



JSU Renewing Battle With FOC System

By: Shigeru Fukuma

Assistant Director

Oceangoing Seafarers Department

Long has the ITF been fighting the Flag of Convenience (FOC) system, which provides a means for avoiding labor regulation in the country of ownership and has become a vehicle for paying low wages and forcing seafarers to work long hours in unsafe conditions.

The ITF has therefore been obliged to take on internationally the role traditionally exercised by national trade unions – i.e., to organize and negotiate on behalf of FOC crews.

For 50 years the ITF,

through its affiliated seafarers' and dockers' unions, has been waging a vigorous campaign against shipowners who abandon the flag of their own country in search of the cheapest possible crews and the lowest possible training and safety standards for their ships.

For the past 20 years, the JSU has been conducting an FOC Campaign in Japan (responsibility for which is shared by the seafarers' and dockers' unions).

From July 3-6, 2006, the JSU conducted its latest campaign by visiting 117 FOC vessels and inspecting the crews' working condition. The JSU successfully

made concluded new agreements for eight of the vessels, covering them with an IBF Green certificate that signifies ITF acceptance of the wages and working conditions on board.

While the political campaign has not succeeded in preventing further growth in the number of ships using FOC registers, the industrial campaign has succeeded in securing decent minimum wages and conditions on board nearly 5,000 FOC ships. The ITF has become the standard-bearer for exploited and mistreated seafarers, irrespective of nationality or trade union, throughout the world.



JSU representatives visit an FOC vessel

ISPS Code Misuse Harms Seafarers

By: Shoji Yamashita

ITF Coordinator

All Japan Seamen's Union

The International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code took effect on July 1, 2004, and covers all international ports and harbors as well as all vessels of 500 tons and over deployed in international services.

The Code was formulated when governments reached agreement amid mounting concern over maritime security in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in the U.S. on Sept. 11, 2001.

In preparation for coming up with the Code, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) agreed that security must be enhanced for ports/harbors and ships.

The ITF insisted, however, that the Code not be used to refuse shore leave for seamen or encroach upon labor union activities and rights.

It was decided, as such, that this fundamental rule would be incorporated clearly in the Code.

It was also claimed that security plans would be designed so that relevant organizations in charge of seafarers' welfare would have no problems visiting commercial vessels.

Currently, however, it has been reported that some business operators arbitrarily make improper use of the ISPS Code to prevent members of labor unions and other organizations from boarding ships. On the strength of the Code, they

cover up unfair labor practices, violence, and very poor working conditions.

As such, all interested parties are required to continue to maintain firm attitudes in undertaking remedial measures.

Outlined below are specific examples of the present situation:

1) The United States has enacted a domestic law, which supersedes International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 185, which is designed to simplify seafarer shore leave, requiring those who work onboard commercial vessels calling U.S. ports to obtain a visa and prohibiting those without visas from entering the country.

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Authorities Must Realize Seafarers Not Terrorists

By: Shoji Yamashita

ITF Coordinator

All Japan Seamen's Union

In today's Japan, incredible situations, some of which are outlined below, are observed onboard commercial vessels, one of the country's major means of trade, and at ports and harbors, its gateways.

In response to the terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001, the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code was implemented in July 2004 to ensure the security of ships and ports/harbors. As a result, international ports/harbors are now surrounded with steel fences; patrolmen are stationed at their entrances (gates); and security officers keep a tight rein over visitors to ships. These situations take place because the Code is not understood correctly.

We need to realize that the Code was designed originally to keep terrorists from entering commercial vessels and ports/harbors and that free access should be guaranteed to ships and ports/harbors for labor union members and other visitors.

At the request of the Seafarers' Union of Russia, I visited Comoros-flag Flag of Convenience (FOC) ship [BENARI] in May 2006, which was at anchor at the Port of Funagawa in Akita Prefecture, to investigate a case in which a Ukrainian engineer had been forced to leave the vessel at a Russian port without receiving his salary, and to encourage seamen to join forces to confront the operator.

"The shipowners earns a lot of money; however, it never passes it on to its seafarers and does not even pay salaries," the Ukrainian complained, adding that he is always late in sending money to his family. The seamen and I were determined to recover unpaid wages via our concerted efforts and to advance negotiations for improving their situation. Our spirit was "Never say die!"

When I visited domestic vessel *T.R. Maru*, which was moored next to [BENARI], I saw her master and several crewmembers expressing their anger in a black rage over the implementation of the ISPS Code. "The Port of Funagawa bolted the gates at 7:30 p.m., confining us," they said. "We were going to go ashore from the vessel, but we could not." "We were treated as if we were criminals," they added. "Crewmembers of [BENARI] were upset as well."

T.R. Maru is operated according to a very tight schedule, making as many as 120 voyages a year between the Kanto and Hokkaido-Tohoku regions. Any normal person would understand that these crewmembers want to leave their vessel when she is at a port, which is not very often, to take a walk or pursue other activities as a means to get adequate rest.

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JSU Goes Green for Marine Day

Japan celebrates Marine Day every July 17. The JSU, being a seafarers' union, has made it a tradition to celebrate Marine Day by letting its office staff in most of the union's branches volunteer for activities related to care of the marine environment.

For this year's Marine Day activity, the JSU head office sent 40 current and retired staff as volunteers to help clean up Kasai Rinkai Park on July 14 from 3 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.

The volunteers were able to clean the beach of litter such as cigarette butts, plas-

tic and food packing materials and seaborne trash.

The ocean is obviously being polluted by toxins from factories and human-generated waste and the union would like every seafarer and person who bene-

fits from marine resources to be aware of the consequences of pollution.

The JSU encourages seafarers to maintain proper disposal of garbage as a way to care for the world's oceans.



JSU staff helping to clean up Kasai Rinkai Park

Rogue Wave Theory Backed by Science

Rogue waves that rise to a height of a 10-story building may be sinking ships in accidents that are attributed to nothing more than poor weather, the *Guardian* reports.

Once dismissed as a nautical myth, freak or rogue waves have been recorded by shipping vessels and more accurately measured from oil and gas platforms at sea. The waves arise by chance when others combine, leading to giant walls of water that momentarily tower above the rest of the ocean.

Research at Imperial College, London, shows that far from being rare events, rogue waves can emerge frequently, and may be responsible for some 200 supertankers and container ships longer than 200 meters that have sunk in poor weather conditions in the past two decades, the report says.

Researchers said a combination of wave tank experiments and theoretical calculations revealed that in small patches of ocean, measuring up to a square kilometer, sea states vary enough to trigger rogue waves, the *Guardian* reports.

According to Nigel Barltrop, professor of naval architecture at Strathclyde University, so little is known about many shipping accidents, that it can be difficult to know when a rogue wave is to blame. "A lot of ships, when they go down, there's no real investigation possible without spending a lot of money, so most of them, no one really knows why they sink," he told the *Guardian*.

Andrew Linington of the National Union of Marine, Aviation and Shipping Transport Officers, said: "We have to stop calling these freak or rogue waves because all the evidence seems to be suggesting they're to be expected with more frequency than people believed in the past."

Meanwhile, oceanographers told *The New York Times* that growing understanding of rogue wave formation and the greater proliferation of radar satellites should allow for a global warning system in about a decade.

Rogue waves are believed to form when strong currents hit winds and waves traveling in the opposite direction, shortening the distance between wave sets of the current and merging wave sets, thereby increasing peak heights to over 25 meters. Conditions favorable to rogue wave creation have now been identified in the Agulhas current around South Africa, the Kuroshio current off Japan and the Gulf Stream along the U.S. East Coast.



Scientists now confirm that rogue waves occur with shocking regularity. (Photo: BBC)

Philippines Encouraging Ship Registration

Vicente Suazo Jr., administrator of the Philippines' Maritime Industry Authority (Marina), is looking at ways to relax the regulations of the ship registry system to encourage more tonnage to the flag without leaving the Philippines open to Flag of Convenience (FOC) concerns.

Suazo was speaking after attending the inauguration ceremony for 18,000-dw/t bulker newbuilding *Lalinde*, which has been registered in

the Philippines.

The ship registry is under review ahead of a push to increase the number of ships flying the flag, with new rules the subject of a proposed executive order to be signed by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

Marina has been working with the private sector and international counterparts to make the flag more attractive for both foreign and local owners and operators.

Key elements in a strong registry are already in evidence, Suazo said, including competent and qualified seafarers, and the availability of professional shipmanagers and staff. (*Lloyd's Register/Fairplay*)

Swindlers Hunt OFW Families

Swindlers in the Philippines are victimizing families of OFWs, such as seafarers with a new modus operandi: using telephones to contact a wife or parent.

The sweet-talking caller will begin by introducing himself as a shipmate or a friend of the seafarer and then explain that her husband was involved in a quarrel that led to the killing of a foreign national.

The caller says that he assisted the husband sneak back into the Philippines via Mindanao or another location far from Manila; that her husband is undergoing medical treatment for

injuries sustained in the fight; and that a significant amount of money is necessary to cover his medical expenses – often more than P150,000 (US\$3,000).

The caller cautions the seafarer's wife not to contact her husband's manning agency to avoid providing the authorities with information about her husband's whereabouts. The wife is then ordered to send the money to a bank account provided by the caller.

In some cases, the caller pretends to be a "doctor" who is treating the seafarer or a high government official responsible for her hus-

band's secret repatriation. The wife, after sending the money, will later find out that her husband is in good health onboard his ship.

Victims suspect that someone at a manning agency or with the POEA is working with the swindlers, providing information such as the OFW's telephone number or names of his beneficiaries.

Seafarers are encouraged to inform their families not to fall for this kind of scam. If they have a question about a seafarer the best bet is to call the manning agent, since it will be the first to receive information about seafarers in trouble.

Pirates Kill Six Seamen During First 6 Months

At least six seafarers were killed in the first half of the year in pirate attacks, the ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB) said. The bureau reported 127 pirate attacks during the period, unchanged from last year.

Ships were boarded in 74 cases and 11 were hijacked, said the IMB in its "Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships" report; 156 crew were taken hostage, 13 were kidnapped, and six killed.

The IMB warned: "Although the number of attacks overall remain the same, there is a worry that in some key hot spots the situation has deteriorated. Eight attacks have been reported off the eastern coast of Somalia where pirates armed with guns and grenades have attacked ships and fired upon them.

"The eastern and northeastern coasts of Somalia continue to be high-risk areas for hijackings," it said. Ships not making scheduled calls to ports in these areas are urged to stay at least 200 miles, or as far away as practical, from the eastern coast of Somalia.

At least 33 incidents were recorded in Indonesia, the highest number this half year. Bangladesh followed with 22 attacks. These were reportedly armed attacks, with many of the pirates carrying guns and knives.

The Malacca Straits has shown an improvement with three attacks compared to eight last year. However, since the end of June 2006, three further incidents within a two-day period have been reported there. (Source: *MaritimeGlobal.net*)

IMO Concerned By Lebanon Conflict

The IMO has expressed concern over the safe evacuation by sea of persons affected by the conflict in Lebanon and for the safety of commercial shipping operating in the area.

The IMO cited Article V of SOLAS, which states: "For the purposes of evacuating persons in order to avoid a threat to the security of their lives a Contracting Government may permit the carriage of a larger number of persons in its ships than

is otherwise permissible under the present Convention."

The IMO also seeks to ensure that all necessary and appropriate measures are taken to protect the safety of life and property at sea and the protection and preservation of the marine environment in the affected area.

Spain has been issuing Navigational Warnings informing and advising shipping about developments in the eastern Mediterranean.

The IMO has also been informed that, as provided for by the ISPS Code, member state maritime administrations have advised ships flying their flags to raise security levels while in the eastern Mediterranean.

Asian Alliance Targeting Piracy

As Asian regional anti-piracy pact, including an information-sharing center in Singapore, will come into force in September despite lack of support from Malaysia and Indonesia.

The Japanese-sponsored Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) has been ratified by 11 of the 16 countries it covers.

Malaysia and Indonesia, the main littoral states of the Malacca Strait, have yet to sign – let alone ratify – the agreement.

The setting up of ReCAAP was in response to piracy attacks in the strait, and without the involvement of Malaysia and Indonesia the center will not be able to cover the sea lane effectively.

Sources in Malaysia indicate the country is unhappy with the way the agreement has been pushed through by Japan and Singapore, key drivers in getting ReCAAP off the ground and among the first four countries to ratify it.

Singapore will host the first meeting of the governing council of ReCAAP information sharing center toward the end of the year, when the center will also be officially launched.

Cambodia, India, Japan, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam have all ratified the agreement, while Brunei is in the process of ratification.

Australia Requires New Maritime Visa

The Australian Government will require a new Maritime Crew Visa for crew entering Australian ports, the Australian Shipowners Association (ASA) has advised owners.

The Maritime Crew Visa will be introduced by July 1,

2007 and up until Jan. 1, 2008. It will be used in conjunction with the existing Special Purpose Visa.

The visa will be valid for three months or until the expiration of the seafarer's passport, whichever is earlier. Multiple re-entries will

be okay. There is no charge for the visa. Application must be made before the crew arrives in Australia.

A fine of A\$5,000 will be charged to the owner/charterer/operator/agent if a seafarer arrives in Australia without a visa.

ISS Comments on ISPS Code

ISS Jaboli – Some private ports require visitors to submit an advance request to visit a vessel 24 hours before the date of visitation. Union staff, such as JSU ISS, are inconvenienced by this system because we don't know which vessel will be calling at what time.

It would be helpful if the authorities would allow us to visit vessels without advance notice since the welfare of seafarers is at stake.

Seafarers complain that they no longer enjoy the privilege of going ashore as some ports require them to be back on their ships at a fixed time. Failure to do so will result in the seafarer being barred from entering the port.

Ironically, I have observed that some people are still able to board vessels even though they lack important reasons for doing so; these people include businessmen selling goods to seafarers. A terrorist disguised as a businessman could easily accomplish his/her objective since ports are lax when it comes to salesmen.

Port authorities should make JSU staff, including the ISS, partners in its fight against terrorism and not consider them as ordinary visitors.

Free access would also allow JSU staff to give information to authorities about suspicious persons or activities in the vicinity of the port or onboard ships.

ISS Quijano – Since the ISPS Code was implemented, most of the ports here in Japan – especially the private ports – subject us to strict interrogations during our daily ship visits.

Regulations at some public ports are not as strict, but still they close their gates at nighttime. I learned from our member seafarers that public ports which close their gates at night, on weekends and for holidays give them more stress because it's difficult for them to go ashore.

ISS Galang – The burden of the ISPS Code is a heavy one. Every crewmember finds it harder to do their duty while performing special roles related to security.

For example, any person intending to board a vessel must have their belongings searched, sign the port log and verify their identity before being allowed to come onboard or proceed to the ship's accommodations.

Stricter rules and regulations are the main con-

cern of the company, in addition to safety of the entire ship and lives of the crewmembers, but the work involved with security is carried out by crewmembers.

Deck crew are the ones affected most since they have to double their workload. Besides keeping an eye on every person and ensuring the safety of the vessel, they also do maintenance work while the vessel is in port. It is a burden for every seafarer working aboard the ship.

ISS Mambalo – During our daily ship visits and observation of what's going on in port, we have noticed that port authorities and port terminal owners are intent on protecting lives and property against imminent dangers and damage. They have erected high fences along the perimeter of their ports without comprehending that some individuals are being deprived of the right to go ashore.

In order to apply the ISPS Code for maximum effectiveness, concerned port authorities or port security should design a system that is beneficial to all, and should ensure that people are informed of the system in clear, easy to understand language. This is a matter of providing free access while making sure to identify all people entering and leaving the port, thereby protecting lives and property within the port and on the ship.

Your Health: How to Beat Top Killer of Seafarers

Heart and artery diseases are the number one killer of seafarers while they are at sea, and are also the most common reason for a seafaring career being ended early for medical reasons.

What are these illnesses? Why are they so important in decisions about fitness? What can you and other people do to reduce your risk of heart and artery disease and increase your chances of a full career and healthy retirement?

Most people living in the developed world build up fat and cholesterol deposits inside their arteries. The probability of illness caused by these deposits (plaque, atheroma) increases with age. These deposits eventually slow or halt the flow of blood, often gradually, but sometimes this may happen suddenly if a deposit comes loose or has a bleed into it.

In the arteries partial blockage (coronary atheroma) means that although there is enough blood flow for moderate activity the flow is insufficient to meet physical and sometimes emotional demands. The heart signals this shortage with pain in the chest, arms or neck (angina pectoris).

More severe blockage causes permanent damage to the heart muscle (heart attack, coronary thrombosis or myocardial infarction). This in turn may be fatal if the rhythm of the heart is blocked or if the muscle stops pumping blood.

Recovery comes with repair and scarring and may be complete or lead to limitations on physical activity or other complications, such as an irregular heartbeat.

Changes in the blood supply to the brain can lead to short-term impairment (transient ischaemic attack), or to the sometimes permanent damage of a stroke (cerebrovascular accident, cerebral thrombosis).

Some factors predispose us to these illnesses, such as smoking, a bad diet/obesity, lack of exercise, a family history of early arterial disease, high blood pressure and diabetes.

Anyone who has had arterial disease is at considerably increased risk of a recurrence of their original problem, as well as other arterial diseases.

A seafarer who has had arterial disease is dealt a triple whammy in terms of subsequent fitness. They are at greater risk of sudden collapse – hence will not normally be acceptable as a navigator; they are at risk of recurrence while at sea where treatment cannot be given – hence are almost certainly unfit for deepsea duty; and their physical and psychological capacity to perform effectively in marine emergencies may be impaired.

Recovery is variable and some can return to their previous fitness level. Risk can also be reduced, even after the event, by changes to lifestyle factors, such as quitting smoking.

Because shipping does not utilize the type of dual manning common with airlines – which have a co-pilot, trained to recognize incapacity and able to take over – that enables some pilots to fly again after a heart attack, a return to duty as a navigating officer is not normally possible.

Various forms of medical treatment can help after the event, including arterial surgery as well as medications and structured rehabilitation programs. All of these are clearly second best to preventing damage in the first place.

How to reduce your risk:

- You may be encouraged to obtain medical advice and treatment if there are problems related to obesity, high blood pressure or diabetes.
- Smoking is the biggest risk factor under your control. If you cannot stop by yourself, obtain advice from a smoking cessation clinic during your leave. It is heart disease that kills most smokers. You will also benefit from lower risk of chest problems if you quit.
- Reduce the amount of fat and salt in your diet, being aware of the amount hidden in processed foods such as cakes and meat products. Do not get fat – set a target weight and stick to it. Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables – they are good sources of useful nutrients such as fiber, vitamins and anti-oxidants. Find foods which you both enjoy and which are good for you and go for them.
- If you detect early signs of arterial disease, get medical advice. Treatment at an early stage will reduce your chances of death, disability and job loss.



What Seafarers Say About ISPS:



3/M Dindo B. Clavero
(M/V *Shin Nichiho*)

Since it is not easy for us to go ashore, we are glad that the Filipino JSU Staff visit us onboard and share with us news and opportunities. I hope to be seeing them again on future voyages.



1/E Maximo L. Porazo
(M/V *Phoenix Ace*)

The ISPS Code is actually good for our security in these unpredictable times.



3/O Ivan T. Castro
(M/V *Kyowa Salvia*)

The ISPS Code means more work, and more stress, for seafarers.



Capt. Alejandro R. Tamonan Jr.
(M/V *Valeria*)

The ISPS Code has both advantages and disadvantages for seafarers: Advantages are in the form of increased security in our working environment, disadvantages include a greater workload, increased fatigue and stress.



2/O Marvin A. Casignia
(M/V *Kyowa Salvia*)

The ISPS Code is good for our security; however, seafarers are inconvenienced by the strict port regulations.



Capt. Pacifico D. Lacson
(M/V *Pegasus Ace*)

The ISPS Code may be good for the security of both the ship and the port but the seafarers are the ones being subjected to scrutiny by port authorities. Ship's manning levels should be increased in order to fully implement the ISPS Code.

LETTER from HEADQUARTERS

Developing Strong Ties With Filipino Members

The JSU regularly needs to take part in many meetings and discussions, which are held not only in Europe but also in Far East Asian countries, in order to represent the interests of the JSU's special members.

In this context, over the past decades, the JSU has addressed the issue of developing working and living conditions for Filipino seafarers and families, seeking to ensure decent working conditions and opportunities on board vessels controlled by Japanese principals.

The most crucial commitment for the JSU through these negotiations is, *inter alia*, to implement the provisions of the CBA, and to ensure that principals and relevant agents comply with international regulations.

It is my great honor to take this opportunity to introduce myself in this journal. I was newly appointed as a director of the JSU by the Central Executive Board, and am now mainly taking up international matters, such as forthcoming IBF negotiations, various welfare programs provided for under the CBA, upgrading projects in Vietnam and China, lobbying the government for promotion of ILO 2006 MLC ratification, etc.

From July 2001 to January 2004, I was based in London, as a liaison officer in the JSU European office. I attended many meetings dealing with maritime issues.

I can assure you that I am going to work flat out to fulfill the aforesaid crucial objectives. "Maintaining a good relationship with you is my top priority."

Yours in unity,

Katsuji Taki

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VoIP Phones Mean Cheaper Calls Home

To make cheaper calls to their families in the Philippines, Microsoft will soon arm overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) with voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phones.

VoIP is a technology that routes voice calls to IP networks or the Internet instead of through the traditional circuit-switched networks. It allows people to make cheap or even free long distance calls anywhere in the world.

Seattle-based Randy Granovetter, who is general manager for business development for emerging markets at Microsoft, disclosed that the software company chose to pilot this project in the Philippines through its partnership with the Overseas Workers Welfare Association (OWWA). The government agency and Microsoft are also collaborating on other technology-related projects.

Granovetter said that Microsoft felt that OFWs would have the most need for a service like this as in most countries there are

WiFi (wireless fidelity)-enabled facilities where OFWs are working; such as in hospitals, hotels, engineering offices, cruise ships and i-cafes/hotspots.

While there are issues of lack of infrastructure and poor Internet connectivity in the Philippines, Microsoft believes this initiative will eventually drive down communications spending among Filipino foreign workers and their families.

Filipino foreign workers will be required to sign up to use the special VoIP phone and the VoIP-enabled PC at the OWWA. After registration, the OFWs can make VoIP calls from the OWWA's 30 OFW global centers.

The Microsoft executive revealed that this initiative will soon make OFW remittances a lot easier, as it will promote digital fund transfers.

Granovetter said the OFWs will be issued a bank card, while the beneficiaries will be given debit cards through one of the authorized OWWA banks or remittance centers.

Misuse-

(Continued From Page 1)

2) Since the implementation of the ISPS Code, the majority of seafarers were unable to go ashore in many ports in Japan due to bolted port gates at night.

3) Dishonest shipowners make sailors work under very poor conditions, while promoting unfair labor practices, such as abusing the ISPS Code to prevent labor union members from gaining access to ships. Violent and other inhumane acts have been reported.

Taking these situations into consideration, the ITF and relevant countries/regions are enhancing their concerted global efforts to have the United States adopt the ILO Convention No. 185 and to abolish the requirement that seamen obtain a visa for shore leave.

They are also calling upon Japanese ports/harbors to properly understand the intent of the ISPS Code and allow sailors to go ashore at night.

Koutoku Kaiun of Japan, Russian crab carrier operators, and other dishonest shipowners are making improper use of the ISPS Code, forcing seafarers to remove accommodation ladders and thereby making it impossible for labor union members to board their ships. Such seafarers are usually working under extremely poor conditions, are victims of violence, and often not paid regularly.

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT) is authorized to order Japanese-flag ships to stop illegal activities; like-

wise, other governments have authority over commercial vessels registered with their countries/regions. In case of Flag of Convenience vessels, however, flag states are not responsible for FOC vessels registered with them, so they do not issue improvement orders.

In order to combat such malicious, illegitimate activities, the ITF and relevant countries/regions are making efforts via, among other means, social sanctions and protests.

ITF/Employer Talks Win War Bonus for Crews

Dialogue at the International Bargaining Forum (IBF) – the ground breaking body that brings together the ITF and maritime employers – has paid off with the declaration that waters around Israel and Lebanon are a war zone. This means that crews on ships run by IBF members can ask not to enter the area and, if they do, will be paid double normal rates.

The deal will potentially affect thousands of seafarers on Flag of Convenience ships run by members of the International Maritime Employers' Committee (IMEC), which represents employers at the IBF.

The agreement covers the sea area off the coast of Lebanon that is covered by a sea blockade and also approaches to the Israeli port of Haifa. Specifically, the area is between 034 05N and 033 06N and East from

034 00 to the Lebanese coast. The area also covers those Israeli waters within 12 miles of the coast North of 032 35.

The agreement comes shortly after – following lobbying by ITF-affiliate union Numast – the UK Chamber of Shipping had agreed to the same conditions for crews of British-flag ships.

Steve Cotton, Secretary of the ITF's Special Seafarers' Department, commented: "With one vessel already caught in the crossfire of a ship-to-shore battle there was an urgent need to get the provisions for war into place – the right to disembark without facing disciplinary action, and to earn danger money for time spent in the war zone."

"Once again a decision has been thrashed out at the IBF, with all the speed and urgency that the situation demands."

Terrorists-

(Continued From Page 1)

Concerned deeply about T.R. Maru's crewmembers, I telephoned the Port of Funagawa authority to give it a briefing on the situation. However, the authority abrogated its responsibility, saying: "Since we are undertaking those measures in accordance with Akita Prefecture's security plan, contact the prefecture's port/harbor management division."

When I contacted the prefectural port/harbor management division, it shifted responsibility to the federal Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT)'s port/harbor management

division. So then I called them. "In respect to seafarer shore leave, guidelines have been formulated and distributed to each prefecture," it replied. "It is each prefecture that is responsible for coming up with and implementing improvement plans." When I returned to Akita Prefecture's port/harbor management division to deliver the MLIT statement, the issue was finally settled.

I would like to state clearly in this report that prefectural port/harbor divisions and port authorities should come up with security plans only after arriving at a complete understanding of the ISPS Code, and that seafarers, who underpin the Japanese economy, are never terrorists.

In partnership with its local branch offices, relevant organizations, and seamen, the ITF is working to investigate whether or not similar cases are being reported in other parts of Japan, and if so is taking corrective action.

JOKE CORNER

After their vessel sank, the Bosun and the Chief Cook found themselves inside an inflatable raft. After days of drifting with no food or water they dreamed of having a cold beer inside a cozy bar. Suddenly, the Bosun spotted a lamp floating by, picked it up and a genie popped out. The genie notices the severe condition of the seamen and grants them one wish between the two of them. After a lot of arguing over who gets to make the wish, the Bosun blurted out, "I wish the ocean was made of beer."

Infuriated, the Chief Cook yelled: "You idiot! Now we have to piss inside the raft." (Submitted By: Hero)



Access to vessels, such as during this FOC campaign, is essential in our battle to ensure humane treatment and improved working conditions.