Maritime Security
This book is dedicated to my parents, Francis and Virginia McNicholas, for their never-ending love and support, and to my children, Alexandra, Maria, and Julian, who are the sunshine in my life.
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About the Author

Michael A. McNicholas

Mr. McNicholas is the Managing Director of Phoenix Management Services Group in the United States, Panama, and Costa Rica, Operations Support Services (Panama), and Pathfinder Consulting, LLC, in the United States. Michael has over 14 years of distinguished and progressive law enforcement, military, and intelligence experience and, most recently, 20 years as founder/cofounder of several successful professional security service corporations in Latin America and the United States. A former noncommissioned and commissioned officer (direct presidential appointment) in the U.S. Army, Mr. McNicholas served for 9 years in airborne infantry, military police, and military intelligence units. Mr. McNicholas held a top secret security clearance in the Central Intelligence Agency, where he specialized in counter-narcotics trafficking and international terrorism and served on the Vice President’s Narcotics Interdiction Task Force and as the CIA Liaison to U.S. Coast Guard Intelligence. Michael designed, implemented, and managed the internationally acclaimed seaport security program at Manzanillo International Terminal–Panama, the largest container port in Latin America. In 2003, he spearheaded the successful efforts to have Phoenix Management Services Group designated as the first “Recognized Security Organization” (RSO) by the Republic of Panama and the Dominican Republic. On behalf of the government of Panama, Phoenix evaluated and approved or rejected ship security plans for over 2,500 ships in the Panama Registry. In the Dominican Republic, Phoenix conducted port facility security assessments and wrote the port facility security plans for two of the primary ports in the country. Mr. McNicholas is credited with copioneering the Maritime Security Team (antipiracy/stowaway/drugtrafficking/terrorist) concept in commercial cargo shipping and has Maritime Security Teams deployed onboard container and cargo ships in the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean. Mr. McNicholas and his staff have conducted security surveys and training in every major seaport in Latin America and the Caribbean and has been a sole source contractor for a U.S. Intelligence agency. In mid-2001, Mr. McNicholas was contracted by RAND Corporation, under funding by the Defense Intelligence Agency and the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, to provide an intelligence analysis of the “origins and routes of arms procured by Colombian Guerrilla, Paramilitary, and terrorist groups.” From 2002–2004, Mr. McNicholas served as a Special Advisor to the Congress of the Republic of Panama for Counter-Narcotics, Terrorism, and Intelligence issues and on several occasions has briefed the current president of Panama on national security issues. Mr. McNicholas has conducted numerous briefings to senior intelligence officers and analysts at the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency and Pentagon—and more recently the Department of Homeland Security—on narcotics trafficking in Latin America, Islamic terrorist activities in Latin America, and maritime security issues. Mr. McNicholas is the author of Chapter 13 (“Port Security”) of the book Port Engineering: Planning, Construction, Maintenance, and Security (Tsinker, Gregory, 2004, Wiley and Sons, Inc.).
Triana Resto has 20 years of experience working in a variety of positions in international shipping and all facets of the transportation industry. For 10 years, Ms. Resto managed the day-to-day activities of the Documentation department of a large ocean freight forwarding and brokering company, which coordinated the worldwide transport of both import and export cargo via ocean, rail, truck, and air. She later worked for Florida-based TEC Marine Shipping Line, as a manager of the Import/Export Documentation, Logistics, and Equipment Control departments. A graduate of Florida Atlantic University, Ms. Resto holds a bachelor’s degree in International Business and Trade.

James Stapleton is a graduate of the United States Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York. Following graduation, James sailed for 3 years as an officer onboard several U.S. Flag cargo, container, and bulk vessels. In 1999, Mr. Stapleton accepted a position with Del Monte Fresh Produce in Miami, as the Shipping Operations Coordinator. In this position, James was charged with coordinating and scheduling vessel operations (sailing routes and travel times, maintenance, and port activities and cargo stowage issues). Shortly after, in 2000, James was promoted to Port Manager of Del Monte Fresh Produce’s operation in the Port of Galveston, Texas. As Port Manager, Mr. Stapleton was responsible for directing all aspects of the port operations, including terminal planning; stevedoring and trucking issues; cargo discharging and loading activities; cold storage warehousing; dispatch and drayage to clients; and interface with the port authority, government agencies, Del Monte foreign sites, and U.S. clients. In 2006, James resigned to start up two service companies: Dolphin Chemical & Supply, LLC, and The American Energy Network in Texas.

Donna Friscia has over 30 years of experience in the maritime industry working for several Shipping Lines trading in Europe, the Far East, the Americas, and the Caribbean, holding a variety of management positions in the Pricing & Documentation Department, Customer Service, and Auditing. Donna started her career working for an NVOCC and then later at Tropical Shipping and Barber Steamship Company, where she learned cargo booking, import-export documentation preparation and filing, vessel chartering, and contract negotiations from the ground-floor up. Ms. Friscia also worked as a Senior Auditor for Tariff Compliance International (TCI), an industry watchdog which audits the rates, agreements, and all documentation of the Latin American operations of Maersk Lines, Crowley Liner Services, Seaboard Marine Line, King Ocean, Tropical Shipping, and the former Sea-Land Service.

Captain Frederick (Fred) Allen holds an Unlimited Master & First Class Pilot license issued by the US Coast Guard and during the past 30 years he commanded 7 containerships and held senior officer positions on several dozen other cargo ships operating in worldwide services. A graduate of West Virginia University, Fred was awarded a direct commission in
the US Navy Reserve and during the 1988 Seoul Olympics commanded the US Navy task force in charge of ensuring the security of Korean waters. Today he continues to serve and hold the rank of Captain in the US Navy Reserve. Since 2004, Captain Allen has worked as a consultant for Phoenix Vessel Services, an RSO for the Panamanian government, evaluating and approving/denying Ship Security Plans of vessels in the Panamanian Registry.

Ed Piper has over 30 years of diversified experience in law enforcement, security, intelligence, education and training. Ed served as a commissioned officer in U.S. Naval Intelligence, the Military Police Corps, and as a Police Officer in the Baltimore City Police Department. Mr. Piper was a Primary Instructor at the Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS) for the CSO/SSO/PFSO Courses and has taught numerous police and security management courses in Africa and Latin America. He is a veteran professor at teaching security, management, and contingency planning courses at Johns Hopkins University and also serves as the Dean of Homeland Security Studies at Canyon College. Mr. Piper is currently the Director of Security and Emergency Planning at Georgetown University School of Law.

Gerard R. Draughon has over 30 years experience in US law enforcement, with 25 years with US Customs and Border Protection and focused on seaport law enforcement. Gerry started his law enforcement career as a Police Officer in the Panama Canal Zone, where he was born and raised. After 5 years, Gerry was selected for employment with US Customs and in 1979 started as a Customs Inspector at the Miami Seaport and Miami International Airport. In 1983, Gerry was promoted to Senior Customs Inspector and spearheaded various special operations at the seaports and airports in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, and Key West, Florida. Most notable, Senior Inspector Draughon was a “founding member” of the Miami Contraband Enforcement Team (CET), which was US Customs’ flagship interdiction task force and became the model implemented all US Customs Points of Entry nationwide. Gerry’s photo and successes are recorded in the New York Times best seller The Kings of Cocaine, and he received an award personally from then President George H.W. Bush. In 1990, Gerry was promoted to Supervisory Customs Inspector and tasked with managing the field operations in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando, West Palm Beach seaports and international airports, as well as the US Customs Pre-Clearance Operation in Nassau, Bahamas. In recognition of his vast experience and successes, and his native Spanish language capability, SCI Draughon was frequently tasked by US Customs’ Office of International Affairs and the US Department of State to conduct training classes in Latin America. From 1990 to 2004, Gerry provided seaport and airport security training to police, military, and customs officers in Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Ecuador, Bahamas, Brazil, Jamaica, and Venezuela. In 2005, after his retirement from the Department of Homeland Security, Gerry joined Phoenix Group in Panama as the Deputy Director of Field Operations and today manages the day-to-day operations in Latin America.

Dr. Michael K. Lavine is Executive Vice-President and Chief Security Officer of Homeland Security Consultants, Inc. in Baltimore, Maryland. He has over 18 years of experience in: critical infrastructure protection, information assurance, computer security, and information technology. Currently, he serves as Research Assistant Professor at the Johns Hopkins University Information Security Institute. Dr. Lavine earned his Ph.D. in Management at Sir John Cass Business School—City University in London, England and his other degrees include an M.S. in Information and Telecommunication Systems from Johns Hopkins University, an MSc. in Internal Auditing and Management from City University in London, England and B.S. in Finance from Touro College.
This book provides a thorough introduction to the topic of maritime security, as seen through the eyes of practitioners who have decades of on-the-ground, experience-based knowledge in seaport security, vessel security, and commercial maritime transport. This book is directed to the academic student, government Homeland Security official or policymaker, and private sector maritime security professional. Specifically for these readers, the book details the fundamentals of commercial shipping and how the business functions; the threats and vulnerabilities to the links in the cargo supply chain; and strategies, policies, procedures, and practical measures which have proven to be effective in mitigating terrorist incidents, narcotics smuggling, pilferage, stowaways, and piracy.

It wasn’t until after I left my position as a CIA Counternarcotics Analyst, which included stints as the CIA Liaison to United States Coast Guard Intelligence and as a member of the Vice President’s Narcotics Interdiction Task Force, and working in the field for several shipping lines, did I realize the critical value of learning the “business” of commercial maritime transport and how seaports and ships actually function. During my first few years in the private sector, I rode many cargo ships through the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and worked side-by-side with seaport and shipping line employees in most countries of Latin America and the islands in the Caribbean. Gaining insight from these experiences, learning the native language, and understanding the culture provided me with a somewhat unique perspective on maritime security, one which was key to the development and directing of highly successful maritime security programs for the top 20 shipping lines in the world and several of the largest seaports in Latin America. Working on the “front lines”—or, more appropriately, “behind the lines”—of the War on Drugs, I learned that successes could be achieved when effective and comprehensive security policies, plans, and procedures were implemented at key initial links in the cargo supply chain and focus was placed at the first primary “choke point”—the load seaports and their ships. In these post 9-11 times, with the emergence of the commercial maritime sector as a highly vulnerable and probable target for a major terrorist attack, it is important that private sector maritime security professionals and government officials and policymakers have access to the knowledge, experience, and “lessons learned” of practitioners who have successfully operated in the highest risk ports in this hemisphere. This is the reason I wrote this book.

For the reader’s benefit, the book is divided into three parts, which combined total 11 chapters. In Chapter 1, we review the types, functions, and operations of commercial seaports and ships. Chapter 2 explains the process, steps, and documentation utilized in the maritime transport of cargo through the supply chain and the business entities—and their roles, functions, and interactions—involvement in the transport of cargo. Chapter 3
provides an overview of the key tenets of the primary international and U.S. laws, regulations, and government programs related to ship and port security and their requirements and implications. Chapter 4 discusses vulnerabilities in the “links” within the cargo supply chain, security countermeasures, cargo theft and pilferage, and techniques and tactics used by criminal and terrorist elements to circumvent or negate security measures and procedures. Chapter 5 offers an overview of the history and current trends of the plaques of the seas: piracy and stowaways. Chapter 6 is a detailed presentation of narcotics smuggling via cargo, containers, and vessels, including the numerous smuggling methods and current trends. Chapter 7 provides an overview of the history of terrorism and discusses how terrorist organizations are utilizing commercial ships, containers, and cargoes as a form of conveyance for moving or delivering persons, equipment, and contraband, as well as an overview of the targeting of ships and ports by terrorist organizations. Chapter 8 defines a “blueprint” of a model port and vessel security program, one which has been proven effective for a “high threat” environment. Chapter 9 discusses the roles, responsibilities, and functions of the port security director and his staff, human resources guidelines, training programs, intelligence operations, contingency plans and the Incident Command System, and risk management models. Chapter 10 addresses the behaviors and characteristics of terrorists and other criminals; offers additional threat mitigation strategies in detail; and reviews the security devices, systems, and hardware utilized on a ship and in a port environment. And, Chapter 11 sheds light on the threats and vulnerabilities to computer, information, and communications systems and available countermeasures and protective measures.

This book provides the reader with a solid familiarization with and appreciation of the key tenets of seaport and vessel security and commercial maritime transport and will serve as a practical guide for those private and public sectors persons involved in maritime security.

Michael A. McNicholas
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I would like to recognize and thank the many true maritime security professionals whose hard work, loyalty, dedication, and camaraderie over the past 20 years provided me with the critical support necessary to design, implement, and direct world-class security programs and operations in numerous high-threat seaports in Latin America and the Caribbean. Gratitude to George Weldon, formerly Security Manager of Crowley American Transport, Ian Pull, formerly Vice President of Fleet Operations of Dole Fresh Fruit International, Captain Sergio Fourlong, Director of Fleet Operations of NYK Line (Latin America) Helmuth Lutty, V.P. of Del Monte Fresh Produce, and Edward Gonzalez, President of Seaboard Marine Line, for giving me the incredible opportunity to travel onboard dozens of cargo ships and to conduct security surveys and training in every major seaport in Latin America. And from one “tire kicker” to another, a debt of thanks to Dave Michou, V.P., Stevedoring Services of America, and John Bressi, former Port Director of MIT-Panama, for your support and dedication to building a world-class seaport security program. Thanks to Rafael Martinez, my friend and former business partner, for his integrity and assisting me in setting up my first operational base in Central America, and to Gerard Draughon, a legend in U.S. Customs and Border Protection, for sharing his vast and invaluable field experience and instructor skills and joining our team.

Special recognition and a hearty military salute to mis compañeros Wilberth Gutierrez, Dennis Vargas, Carlos Wolfe Jackson, Rodolfo Valverde, Miguel Munoz, and Alberto Lee Sanchez for their many years of joining me boarding barges and ships at sea to search for stowaways, pirates, and drug shipments; trudging through banana plantations and container yards; training hundreds of military and port police officers and wondering how many of them were actually the bad guys; and passing many, many sleepless nights ensuring the port and vessel security officers were always on their toes. Likewise, a special thanks and “job well done” to Ronald Chacon, the Maritime Security Team Supervisors, Vessel Security Supervisors, and K-9 Handlers in Costa Rica and Panama, and my Intelligence Staff for their excellent efforts, which over the past 15 years have resulted in the seizure of over 7 tons of cocaine and heroin, capture of hundreds of stowaways, elimination of a group of pirates, and successful mitigation of two terrorist operations. My hat is off to you guys!

Gratitude goes to Gary Greco for teaching me how to shoot and watching my back on my first trips to Colombia, Peru, and Nicaragua many years ago; Keith Herrington for teaching me to drive; Ed Piper for his expertise in training and inspirational motivation; Geoffrey Walker for working with the folks on the Miami River; Bill DeWitt for bringing his Navy SEAL perspective and experience to our program; and former partners and current friends Jerry Peterson and Dave Herring, for instructing me on the fine arts of sales.
and marketing (making proposal books) and developing a budget. And then, there is my “right hand” Priscilla Ng, my Admin Manager, who is a good friend, is a sounding board for ideas, and keeps the guys on the straight and narrow.

My sincere thanks to contributing authors Donna Friscia, Triana Resto, James Stapleton, Captain Fred Allen, Ed Piper, Gerard Draughon, and Dr. Michael K. Lavine—all experts in their subject matter—for their valuable insight, many hours of work, and responses to my prodding. Also, my appreciation goes to Dr. Pamela Chester and Jay Donahue of Butterworth-Heinemann for their support, hard work, patience, and belief in the book.

Lastly, and most importantly, I’d like to give thanks to our Lord for the good health, safe travels, answered prayers, and blessings provided during the past 20 years working in the field as a practitioner in maritime security.

LOOK FOR MORE VITAL RESOURCES ON MARITIME SECURITY FROM MICHAEL McNICHOLAS:

- Sample Port Facility Security Assessment