

What's on the Iraqis' shopping list?

The effect on the ports sector has not been just the recent invasion of Iraq by the coalition forces, writes **Steve**

Cameron. Since the 1980s the combination of the Iran-Iraq and first Gulf wars left a development vacuum in Iraq's ports with virtually no progress for 20 years. Set against this backdrop, the specialist Ports & Logistics section of UK Trade & Invest arranged for the delegation to visit the UK on a fact-finding mission. Their objective: to establish how support can be provided to the Iraqis to help them regenerate their facilities after management by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and Shipping Services of America (SSA) is returned to the Iraq Ports Authority on June 30th.

Peter Bingham, who has been in Iraq as special advisor for the CPA explained that on his arrival last year his initial views were that the ports had deep water and were generally in reasonable condition with good quay surfaces and warehouses.

They outlined the potential for Iraqi ports to provide a gateway with a three pronged trident of routes to the hinterland covering: the northwest via Syria into Turkey and beyond, to the north via Iran into Russia and to the northeast via Iran to Kazakhstan.

One of first problems the IPA faces is the complete lack of records or statistics, making planning and cargo volume forecasting difficult but as a starting point they are assuming an annual volume for planning purposes of about 60 million tons today.

WHAT THEY NEED

Cargo handling equipment seemS to be top of the list

with initial indications of a need for 20 reachstackers. Marine Services, VTS and security and ISPS Code compliance were close behind with a tender for the latter imminent.

One of Peter Bingham's first tasks on his arrival was to identify a new IPA director general. Fortunately Cardiff University educated Mahmood

Salih Abdul-Nabi with years of port management experience behind him, was waiting in the wings. Mahmood Salih Abdul-Nab explained that whilst the ports employ a total of 10,000 people, the problems of the last 20 years have left huge gaps in the management structure with virtually no middle or junior management.

Clearly selection and training is going to be a big issue for the port.

Mahmood is open-minded on the future. Subcontracting and outsourcing of services are possibilities and he is looking for large organisations that can provide both investment and consultancy to help them improve their facilities.

Iraq Ports Summary	Berths	Depth	Cargo Equipment	Other
Umm Qasr	22	12.5	4xGantry Cranes (2 in repair)	1xRoro Berth, 2nd due
Cargo handled			Containers, break-bulk, ro-ro, construction, bulk grain and sugar.	
Facilities			Extensive warehousing & development land. Good Road Rail Links	
Khor Az Zubayr	12	11	Automated handling equipment	
Cargo handled			Containers, break bulk, iron ore, fertilisers, oil export & import	
Facilities			Extensive warehousing & development land. Good Road Rail Links	
Abu Fuloos	4	4	Traditional general cargo handling, Ro-Ro, Oil exports.	
Al Basrah and Al Amaya - Offshore Oil Terminals				
Al Maqal (Basrah)			Currently disused but extensive riverside berthing available.	
Al Faw			Currently disused	

New MSC-Gate venture gets Bremen cash backing

The state of Bremen has moved fast to pledge €19m for infrastructure modernisation at Bremerhaven's 30-year-old Container Terminal 1 to back the spectacular news that Eurogate and MSC will base their dedicated new MSC Gate 50-50 joint venture there.

MSC operates the world's second biggest container fleet whilst Eurogate is Europe's largest terminal operator. The partners say the new terminal, south of the Wilhelm Kaisen Container Terminal, will attract about half a million more TEUs. Eurogate has already announced investment of €34m in the site.

Ports Senator Hartmut Perschau says the deal offered the Weser a "unique" chance to win more Asian trade. Bremerhaven, Europe's fourth biggest container port, faced "massive growth" as a result of

the MSC concentration. "MSC is putting all its cards on the logistical advantages of

Bremerhaven. ... That's another economic quantum leap for our port", declared Perschau.

More vehicle space for Bremerhaven

Work will start in September on a €24m project to expand vehicle handling in Bremerhaven, Europe's second largest vehicle hub. Part of the Osthafen will be filled in by the end of 2005 to create 60,000 sq metres of additional vehicle handling space. Water depth will be deepened to

9.8 metres and the site will get a 550 metre quay with one berth for deep sea carriers and three further berths for short-sea and feeder vessels.

The Weser handled 1.4m vehicles last year having lost its European car handling lead to Zeebrugge a year or so back.

Hamburg invests in booming bulk

Up to the end of 2005, €17m is being invested in the expansion of Hamburg's Hansaport bulk facility where coal and ore handling is booming.

The facility, 51% owned by steel giant Stahlgitter and 49% by Hamburger Hafen und Lagerhaus (HHLA), will get a fourth handling bridge crane and additional storage area. Last

year it handled 12.6m tons, 12% of Hamburg's total cargo.

Officials said demand for steel was rising, particularly from the Far East. However Hansaport MD Erhard Meller said the biggest handling growth potential lay in imported coal. "Our investment now will mean that we are ready for that", he was quoted as saying.