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No one single fuel will solve shipping's decarbonisation dilemma

22 Sep 2021 Nidaa Bakhsh

NO one single fuel will solve shipping's decarbonisation dilemma, according to consultant Matt Stone, who believes it will require three to four.

"Zero-carbon shipping is possible, but vessel efficiency will also have to play a role," the McKinsey & Co partner told a Marine Money Climate Week webinar.

Half of shipping's 2050 decarbonisation goals can be met through efficiency, such as retrofitting equipment including air lubrication and wind assistance and the use of artificial intelligence tools for better optimisation, along with new, more efficient vessels, he said.

There were several options in terms of new alternative fuels, but infrastructure was needed which made consensus difficult. He said options include green hydrogen synthesised to e-methanol and e-ammonia, blue hydrogen, including that from carbon capture and storage, and the biomass/biofuels pathways.

Methanol is easier to adopt as it is widely used in the chemical industry, and the needed technology is available. But, it is not carbon-neutral if the carbon dioxide is collected from industrial processes, Mr Stone said.

Green ammonia has toxicity issues and handling and building new infrastructure is challenging, while hydrogen may have a role to play in combination with fuel cells.

The industry is heading for a carbon emissions increase, if it stays on the current pathway, said Mads Peter Zacho, head of industry transition at the Mærsk Mc-Kinney Møller Center for Zero Carbon Shipping in Denmark.

That is mainly because of cost gaps between fossil fuels and alternative zero-carbon fuels, which were five times more expensive, he said on the same webinar in a joint presentation.

"Most of the technology is already known but it is the scale and costs that pose challenges," he said, adding that a global carbon tax or even a regional one will close the pricing gap and will reward first-movers.

Finance and regulation were also important in achieving the goals, Mr Zacho said, with movement on those fronts.

The group has 22 partners listed on its website ranging from dry bulk companies Norden and major charterer Cargill to Stolt Tankers and energy company BP. Class society American Bureau of Shipping is also involved.

It expects to add more partners and staff by next year, said Mr Zacho, who was former chief executive of bulker and tanker company J. Lauritzen.

Its NavigaTE analysis gathers data from its projects and partners into the model which will be shared later this year.

It is likely that a few of the technologies will co-exist as different fuels will be more suited to specific types of vessels, he said, adding that constraints in production meant that the industry would need a mix of everything to reach decarbonisation goals.

Imports of LNG down 75% as UK energy crisis deepens

21 Sep 2021 Michelle Wiese Bockmann

ONLY one liquefied natural gas carrier is signalling it will arrive at the UK in the next two weeks, with vessel calls to the country's main regasification terminals down 75% so far in the third quarter compared with 2020, tracking data show.

The Bermuda-flagged *Methane Lydon Volney* (IMO: 9307205) is the only LNG carrier showing it is destined for the UK, out of 19 vessels tracked on the water crossing the Atlantic after loading at terminals in the US Gulf.

Another five are signalling their destination as "for orders," suggesting cargo owners or traders are still seeking the highest buyer before the discharge port is decided.

Other carriers are showing next destinations in Spain, Turkey, Japan, or Taiwan, or have not yet inputted the next port of call.

The last LNG carrier to call at UK was the vessel *Rias Baixas Knutsen* (IMO: 9825568), which arrived September 21 at the Isle of Grain terminal, and sailed from Algeria on September 15.

Only five LNG carriers have arrived at the UK since July 1, compared with 15 for the comparable period in 2020, according to Lloyd's List Intelligence data.

The cargo shortage underscores the severity of the energy crunch gripping the UK and Europe that is pushing natural gas prices to fresh records. The pressure also signals significant earnings gains ahead for shipowners with LNG carriers available on the spot market in the next three months.

"A perfect storm might materialise in the LNG market and we remain highly optimistic towards the 2021/2022 winter season," said Oslo-based Cleaves Securities.

"The gas price differential between the US and North Asia has seen a further widening and the European restocking cycle has fallen even further behind normal levels, currently sitting at about 70% of capacity as we edge closer to the winter heating season."

The investment bank estimates average 2021 daily spot rates for LNG carriers to be just short of $70,000 per day, level with 2020.

Last year, cold temperatures led to a seasonal winter rally in time charter rates above $180,000 daily as demand for vessels outpaced supply.

Asian restocking of depleted LNG inventories over the northern hemisphere summer has since supported spot rates at levels 25% above the previous year.

Unlike oil, refined products and other commodities like coal and iron ore shipped by sea, 65%-75% of LNG is sold under long-term contracts or offtake agreements.

This reduces the amount of LNG available on the spot market able to fill regional deficits.

LNG imported by the EU plus the UK dropped 17% over August as two of the world's three largest exporters, Qatar and the US, diverted cargoes to Asia, data from Lloyd's List Intelligence shows.

The scarcity of available LNG cargoes to Europe also underscores the geopolitical tension between Russia and Europe over pipelined gas supplies.

Russian producers that have run down their gas stocks are being urged to send more via pipelines to Europe amid criticism that while they have met long-term supply contractual obligations, more could be released on the spot market to alleviate the crisis.

The UK relied on LNG to supply 39% of its gas imports in 2020, according the BP Statistical review. Overall gas imports were 2.6 times higher than 2018 levels, BP data show.

The partial shutdown of a key power cable to the UK until March raises even further pressure on LNG to redress shortages that have quadrupled prices over 2020, crippled electricity providers, slowed manufacturing, and triggered fears of inadequate supplies over winter.

Three LNG cargoes have been delivered the South Hook LNG terminal at Milford Haven on the UK's south-western coast since July 1, data show. That compares with 13 for the same period in the past year.

South Hook LNG is majority owned by Qatar Petroleum, the world's biggest exporter.

China's LNG imports so far in the third quarter are already 13% above the past year's level, while Japan's are also showing similar gains, Lloyd's List Intelligence shows. The two countries are the world's biggest importers.

There are now 14 LNG carriers at anchor waiting to load at Qatar, data show, reflecting the demand gains of past weeks.

Hurricane Ida also temporarily slowed exports from the US Gulf earlier this month, while a shortage of renewable power in the UK and Europe has also increased reliance on gas and LNG, creating what some analysts say is a 'perfect storm' for energy commodities.

The LNG fleet comprises some 630 vessels, data show.

Boxships continue to pile up off US west coast

21 Sep 2021 James Baker

THE continuing onslaught of containerised goods being imported into the US' stagnant distribution networks has seen a surge in the number of boxships waiting to berth at Los Angeles and Long Beach.

Figures from the Marine Exchange of Southern California, which runs vessel traffic services for the two ports, show there were 70 containerships either at anchor or drifting off San Pedro Bay. That was slightly down from the record 73 set at the weekend.

The backlog of ships is being driven by huge volumes of peak season imports into the US market ahead of the holiday season but is also affected by congestion at both terminals and in inland distribution networks.

Data released by the UN Conference on Trade and Development indicates that the median waiting time for ships in port globally increased 11% compared with pre-pandemic levels, despite global trade containerised trade growing only 5.5% in the same period.

“This means that the efficiency of the port calls themselves have clearly declined in 2021, on account of the bottleneck problems in the system,” said Sea-Intelligence chief executive Alan Murphy. “It can clearly be seen that the time spent in port has increased significantly more for the container vessels than for any other vessel category.

“Hence, to some degree, the container shipping sector is more impacted by the supply chain bottlenecks than other parts of shipping — which in all likelihood can be traced to the container shipping sector having a strong reliance on a land-side intermodal setup, which also suffers from severe bottlenecks presently.”

When the data is separated out regionally, the US shows a 20% increase in vessels dwell times.

The situation in the US is unlikely to see any immediate resolution, even after the end of the peak season demand peak.

The latest US Census Bureau data on sales and inventories up to July shows that the ratio has fallen from the 1.35 level it sat at during the second half of 2020 to 1.25 during the first half of 2021.

While retail inventories had bottomed out in April, Mr Murphy pointed out that inventory replenishment for wholesalers continued to fail to keep pace with sales, leading to a declining ratio.

“The concurrent developments in the inventories and in the sale of goods lead to the conclusion that the pressure on the containerised supply chain into the US will not abate in the near-term future,” said Mr Murphy. “The data continues to suggest a hypothesis that the pressure on the retail inventories is partially spilling over, to fuel a boom for the wholesalers as well.

“If anything, the July data points to an increase in the strength of the boom, as especially retailers struggle to not only keep up with sales growth, but also to replenish their inventories.”

Why COP26 matters to shipping

21 Sep 2021 Richard Meade

TRANSLATING political statements and corporate commitments into gigatonnes of carbon dioxide is hardly an exact science, but in the run-up to the November climate summit COP26 the shipping industry is desperately trying to make the rhetorical, tangible.

The steady stream of calls to action, commitments and pathways is about to turn into a flood as companies, alliances, and governments jostle for position in a bid to present a suitably ambitious strategy for shipping’s zero carbon timeline.

This is no mere marketing greenwash. The success, or failure, of this positioning exercise will ultimately steer the direction of regulation in shipping for the next decade, either sustaining, or potentially undermining the continued mandate of the International Maritime Organization as the industry’s primary regulator in the process.

Shipping needs to put on a good show in Glasgow. Its future depends on it.

The race to zero will not be won in the maritime sector without a major regulatory push — that much is now at least a consensus position across a maritime sector divided over policy priorities.

But the chicken and egg nature of climate change politics requires the industry to be deemed suitably advanced from a business perspective to warrant prioritised policy amid a slew of competing sectors vying for national and international interests.

That could be a hard sell.

As eye-catching as Maersk's green methanol order was, the zero-carbon fleet orderbook remains a series of pilot projects awaiting scalable infrastructure, rather than viable orders.

For all the talk of ambition, the majority of shipowners are waiting for regulatory clarity and available zero carbon infrastructure before strategic decisions and investments are made.

Shipping's dual conversation

There are two distinct conversations happening within shipping simultaneously. The first is an internal industry conversation about the practical, pragmatic choices being taken by companies daily in a market where zero-carbon infrastructure does not exist at scale.

"Of course, every progressive shipowner wants to zero carbon ships, we want to we want to be part of the solution. But we need to do it economically," explained Ardmore chief financial officer Paul Tivnan.

"The ambition for 2050 is there, but the reality right now is that you have two trades — those companies that are trying to run modern efficient fleets, and others that probably won't until the regulation forces them to. It's a fine balance for owners and you don't want to go too early."

But even as regulatory uncertainty is trumping climate urgency for the majority of the industry, there is a second conversation focused on political influence, rather than market reality.

Those corralling the industry into presenting united 2050 targets are doing so with the knowledge that shipping's race to zero won't be won without a major regulatory push.

The differences of opinion over the extent to which the IMO initial greenhouse gas strategy is aligned to the global temperature goals of the Paris agreement, are no longer the battleground.

Here the priority is to make a suitably bold commitment to accelerating zero-carbon investment in a bid to convince governments to match them with the required policies that will, in their words "supercharge the transition and make zero emission shipping the default choice by 2030".

The Global Maritime Forum will on Wednesday unveil the latest tranche of its 'Getting to Zero' campaign that will see over 150 high profile signatories from across the maritime sector commit to the scaling and investment required to deliver full net zero decarbonisation of shipping by 2050.

It is the latest in a series of high-profile attempts to present a coalition of industry leaders from shipping, finance, ports and charterers as the pace setters for the rest of the industry to follow when it comes to greening maritime. And there are signs that such efforts are gaining momentum.

Those attending keynote conferences during London Shipping Week heard container giant MSC and class society Lloyd's Register both talking up the commercial reality of a viable ocean-going net zero vessel being available in the market within 24 months. They were joined by numerous associations and companies keen to use any industry platform to stress the need for pace and scale, all backed by a chorus line of ministers and climate tzars urging audiences to "turn ambition into commitment". Meanwhile, the artfully scheduled announcements of COP26 action plans were revealed to the assembled ranks of those who will travel to Glasgow in November to make the case for shipping.

Much of this may feel like marketing rather than progress, but it is marketing with a critical purpose.

Why COP26 is crucial

In 2015, governments set a destination with the Paris Agreement —to limit global warming to 1.5-2°C above pre-industrial temperatures — but failed to agree the means of getting there. Governments made national pledges to cut emissions but, the Paris documents called on signatories to promise more every five years — starting in 2020.

COP26 is therefore a crucial moment in terms of climate policy. However, it will not directly discuss shipping targets. So why does COP26 matter so much to maritime?

The answer lies inside the IMO, where the opening gambits that will ultimately decide how carbon is priced into maritime trade, are being played out.

The proposals for so-called market-based measures submitted to the next Marine Environment Protection Committee meeting in November will realistically only mark the start of a difficult political process within the IMO, the outcome of which will largely depend on government positions yet to be decided.

Progress agreed at COP26 will directly inform the direction of national strategies, ultimately opening up, or closing down the debates that follow inside the IMO.

Back in 2013 when market-based measures were last on the table, the IMO debate spectacularly imploded as climate economics created a schism between developed and developing nations.

While the strategic roadmap for the IMO has since been agreed, much of the underlying tension related to MBMs has not fundamentally changed in the intervening years and even the most optimistic IMO insiders privately concede that they remain unsure how the debate will play out based on current national positions.

The IMO, meanwhile, is also no longer the only show in town.

The European Commission's proposed "Fit for 55" policy package creates an incentive for the shipping industry to accelerate its decarbonisation efforts, but without a coordinated global framework the fragmented middle majority of shipping will struggle to match the pace-setters. Strong leadership in the private sector could yet play a key role in raising the ambition of policy makers and advocating for more effective, and more global policies.

Such positions are not decided within the IMO, but a positive outcome to COP26 could help unlock the political impasse in shipping, translating into an accelerated timeline within the IMO.

“The conversation heading into the UN General Assembly and then COP26 is going to be crucial for shipping,” said Lloyd’s Register’s global head of sustainability Katharine Palmer, who also acts as the shipping lead for the UN High-Level Climate Champions Team.

While shipping will unlikely be able to lobby for any significant change to the outcome of COP26, by presenting an ambitious and coordinated pitch of the industry’s alignment with climate science and readiness to invest in zero-carbon technology, the collation of the willing hope to assuage political concerns that shipping be pigeon-holed as a laggard sector.

“The key objective of these political summits is to secure increased ambition from states, while also mobilising finance and increasing the scope of collaboration,” said Ms Palmer. “We want to see that momentum then translated back into the IMO discussion from member states. To do that we have to show that shipping is ready to go from a business perspective with a level of ambition aligned to the political commitments. We need to give that clear message to the governments and regulators that they just now need to provide the framework and supports.”

Climate risk is real for shipping

The counter to all this is what happens should the collation of the willing fail in its bid to assuage political concerns that shipping be pigeon-holed as a laggard sector?

Here the predictions become somewhat starker, if not more general.

Warnings of regulatory regionalisation and challenges to the IMO’s mandate have to a certain extent already materialised. Unilateral action controlling shipping calling at European ports from 2023 is now a given and increasing national restrictions and a fragmented patchwork of regulation now seem inevitable given the pace of consensus agreement within the IMO structure.

But perhaps the more significant risk yet to fully emerge will be financial, rather than regulatory.

According to the former governor of the Bank of England Mark Carney, companies and industries that are not moving towards zero-carbon emissions will be punished by investors and go bankrupt.

As far back as 2015 Mr Carney described a possible “Minsky moment”, named after Hyman Minsky, an economist, in which investors’ expectations about future climate policies adjust sharply, causing fire sales of assets and a widespread repricing of risk. That could spill over into higher borrowing costs.

Such general scenarios from economic Cassandras have largely been written off as alarmist by shipping industry leaders until recently, but with investors and lenders now firmly focused on the outcome of COP26 and increasingly viewing environmental, social and governance policy as a filter through which investment is being considered, attention is now being paid.

Mark Lutes, senior adviser on global climate policy at WWF Climate & Energy, said: “If the rest of the world is decarbonising, and the global shipping sector is not doing its part, there will probably be more draconian measures applied that may be more expensive and disruptive to the sector.

“If companies want their business model to survive these kinds of changes, they should be building these in their plans already. Otherwise, we are going to see a lot more stranded assets, bankruptcies and failures in the sector.”

K Line expands dual-fuel car carrier fleet

21 Sep 2021 Cichen Shen

K LINE will add eight dual-fuel car carriers to its fleet as part of the Japanese shipping group’s decarbonisation strategy.

The 7,000 ceu vessels, which can run on liquified natural gas, are expected to be delivered by between March 2024 and March 2026.

Six of the newbuildings have been ordered and shared across three shipyards — Japan’s Nihon Shipyard and Shin Kurushima Dockyard, as well as China Merchants Jinling Shipyard (Nanjing).

The other two will be chartered in from an unidentified owner, a K Line official told Lloyd’s List.

The newbuilding project will push the number of dual-fuel car carriers under its operation to nine vessels, after the delivery of Japanese-flagged *Century Highway Green*(IMO: 9875202) in March this year.

The move coincides with shipowners’ increasing pursuit of LNG-fuelled car carriers as operators are under pressure from automakers to trim emissions.

Singapore-based Eastern Pacific, part of shipping magnate Idan Ofer’s businesses, returned to Jinling Shipyard in the past month and added another six dual-fuel 7,000 ceu car carriers to its orderbook.

Zodiac Maritime, which is owned by the Ofer family, was reported to have ordered four similar units, plus options for eight more at CIMC Raffles Longkou shipyard in China.

Prices of the fresh tonnage are about $83m-87m each, according to brokers’ reports.

Compared with those burning conventional heavy fuel oil, K Line said the “environmentally friendly vessels” it is acquiring could cut carbon dioxide emissions by 25%.

The company aims to cut its fleet’s carbon dioxide emissions by 50% by 2030 based on 2008 levels, which is higher than the International Maritime Organization’s goal of a 40% improvement.

“We are planning to substitute LNG fuel and other new fuels for conventional heavy fuel oil to achieve the targets set forth,” it said.

Bulker seriously damaged after collision in Aegean

20 Sep 2021 Inderpreet Walia

A CLIPPER group handysize vessel has sustained significant damage after coming into collision with a Greek panamax bulk carrier in the Aegean Sea.

The 2010-built, 37,300 dwt *Clipper Como* (IMO: 9486570) has developed heavy fore tilt and portside list after the incident at the weekend with the 2001-built, 76,015 dwt *Levantes* (IMO: 9244829).

Clipper Como was en route from Jorf Lasfar, Morocco, to Samsun, in Turkey, in a laden condition, with a cargo of phosphate in bulk, when the incident occurred about 20 km south-west of Turkey's Bozcaada island, according to Lloyd's List Intelligence casualty reporting.

Levantes was en route from Novorossiysk, in Russia, to Port Said in Egypt, with a cargo of wheat.

The cause of the collision is being investigated. No one was injured and no pollution has been reported.

An initial damage survey of *Clipper Como* has revealed serious structural damage on the port side shell plating in way of number two and three cargo holds, and breach in top port side tanks of resulting in water ingresses.

The coastal safety tugs and technical teams are standing by at the incident scene as an underwater survey of *Clipper Como* is conducted by coastal safety divers, according to Lloyd's List Intelligence.

The extent of any damage to *Levantes,* which is south of Greece's Lemmos Island, is unknown at this stage.

Lloyd's List understands that that vessel's voyage permission has been cancelled by the Turkish Maritime authority.

Pizza ovens and gyms for crew on Eastern Pacific fleet

20 Sep 2021 Micelle Wiese Bockmann

EASTERN Pacific Shipping said it has spent $30m to update working conditions on board its fleet, which includes installing gymnasiums, pizza ovens and even hydroponics equipment to grow vegetables.

The Singapore-based shipowner and manager, which employs 5,000 seafarers and people shoreside, has introduced these, and other perks, alongside online access to mental health professionals and fitness programmes as part of its newly established EPS Life at Sea Program.

The Idan Ofer-backed company said it has an orderbook of more than 70 vessels and was undergoing a period of "unprecedented growth".

The scheme would help recruit and retain seafarers needed for the expanded fleet, the company said. The EPS Life at Sea Program would cost "six figures" annually to maintain.

Working conditions for the world's 1.5m seafarers have deteriorated over the pandemic amid crew-change challenges that include extended quarantines and immigration restrictions that have blocked shore leave and extended work contracts beyond the legal maximum.

Some 25% of crew are said to be vaccinated, with many governments indifferent to the plight of seafarers and unwilling to provide the freedom of movement that comes with key worker status.

"On top of the inherent physically and mentally demanding nature of life at sea, the long-drawn global effects of coronavirus have also weighed heavily on the mental wellbeing of our sea and shore colleagues alike," the company said.

"EPS understands that long periods away from families, loved ones, along with heightened restrictions because of coronavirus, can all take their toll. Results from recent studies is further proof that more needs to be done to protect the mental wellbeing of our people."

A survey of 752 seafarers conducted last year reported mental and physical fatigue for those on ships and prolonged anxiety about economic wellbeing if stuck at home waiting to sign on.

Seafarers' wellbeing was seriously threatened by coronavirus-related restrictions, the study found.

Preliminary results from another study with Lloyds Register Foundation, Yale University and Seafarers Hospital Society said owners and operators needed to focus on getting the basics right including accommodation, culturally appropriate food, training and a "culture of care".

In addition to headline benefits such as pizza ovens and gyms, Eastern Pacific Shipping has reorganised accommodation and living space, provides two hours of free wi-fi daily to crew, with culinary onshore training for all chefs in the fleet as travel restrictions eased.

Professional mental health support included a 24/7 helpline as well as company-wide campaigns for depression, anxiety and stress.

Where is the outrage over ports' refusal of crew change?

20 Sep 2021 Bjorn Hojgaard

IN shipping circles these days, it seems that all the talk is about decarbonisation. It's the topic-du-jour, and whereas I am as passionate as anyone about our industry's transition to a low-carbon future, I wonder why we as an industry have seemingly so little emotionally vested in the crewing crisis?

Two years ago, seafarers were sent to a ship to relieve a colleague in a matter of days. A pre-medical examination, a few documents to sort out, a plane ticket and off you go.

For seafarers on board, life was predictable, if not ordinary. You knew when you would get off the ship (close to the end of your contract), you enjoyed the occasional shore leave, and, if you were lucky, you would even have your family sail with you from time to time.

Most importantly, if you got injured or sick on board, you knew that you could undergo medical evacuation off the ship anywhere in the world (as long as the vessel was close enough to shore) to receive proper attention and treatment.

The way we treat seafarers in 2021 is absolutely shameful.

Since the pandemic started, crewing departments the world over have scrambled to facilitate crew change against increasingly difficult odds.

Seafarers at home are often unable to get a contract, perhaps because they live in a country with a high coronavirus load. And seafarers on board are increasingly being treated as pariahs, despite the fact that they have kept the global supply chain we call shipping functioning throughout the pandemic — to the immense benefit to people and nations everywhere.

Think about it: Today we often ask even fully vaccinated seafarers to quarantine for a total of 14-21 days before and after their flight to the port of embarkation, and once they do get on the ship, they are asked to self-isolate for another 14 days, to minimise the risk of bringing coronavirus on board.

When they do get into their job, they do so without family-sailing, oftentimes without shore-leave, having to guess if their contract duration will be honoured, and in the chilling knowledge that should they get injured on the job, many nations refuse to take them ashore to treat them. How is that even possible?

Add to that the constant fear of interacting with possibly coronavirus-infected pilots, port officials, immigration and customs officers and stevedores, worrying that someone on board may get an infection with the potential result that the ship is detained and the whole crew isolated. And if you are lucky enough to go through a tour of duty without any adverse event, there's a risk that your own country doesn't want to accept your repatriation and you have to wait in a port for sometimes months, before you finally find a way home.

Is that really a way to treat key workers, which is what our seafarers truly are?

Without these front-line workers shipping would come to a grinding halt, and with that we would all be without food, clothes, energy and medical supplies in a matter of weeks... something too few people are aware of.

It is not the shipowners and shipmanagers who are being difficult. They are doing everything in their power to execute crew change against a constantly changing but increasingly impossible background.

No, the real culprits here are the ports and nations who decide that, yes, they want the ships and their cargo, but no, they do not allow crew change. Not on my door step! You can do that somewhere else, thank you very much!

East of the Suez Canal, crew change is an exception rather than the rule today. And the problem with that beggar-thy-neighbour attitude is that it is a frontal assault on the integrity of the very supply chain that we all rely on, and mostly so by the nations and ports that are the biggest beneficiary of shipping.

Add to that, it's a blatant disregard for the humanitarian costs of all this to seafarers from around the world. These often-invisible but absolutely indispensable hard-working individuals, and their families, are suffering because of it.

Mental health issues, including suicide are on the rise. Depression and apathy on board is making navigation, cargo operations and critical maintenance more risky, with potentially grave consequences for lives, the environment and property. And when it does go wrong, the public will blame the seafarers, the shipowners and the shipmanagers for "running a substandard operation".

But no part of this supply chain is an island, and we cannot do it alone. Without the willingness of all stakeholders —crew, owners, managers, flag and port state, and charterers —the integrity of the supply chain is at risk, as are individual lives and livelihood.

So where is the outrage against the ports and nations that are the real culprits in this crisis? They are having their myopic, egocentric policies because they get away with it, with impunity. Again and again. Nobody is refusing to deliver goods/cargoes to ports that don't play their important role in ensuring that the 1.5m men and women who serve on board can do so under acceptable conditions.

Charterers are willing to move the cargo, also to ports that refuse crew change —and sometimes even refuse medical support toward emergencies. Shipowners and shipmanagers are willing to put their ships to use for these cargoes, despite the fact that their employees are on the receiving end of these ports' unsustainable rejection of crew change. And seafarers are faithfully continuing to do their job, even in ports where they are being treated in an absolutely inhumane way.

Adding insult to injury, it makes absolutely no change to these ports' policies whether the seafarers are vaccinated or not.

I absolutely understand the need for people and communities to be kept safe and healthy. Nobody denies a responsible government the means to do their best to avoid coronavirus in the population.

But no nation can be hermetically sealed off from the rest of the world. Trade is the lifeblood that eradicates poverty and without shipping many nations would run out of essentials in short order.

Demanding the ships and their cargoes call their ports, and at the same time expecting other countries and ports to take the full responsibility of facilitating crew change is truly unsustainable. It is short-sighted and it is wrong.

In a word, it is simply unconscionable.

So what do you think? Why do the ports and nations that have zero-tolerance to coronavirus and therefore zero consideration for seafarers get away with it? Why is there no outrage? And how does it all end?

As it is we already see many seafarers, especially senior officers, refuse to take a new contract, given the current conditions. And it will increasingly be difficult to attract young people of the right calibre to pursue a career at sea. All that lowers the experience and competency levels on board and make shipping more accident-prone.

Completely the opposite of what we have all been trying to achieve for so long.