event

This achievement was marked at an event organised by the MPA at PSA Horizons on 26 December. The event was graced by Mr Chee Hong Tat, Acting Minister for Transport, and attended by guests from the maritime industry. Mr Chee presented mementoes to the Master of *One Olympus*, Captain Vaibhav Narula, and the Global Chief Executive Officer of Ocean Network Express (ONE), Mr Jeremy Nixon.

Comment

Speaking at the event, Acting Minister Chee said that the Port of Singapore's most important success factor, which enabled this milestone achievement, was the strong tripartite co-operation which existed between the unions, industry, and government. He noted that while others could try to replicate MPA's hardware, infrastructure, technologies and operating systems, *'many find it difficult to replicate our trusted tripartite ecosystem in Singapore. This is one of the key elements which gives us an edge to stay ahead of the competition and to take Maritime Singapore to even greater heights.'*

MPA Chief Executive, Mr Teo Eng Dih commented: *'We are humbled that Singapore continues to be a choice port of call. We will continue to work with all our tripartite stakeholders to improve the efficiency and safety of our port. The launch of the Just-in-Time (JIT) Planning and Coordination Platform on 1 October this year for vessels calling at PSA terminals and Jurong Port is one such initiative. The JIT Platform will help to improve vessel turnarounds and optimise port calls, and thereby reduce greenhouse gas emissions from ships. It will be extended progressively to all vessels calling into Singapore from January 2024.'*

Mr Jeremy Nixon, Global CEO, ONE, added: *'As ONE we take great pride that one of our vessels has contributed in this way, to assist Singapore in achieving this truly historic and significant 3 billion gt milestone. ONE's enduring ties with Singapore will continue to flourish as we recognise its leading qualities as a global maritime centre, strategic logistics hub and home to our global corporate head office.'*

'On behalf of ONE and all the maritime companies based and operating in Singapore, we congratulate the Port of Singapore for this fine achievement and wish them further success for many more decades to come.'

Mr Ong Kim Pong, Group CEO (Designate), PSA International, said: *'Hitting the three billion gross tonnage mark is a significant achievement. The trust*

by our customers and the efforts by many generations of PSA staff since 1964 have brought about the evolution of PSA in driving Singapore's economic growth, and in enabling global trade.

'PSA stays committed to positioning Singapore as a premier hub port and a trusted node in global supply chains by delivering service excellence and sustainable connectivity. Alongside our staff, unions, partners, and customers, we will continue to innovate and co-create a vibrant and resilient Maritime Singapore that embraces digitalisation, sustainability, and talent development.'



To conclude Mr Terence Seow, CEO, Jurong Port, reflected: 'The strong partnership and collaboration with customers and stakeholders have supported Singapore's achievement of the three billion gross tons milestone today. As a next generation multi-purpose port, Jurong Port is committed to help build leaner and greener supply chains to enhance our productivity and provide quality service to our valued customers. We are proud to be part of this accomplishment which reflects the reliability and resilience of Singapore's maritime industry.'

¹ The annual vessel arrival tonnage refers to the combined internal volume of all vessels that arrived at the port in a year. It is commonly used by the industry to measure the traffic of vessels calling at a port.

² The Port of Singapore reached one billion gt in 2004 and two billion tons in 2011.

Cyclone Alvaro

Madagascan waters

The first cyclone of 2024, named Alvaro, made landfall near Morombe on the west coast of Madagascar on 1 January, bringing strong winds and heavy rain.

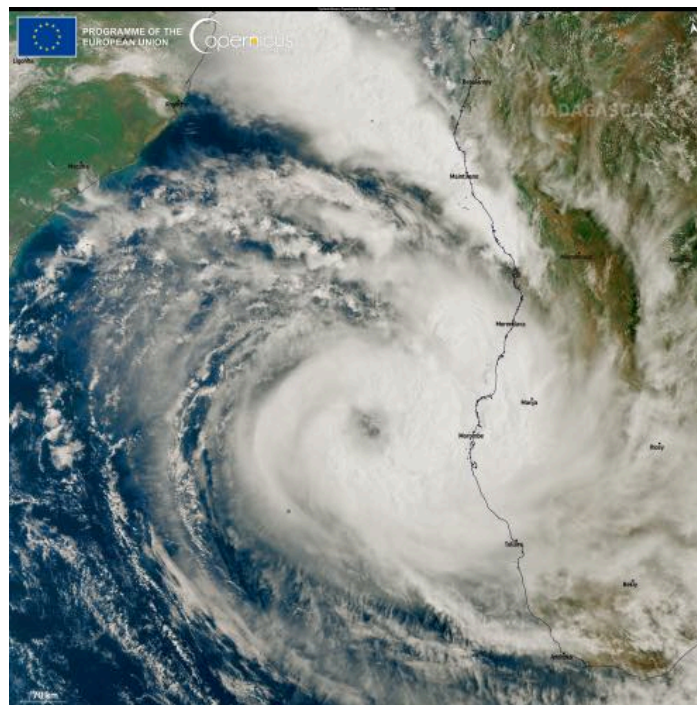
According to forecasts of 2 January/1431 GMT) from Meteo France, the storm was unlikely to pose a threat to other regions and was expected to gradually weaken.

This image, acquired by one of Copernicus Sentinel-3 satellites on 1 January 2024, shows the cyclone when it was in the Mozambique Channel.

Cyclone Alvaro was unusual in that it developed overland in Mozambique and then trekked eastwards across Madagascar and into the Indian Ocean, south of Mauritius. These storms normally come from the east, cross Madagascar then enter the land over Mozambique to blow themselves out. As has been

witnessed in the last couple of years, occasionally these turnabout back into the Channel. It has been regarded as unusual in originating over Africa and heading east. An example of Nature doing its thing.

Alvaro entered the Indian Ocean tracking SE at 11 knots. At 0300 on 3 January the storm was centred approximately 262 nautical miles SSE of Madagascar's Antananarivo.



Credit: European Union, Copernicus Sentinel-3 imagery ©.

Background

Copernicus is the Earth observation component of the European Union's Space programme, looking at our planet and its environment to benefit all European citizens. It offers information services that draw from satellite Earth Observation and in-situ (non-space) data.

The European Commission manages the Programme. It is implemented in partnership with the Member States, the European Space Agency (ESA), the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT), the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), EU Agencies and Mercator Océan.

Vast amounts of global data from satellites and ground-based, airborne, and seaborne measurement systems provide information to help service providers, public authorities, and other international organisations improve European citizens' quality of life and beyond. The information services provided are free and openly accessible to users.

Why is it called Copernicus?

By choosing Copernicus's name homage is paid to a great European scientist and observer: Nicolaus Copernicus. Copernicus' theory of the heliocentric universe made a pioneering contribution to modern science.

Copernicus (1473-1543) opened man to an infinite universe, previously limited by the rotation of the planets and the sun around the Earth, and created an understanding of a world without borders.

Humanity was able to benefit from his insight. This set in motion a spirit of discovery through scientific research, which allowed mankind to better understand the world.

Rise in maritime piracy incidents in 2023

New IMB report

Released 11 January the annual Piracy and Armed Robbery Report of the ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB) raises concern over the first successful Somali based hijacking since 2017.

The IMB annual report recorded 120 incidents of maritime piracy and armed robbery against ships in 2023 compared to 115 in 2022.

The 2023 annual report reveals that 105 vessels were boarded, nine attempted attacks, four vessels hijacked and two fired upon.



Where the number of 2023 reported incidents has slightly increased compared to 2022, the IMB urges caution for crew safety as the number of crew taken hostage and kidnapped increased from 41 to 73 and from two to 14 in 2022 and 2023 respectively. A further 10 crew were threatened, four injured and one assaulted in 2023.

Alarming first successful hijacking off Somalia since 2017

On 14 December 2023 the report recorded the first successful hijacking of a vessel off the coast of Somalia since 2017.



A handymax bulk carrier was boarded and hijacked by alleged Somali pirates. The incident took place around 700 nautical miles East of Bosaso in Somalia. Reports also suggest two dhows were subsequently hijacked, a type of vessel with potential use as mother ships for further attacks.



IMB Director Michael Howlett said: 'This is a cause for concern and the IMB is once again calling for all masters and vessel owners to continue following the recommendations and reporting procedures as per the latest version of the Best Management Practices,' adding that the incident demonstrates the continued capabilities of the Somali pirates.

Three of four reported vessel hijackings in Gulf of Guinea

Despite the continued restraint in the number of reported incidents in the Gulf of Guinea, with 22 in 2023 compared to 19 in 2022, 35 in 2021 and 81 in 2020, these waters accounted for three of the four globally reported hijackings, all 14 crew kidnappings, and 75% of reported crew hostages and two injured crew in 2023 – continuing to be dangerous waters for seafarers.

Concerns for crew safety in Singapore Straits, Malacca Straits and Indonesian archipelago

The Singapore Straits remain an area of concern due to the high number of incidents. While considered low level opportunistic crimes, 95% of reported incidents were successful, with 37 reported incidents overall in 2023 compared to 38 in 2022. Crew continue to be harmed with nine taken hostage and two threatened. Guns were reported in three recorded incidents and knives in 15.



'We are concerned due to the late reporting and under reporting by vessels. The IMB continues to encourage timely reporting of all incidents, as it contributes to a

more accurate understanding of risk,' said IMB Director Michael Howlett.

One crew member was injured and required medical attention after a bulk carrier was boarded in the Malacca Straits in October 2023. The last reported incident of crew injured by pirates in the area was in 2015.

A year-on-year increase in reported incidents has been observed in the Indonesian archipelago, up from 10 in 2022 to 18 in 2023. Weapons were reported in 50% of the incidents. Seven crew were threatened and two taken hostage in 2023.

Looming threats in South America

Fourteen incidents were reported from vessels at Callao anchorage in Peru. Seven crew were taken hostage and one each assaulted and threatened. Guns and knives were reported in nine incidents.

Other ports affected in South America were Macapa anchorage in Brazil, and Cartagena and Puerto Bolivar anchorages in Colombia.



To request a copy of the 2023 Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships report readers are invited to apply here: <http://tinyurl.com/44n98cu3>

About IMB Piracy Reporting Centre

Since its founding in 1991, IMB's Piracy Reporting Centre serves as a crucial, 24-hour point of contact to report crimes of piracy and lend support to ships under threat.

Quick reactions and a focus on coordinating with response agencies, sending out warning broadcasts and email alerts to ships have all helped bolster security on the high seas. The data gathered by the Centre also provides key insights on the nature and state of modern piracy.

IMB encourages all shipmasters and owners to report all actual, attempted and suspected global piracy and armed robbery incidents to the Piracy Reporting Centre as a vital first step to ensuring adequate resources are allocated by authorities to tackle maritime piracy.

Baltic Sea ice

The formation of sea ice in the Baltic Sea has been favoured by the cold temperatures recorded in

Scandinavia at the beginning of 2024. The ice cover is currently the most extensive since 2011 and about four times larger than usual at this time of the year, according to the Finnish Meteorological Institute.

The entire Bothnian Bay is covered with sea ice, as visible in this image of 4 January acquired by one of the Copernicus Sentinel-3 satellites.



Credit: European Union, Copernicus Sentinel-3 imagery

The Copernicus Marine Service provides up-to-date open data on the extent of sea ice in polar regions.

Windows on the world

By Michael Grey, IFSMA Honorary Member

Officers of the watch, usually after there has been a failure of navigation, leading to a near-miss, or worse, a collision, are often accused of being so focussed on their electronic screens that they fail to look out of the windows. One hesitates to ask such a question of a ship designer, but maybe this is the reason bridge windows have become large and without structural obstruction, giving the Mk.I eyeball a free reign around the horizon, to spot any incoming peril. In some ships, notably ferries and cruise ships, the windows are so large that a landsman might term them "picture" windows; the bridge resembling nothing less than a large conservatory, which if it was sited ashore, would be the repository of potted plants and rattan furniture.

These days, glass can be manufactured to be tougher than steel, so there should be no case for nervousness, should a large green sea be sweeping down on a ship in heavy weather. But it rather depends on where the windows are sited on the ship, as the power of the sea can never be underestimated. Thus a few days before Christmas, with Storm Pia (bad mistake to start naming them) raging in the North Sea, the Hurtigruten cruise/ferry/ expedition ship Maud encountered what was

described as a “rogue” wave, which smashed its way into the wheelhouse and completely disabled the vessel.

It should be unsurprising in this electronic and digital age that water sloshing around the bridge of a modern ship can be quite devastating and with power lost to steering and navigation the ship was not going to get her 266 passengers to Tilbury as they had anticipated. Fortunately, nobody was hurt, some sort of limited power was restored and with jury steering from the machinery space and a couple of Esvagt anchor handlers helping, the damaged ship was taken slowly into the shelter of a German port. The accounts of the passengers to their neighbours and friends of this particular cruise, around their dinner tables, will be rather more lively than they might have been.

Maud, at 16,151grt, is by no means a small vessel, although in cruise ship terms she is something of a minnow, but she is by no means the first victim of a rogue wave in recent years. And invariably, the common feature of such incidents, some of which have been deadly, is the position of the navigating bridge on the ship, being well forward and far lower than it arguably ought to be.

You might suggest that when one is designing a cruise ship, the priorities will all revolve around the passengers. The navigation bridge cannot be described as revenue earning, so it has tended to move inexorably forward, once the naval architects persuaded themselves that the old virtues of controlling a ship from a position near to the mid-length was over-indulging the ship-handlers. And you will be wanting to place extravagant lounges and even bigger picture windows above the bridge, so this cannot be elevated above the bow too much. Your computers and tank-testing provide reassurance about sea-keeping, so everyone is happy, only traditionalists complaining about the overall appearance.

But, all too often, the power of the sea is underestimated by designers, who may never have experienced its awesome and elemental strength. There is nothing new in this, as people have been blaming “rogue waves” for as long as there have been survivors from such incidents; well before the litany of climate change was identified as a handy excuse for the frequency of such incidents. There may, or may not, be more of this extreme phenomenon, but it is a valid question to ask whether the designers, with their enthusiasm for placing the controls of a ship in a more vulnerable location, might have rather lost the plot in their sense of priorities.

It is not just cruise ships that seem to be looking for trouble in heavy weather as there is now a growing number of dry cargo ships appearing with the accommodation right forward, like a stretched supply boat. Doubtless their designers have done the sums, tested their creations on their tanks and programs, thinking triumphantly of the cargo capacity available for the given dimensions. Old-fashioned sailors, who approved when accommodation was no longer situated in the forecastle, in a more generous age,

might shake their wizened heads, but what do they know?

Michael Grey is former editor of *Lloyd's List*

This article first appeared in *The Maritime Advocate Online Issue No 847 of 12 January 2024*

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Degrading Houthi capabilities

In a US Department of Defense report on 12 January it was indicated that the Department was highly confident that the previous day's strikes (11 January) against Houthi military targets in Yemen were effective in degrading the rebel group's ability to carry out further attacks against commercial ships operating in the Red Sea. This was apparently the comment of a senior Pentagon official the same day (12 January).

Lieutenant General Douglas A Sims II, US Army, director of operations for the Joint Staff, said joint forces from the US and UK launched more than 150 munitions from both maritime and air platforms against more than 16 locations controlled by the Iranian-backed militants.

Sims said: *'At this point, we continue to conduct battle damage assessment of the various targets We feel very confident about where our munitions struck.'*

Targets

Such targets were reported to have included command and control assets, munitions dumps, launch sites, production facilities and air defence radar systems used by the Houthis to carry out attacks against vessels operating in international waters.



Sims added: *'We know precisely the capability that the Houthis have been employing against the Red Sea and the Bab al Mandab. This was solely designed to get after the capability that is impeding international freedom of navigation in international waters. We feel pretty confident we did good work on that.'*

Order given

Defense Secretary Lloyd J Austin III issued the order for US Central Command Commander General

Michael E Kurilla to carry out the strikes on 11 January.

Said Austin in a statement following the strikes: *'This action is intended to disrupt and degrade the Houthis' capabilities to endanger mariners and threaten global trade in one of the world's most critical waterways.'*

'Today's coalition action sends a clear message to the Houthis that they will bear further costs if they do not end their illegal attacks.'

Austin added in conclusion that the US *'maintains its right to self-defense and, if necessary, will take follow-on actions to protect U.S. forces.'*

The 11 January strikes launched against the rebel stronghold in Yemen were not associated with, and are separate from, Operation Prosperity Guardian, the Pentagon official said.

Diplomatic efforts

Defensive strikes followed sustained diplomatic efforts and broad international condemnation of the Houthi attacks that have threatened global commerce.

The previous week (ending 6 January) the coalition governments issued a joint statement condemning the attacks and warning the rebel group against further escalation.

In the statement, the nations warned that the Houthis *'will bear the responsibility of the consequences should they continue to threaten lives, the global economy and free flow of commerce in the region's critical waterways.'*



Earlier the UN Security Council adopted a resolution demanding that the rebel group cease all attacks against ships in the Red Sea.

Allied governments' joint statement

In a statement following the Allies' strikes the governments of the US, Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and the UK issued a joint statement further condemning the Houthis' actions and warning against further escalation.

The nations' statement read that the strikes: *'demonstrated a shared commitment to freedom of navigation, international commerce and defending the lives of mariners from illegal and unjustifiable attacks.'*

'Our aim remains to de-escalate tensions and restore stability in the Red Sea, but let our message be clear: We will not hesitate to defend lives and protect the free flow of commerce in one of the world's most critical waterways in the face of continued threats.'

Illustrations per US Department of Defense ©.

Editorial note: This text is based on material kindly made available by the US Department of Defense.

Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd: Operational cooperation

It was reported jointly on 17 January that Hapag-Lloyd and Maersk had signed an agreement for a new long-term operational collaboration called Gemini Cooperation, which will commence in February 2025. The ambition, it is understood, is to deliver a flexible and interconnected ocean network with industry-leading reliability.

In the words of Rolf Habben Jansen, CEO of Hapag-Lloyd: *'Teaming up with Maersk will help us to further boost the quality we deliver to our customers. Additionally, we will benefit from efficiency gains in our operations and joint efforts to further accelerate the decarbonisation of our industry.'*

The new cooperation between Hapag-Lloyd and Maersk will comprise a fleet pool of around 290 vessels with a combined capacity of 3.4 million TEU; Maersk will deploy 60% and Hapag-Lloyd 40%.

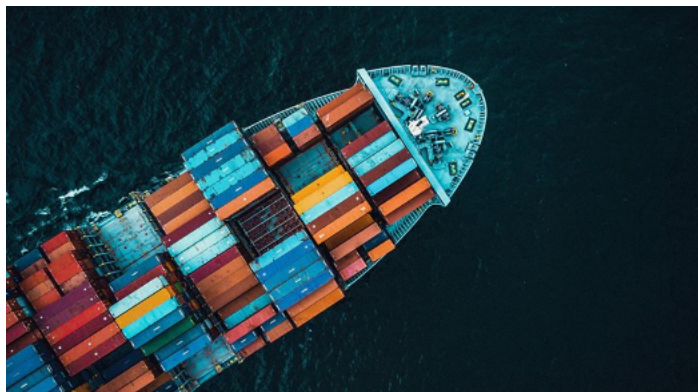
Vincent Clerc, CEO of Maersk, commented: *'We are pleased to enter this cooperation with Hapag-Lloyd, which is the ideal ocean partner on our strategic journey. By entering this cooperation, we will be offering our customers a flexible ocean network that will be raising the bar for reliability in the industry. This will strengthen our integrated logistics offering and meet our customers' needs.'*

As a part of the agreement, the two companies have set the ambitious target of delivering schedule reliability of above 90% once the network is fully phased in. As well as improved service quality, customers will also benefit from improved transit times in many major port-to-port corridors and access to some of the world's best connected ocean hubs.



Both companies are committed to the decarbonisation of their fleets and have set the most ambitious decarbonisation targets in the industry with Maersk aiming for net-zero in 2040 and Hapag-Lloyd in 2045.

As a consequence of joining this cooperation, Hapag-Lloyd will leave THE Alliance end of January 2025.



During 2024, Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd will carefully plan the transition from their current alliances to the new operational cooperation. Concurrently, service to customers will continue along existing agreements.

About the new network

- Gemini Cooperation will be a long-term operational cooperation starting in February 2025. Both companies will provide dedicated operational teams to manage the cooperation.
- Both Hapag-Lloyd and Maersk can flexibly adjust their operations outside the network to scale capacity in line with their customers' needs.
- As a part of the agreement, the two companies have set the ambitious target of delivering a schedule reliability of above 90% once the network is fully phased in. This objective is backed by a strong governance model and contractual obligations.
- Gemini Cooperation will leverage Hapag-Lloyd and Maersk's combined unparalleled global networks and terminal presence, and the extensive logistics expertise of our teams. The cooperation comprises around 290 vessels with a combined capacity of 3.4 million TEU; Maersk will deploy 60% and Hapag-Lloyd 40%
- The cooperation will cover seven trades: Asia / US West Coast; Asia / US East Coast; Asia / Middle East; Asia / Mediterranean; Asia / North Europe; Middle East – India / Europe and Transatlantic.
- Gemini Cooperation will comprise of twenty-six mainline services. The mainline ocean services will be complemented by a global network of dedicated shuttles centred around owned and / or controlled transshipment hubs – thereof fourteen shuttle services in Europe, four in the Middle East, thirteen in Asia and one in the Gulf of Mexico. These shuttle services will offer a fast connection with flexible capacity between hubs and ports served by shuttle services, and vice versa.

Illustrations per www.hapag-lloyd.com and www.maersk.com

Hapag-Lloyd © Maersk A/S ©

Wallem Group and BYD partnership

In mid-January Wallem Group announced that it is to partner Chinese automaker BYD by providing commercial services for its first fully chartered PCTC vessel, mv *BYD Explorer No. 1*. At the time of writing the vessel had completed its first loading operations and was on its inaugural voyage to Europe from the Far East.

Wallem Group is providing BYD with day-to-day support on vessel operations including cargo stowage, route and bunker planning, and is liaising between the vessel, owner, and charterer. In addition, Wallem Group is working closely with BYD to explore possibilities to support the group on all other maritime functions such as cargo bookings and vessel performance management.



BYD Explorer No. 1 has completed its first loading in China

The PCTC vessel set sail from Yantai and Xiaomo ports in China, marking the first addition to BYD's sea fleet. Using LNG as the primary fuel for its main engine and generators, the vessel boasts environmentally friendly features, significantly reducing carbon, nitrogen, and sulphur oxides emissions.

Anurag Mathur, Managing Director, Commercial Services, Wallem Group commented: *'We are proud to partner with BYD in providing commercial services for its inaugural vessel. Wallem's Commercial Services aims to add efficiency not only to vessel performance but also to the charterer's port, bunkering and cargo operations. We are also pleased to collaborate with a partner who holds sustainability at the heart of their business.'*

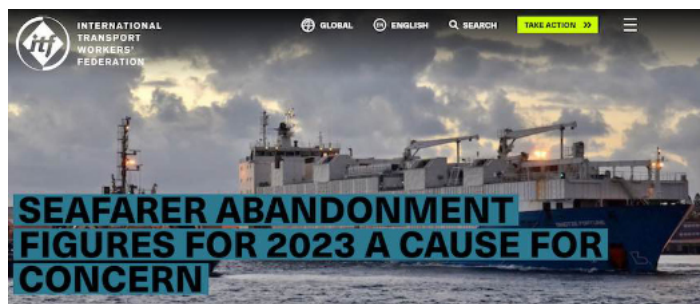
About Wallem

Wallem Group is a leading provider of technology-driven maritime services, offering support for the complete lifecycle of a vessel from newbuilding supervision to end-of-life recycling guidance. Wallem's extensive portfolio includes asset management, crewing, training, ship management, safety and compliance management and agency services.

Wallem operates globally with a shore-based team of 700 people and 7,000 highly qualified seafarers, serving nearly all vessel segments. Wallem Group is providing BYD with day-to-day support on operations.

ITF and abandonment; Nautilus International

It was reported on 19 January from London that the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) released its figures for the numbers of vessels abandoned in 2023. These show a worrying increase on figures from the previous year.



A total of 132 abandonments were reported which is thirteen more than in 2022 – an increase of 10.92%. The overwhelming majority of those reports (129) were made by the ITF.

Definition of abandonment

Under the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (the MLC) the seafarer is deemed to have been abandoned if the shipowner fails to cover the cost of a seafarer's repatriation; or has left them without the necessary maintenance and support; or has otherwise unilaterally severed ties with them, including failure to pay the seafarers' contractual wages for a period of at least two months.

Key findings

- Owed wages from the 129 ITF reported cases totalled in excess of \$12.1 million.
- A total of 1,676 seafarers contacted ITF from abandoned vessels. Indian seafarers were the most abandoned, with more than 400 cases reported.
- ITF have received more than \$10.9 million in owed wages from 60 of these vessels so far. The final figure will exceed \$12.1 million as cases take time to resolve and as other seafarers come forward, thereby increasing the amount of recoverable wages.

Steve Trowsdale, ITF Inspectorate Coordinator commented: *'The ongoing rise in the number of seafarer abandonments is unacceptable. It is a consequence of an industry where the seafarer can be a throw-away commodity.'*

'Seafarers and their families pay the ultimate price for the greed and non-compliance of shipowners, enduring the inhuman consequences of a system that compromises their well-being, dignity and basic human rights. ITF inspectors do an incredible job in holding to account those shipowners that try to get away with treating seafarers like some sort of modern-day slaves.'

Numbers

The highest numbers of abandonments by flag state were:

Panama 23
Palau 12
Cameroon 11
St Kitts & Nevis 8
Unknown 8
Comoros 6
Tanzania 6
Togo 6

About the ITF

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) is a democratic, affiliate-led federation recognised as one of the world's leading transport authorities.

The organisation fights passionately to improve working lives. It connects trade unions from 147 countries to secure rights, equality and justice for their members.

The ITF is the voice for nearly 20 million working men and women in the transport industry across the world.

Red Sea

Nautilus International

Warlike Operations Area Committee agreement

Nautilus International on 19 January reported that it had welcomed an expanded agreement to protect seafarers in the Red Sea.

The Warlike Operations Area Committee (WOAC)* agreed to expand its existing recommendations to cover vessels with connections to the UK and the US. Previously, the recommendations only covered vessels with links to Israel.

This agreement allows for seafarers on these vessels to be given the opportunity to disembark at an appropriate port prior to transiting through the high-risk area or to receive double pay for each day the ship is in the area.

It is understood that the revised recommendations were applied from the date of the Nautilus International notice, 19 January 2024.



Operation Prosperity Guardian was inaugurated in December 2023 following a series of drone and missile attacks threatening shipping passing through the Red Sea.

Our picture shows a Royal Navy asset, believed to be HMS Diamond.

Illustration: Ministry of Defence Crown Copyright 2024 ©.

The committee agreed the recommendations considering the increased threat posed by Houthi rebels who stated that all British and American assets were legitimate targets after the UK and US launched targeted strikes in Yemen to protect freedom of navigation.

Nautilus International head of professional and technical David Appleton said: *'This is a welcome move, and we are pleased agreement was reached between unions, employers, and government.'*

'Merchant navy seafarers, like all workers, have the right to carry out their jobs in a safe environment. While seafarers often work in high-risk situations, all measures must be taken to protect the lives of these civilians who are vital to securing global supply chains.'

'Seafarer safety must take precedence over commercial interests.'

'It is now imperative that shipping companies transiting through the high-risk area give seafarers every opportunity to disembark or to ensure they are remunerated in line with the WOAC recommendations.'

*WOAC is a committee consisting of Nautilus International, the RMT Union and the UK Chamber of Shipping.

ABS Wavesight™ eLogs

USCG approves in US-flagged ships

On 18 January the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) reported that its ABS Wavesight™, an ABS-affiliated software-as-a-service company, had formally received United States Coast Guard (USCG) approval for its ABS Wavesight's eLogs™ software to be used in US-flagged vessels.

It is understood that ABS Wavesight is one of only three maritime software providers to receive such approval on the basis of the USCG's guidance under USCG NVIC 01-23*.

In the words of Gurinder Singh, Director of Solutions Engineering at ABS Wavesight: *'The maritime industry is entering an era of rapid digitalization. We are proud to be at the forefront of that transformation, and the fact that our eLogs software meets all of the US Coast Guard's stringent requirements is even more evidence of our leadership position.'*



A digital successor to traditional paper logbooks, eLogs is designed to help crew members address numerous recordkeeping challenges, from user errors to excess administrative work, security risks and more.

In addition to featuring more than twenty logbooks, including all MARPOL-required logbooks, ABS Wavesight eLogs aligns with IMO Marine Environmental Protection Committee standards, SOLAS and BWM Convention principles and is approved by the American Bureau of Shipping.

Throughout the approval process, ABS Wavesight worked with the USCG to ensure necessary criteria had been met. ABS Wavesight eLogs was developed pursuant to the ISO/IEC 27001 standard, which is a well-established standard for information security management systems to protect data from cybersecurity threats.

For more information about ABS Wavesight eLogs readers are invited to see here: www.abswavesight.com/en/products/elogs

About ABS Wavesight™

ABS Wavesight is the new ABS Affiliate maritime software-as-a-service (SaaS) company dedicated to helping shipowners and operators streamline compliance while maintaining competitive, more efficient, and sustainable operations.

The mission is to develop world-class software products that improve vessel performance for the health of our seas, environment and self.

The ABS Wavesight portfolio comprises best-in-class proprietary technology and third-party integrations that are said to offer unparalleled insight into every aspect of a fleet's operations.

Backed by ABS's 160-year legacy of maritime innovation and experience, its products are collectively installed in more than 5,000 vessels across the global fleet. See also here: www.abswavesight.com.

*The 17-page document: *NAVIGATION AND VESSEL INSPECTION CIRCULAR NO. 01-23* with the subject *GUIDANCE FOR THE VOLUNTARY USE OF MARPOL ELECTRONIC RECORD BOOKS ON U.S. FLAG VESSELS* is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/3zn6njaa>

Autonomous ship benefits arrive at the berth

A submission by One Sea

One Sea (www.one-sea.org) is a global alliance dedicated to the development of an automated and autonomous maritime transport system.

Discussing how autonomous ship technology is driving change across the maritime transport chain and what this means for ship-port interfaces.

Automated or semi-automated operations have become increasingly familiar at ports around the world, but the resulting efficiency gains have mostly been contained within the terminal area. Faster operations alongside have not necessarily converted into direct gains in vessel turnaround times.

Supply chain efficiencies

With growth ever increasing in port call numbers which reached 4.5 million in 2022, autonomous ship association One Sea has earmarked the port-ship interface as a key target for improving supply chain efficiencies.

One Sea Secretary-General Sinikka Hartonen says that better coordination between ships and ports will be a key source for mutual efficiency gains – based on real-time information sharing, automated load identification or remote operations, among other techniques.

She commented: *'We often hear that ships carry 90% of world trade. In a global supply chain increasingly looking to automation, machine learning and AI for efficiency, it is not logical to overlook the interface where those goods switch between ship and land.'*

'We are starting to see an increase in active collaboration between sea and shoreside operators which is very encouraging. But there is always room to do more.'

'The pricing and flexible arrangement of remote pilotage are also expected to generate savings for shipping companies.'

'The NELSON project is taking a holistic approach to the future of navigation and fairways by testing remote pilotage alongside issues such as connectivity, risk management, shared situational awareness and the content and latency of data exchange - elements which can be used when planning remote operation centres.'

In conclusion One Sea S-G said: *By providing the dual capability to support conventionally operated as well as unmanned ships, ports can ensure they are ready to reap the rewards of autonomous vessels and automation as the technology becomes more prevalent.'*

'For this reason, the efforts to create an international rules structure at the IMO to ensure all vessels follow

the same collision regulations must be wholly compatible with vessel traffic management schemes.'

Jens Meier, the CEO of Hamburg Port Authority who is also IAPH President, says ports are in constant contact with each other through networks within the IAPH and chainPORT. He added: *'It is important to think outside the box and learn from each other, and it is essential to coordinate, because isolated solutions make no sense along the supply chain.'*

Autonomous ship technologies are already proving that they can improve the safety of navigation in crowded port waters, by enhancing situational awareness onboard ships, Hartonen pointed out. A growing number of collaborative trials, focusing on autodocking of seagoing vessels, the remotely operated port service vessels, and even pilotage, suggest untapped opportunities for greater efficiency are available to ports if they work in concert with autonomous ship technologies.

MEGURI2040

Autonomous dock departure and entry was part of the first stage of the MEGURI2040 project in Japan during 2022 when the ferry Soleil completed the world's first fully autonomous voyage of 240 kilometres between two ports, for example.

Freighter demonstrator: Japan

A subsequent 300 kilometres between two ports in Japan by the world's first autonomous container freighter, *Mikage*, demonstrated the use of a drone to assist in mooring on arrival.

Norway

In Norway, the ports serving the autonomous container ship, *Yara Birkeland*, sail between Yara's chemical production plant at Herøya and Brevik can connect to the vessel's automated mooring system and will in future support its fully autonomous operations.

Autonomous through port channels

Hamburg Port is currently investing in new Shore2Ship and Ship2Ship software, but its trailblazing use of autonomous surface vehicles and systems under water within the SeaClear research project to collect waste from the water has received less attention.

Hamburg's Meier said that the risk of collision in the busy Elbe waterway are high and must be avoided with the highest priority: *'Because these issues are so complex, research projects like SeaClear are important and valuable here in creating a framework for how conventional ships and autonomous ships can coexist.'*

Tug operations

Meier also confirmed that Hamburg is also looking at a research project in which one tugboat will be

controlled by humans and two others act autonomously.

Harmen van Dorsser, Programme Manager, Future VTS within the Port of Rotterdam, believes port optimisation will be mainly about collaboration and slot management between vessels and port systems. He says autonomy needs to serve operations by making them more safe, cleaner and sustainable.

Tests done within the port area have shown a high impact from autonomy for offshore operations, like seabed survey and maintenance with short sea applications to be tested within the next few years, he adds.

Singapore

Elsewhere, The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore has enabled trials for autonomous vessels to take place within its port waters with an SRS tugboat, owned and operated by Keppel Smit Towage, becoming one of the first in the region to be operated by joystick control and the first Singapore-flagged vessel to receive the Smart (Autonomous) Notation from the authority.

The tug's systems fuse data from different sources to conduct risk assessment, make decisions and automate navigational observations. It also has a digital twin to simulate vessel behaviour in multiple scenarios.

Navigating by remote pilot

Other cases are fast emerging which demonstrate how ports are engaging in autonomous ship technologies for their own ends. For example, One Sea members have been closely involved in a project trialling the practicalities of remote pilotage operations. The solution could keep ports in operation when weather might prevent a pilot from joining a vessel or improve flexibility by reducing waiting times when a departure plan changes.

Finland

As part of the national Sea4Value project, Finnpiilot completed a remote pilotage trial in May 2022 in the fairway to Finland's Port of Kokkola. The trial proved that remote pilotage could work with existing technologies and Finnpiilot is now applying for funding from the EU CEF together with other European countries to continue remote pilotage development as part of an international project.

Led by Fintraffic, the VTS provider in Finland, the aim of the NELSON Project is to define the concept of operations and standards for remote pilotage available for use worldwide and enable the manufacturing industry to provide products that are compatible with remote pilotage. Finland is aiming to have its first remote pilotage services up and running by 2027, and in addition to remote pilotage development, the NELSON project will also explore the development of future VTS and meteorological services, and smart fairway development.

Not everyone is convinced. Rotterdam's van Dorsser asks: *'The question would be, do you need highly automation to implement such services?'*

Rules of the road

Whether or not individual initiatives have 'port appeal', however, One Sea's Hartonen emphasizes that autonomous ship technologies are symptomatic of broader societal shift towards automation; as such, progressive ideas should be investigated and embraced, rather than resisted.

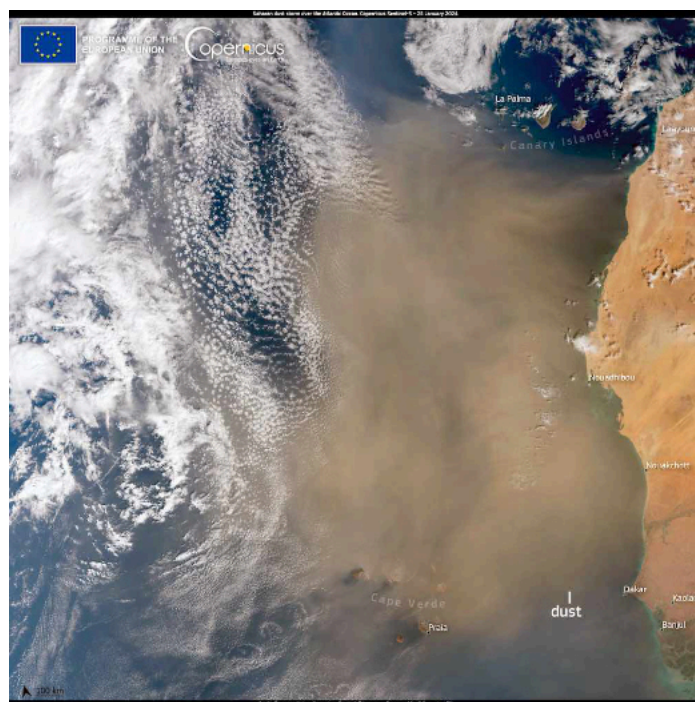
Ships of varying degrees of automation will coexist for the foreseeable future and so ports need the capacity to receive both highly advanced, self-navigating vessels and conventional ships that rely more heavily on human attendance. For example, ports must have real time access to information regarding course alterations or delayed approach by an autonomous ship.

On the same theme, Hamburg Port Authority's Meier commented: *'There are legal framework conditions that have not yet been finally clarified. All this must be considered, researched, and then implemented accordingly.'*

Saharan dust

Canary Islands and Cabo Verde

On 25 January, one of the Copernicus Sentinel-3 satellites acquired this image, showing dust particles being carried by the wind from the Saharan desert over the ocean and extending to the Canary Islands and Cabo Verde.



At the time the sand was expected to reduce visibility and affect air quality in the affected areas, and also to contribute to the fertilisation of the ocean and boost the growth of phytoplankton.

Air quality monitoring

The Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service, CAMS, provides air quality monitoring and forecasting at the European and global level, which support global environmental management and public health efforts.

EU Earth observation programme

CAMS is one of six services that form Copernicus, the European Union's Earth observation programme which looks at the planet and its environment for the ultimate benefit of all European citizens. Copernicus offers information services based on satellite Earth observation, *in situ* (non-satellite) data and modelling.

CAMS is implemented by the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) on behalf of the European Commission.

ECMWF is an independent inter-governmental organisation supported by thirty-five states. It is both a research institute and a round the clock, day-in, day-out, operational service, producing and disseminating numerical weather predictions to its member states.

To provide and further develop the CAMS portfolio, ECMWF works with many service providers around Europe. By doing so, CAMS combines the expertise and infrastructure that exist in Europe to provide a range of services that are unequalled by any other organisation in the world.

Inter-agency collaboration

To acquire all the observations that are needed to produce the CAMS services, ECMWF collaborates with the European Space Agency (ESA) and the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT) as well as many other organisations providing satellite and *in situ* observations.

Background

CAMS builds on many years of European research and development, and on existing European and national capacities, experience and know-how. The current portfolio of mature operational products was designed in close consultation with the (potential) users and developed through a series of EU-funded precursor projects starting in 2005.

CAMS has been fully operational since 1 July 2015. The first phase ran until the end of 2020, in alignment with the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) of the European Union. The second phase of Copernicus, included in the European Space Programme is ongoing until 2027 as envisaged by the new MFF.

Brochure

For more information, readers are invited to download the comprehensive brochure about Copernicus available here: <http://tinyurl.com/456k4dxv>

This document is available in 22 other languages of the, [Greek](#), [Hungarian](#), [Italian](#), [Latvian](#), [Lithuanian](#), [Maltese](#), [Polish](#), [Portuguese](#), [Romanian](#), [Slovak](#), [Slovenian](#), [Spanish](#), [Swedish](#).

Productivity afloat

By Michael Grey, IFSMA Honorary Member

There is endless angst about the inability of any British company or institution to improve its productivity from one year to the next, with a variety of reasons being given, from too many staff working from home, through a lack of investment, to gross idleness. When I read these agonised entreaties, my mind always flits to the complement of hard-working seafarers on modern merchant ships and the way that their numbers have been whittled away to the skeleton staff who rattle around today in big ships.

Half a century ago it would have taken some 50 to 100 officers and seamen to man a 10,000ton cargo liner on a deep-sea schedule to the furthest reaches of the Commonwealth. Today we have a crew of under 20 running ships ten times the size, that can be four or five times more productive than their break-bulk predecessors in terms of round voyages accomplished. You might suggest that this really is a cracking example of productivity improvement, driven by design, innovation, huge investment and for those 20 souls aboard their giant ships, a lot of hard work.

But the work aboard ship is, one could observe, quite unevenly spread, with the senior officers and mainly the masters driven mad by endless and quite pointless activity that distracts them from the main job of keeping their ships safe and on schedule. I always recall a conversation some years ago with an old shipmate, who a few years short of retirement had determined that rather than being on the receiving end of all the endless communications and reporting, and soul destroying pointless regulatory nonsense, he was going to become one of those dishing it all out. He had handed in his resignation and was going to become an auditor, who would be going aboard other people's ships and keeping them awake.

He was not without a conscience and, as a result of his decades in command, would be more kind and understanding than some of the box-tickers who had stamped up his gangway demanding instant attention. But he said, "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em". I also recall another master who corresponded with me before his too-early death telling me of his increasingly miserable life as every last bit of support was stripped away from his role by penny-pinching managers ashore. The radio officer (who had been his confidant and secretary) disappeared, leaving him to supervise the ship's communication system. The electrician went, as did the cadets and junior engineers.

The crew were to become "Gee-Pees", working in both engineroom and on deck, with all threatening mutiny as the sailors hated the noise below and the greasers hated the cold. The last straw was the removal of the chief steward, which left him (the multi-tasking master) with the job of what he wrathfully described as the "menu engineer," sorting out what

they were all going to eat on the voyage. And it wasn't quite the final straw, as the company had just told him that he would no longer have the facility (and company) of a North Sea pilot on an eight port European rotation. It is those old friends who I think about when I read about the lack of productivity and its consequences.

A few weeks ago in the Spectator magazine the advertising guru Rory Sutherland had some useful reflections about the past, when "people who did useful work were given people to work for them so they could do useful things more easily". There were PAs capable of making their bosses several multiples more productive, drivers, assistants – a whole cadre of people who were part of a productive machinery that really worked.

Now the few useful people are bowed under with demands from the box-tickers, the compliance staff, the HR gang, the administrators, the "pen pushers" says Sutherland "who demand that they must conform to a host of metrics and proxy targets so their contribution can fit into a cell in a spreadsheet." The output of productive staff, now a distinct minority, can only suffer, as the demands of these leeches are met.

You might say that this is a feature of modern life and we are not going to change things for the better, even as the technology which is supposed to make life easier, puts even more demands upon us.

But back to our maritime world and wouldn't it make a lot of sense if, instead of plotting to take even more people off the ships, the role of the few genuinely overworked people (chiefly the master) could be made easier, more fulfilling and infinitely more useful. Give them some sort of assistant, to (like old ROs, pursers and chief stewards did) keep the auditors, e-mail senders, box-tickers etc etc off the master's back. That could preface an increase in productivity which otherwise will remain elusive.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List

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mv Ane Maersk

The world's first large methanol-enabled container vessel

Towards the end of January it was announced from Ulsan, Republic of Korea, that the world's first large methanol-enabled container vessel had been named *Ane Mærsk* at a ceremony in the shipyard of HD Hyundai Heavy Industries (HD HHI) in the port city.

The vessel is named after Ane Mærsk Mc-Kinney Uggla, the Chair of the A P Moller Foundation and A P Moller Holding. Ane's eldest granddaughter served as godmother and christened the vessel by breaking a champagne bottle over the bow.

Ane Mærsk is the first of Maersk's eighteen large methanol-enabled vessels, that will be delivered within 2024 and 2025.

It is the world's second methanol-enabled container vessel. At the time of writing it was due to enter service on the AE7 string connecting Asia and Europe, marking a significant milestone in the company's commitment to pioneering low-emissions shipping provision. The vessels in the new series have an industry-first innovative design with the bridge and accommodation placed far forward which is said to ensure fuel efficient operations.

In the word of Vincent Clerc, Chief Executive Officer of AP Moller-Maersk: *'This series of vessels will have a transformative impact on our ambition to progress on our industry-leading climate ambitions.'*



'It is a visual and operational proof of our commitment to a more sustainable industry. With Ane Mærsk and her sister vessels we are expanding our offer to the growing number of businesses aiming to reduce emissions from their supply chains.'

Ane Mærsk was expected to commence her maiden voyage on green* methanol and Maersk continues to work diligently over 2024-2025 sourcing and bunkering fuel for its methanol-enabled vessel fleet.

About Maersk

A P Moller - Maersk operates in more than 130 countries and employs 100,000 people world-wide. It is aiming to reach net zero emissions by 2040 across the entire business with new technologies, new vessels, and green fuels.

*Maersk defines green fuels as fuels with low to very low GHG emissions over their life cycle compared to fossil fuels.

Different green fuels achieve different life cycle reductions depending on their production pathway. By 'low' Maersk refers to fuels with 65-80% life cycle GHG reductions compared to fossil fuels. This covers for example, some biodiesels. 'Very low' refers to fuels with 80-95% life cycle GHG reductions compared to fossil fuels.