Security in the transport industry research paper samples

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The transport industry has been aware of security and safety issues for a long time. However, a recent resurgence in terrorist activity and piracy has prompted the industry to be more alert to security. Security threats manifest mostly in the form of terrorist activity, theft, and (organized) crime. The effects of this insecurity are far-reaching as they can cause the spread of pandemics, destabilize and economy, or facilitate the growth and power of a terrorist group. Security threat to transportation could also cause serious environmental damage if the cargo was, for example, a potent industrial chemical or radioactive material. Piracy off the shores of Somalia is especially infamous and usually wildly publicized. Sometimes ports can be compromised from the land side due to unauthorized access; when the threats of insecurity increase, the insurance of freight lives and machinery become expensive. Given the necessity and importance of the transport industry to any economy in the world, from sailing to trucking to air transport, threats to the transport industry should be addresses with immediate gravity.

The major modes of freight transport are by rail, shipping, air and, for relatively shorter and lighter loads, trucking. Criminals seek to smuggle contraband goods, drugs, or even people into or across the country. Instead of hiring or organizing their transport, criminals sometimes hijack and commandeer legitimate transport vehicles and hide their goods there, with or without the cooperation by the crew. Terrorists sometimes do this to sabotage the transportation and cause damage to the transport vehicle, goods and crew for publicity (Slac & Rodrigue, 2013).

Pirates usually plunder the ship of any goods of high value that could be

easily traded illegally or demands ransom in exchange for the ship itself and the lives of the crew. Evasion of customs duty and illegal immigration are some of the most serious issues plaguing the industry, and consequently posing a security threat. Vessels that do not meet industry and government specifications for fitness and safety also pose a major threat (Slac & Rodrigue, 2013). Understanding the motives and causes of insecurity is paramount to establishing a framework or plan to deal with the issue. Increased security in the transport industry is complicated and creates an expense-it is a compromise with cost and time. In an ideal transport industry, vehicles would take the shortest possible route without any security threat. Goods would arrive unaltered and in the shortest time possible because there would be no need to inspect the cargo, and cargo could be loaded in a much greater capacity. There would be no need to hire private security personnel. The scenario is impossible and restricted in reality, however, as goods have to be inspected at ports, airports and border crossings. Some of the ideal routes have to be avoided because of a high-risk threat, such as the Somali coast at some point. A bigger capacity of the cargo increases the chance of hiding something onboard a security vehicle successfully (reduces visibility); hence this causes bigger loads to take more time at inspection for them to be checked thoroughly. Inspection can create a bottleneck as more vessels queue to wait for inspection, especially if the size of the port does not allow for expansion (Slac & Rodrigue, 2013). Delayed time at port and inspection pints increases the chance of theft and tampering. Passengers in major airports are expected to arrive two hours before take-off for screening. Screening machinery has to be bought and maintained, further increasing

expenses.

The events of 9/11/2001 in the U. S. had a major effect on the transport industry, and policy implementers, private organizations and governments moved swiftly to prevent the repetition of the event. Although there have been efforts to improve security, there is still a lot that could be done to improve security in the industry (Patridge, 2012). An increased awareness of higher risk areas would reduce the incidences of hijacking a piracy. Law enforcement agencies should try to eliminate the threat. International cooperation is needed to curb piracy, by patrolling high-incidence and high-risk areas. The root causes of piracy should be investigated and dealt with since this is the surest way to stop piracy in the long-term. Dealing with piracy as a long-term issue also reduces the overall costs and damages caused by piracy. Terrorism also requires international cooperation and a long-term approach to the problem.

Increased and more stringent inspection of people and cargo, despite its drawbacks, should be enforced. Development and deployment of (automated) technology-based solutions to inspection, as opposed to manual inspection, could reduce the time and cost of inspection (Patridge, 2012). Issues of privacy violation at airports should be addresses with the help of credible methodologies such as that of social science and the public assured of its privacy. If privacy and security are mutually exclusive, then a compromise should be established. Security loopholes, such as land-side unauthorized access to ports, should be researched and addressed.

Tracking shipments helps to monitor and detect cases of hijacking, theft or misconduct by the crew of a vessel (Patridge, 2012). Increased surveillance

of ports and transport vessels could help to deter theft and tampering. Ensuring that cargo is always closed and locked safely via industry-strong alarms could also prevent theft and tampering.

Finally, the findings of research on insecurity in the transport industry, and recommendations and solutions that could be made from it need to be formalized as an international standard. Developing countries, especially those whose economy is export-based, tend to incur a higher cost due to higher transport regulation. Due to this, they may ignore or not fully enforce security regulation. Since international security is only as secure as its weakest point, a formalization of international standards for transportation security could address weak links. However, this has the potential to become, like international efforts to reduce carbon emission, a controversial issue, with some countries refusing to observe the protocol.

Works Cited

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