

Homeland Defense Journal

"He is best secure from dangers who is on his guard even when he seems safe." —Syrus Publilius

Homeland Defense Journal, Inc. | Suite 1003 | 4301 Wilson Boulevard | Arlington, Virginia 22203
www.homelanddefensejournal.com | Phone: 703-807-2758 | Fax: 703-807-2758

Guaranteeing Smooth Sailing for Port Security

By Gerald (Jerry) Woolever
 For Homeland Defense Journal

Just about any store in the local shopping mall is on the front line of homeland security.

Consider a shipment of 100,000 leather jackets from a factory in Milan, Italy, bound for a warehouse in Omaha, Neb. Following the successful deployment of passenger and baggage screeners to the nation's airports, this seemingly innocuous container of jackets is the focal point of the federal government's maritime security strategy because part of the jackets' journey would be by sea.

Leather jackets from Italy, toys from Taiwan or bananas from Costa Rica, by themselves, would not be considered threatening. However, on average, one shipment of coats would pass through up to 28 points before winding up in the local mall.

That's up to 28 different ships, docks, tugboats, warehouses, forklifts, trucks or trains in many different countries and U.S. states. That one shipment also passed through countless pairs of human hands.

Who would know if terrorists tampered with the jacket? What about the other 17,000 shipping containers, Government Executive magazine estimated that enter 361 U.S. Sea ports every day?

That is a synopsis of the task of ensuring the safety of consumer goods imported into the United States every day of the year. It is a logistical migraine of the first order.

To avoid that headache, the government and industry partners should take a holistic approach to improving maritime security. Rather than consider safety at sea independent of highway security, it should approach the two intertwined problems together. What should also be clear is that technology exists today to reasonably ensure the safe shipment of nearly every product that enters the American marketplace.

Why? Frequently in one shipment, a single container would travel by ship, rail and truck before reaching its final destination.

What the government should do as it tackles this monumental homeland security problem is establish a clear process to ensure that public and private industry partners employ the best available technology to mitigate those threats, much like it did with the passenger screener

rollout completed in December. The successful deployment of 44,000 passenger screeners to 429 airports in less than six months should be the model used for the homeland security projects of the future.

While the airport piece of homeland security was unique and challenging, improving maritime security would prove much more difficult because of the larger number of stakeholders involved, the significant volume of cargo, the number of ports and the miles of American coastline.

There are a number of steps that must be taken to guarantee smooth sailing for port security:

Understand the supply chain

The government and port security stakeholders need to take a step back and map every landmark from the factory floor to the showroom floor and know each stakeholder along the supply chain. From its understanding of every manufacturer, shipper and insurance company, they would be able to develop an integrated picture of what it means to have total and secure asset visibility.

Identify critical supply chain logistics issues

The supply chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Homeland security officials must now look for weaknesses in the supply chain. Where can a potential terrorist come in contact with that shipment of leather jackets? Various parties must understand vulnerabilities on the factory floor, on the rail line and in the warehouse – and then take steps to minimize those risks.

Establish end-to-end supply chain management processes

Processes must be put in place to make sure that container of leather jackets could be tracked, uninterrupted, from Milan to Omaha and that every stakeholder along the way, from the manufacturer to the warehouse worker in Omaha, is confident that each jacket is untainted by terrorists. Each party to the shipment of those jackets wants a clean handoff of that cargo from one to the other, at minimal cost and with as little interruption in the process as possible.

continued on page 2

Guaranteeing Smooth Sailing for Port Security

continued from page 1

Enlist technology in the fight against terrorism

State-of-the-art technology is available to shippers, manufacturers and warehouse workers to monitor distribution of exported products, contain theft and prevent unwanted intrusions.

Intrusion devices, like home motion detectors, would be inserted in a container. When activated by light and motion, they would send a signal to the port authority or the warehouse that there has been tampering.

Radio frequency identification tags would be attached to individual cartons containing vital information about the contents. The box could then be inspected remotely to ensure that it contains the 100,000 leather jackets that left Milan, instead of something less benign.

In a way, passive or active tags are like little bugs. Boxes exported to the United States could be monitored by

GPS and tracked along the supply chain. The factory could monitor the whereabouts of those jackets at all times.

Sensors would be critical to examine the inside of the container to determine whether anyone may have slipped in any fissionable materials. Proliferation of weapons grade plutonium is of particular concern.

As port security work commences later this year, an operations center would be established to monitor container traffic moving in and out of the ports, enabling the government to track each container from end to end.

The goal of the maritime security portion of homeland security is to make sure that every barrel of oil imported from the Middle East, every plastic toy brought in from South Korea and every leather jacket from Italy is safe to use and enjoy by the American people.

Retired Coast Guard Rear Adm. Gerald "Jerry" is senior vice president of homeland security operations for INNOLOG and was involved in the company's portion of the passenger screener rollout for the TSA. Woolever has more than 35 years of logistics and operations experience with private industry and with the U.S. Coast Guard. INNOLOG is a leading integrator of logistics systems for homeland security, defense and state and local government agencies. Woolever's e-mail address is gwoolever@innolog.com.



1.800.INNOLOG
www.innolog.com