**PDVSA is part of SANCTIONED list. NO CARGO Operations to be undertaken**

* Underwater Inspection by port authorities for Drugs
* Stowaway Search
* Easy picking of Alcohol thru shore personal - Crew to be made aware for strict compliance. Extra vigilance & complete search at Gangway, Cabin search upon departure.

MDS posted the following:

Fwd as received from some other marine forum site.

Info is genuine by source unknown.

Dear Masters/Chief Engineers,

ALLEGED INCIDENT AT JOSE Anchorage, Venezuela.

One vessel was scheduled to load at Jose terminal. She was instructed to anchor at the designated anchorage to await loading. Agent had advised Master that authorities will board for clearance and subsequently vessel will undergo an inspection by National Guards and underwater inspection by authorized divers.

Two diver's representatives and 2 National Guards boarded the vessel. Gangway security procedures as per SSP were carried out including baggage search of divers. Guards were not carrying any bags. Diver's representative was the official spokesman as he could converse in English. Vessel was advised that the guards will carry out a full search of accommodation, deck and engine room.

Escorts were arranged by SSO for this search which was extremely thorough. On completion of the inspection the guards decided to check upper deck, escorted by Chief Officer. The guards spent an unusually long time in the crew change locker, where one of them found an object hidden between last cabinet and bulkhead in crew changing locker and asked Chief Officer for an explanation. Upon further investigation, it was found out that the object was a revolver. The guards asked for Master to be called on bridge and not to speak to diver's representatives at all.

On bridge, Master was shown the revolver, packed in zip lock and queried. To collect evidence, Master handled the revolver by donning gloves, inspected same it and took pictures for follow up. The revolver was less than 6 inches in length with a serial number and "Made in Brazil" engraved on it. The guards, who could not speak in English used translator app and told Master that the weapon was empty and there may be ammunition hidden on board, which the Master denied. Master repeatedly told them that he had to inform the company to which they told him not to do so as there might be a big problem. Meanwhile CE & 1AE came to bridge for some work and were updated by the Master who asked Chief Engineer to appraise Vessel Manager of the situation.

After several queries, one of the guard asked Master to pay $2200 and they will take away the object and would consider it a good inspection. Master told the guards that no money could be paid without informing the company.

In between the dive supervisor called bridge asked why the inspection was taking so long and if guards are not creating any problem. He told Master that he could inform the agents if there was any issue concerning any ‘weapon onboard’. The guards were visibly uncomfortable and nervous by this time and unable to make their point strongly. Eventually the guards agreed on 1 carton of cigarette and 1 milk carton (1 Ltr) each and ensured that all photographic evidence was deleted. Diver supervisor confirmed later that the officials are trying this trick on many vessels.

Vessel finally got a clean chit for the inspection and the Guards disembarked with the mentioned revolver without making further troubles.

LEARNINGS

All vessels are to take note of the above incident and be aware that evidence planting can be carried out by the authorities themselves to extract money and have serious consequences for the vessel. In view of same all vessels calling at Jose terminal are to follow below:

1. Strictly enforce security measures of SL 2

2. Carry out a thorough vessel search as soon as vessel is fixed for loading at Venezuela.

3. As a minimum, appoint 1 crew member for every visitor that boards the vessel. For inspection by guards, a senior officer to oversee the search.

4. Carry out a thorough search of vessel after the arrival inspection by Authorities.

5. Carry out a thorough search of vessel after the departure inspection by Authorities

6. A final search is to be carried out when vessel is in international waters.

All the searches are to be carried out using vessel specific checklist and appropriately logged as evidence of due diligence.

Incident reported on 14 Oct’18 at Jose,Venezuela

We have learned of the details of an incident at the anchorage of Jose, Venezuela which should be shared with any vessels intending to call there.

Around 00:20 local time on 14 October 2018, four persons armed with pistols in National Guard uniform boarded a Hong Kong-registered Bulk Carrier at the anchorage of Jose, Venezuela. The armed persons claimed to carry out a drug smuggling inspection and forced the ship's master to muster the ship’s crew in the mess room. They searched some crew cabins and the shipmaster was forced to open the safe box. The armed persons took away the ship’s cash in the safe box (33,800USD) and some seafarers belonging, 9 x mobile phones, 2 x notebooks, etc. then left the ship around 01:00 local time. There was no crew injury or equipment damage caused by the incident.