



Policies, resolutions adopted at 70th National Congress

The JSU convened its 70th National Congress in Matsuyama, Ehime prefecture on Nov. 4-6.

Attending union members held serious discussions, which led to the adoption of JSU policies that had been proposed by headquarters as well as nine amendments and three resolutions.

In the resolutions, the JSU (1) requested that Kurihama/Kanaya services remain operating, (2) demanded that ferry and passenger services be maintained, and to promote a shift to more environmentally friendly modes, and (3) stated that it is definitely against the Japanese government's toll-free-expressway scheme, and asked to secure jobs for those working on expressways and bridges.

The meeting of the committee of ocean-going section was held Nov. 5, and attended by many union members who work in the



Delegates to the JSU 70th National Congress held in Matsuyama city, Ehime prefecture on Nov. 4-6, 2009

ocean-going shipping industry.

The meeting reported on nine topics, including developments made by the revised labor agreements and the committee with JSA for discussing issues relating to female Japanese seafarers.

There were also reports on 14 subjects concerned with international affairs, such as developments made at ITF-related meetings and IBF negotiations as well as the international joint project for developing Asian seafarers.

The meeting encouraged attendees to exchange views to better understand the issues.

Discussions began in the afternoon of Dec. 5 on JSU policies for fiscal 2010, which were adopted by an absolute majority.

ITF addresses seafarer safety in piracy areas, reviews FOC campaigns

In respect to the issue of piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Aden and waters off the coast of Somalia, the IBF designated them as a high-risk area and enhanced its security efforts.

The fleet of naval ships deployed by governments began an escort mission.

Although these efforts resulted in a certain degree of deterrence, the ITF's Seafarers' Committee held on Nov. 16-17 confirmed that pirate attacks are still frequent.

As such, the ITF indicated that it is necessary to make public basic ITF policies for combating piracy, which will cover all ships regardless of flag.

Therefore, the meeting adopted an ITF Policy Statement to address the piracy issue which clearly articulates a role of the ITF in monitoring piracy and that of ITF inspectors in dealing with seamen and their families in respect to providing welfare-related support.

ITF's Statement on Piracy

The ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) Seafarers' Section, having assessed the growing problem of piracy in the Gulf of Aden off the coast of Somalia, and now wider in the Indian Ocean, has determined that except under exceptional circumstances, ships should not transit the area. The risk of attack is now so great that putting seafarers in harm's way amounts to a breach of the ship owner's duty of care.

The exceptional circumstances relate to:

- having close and active protection of naval forces or being in a convoy with adequate naval escort; or
- the ship can be classified as low risk and has a proven level of protection measures in place.

The ITF also considers that sea-

farers should suffer no detriment from refusing to take ships into these high-risk areas. Seafarers have a right to refuse to put themselves in harm's way and the right to be relieved before the ship enters a high-risk area. The ITF calls on flag states and ship owners to uphold seafarers' rights in this regard.

The ITF reaffirmed the position that seafarers should not be armed.

The ITF calls on the wider shipping industry to support this position and to take all measures to ensure the protection of seafarers by not putting them in harm's way.

Q&A

Q. *Is the ITF recommending stopping all movement across the entire Indian Ocean unless they are in a convoy or escorted by a warship? But surely there isn't enough of either for all ships, nor do they cover all the routes.*

A. There are currently insufficient naval forces to escort more than a small proportion of essential vessels; however, only a third of the flag states are actively contributing to vessel protection and there is much more that littoral states can do to police their coastal areas.

Q. *How many convoys are there now? How does a vessel join them or get protection? What about cases in which ships are told they can't receive protection?*

A. There is protection through the transit zone offered by EU NAVFOR Somalia (EU Naval Force) through MSC HOA (Maritime Security Centre, Horn of Africa), with which ships should – but don't always – register. There are also convoys offered by some naval forces for their own flag vessels. This leaves a massive area where vessels have limited protection. It is estimated that there are 25 to 30 naval vessels operating in the area

at any one time. It has also been estimated that it could take closer to 400 vessels to do the job properly.

Q. *What's a "low risk" vessel, given the range of the types of ships attacked so far? And if high-risk ships disappeared from the area, wouldn't the low-risk ones be attacked anyway?*

A. Pirates have attacked both low- and high-risk vessels, but EU NAVFOR has stated that 80% of ships taken fall into the high-risk category. This assessment is based on the vessel's speed and freeboard (height of the ship's sides) as well as manning levels, and training and protective measures onboard. The pirates have changed their tactics constantly so no vessel can be certain of being safe from attack. But with appropriate naval support, it can be considered a reasonably safe vessel.

Q. *Does the ITF believe that next month or next year there will be a real reduction in ships using the Indian Ocean unless they're in a convoy or under close escort?*

A. There are already many companies that divert their vessels around the Cape and we expect that, given the current increase in successful acts of piracy, more companies will make this choice.

Q. *Wouldn't it be simpler to target and arrest pirates or blockade their ports?*

A. Blockading is unrealistic given the way a number of pirate gangs work. Targeting mother ships has already had some effect but there are thousands of small boats that are or claim to be fishing, and only become pirates in the eyes of the law when they attack. Undoubtedly more aggressive action against pirates, especially by arresting them, would give more protection to ves-

sels, but it would, of course, have to be done in a lawful manner.

Q. *Is anywhere in the Indian Ocean safe?*

A. The high-risk areas are well known. But unless new and effective measures are immediately introduced to protect vessels from pirate attacks, the risk level will rise across much wider areas of the Indian Ocean. This is a massive area to police, and current actions and policies by naval forces will need to be reviewed.

Q. *How are ship owners likely to view the ITF's position?*

A. The ITF is aware that many ship owners and operators are similarly frustrated with the current situation and are looking for mechanisms to solve the problem of Somali piracy. Ultimately the responsibility for the crews' welfare lies with the flag state and owner, and if the situation continues to deteriorate and their legal "duty of care" for seafarers cannot be assured, the owner will need to reevaluate the possibility of vessels passing through these areas. We have made an objective decision of the current levels of risk, and we hope and expect that owners will act similarly and then fulfill their legal and moral obligations. It is also essential that they get guidance from the flag states whose responsibility it is to protect the ships flagged to them.

Q. *What effect does this have on designated war zones and the IBF? (The IBF is a forum that brings together the ITF and employers' groups. For more detail, see www.itfseafarers.org/about-IBF.cfm)*

A. The expanding area of pirate operations will be raised at the IBF, which already recognizes specific high-risk areas off Somalia in addi-

tion to the universally agreed war zones; however, the danger zone is rapidly increasing.

Q. *Will ships actually stop transiting the Indian Ocean because the ITF says it's dangerous?*

A. The ITF position is that vessels should not transit these areas if protection of seafarers onboard cannot be assured. We accept that while this is our position the actions of seafarers and owners must be subject to their own risk assessment; however, we would stress to them that recent events have shown that very few ships can be classified as safe.

Q. *Are you leaving it to flag states and ship owners to decide whether to divert ships away from the danger areas?*

A. Ultimately flag states and ship owners will make their decision, just as seafarers will make the decision as to whether the risk is unacceptable and they wish to be discharged. The issues of duty of care, however, are likely to become increasingly important and the judgment of the owners on whether to put their seafarers at risk will come into question in the near future.

Q. *What effect would a necessary avoidance of the danger areas (i.e., by re-routing around the Cape) have on world trade and on the littoral states?*

A. Potentially, a huge effect on the littoral states.

Q. *The ITF statement says seafarers should not be armed. What is the ITF's position on armed non-seafarers aboard merchant vessels?*

A. *The unions' and industry's firm position is that seafarers should*

United Kingdom changes policy on non-European officers

The United Kingdom has removed ship and hovercraft officers from the “shortage occupation” list, in a move that will significantly tighten the rules on the use of seafarers from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) in UK waters.

The step was immediately criticized by the Chamber of Shipping, which said it was “dis-

Ship officers no longer on shortage list under new immigration rules

mayed” at the outcome, insisting that the move might even put some shipping operations at risk.

The chamber dismissed the suggestion that it was primarily interested in cheap labor, as under the points-based immigration scheme that is being phased in, any national of a non-EEA state

working in the United Kingdom must be paid the same as a UK national in the same job.

However, officers’ union Nautilus International argued that the decision, announced by Border and Immigration Minister Phil Woolas, would help safeguard employment for UK seafarers at a time of

redundancies and restructuring.

Shortage occupations are exempt from the so-called resident labor market test, under which vacancies must be advertised in the United Kingdom for two to four weeks before non-EEA nationals can be recruited. But following a recommendation

from the Migration Advisory Committee, ship and hovercraft officers are no longer designated as shortage occupations.

Nautilus International said that it could provide concrete examples of ships operating between two UK ports without UK nationals, and that “some sort of controls to regulate matters” was needed until industry consensus can be reached. (Source: Fairplay)

U.S. advises Greek ship owners to arm crews sailing off Horn of Africa

The United States is advising Greek ship owners that they should arm their crews to protect against attacks by pirates off the Horn of Africa.

The advice to members of the Union of Greek Shipowners is that they “will find it in their own best interest to implement appropriate self-protection measures,” the U.S. State Department said in a report on a meeting between the Greek magnates and department officials including Andrew J. Shapiro, assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs. The ship owners’ fleets control about 20 percent of the world’s capacity in deadweight tonnage.

Theodore Veniamis, president of the Union of Greek Shipowners, headed the Greek delegation. Somali pirates have taken dozens of vessels this year in the Gulf of Aden and the Somali Basin. (Source: Shiptalk)

Stinger in the tale: fighting pirates with nonlethal weapons

British firm develops pirate-buster device that tangles up attacker’s propeller in ropes

While armed guards have been credited with repelling the recent Somali pirate attack on the U.S.-flagged Maersk Alabama, a separate industry based on the development of nonlethal weaponry to protect ships is booming.

BCB International, a British firm, has developed a pirate-busting “stinger,” a device designed to stop attackers by tangling their propeller up in ropes.

In a demonstration off England’s south coast, the company showed how the device can be fired at short notice into the path of pirate skiffs.

Known as the Buccaneer, the system uses compressed gas to shoot objects such as a net or rope suspended from a small parachute.



‘The Buccaneer’ can also be used to shoot golf balls or life vests.

In the demo, a 300-meter-long rope floated down onto the surface of the water. The pretend pirates at England’s Portland Harbour found their propellers become hopelessly entangled after speeding over it.

The Buccaneer can also be used to fire anything from beanbags and golf balls to life vests in

order help rescue someone who’s fallen overboard.

The cost? About US\$20,000.

BCB has already had queries from shipping companies around the world, and from one, presumably rather wealthy, yacht owner.

“There are enormous difficulties for shipping companies, from the point of view of having

armed guards on board,” said Peter Holmes, the firm’s sales manager.

“We are offering an entirely non-deadly device, which also has an attraction in that it can be fired remotely so that crew members do not have to put themselves in harm’s way.”

He explained that the Buccaneer’s origins lay in another product, the Wall-Breaching Cannon, that’s been sold to police to use in hostage-rescue situations. It fires a projectile from a compressed air gun in order to break down walls or doors.

The Buccaneer is the latest in a growing arsenal of weaponry that is being amassed to counter the pirate threat off the coast of Somalia.

Other systems include a military-grade laser that can cause temporary blindness.

The SeaLase, which was developed by the Finnish company Lasersec Systems, is advertised to have a range of four kilometers and becomes harder for the attacker to look at the closer he comes. (Source: Shiptalk)

U.N. urges addressing root causes of piracy, strengthen regional capacity

Piracy off Somalia’s coast is a symptom of wider problems ashore, and any strategy to tackle it must also deal with its root causes and strengthen regional capacity, the United Nations envoy to the country warned recently.

Briefing the U.N. Security Council, Special Representative Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah said piracy is “a highly profitable business; we therefore have to address it as a criminal activity with many tentacles in the region and around the world.”

He noted that an increased maritime presence is helping to stabilize the situation on the sea but that the number of pirate attacks has not diminished.

Between January and September, some 160 piracy incidents were reported in the East African area, with 34 ships being hijacked and more than 450 people taken hostage off the coast of Somalia, according to the U.N. International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The IMO is steering the implementation of the Djibouti

Code of Conduct, which aims to establish a cooperation framework that would include information sharing between regional states and prosecution of suspected pirates.

Ould-Abdallah introduced the latest report of the secretary-general on the issue, in which Ban Ki-moon wrote that one of the ways to ensure the long-term security of international navigation off the coast of Somalia is by stabilizing the situation ashore, as pirates have become more sophisticated in their meth-

ods and techniques of attacking.

“Piracy is a symptom of wider problems ashore in Somalia,” the special representative said. “The only sustainable solution will be effective governance, the establishment of the rule of law and security institutions and the creation of alternative livelihood in Somalia for stable and inclusive economic growth,” he said, adding that the U.N. Political Office for Somalia and the U.N. Country Team are working together on these issues. (Source: Shiptalk)

Manila weighs crewing changes

The Philippine government is considering new laws that would affect the country’s crewing industry.

Under the proposed changes, operators would not be able to require seafarers to have health examinations at specific clinics or undergo training at designated institutions. Instead, seafarers would be allowed to choose where they are examined and trained.

If the amendments to the Migrant Workers Act are passed, any officers from ship management or crewing agencies who violate the laws could be fined or imprisoned.

The legislation would also provide new insurance coverage to seafarers, in addition to benefits available under existing employment agreements.

“It will be an added burden to vessel interests who are already doing their best to keep their Filipino seafarers employed despite the economic recession,” P&I correspondent Del Rosario of Pandiphil said. (Source: Fairplay)

“Zero recruitment in Europe.” Those were the four stark words that headed one of the paragraphs in a memo from Maersk Ship Management to all its Dutch-crewed vessels. At least nobody can accuse the company of not getting straight to the point.

The world’s biggest boxship outfit will not be recruiting officers in Western Europe, at least for the time being, and instead

Workforce shifts from Europe to Asia

will turn to Asia. Where Maersk leads, others will surely follow.

European officers are already an endangered species. Famously, there are already more blue whales than there are British seafarers on British ships. The difference is that people are taking conservation measures to save

the whale. Does this matter?

Asian seafarers perform the job on salaries a fraction of what Europeans are ready to work for, and generous in terms of what else they could be doing. So everyone is a winner, right?

The wisdom of this policy will only be judged several decades

from now. Concerns will focus on the erosion of Europe’s maritime skill base. The optimists say Asian officer cadets will fill shore jobs in Europe’s maritime centers. But will they want to, especially if shipping’s center of gravity shifts to the East?

It is time to drop the insistence that seafaring offers graduate-caliber Europeans worthwhile career prospects. It does not. (Source: Lloyd’s List)

How to stay awake at work: healthy ways to fight fatigue

Staying awake through a meeting, the graveyard shift, or a long day can be a challenge. Try the following suggestions to shake up the routine and keep the eyes open.

Change Your Routine

Often, sitting in the same position causes fatigue. A short break will jump start your body and fight boredom. Talk to a co-worker, switch to a different activity, run some errands, or drink a glass of water.

Alternate tasks to stay alert. Set a schedule, with regular breaks, or divide a larger project into smaller chunks. Plan ahead. Procrastination can perpetuate a cycle of fatigue, as doing everything last minute can be stressful.

Move the Body

Just moving the body gets blood pumping and fights fatigue. Spend time during breaks exercis-

ing in the company gym or walking around the building. Find a friend to stay on track with at-work exercising, and be sure to exercise regularly outside of work, too.

Offer to run errands at work, deliver a memo in person instead of sending e-mail, and take the long way around the facility. If appropriate, walk around the building – outside – to enjoy fresh air and sunshine.

If unable to physically leave your workspace, try doing some quick stretches. Reach tired typing fingers high over the head, stretch out sore legs, and contort like a cat to ease back pain. Stretch any part of the body that feels tense, tired, or numb. Make a habit of listening to the body. Many aches and pains occur from sitting in an uncomfortable position for too long.

Escape the Office

Try the following office escapes

to wake up and get back on track:

Think of a favorite place or memory. Spend a couple minutes in that place, remembering the details and happy feelings.

Decorate a workspace with pictures of family, friends, a beloved pet, and a favorite vacation spot. Take a few seconds to look at a picture and remember why one is working in the first place.

Music can also offer welcome escape and energy. Choose music that is stimulating and does not generate negative feelings, as these will contribute to fatigue.

Just doing something unusual will help you out of the rut. If no one else is around, sing a song or whistle. Jump up and down. Take a yo-yo out of the desk drawer and practice a few moves, as long as the boss isn't looking. Be creative, and be as random as possible without harming self or others.

Eat Healthy

Many people reach for carbohydrates when tired, but carbs just

make the fatigue worse. They burn off a short time later, leaving the person more tired than before.

Try a slow, natural rush of energy with high protein foods such as low-fat cheese or yogurt and low-salt nuts. A piece of fruit offers a short-term burst of energy, but it is healthier than junk food.

Drinking soda and other highly sugared drinks is easy when tired. Get in the routine of drinking water instead. For a while, the sugar withdrawal may be painful, but in the long run, the body will function more effectively and efficiently on water than artificial liquids packed with chemicals and sweeteners.

Meditate

A quick meditation can boost energy and break the monotony of the day. Here are several quick and easy exercises that may help.

Try the tree pose, a yoga position. Remove shoes, and stand up

straight. Curl the toes up, and visualize the balls and pads of the feet sinking into the ground, like roots. Breathe deeply three times, then lift up the arms, like branches during an inhale, and turn the face upward to the sun, even though it's beyond the office ceiling. Arch the back, if desired, and continue to breathe deeply for as long as desired.

Find lotion or aromatherapy oil in an invigorating scent, such as peppermint, ginger, or citrus. Gently massage the lotion into the hands slowly. Visualize the tension seeping out of the hands. When the hands feel relaxed, lift the hands up to the nose, and breathe in the scent with several deep breaths.

Staying awake at work can be a challenge. With a few simple tricks, fighting fatigue can be healthy, too. However, there are only so many tricks to keep you awake. The best remedy for fatigue is to get enough sleep as soon as possible.

VOICES from SEAFARERS



Capt. Victorino S. Ando and the crew of **ASTRO VENUS**

Seafaring life nowadays is really tough and different from before due to restrictions in the crew's shore liberty. Now, Heavenly Father, if only I had known that it would come to this, I would have chosen a land job.



Jonathan Barcelon, 3/O of **HESTIA LEADER**

On behalf of the Filipino crew onboard, I would like to thank the JSU for all the support that you have given us. You have provided us with valuable and useful information.

Capt. Reyno P. Soco of **WORLD SPIRIT**



Communication and good harmony onboard is a very important part of our seafaring life. I would like to propose to the JSU to negotiate with ship owners to include a provision in the next CBA for a "Wireless Internet Broadband" provider onboard for easy communication access with our families.



Crew of **MORNING CARINA**

We thank the JSU for all the support and funding for the welfare facilities in the Philippines.



Capt. Edgar L. Uy and crew of **JP GUNJO**

The JSU Union Officers and AMOSUP's L.O. visitations provide us with all the latest information and updates, the funding of various facilities, training, etc., and show that the JSU really cares for all its members. We understand that the JSU and AMOSUP are trying their best to get us an increase in our wages and benefits, and for this, we salute you.



Officers and Crew of **ANDERSON BRIDGE**

Thanks to the JSU for giving us its support. Our ship was turned over to us last May and we become a full Filipino crew.



Capt. Melchor G. Jagua of **SINCERITY ACE**

My C/O signed off and went to the JSU/AMOSUP Mariners' Home but was not accommodated because it was fully booked. It was full because of so many cadets from a big manning agency. Why don't you give priority to member seafarers, especially those who have just arrived from the ships. More power to the JSU and its staff!

JOKE CORNER

Deadly Wife

The sailors used to play mahjong during their free time. In one of their sessions, a sailor who already lost \$500 suddenly grabbed his chest and dropped dead on the mahjong table.

The Captain didn't know how he would break the sad news to the sailor's wife. "I want to tell you something about your husband. I hope you would just take it easy," the Captain said over the phone. "He lost \$500 at mahjong."

The wife screamed angrily, "Tell him to drop dead!"

Submitted by **ISS John Canto**

U.S. issues directive on ships from Madagascar

Vessels bound for the United States that previously visited ports in Madagascar, off the southeastern coast of Africa, might be required to post armed guards at ship access points while in U.S. ports.

The U.S. Coast Guard issued

a directive today because it said Madagascar ports have not abided by a May 2007 U.S. request to maintain effective antiterrorism measures, a notice in the U.S. Federal Register explained.

Ships from Madagascar seeking

entry to U.S. ports must also be able to show that access points were guarded while at port in Madagascar.

Guards may be provided by the ship's crew or by outside security forces. Vessel officers must report actions taken to the

Coast Guard captain of the port before arriving in U.S. waters. Ships arriving at Toamasina (also known as Tamatave) during their last five port calls are exempted.

The regulation became effective as of Dec. 4. (Source: Fairplay)

JSU, IMMAJ hold local IBF negotiations

On Nov. 13, the JSU and the IMMAJ held local negotiations on the IBF JSU/AMOSUP-IMMAJ CBA, the IBF JSU/PUS-IMMAJ CA and the IBF JSU-IMMAJ CA agreements.

They discussed consideration of the agreements reached during the IBF negotiations, which were reported in the previous edition of Maritime Journal.

They agreed to discontinue the DER Fund and introduce the SPF (\$10 per person) retroactively from Jan. 1, 2008, as well as revise the rate of the Training Levy Fund to \$15 per person.

ITF questions legality of pirate route passage

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) has warned that ship owners and flag states that allow vessels to pass through pirate-infested waters might be acting illegally.

The ITF said: "The risk of attack is now so great that putting seafarers in harm's way amounts to a breach of the ship owner's duty of care."

It argued that ships should be allowed to travel through the Gulf of Aden, off the coast of Somalia and through parts of the wider Indian Ocean only if they have naval protection or are classified as low risk.

"Many of the world's largest ship registers have provided not one vessel to patrol an ocean that can only be made safe by an increase in the number of warships needed to aggressively patrol and police it," ITF said. (Source: Fairplay)

Taiwan extends stay for foreign seafarers

Taiwan revised an immigration regulation to extend the length of stay for foreign shipping crews to 30 days from one week.

"The revision, made in line of current international trend, is to allow foreign crew members to have a longer stay to facilitate their vessel maintenance, supply and cargo loading and unloading work," the Interior Ministry said in a statement. (Source: DPA)

Shipping warned of icebergs moving toward New Zealand

New Zealand authorities have issued an urgent warning to shipping that a group of Antarctic icebergs are traveling toward the country.

Maritime New Zealand said many of the bergs are big enough to be picked up on radar, including one estimated at 500 meters by 50 meters. But others might be submerged or too small to be tracked. The group of icebergs is reported to be moving at 4-5km a day.

They are thought to have origi-

nated in the partial disintegration of the Ross Sea Ice Shelf in 2000. Some of them passed within few hundred meters of Macquarie Island, and the closest are moving within 250km of the Southland/Otago coast.

The New Zealand Press Association reported that a group of Australians plans to travel by helicopter from the New Zealand coast to the nearest iceberg to carve out an ice bar and set up a disco. (Source: Fairplay)



Icebergs floating off southern tip of New Zealand (New Zealand Defense Dept. photo)

EU urges HoA-bound vessels to register, apply BMPs

As many as 25 percent of vessels passing through the Gulf of Aden have still not registered with the MSCHOA (The Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa). They have also not applied the Best Management Practices (BMPs), said Capt. Richard Farrington, chief of staff of the EU Naval Force (NAVFOR) and co-chairman of the Shared Awareness and De-confliction (SHADE) mechanism.

He was updating a recent meeting of Working Group 1 of the UN/IMO's contact group on piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) on the latest operational achievements, development and planning of the international anti-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden, focusing on information exchange, the internationally recommended transit corridor (IRTC) and the IRTC military coordination guide.

Crucially, he pointed out that seven out of eight vessels hijacked recently had not been reporting their movements to UKMTO (United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations) and not



An EU NAVFOR vessel escorts a commercial ship through the Gulf of Aden.

one of the eight was registered with MSCHOA, although all were registered with flags that had signed up to the BMPs. Out of 15,000 vessels with registered transits, only two had been hijacked and one of these was not implementing BMPs, he claimed.

Capt. Howard Snaith, Intertanko's marine director, had stated at a public conference in London that it was crucial that vessels passing through this area register with MSCHOA and report to UKMTO and at the same time implement BMPs.

He emphasized that the aver-

age pirate attack lasted only 11 minutes, and therefore a policy of "detracting, deterring, delaying" by implementing BMPs, reporting to UKMTO and registering with MSCHOA was the most effective way of avoiding a hijacking situation. (Source: Tanker Operator)

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not be armed, and that there should be no arms on board, not only because they introduce massive legal and liability issues but also because they can potentially raise the level of violence used by pirates and further endanger seafarers. However, the decision on whether or not to carry armed personnel is the prerogative of the flag state and the owner. Unions are keeping the situation vis-à-vis arms on ships under constant review.

FOC Campaign Review Working Group report

During the meeting, the FOC Campaign Review Working Group reported on developments in its efforts, while reports by the seafarers' and dockers' committees were examined.

It was approved that fee for joining the Special Seafarers' Department (SSD) will be raised from US\$62 to \$120, while developments in the campaigns against

Seatrade and Dowa Line were reported.

When summarizing the IBF negotiations, a briefing was given on the background for the discontinuation of the Developed Economy Rating (DER) Fund and establishing the Seafarer Promotion Fund (SPF), the development on which member unions both argued for and against.

The JSU explained that the development was a result of long

and difficult negotiations.

It also briefed how the SPF will be operated in the future and sought understanding from the attendees.

In respect to whether or not the SPF will be upgraded into an ITF uniform TCC agreement (non-IBF agreement), it was decided that the ITF secretariat will prepare material for discussion to clarify how it would be upgraded and what technical challenges it would face.

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