



Negotiators from the International Bargaining Forum met at a Tokyo hotel on Feb. 2, 2012 to address the piracy issue. JSU was represented by (from far right) Hiroyuki Watanabe, ITF Policy Section Director; Yasumi Morita, International Affairs Bureau General Director; and President Yoji Fujisawa. (Photo courtesy of Ocean Gate International)

Biometric ID extended to one-fourth of world's freight shipping crews

Nine years after it was first mooted by the International Labour Organization (ILO), Convention No. 185 has finally been ratified by the Republic of the Philippines.

This now means that Filipino seamen, who represent around 25 percent of the labor force on merchant and other shipping ranging from general cargo and bulk freight vessels to tugboats and passenger liners, will now carry biometric identification designed to eliminate fraud and identity theft and ensure fair treatment of crews.

Over a quarter of a million seamen from the Islands can be afloat on the world's merchant ships at any one time and are designated as sea based migrant workers.

The nation have proved popular and durable staff for virtually every major maritime employer globally and with the adoption of the Seafarers' Identity Document (SID), which follows the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) guidelines on machine readable travel documents (ICAO Document 9303), port authority and border control officials are able to verify the seafarers' identity by the comparison of fingerprints to the biometric information on their SID, and also by comparing the seafarers' biometric information with details held on the Issuing Authority's database at any hour of any day.

Since the adoption of Convention No. 185 authorities have been ensuring that around 3,000 worldwide ports and border transit offices in regular use when switching crews are equipped to verify seafarers' identities.

The intention of the ILO is to issue SID's to the two million plus workers associated with global maritime trade. Commenting on the official acknowledgement that the Philippines has signed up to the Convention, ITF seafarers section secretary Jon Whitlow said:

"This is significant news. This move by the world's largest crew supply country sends a strong signal to nations worldwide that seafarers' rights to shore leave and safe transit must be respected."

Maritime security specialist Hassan M. Eltaher, president of Marine Canada commented:

"The ratification of No. 185 is good for maritime security, and equally good for the Philippine overseas job market." (Source: From the Handy Shipping Guide (UK).)

IBF holds high-level meeting

ITF, JNG execs argue extended high risk areas, conditions

An International Bargaining Forum (IBF) High Level Officers' Meeting was held recently at a Tokyo hotel to discuss IBF-related matters. The negotiators from the IBF, comprised of executives of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and the Joint Negotiation Group (JNG), met on Feb. 2, 2012 at the Prince Park Tower Tokyo to focus on the piracy issue, in particular, high risk piracy areas.

As for an extended high risk area, the ITF demanded the consolidation of the existing High Risk Area and the Extended Risk Zone, and to implement in the extended high risk area, conditions similar to those of the high-risk area, such as working conditions and seafarers' right to disembark.

However, the JNG insisted that it is not rational to implement new conditions while the piracy situation has not worsened since the parties agreed in March 2011 on how they would handle the existing high risk area.

When crewmembers are employed,

contracts are signed after the seafarers have been told in which waters they will be working, the JNG added, stressing that it is therefore unreasonable for the seafarers to disembark while on duty at sea.

In response, the ITF said that no one can know when the piracy situation

No one can know when the piracy situation will change, and contracts should reflect this, ITF says

will change. As such, even if seafarers agree on what is written in contracts when signing them, it does not mean that they should agree to work in dangerous waters until the end of their employment contract periods, which are valid up to nine months, it added.

It is possible that seafarers' families would want them to return home if the piracy situation changes for the worse. Therefore, in consideration of the fact that many seafarers are still being taken hostage for long periods by pirates, it is necessary to confirm

seafarers' intentions in advance as per their fundamental human right. For this reason, the federation emphasized that its demand is reasonable.

In respect to this issue, neither of the ITF and the JNG compromised their stance, failing to reach agreement. Therefore, they decided to hold another round of negotiations when the piracy situation changes.

Regarding new high risk areas, the ITF proposed the designation of waters off the coast of western Africa and Syria as well as ports in Syria. The JNG said they will designate them as high risk areas if the ITF proposal has been deemed appropriate. As such, the group announced that it will research and analyze piracy in these waters and make a decision to the ITF hopefully at the end of February.

The All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU), the president of which is also the first vice-chair of the ITF's Seafarers' Section, said it is determined to continue to work hard to protect seafarers' rights.

Unions in RP, others conclude FOC ship protest

Seafarers and dock workers unions in designated ports in the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia completed recently a week-long industrial campaign against Flag of Convenience (FOC) ships visiting their ports.

Inspectors from the International Trade Federation and local union activists at these ports investigated ships, crew contracts and working and living conditions on board FOC vessels notorious for employing seafarers on exploitative conditions, according to a statement from the Philippine Seafarers' Union,

the local affiliate of ITF.

In Philippines, things started on a slow note on Day 1 (Jan. 9) in view of heightened security alert due to terrorist threat in Manila and the port area. An impressive rally of seafarers and dockers union against the ills of FOC shipping was taken out on the second day from the union office to the Asian Terminal. Three vessels were inspected. On board Japanese-owned Panama flagged *Hanjin Surabaya* crew were found to be paid poor wages and the Japanese Inspectorate was alerted.

PSU said negotiations with the company are underway.

The regional event had been coordinated from the ITF's Asia Pacific office in New Delhi, India, from where regional secretary Mahendra Sharma said: "We're pleased to welcome Thai unions into this latest action, whose participants intend to do everything possible to ensure decent pay and conditions are applied on ships across the region."

In the Philippines, Manila ITF inspector Rodrigo Aguinaldo led in coordinating the week-long activity, and in conducting visits to ships, in company of seafarers-marine officers and crew - dockers who belong to trade

unions with their officers. The 90,000-strong Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP) led by their chairman-president Dr. Conrado F. Oca, together with their executive vice president ex-Navy chief Vice Admiral

Eduardo Ma. R. Santos have expressed all-out support to ITF's move in helping the seafarers, protecting their rights and promoting their welfare.

Capt. Felix Rebustes has been tasked to coordinate for the week-long duration.

Likewise, AMOSUP's affiliate, the Philippine Transport General Workers Organization (PTGWO)

under its head Robie B. Oca drew up a united commitment for a stronger ITF.

The Philippines continues to be the No. 1 supplier of manpower in the international crewing fleet. The number of Filipino seafarers overseas is now reaching 400,000.

As the campaign stepped up its activities midweek, it was hoped that some of the companies plying FOC vessels will come around to sign ITF agreements which will ensure implementation of internationally accepted wage and working conditions for seafarers serving on board these ships. (Source: Manila Bulletin)

Fall in piracy but Somali threat remains

There was a slight fall in reported incidents of piracy and armed robbery on ships worldwide in 2011, according to the annual figures from the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), but Somali piracy still poses the main threat. The IMB's global piracy report for 2011 shows that more than half the 439 attacks reported to its worldwide piracy reporting centre took place off Somalia and in the Gulf of Guinea on the west coast of Africa, with Somali pirates accounting for 54 percent of all attacks. Total attacks worldwide showed a slight fall from the 445 attacks reported in 2010.

In 2011, 802 crewmembers were taken hostage, compared with 1,181 in 2010, with eight seafarers killed in both years. In 2011, 45 vessels were hijacked, 176 boarded, 113 fired upon and 105 reported attempted attacks. However, concerted measures against Somali piracy are continuing to pay off, with a fall in successful hijackings from 49 in 2010 to 28 in 2011.

In West Africa, Nigeria and Benin continue to be piracy hotspots, with under-reporting

of incidents distorting the true level. IMB warns that hijacks in these areas can be violent.

Somali pirates have now released the 21 Indian crewmembers of the Marshall Island-flagged tanker *Fairchem Bogey*, hijacked off Salalah, Oman last August.

Thirteen suspected Somali pirates were captured during a NATO operation in the Indian Ocean on Jan. 13. The men surrendered after U.K. Royal Marines boarded their vessel, which carried a selection of weapons.

Figures from IMB on 19 January show that Somali pirates currently hold captive nine vessels and 151 hostages. Hostages continue to include seven Indian seafarers from the Asphalt Venture and four South Koreans from the Gemini, still held captive despite the payment of ransoms.

The latest reported incidents include:

- Armed pirates approached a vessel 93 nautical miles off Socotra Island, Yemen on Jan. 17 but moved away after the onboard armed security team showed their weapons.

- Six pirates in a skiff approached and fired on a tanker 265 nautical miles north east of Socotra Island on Jan. 16. Non-essential crew mustered in the citadel and the onboard security team fired warning flares. The pirates retreated to their mother-ship after further flares were fired.

- Four robbers armed with knives approached a container-ship anchored off Bintan Island, Indonesia on Jan. 14 and two attempted to board. The alarm was raised and the crew mustered and activated fire hoses, which led the robbers to abandon their boarding.

- Six robbers armed with long knives attempted to board a bulk carrier anchored at Callao, Peru on Jan. 13 but abandoned the attack after the alarm was raised and the crew mustered.

- Five robbers boarded a bulk carrier anchored at Adang Bay, Indonesia on Jan. 13 and escaped with stolen ship's stores.

- Three robbers armed with long knives boarded a tanker anchored at Balikpapan, Indonesia on Jan. 11 and escaped with ship's stores after the alarm was

raised.

- A boat approached and fired on a bulk carrier 80 nautical miles off Bonny, Nigeria on Jan. 9. The crew retreated to the citadel and emerged after 12 hours to find that the pirates had escaped with cash and ship's stores.

- About eight pirates armed with AK47 chased, fired on and attempted to board a container-ship around 85 nautical miles off Bonny Island, Nigeria on Jan. 9 but moved away after the vessel increased speed and took evasive maneuvers and the crew mustered in the citadel.

- Six pirates in a skiff carrying machine guns and rocket-propelled grenade approached a bulk carrier 146 nautical miles off Muscat, Oman on Jan. 5. The alarm was raised, non-essential crew mustered in the citadel and the master took anti-piracy measures. The pirates abandoned the attack after a naval helicopter arrived on the scene.

All attacks and suspicious sightings should be reported to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre, Tel: +603 2031 0014 (24 hours), Email: imbkl@icc-ccs.org (Source: ITF Seafarers)

FSA welcomes IMO sec-gen

The Filipino Shipowners' Association (FSA) headed by its chairman Ambassador Carlos C. Salinas, the 90,000-strong Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP) led by its chairman-president Dr. Conrado F. Oca, and other groups of major stakeholders in the Philippine maritime industry lauded the visit to country of International Maritime Organization (IMO) Secretary-General Koji Sekimizu on Feb. 7-9, 2012.

"It is, indeed, a big honor to our country and its maritime industry to be visited by Secretary-General Sekimizu, as this is his first official visit to an IMO member-state since he assumed the highest post in IMO last Jan. 1, 2012," said Salinas. "We should be thankful to him (Sekimizu) for giving importance to our country, an archipelago of more than 7,000 islands," said Salinas, a highly respected diplomat and top shipping management executive.

Dr. Oca said Sec-Gen Sekimizu's visit and pronouncements about the Philippines on maritime industry, validates his care and concern, much more a recognition for the Philippines as a working maritime nation, reinforced by industrious and competent seafarers.

"We look upon on him as a world leader, who, we know, could help save the world from man-made threats and disasters, through his advocacy-turned staunch IMO programs, drawn up for more sustainable programs for the protection for marine environment; for stronger maritime security and safety of shipping and cleaner oceans, for continuously fighting and sprucing all available efforts to win against ship piracy at the Gulf of Aden and coast of Somalia; and the upgrading competency programs with seafarers as beneficiaries, like compliance to international 'Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping' (STCW) for seafarers," Dr. Oca said.

Sekimizu is the first ever from East Asia to be elected to IMO's highest post, succeeded long-time serving Efthimos Mitropoulos as IMO Secretary-General. (Source: Manila Bulletin)

Philippines OKs merchant ships to employ private security

The Philippines has given national flagged merchant vessels the go-ahead to employ private security on board to protect Filipino seafarers from Somali pirates in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

The move, however, is "subject to the Philippine shipping companies'" adherence to strict guidelines promulgated by the Maritime Industry Authority and the International Maritime Organization (IMO)," the DFA has said.

"In their participation at meetings to combat piracy in the IMO, the United Nations and other fora, Philippine government officials have been advocating the importance of promoting the safety of Filipino seamen. This advocacy is sup-

ported by other governments," it said.

Pirates in east Africa continue to hold 26 Filipino seamen hostage on board three foreign-flagged vessels.

"The longest one in detention is a crew member of the *MV Iceberg 1*, which was hijacked on Jan. 29, 2010, off the Port of Aden in Yemen," the DFA said.

Between 2006 and 2011, a total of 769 sailors from the Philippines were seized by pirates operating in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean.

It is believed that all but the 26 were released unharmed and upon payment by their principals of ransom.

Earlier this month, the DFA said the government had come up with a plan to protect Filipino sailors from Somali pirates.

The plan calls for, among other measures, the adoption of what the merchant shipping industry refers to as "best management practices," said Raul Hernandez, the foreign office spokesperson.

These practices—or ship protection measures—include watch and lookout arrangements, installing antipiracy alarms and razor wire around the vessels, using water cannons that blast steam and hot water as deterrents, and wearing night vision optics.

The government is "also making arrangements with the ships' foreign principals and local manning agencies to travel along a safe corridor" in shipping routes, Hernandez told the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

The Philippines is a member of the 70-nation Contact Group

on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, which includes the United States, China, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, among other countries.

The group has "facilitated the operational coordination of an unprecedented international naval effort from more than 30 countries working together to protect transiting vessels; worked to build the capacity of Somalia and other countries in east Africa to combat piracy; and launched a new working group aimed at disrupting the pirate enterprise ashore, including its financial network through approaches similar to those used to address other types of organized transnational crime networks," said a U.S. Department of State report posted on the website of the U.S. Embassy in Manila. (Source: Ship-talk)

DOLE thanks JSU for PHP2.5M donation for flood relief

Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Acting Secretary Lourdes M. Trasmonte has expressed gratitude to the All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) for its PHP2.5 million cash donation for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan City, which were severely devastated by tropical storm Sendong.

"We are very grateful to the JSU for this donation," said Trasmonte shortly after she received the check on behalf of

the DOLE from JSU President Yoji Fujisawa.

At a simple turnover of the donation held at the DOLE Conference Room in Intramuros, Manila, Trasmonte said the amount will be used in assisting DOLE employees and other displaced workers who were affected by the massive flashfloods caused by Sendong in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan City on Dec. 16, 2011.

"As a token of solidarity and support, JSU would like to make a humble contribution to the

relief efforts of DOLE. We hope that this would be of help in the reconstruction efforts for the benefits of the Filipinos who were affected by the disaster," said President Fujisawa in response to the acting labor and employment chief.

The DOLE has already released a total of PHP6.912 million for the emergency rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan City which was used in the relief efforts for displaced workers in the said area. (PNA)



The Philippine Department of Labor and Employment Acting Secretary Lourdes M. Trasmonte (sixth from left) accepts a donation from JSU President Yoji Fujisawa.

VOICES from SEAFARERS



Capt. Christian O. Ligan, C/E Jimmy L. Trapila & crew of M/V ARMERIA

We are very thankful that our new CBA have been approved. The efforts of the JSU to improve our salaries onboard is very much appreciated.



C/O G. Ejercito, 2/O G. Villareal & crew of M/V JUPITER SPIRIT

The effort of the JSU staff to visit our ship is well appreciated. We are looking forward to seeing you again. More power to the JSU.



Capt. Rogelio C. Mahinay & crew of M/V TENDER SALUTE

We are very grateful to the JSU Filipino staff for visiting our ship. We will continue our support to this union and more power to all staff of the JSU.



Capt. Carlos A. Villanueva Jr. & crew of M/V STELLAR NAVIGATOR

We are very grateful for the visit extended to us by the JSU ISS to our vessel. Thank you very much for providing information and updates on the new CBA.



Capt. Ernesto T. Chua, C/E Wilson F. Mayola & crew of M/V RUBENA N

Thank you so much for visiting us at JFE port to inform us that there will be a new CBA coming this year. We look forward to meeting the JSU staff again on our next port of call in Japan.



Capt. Amiel R. Tenorio & crew of M/V MATSUSHIRO

We thank you for the continued monitoring and updates to all seafarers with regards to the benefits of all JSU members. God Bless and more power.



Capt. Edgar S. Palquiran & crew of M/V SIERRA NEVADA HIGHWAY

We thank the JSU staff for the news of a new wage increase for us officers and crew. Thank you for the visits, and more power.



Capt. Alfredo A. Coste Jr., C/E Danilo A. Feliciano & crew of M/V QUEEN ASIA

Mabuhay!!! Thank you very much for taking time to visit us. We hope that the JSU will continue its welfare services and activities for its members.



Capt. Genaro M. Ragay & crew of M/V CAPE MAGNOLIA

On behalf of my officers and crew, we would like to thank you for visiting our ship. We appreciate your kind concern for all Filipino JSU members.

ICS warns shipping firms on STCW compliance

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) has advised shipping companies to ensure that they comply with the Manila amendments to STCW.

In particular, seafarers' rest hours and the more stringent requirements for preventing drug and alcohol abuse that now apply worldwide should be taken into account, the ICS said.

The ICS and the International Shipping Federation (ISF) led employer representation at the IMO Diplomatic Conference,

which adopted the Manila amendments to the STCW.

The Manila amendments began a phased entry into force on 1st January, 2012.

ICS reminded shipowners that the new STCW minimum rest hour requirements are likely to be vigorously enforced by Port State Control (PSC) officers who will have the authority to check that ships maintain accurate records for individual seafarers, which demonstrate they have been provided with the required minimum rest.

For example, seafarers must now always have at least 10 hours rest in any 24-hour period.

To help further reduce the possibility of fatigue, much of the flexibility that previously applied under STCW has now been removed.

The new STCW rest hour requirements were developed to ensure that they were compatible with those stipulated in the ILO Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), which is expected to enter into force in 2013.

Peter Hinchliffe, ICS secretary-

general, explained: "It is particularly important that companies comply with the new IMO rest hour requirements and record and monitor seafarers' rest periods.

"Apart from the importance of preventing fatigue, Port State Control can be expected to begin checking the authenticity and accuracy of any records by comparing them with other vessel documentation. Seafarers must also confirm that their hours are accurately recorded," he warned. (Source: *Shiptalk*)

Focus shifts to security risk off West Africa

With the Somali piracy situation going through a degree of containment, attention is beginning to focus on the security problems off West Africa.

According to a report from Denmark-based company Risk Intelligence there were 70 reported attacks on offshore oil and gas and shipping targets last year compared with 58 in 2010.

Nigerian criminals began to focus on product tankers in December 2010, and in 2011, they attacked 30 tankers off Lagos, Lomé and Cotonou, and two more off the Niger Delta.

The analysis suggests that a combination of factors have led to this problem, and these include the amnesty for former Niger Delta militants, fuel subsidies and political pressure on criminal networks in Nigeria.

Thankfully the Nigerian "brand" of piracy does not entail ransom seafarers, as the focus is to take over the ship for as long as it takes to steal the cargo. Then the vessel will be freed. All told some 14 vessels have been hijacked in this way, after short periods of captivity they have had their petroleum products offloaded into small tankers.

There has been a move to joint naval patrols between Nigeria and Benin in a bid to tackle the problem, and it is understood that around 100 military personnel from the two countries, equipped with three patrol boats and four fast attack craft, are engaged in the operation, and that there is also a support ship equipped with a radar and helicopter. (Source: *Shiptalk*)

Scholarship online application begins

The Norwegian Training Center is now accepting online application for scholarship programs for marine transportation and marine engineering.

The scholarship program provides opportunities for poor but deserving Filipino youth to pursue quality maritime education, and become competitive seafarers in the international maritime market.

Apply at: www.ntcm.com.ph. (TBO/LBRVSM/PIA-Palawan) (Source: *Shiptalk*)

Piracy, armed robbery in Asian waters show decline

Some 155 incidents were reported last year versus the 167 in 2010, according to the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP).

Of these 133 were actual incidents and 22 were just attempts at piracy, the Singapore-based ReCAAP said.

There was a 36 percent fall in Category 2, or moderately significant incidents, from 59 in 2010 to 38 last year. This was largely due to concerted efforts by Indian authorities and the littoral States of the South China Sea to combat piracy in their respective

regions.

Hijacking and kidnapping have remained relatively consistent throughout the past five years, with 2011 being no exception.

There was seven Category 1, or very significant incidents, comprising five hijackings, one kidnapping and an armed robbery. In the six hijacking/kidnapping incidents, all crew were rescued unharmed, and the culprits in four of the incidents arrested. All five hijacked vessels were recovered. Of the 155 incidents reported in 2011, two-thirds of them occurred when vessels were at anchor or berth; and one-third while underway.

Those involving ships at anchor or berth were mostly petty theft involving ship stores and engine spares, and did not involve violence.

In contrast, incidents reported off Tanjung Ayam, Tanjung Ramunia and Pulau Mungging in Malaysia were different in nature involving robbers who stole cash and crew's personal belongings. Half of the incidents at ports and anchorages were in Indonesia. However, there was an improvement in both Bangladesh and Vietnam, ReCAAP said.

Three-quarters of the 47 incidents involving vessels underway took place in either the South

China Sea or the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.

"While the coordinated patrols by Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore have contributed towards a decline in incidents during 2007-2010, the number did increase last year," ReCAAP admitted. "In response, the littoral States have stepped up surveillance, strengthened individual efforts in policing their territorial waters; and enhanced cooperation and information sharing."

ReCAAP also noted that there has been an increase in the number of incidents involving tug boats in 2011 with 35 incidents reported. (Source: *Trade Winds*)

EU to audit maritime education system in RP

The European Union is set to conduct an audit on the state of the Philippine maritime education system, the results of which may prove to be either a boon or bane for Filipino seafarers.

EU Ambassador to the Philippines Guy Ledoux said representatives from the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), an agency attached to the EU, would undertake the audit in the first quarter of 2012. EMSA last year raised some concerns to the Philippine government regarding the quality of maritime schools in the country.

"They visited last year and they found that, in some cases, standards were not up to international norms. So they asked the Philippine government to take corrective measures," Ledoux said at a recent meeting with the Inquirer staff.

Should the Philippine government fail to take the necessary steps to address the issues, all Filipino seafarers could be banned from setting foot on EU flagships. Already, the EU threatened to revoke its accreditation of Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) certificates issued by local schools. STCWs are required before seafarers are allowed to work on international vessels. (Source: *Shiptalk*)

IMO, members urged to address cyber threat

While much of the maritime security focus is on stopping pirates, there is another more hi-tech concern which is worrying some experts.

According to the first EU, European Network & Information Security Agency (ENISA) report on maritime-sector cybersecurity, the maritime industry is simply not taking electronic and cyber security threats into consideration.

The study urges the IMO, the European Commission and member states to align and harmonize international and European policies, and as the maritime industry is increasingly reliant Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in order to optimise its operations then security has to become a concern.

They also advise member states

to raise awareness within the maritime industry, working with cybersecurity specialists to agree on a common strategy and develop good practice for maritime ICT security systems. Current maritime regulations and policies consider the physical aspects of security and safety, and ENISA is urging policy-makers to extend their attention to include cybersecurity.

The report found a perfect storm of low awareness and potential high impact. With all maritime players equally culpable, including government bodies, port authorities and maritime companies.

Why is there this seeming cyber blind-spot? Well, one of the reasons is thought to be the low number of known cyber security incidents within shipping and the fact that there has been little or no

media exposure to trigger specific and bold actions.

It was also seen that there are virtually no mechanisms in place in the Member States to consistently identify and/or report cyber security incidents specific within the maritime sector.

So even where they do occur, there is a danger that no-one will ever know. There were rumours when a German cruise ship grounded a few years back that the officers claimed that their equipment had been remotely tampered with. There was seemingly little proof and so the story seemed to quietly vanish.

Mind you, bearing how bad some watchkeepers are with working kit we can only imagine the havoc which could be caused by terrorist tampering. (Source: *Shiptalk*)

France Telecom launches paperless solution

France Telecom has launched a paperless maritime navigation and communication solution.

Consilium and Orange Business Services have launched a paperless navigation solution that extends an Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) over the world's largest MPLS-based network.

This bundled, flat-rate solution named Current At Sea enables shipping companies to move to a fully electronic platform for navigation and communications.

Current At Sea is a future-proof, modular ECDIS and communication system that can include voyage optimization programs, fleet and ship management systems, and real-time monitoring applications. Orange is bridging the ship and shore by integrating ECDIS with Orange's fully managed network (both terrestrial and satellite, including Inmarsat FleetBroadband connectivity). The Orange network ensures accurate, precise data and provides

value added enterprise communications such as Business Talk Global, IP Telephony, WAN optimization, M2M and video conferencing to ships at sea.

Nicolas Roy, head of the Network Solutions Business Unit, Orange Business Services, said, "Current At Sea is a one-stop-shop solution that is not about simply replacing paper nautical charts with digital ones but is about completely rethinking business processes in order to improve safety, efficiency and costs." (Source: *Shiptalk*)

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