

**CHAPTER 5**  
**SECURITY MEASURES AT AN INLAND  
CONTAINER PORT: CITY DEEP CONTAINER  
TERMINAL, JOHANNESBURG**

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**The role of Customs and the Border Police at City Deep**

City Deep was declared an inland port in 1977, and a Border Police Unit was established there some months later,<sup>133</sup> in response to complaints that containers were being tampered with, systems management was lax, and control procedures were not being followed. There were also allegations that the smuggling of goods was widespread at City Deep. However, the Border Police Unit made an immediate impact. In the first few months they achieved considerable success in controlling smuggling. Currently confiscations are showing a steady decline in number and volume, which has led the police to conclude that smuggling has either been curbed or has been transferred to other routes.

The goods inspection system used at City Deep is similar to that at Durban Harbour. Members of the Border Police City Deep unit make use of the profiling system, information received and crime pattern analysis to select items of cargo requiring inspection. Alternatively, they are alerted by the 'silent stops' placed on consignments by either the Border Police or Customs and Excise at Durban Harbour. At City Deep customs officials place their own stops on containers and undertake their own inspections, especially on high profile cases. In addition, they can instruct the Border Police to act.

There are, however, some differences between procedures at Durban and City Deep, since a larger proportion of containers passing through the latter have other southern African countries as their destinations. Such consignments (referred to as Removed-in-Transit or RIT goods) can be opened and inspected within the normal customs process; but by international law and agreement they should be allowed unfettered transit.<sup>134</sup> This in effect means that checks on cargo in transit usually consist only of inspection of the seals on the container(s), to see that they have not been tampered with, broken or replaced. The acquittal documentation (proof of exit) for RIT cargo has to be presented to Customs by the agent handling the consignment within 30 days of that consignment's entering the country. The acquittals show that the cargo

has gone through a South African border post and left the country. The Border Police and Customs at the border post of exit must inspect all the necessary documents,<sup>135</sup> description codes,<sup>136</sup> and seals on the container, to ensure that no fraud or any other irregularities have occurred during the period of its transportation through South Africa. A consignment in transit must be inspected at every point in the chain from its entry; transportation to City Deep; acceptance at, and transshipment from, City Deep to its arrival at the port or border post. There the consignment will be examined, inspected again for an "S" number<sup>137</sup> (the Spoornet transport stamp), stamped<sup>138</sup> at the border post or port, and allowed to proceed to its destination.<sup>139</sup>

A consignment of goods that arrives at City Deep will be released only when the documents have been stamped to show the consignment has been inspected and the requisite Duty Paid Entry charges have been paid.

City Deep handles approximately 1,200 containers of imports and more than 2,400 containers of exports per day.<sup>140</sup> Profiling is still done by Customs and the Border Police on a manual system at City Deep. One of the problems arising from the lack of an electronic system is that goods manifests are not always received in time because the agent has to physically deliver the original goods manifest to Customs. Moreover, while the goods manifest can be couriered from Durban, this too takes time. Customs therefore often experience delays in receiving goods manifests, or receive only copies. Currently City Deep's Customs have two import inspection teams; one export inspection team; one anti-smuggling team; and a Narcotics Task Team, which focuses on drugs. If the narcotics team detects any suspicious objects besides drugs in cargo, they will hand over the information to the appropriate team or to the police.

City Deep Border Police are in the process of developing their own profiling system. Two of the Border Police officers at City Deep have written the programme with the assistance and involvement of IT specialists in the private sector, and also set up an information database. However, this system has yet to be linked to other databases like the SAPS CAS system, bank and Reserve Bank records, company registrations and tax records, which would allow for more complex profiling. (Over-reliance on the information contained in the goods manifest or DA 550 is a drawback to the proper analysis necessary to identify high-risk or suspicious containers.)

An additional problem relating to goods manifests is that there is no control over Value Added Tax (VAT) refunds. Furthermore, accountants at the VAT Refund Administration (VRA) have not been trained to detect false stamps or

invoices when they process VAT claims. Fraudulent documentation is a problem all along the chain of inspection, and Customs and Border Police officials need to receive specialised training to identify any forged or irregular elements in any documentation for a consignment of goods. Making the system electronic would improve effectiveness and speed up the process, and assist officials to develop background profiles and identify trends. A number of field officers recommend that any such system should be married to a control requiring original documentation, especially when cargo is to be inspected or released.

Currently the system of profiling used at City Deep covers illegal trade in drugs, stolen vehicles, firearms and counterfeit goods. One of the drawbacks of this system is that Customs and Border Police at City Deep are able to inspect, at best, only 20 containers a day.

The whole container inspection system could be improved, not only by standardising the use and type of seals, but by making use of the new technologically advanced seals. These become discoloured when broken, and carry a special three-dimensional barcode which can be picked up in with a hand-held scanner and entered in the computer. This information can then be accessed at points of inspection all along the transport route, and can become an integral part of the whole inspection process. Bolt seals can also have a barcode added to them. Other improvements to container security concern their structure. The design of container doors could be strengthened. Also, containers usually have a wooden floors and not steel ones, as is commonly assumed. This is a weakness, because the whole container can easily be accessed through the floor, which is pop-riveted and can be drilled through. A false floor can be constructed to hide illicit goods. Inspections of containers must therefore take into account the limitations of their design, and the possibility of secret compartments should be borne in mind. (A scoping camera could be used to check for the latter.)

### ***Deficiencies in the City Deep systems***

The systems currently operational at City Deep are open to a certain amount of exploitation. For instance, bribery of the official dealing with RIT transshipments at the exit port would ensure that the consignment is stamped without being examined at the border post. Alternatively, if physical examination takes place when traffic volumes are high, the officials will not have time to inspect every container passing through. Other problems include false stamps, where

the date of the cross-border stamp does not correspond with the date of export, and the difficulty of establishing whether the firm or company in the African country to which the cargo is bound actually exists.

Sometimes RIT cargo has no accompanying manifest, because other documentation has been used to get the consignment through the land border post. An additional problem at the border posts is that containers may be loaded on the rail wagons in such a way that they cannot be opened and inspected unless they are unloaded. This happens when containers are packed end to end, or are carried in 'bath tub' type wagons. This physical hindrance to inspection occurs at the border post rail station at Beit Bridge, which does not have the unloading cranes necessary, and also lacks other inspection equipment. The problem is compounded by the large volumes of cargo passing through the rail station. As a result, very little exiting RIT cargo is physically inspected. Sometimes cargo is 'round-tripped' and returned to South Africa without having been inspected. Other cargo (called 'ghost' exports) never leaves the country.

One of the problems encountered in the documentation of goods sent to City Deep by rail from Durban is that the rail consignment note can be tampered with. Such a consignment note can be used as a Customs acquittal note, but it is possible to change the three-letter station destination address so that it appears to be an 'internal' container and not an imported one. In this manner a consignment can be off-loaded at a station other than City Deep. Such a consignment can then be claimed by the agent or owner without having gone through the acceptance procedure used by City Deep Terminal container officials or having been inspected prior to release by Customs. Similarly, little monitoring is done of the actual transportation of cargo transported by road or rail. Because no checks are made en route, tampering, theft or the removal or insertion of cargo at any point is possible.

One way in which the system of inspections could be improved would be to make Spoornet a more active partner in the inspection process. For example, Spoornet could make an undertaking that as the carrier of transported cargo it will require a declaration from the client that the contents of the container are as described on the form. The Spoornet document could then be compared with the Customs declaration, and these two independent systems could then be used for cross-referencing and profiling.

Any RIB<sup>141</sup> goods packed in a multiple parcel or a so-called groupage container that combines cargo from many clients, are unpacked at a bonded ware-

house or depot.<sup>142</sup> There is currently no requirement that Customs be present at this unpacking. Each package is recorded in the Bond Register. At this point, Customs and Border Police officials have to decide whether each and every parcel should be opened for examination, without any information as to whether any of them contain illegal goods. (Sometimes, however, a specific consignment is stopped when appropriate information has been received.)

Profiling works only for large containers full of the same product or goods, such as a load of running shoes. A goods manifest for this kind of container will specify that it contains multiple and various goods in small parcels, and indicate whether they are of high or low value. The latter tend not to be a priority, and are therefore ignored within the wider scheme of priority profiling and inspections.

Ideally these containers should also be put through the large container x-ray scanner. However this would be a time-consuming operation, since the contents of every parcel would need to be carefully examined and identified. Alternatively each package could be put through the smaller x-ray scanner—but such a facility is not available at the bonded warehouse and depots outside City Deep Terminal itself.

City Deep also has the problem of undeclared containers that arrive with no documentation to identify the agent handling them and the route by which they arrived. (Similar problems occur at Durban Harbour and at the JIA, where unscheduled flights often carry such cargo.) A problem specific to City Deep is RIT consignments destined for export, which come through land border posts by rail or road and have inadequate documentation from the country of origin. Portnet and Spoornet have the capacity to track the movement of any container electronically, but this applies only to transport, and not to contents and customs declarations. Insufficiently documented RIT consignments therefore present the authorities with a serious problem.

Although proper exit inspections are the responsibility of the authorities in the country of origin, the inspecting authorities in the transit country are required to check that no tampering with seals or contents has occurred while the consignment is in transit. In the past the surveillance systems and other security measures at City Deep were not as sophisticated and intensive as they are now. However, the security measures enforced at the state warehouse are not as stringent as those at the terminal itself, which provides opportunities for the illegal removal of containers from the warehouse before they have been declared or inspected.

## **Transnet (Spoornet) security at City Deep<sup>143</sup>**

There are three gates at City Deep Terminal. One is for the entry of trucks delivering containers; one is a rail track gate for entry and exit; and one is an exit gate for trucks. Containers of imports arriving by rail are shunted into the City Deep terminal yard on a single rail track,<sup>144</sup> which has a security gate and a 24-hour guard. This gate is opened only when a train enters or leaves. When a container is offloaded, Spoornet security personnel record the seal number in the Register Book, and also check to see that the seal has not been tampered with.<sup>145</sup> At the same time the container and seal number are punched in on the handheld handset. This information is then automatically recorded on the national data computer system.<sup>146</sup> (A customer wishing to track the movement of any container coming in by rail to City Deep Container terminal can access this information on the Internet website.) The offloaded container is then added to a row where the containers are stacked door-to-door and on top of each other. However, if a container has been opened (that is, the seal has been tampered with or replaced with a false one), it is taken to a checkpoint where its contents are inspected again in the presence of a number of officials (a Container Terminal operator and representatives of Security; the Risk Department, the Border Police and Claims) and the owner or agent if available. Claim forms are filled in for any loss, and the container resealed. The container information is again recorded on the RDT system, and the container stacked. The row number and 'ABC' position are also punched into the RDT system so that the container can be found when the owner wants it released. The whole stack line is checked every morning, while containers still in yard are verified on the RDT system. This routine is necessary because when a container is released and taken out, the stack drivers, who do not have RDTs, merely stack other containers in the open spaces.

Twenty-four hours before a train arrives at City Deep, a client expecting the arrival of a container is supposed to lodge all the documents required for processing.<sup>147</sup> Among these is the Container Information Number (CIN), which is a number that couples the container to a specific client. The container can be taken out only by the client linked to the CIN number, which is attached to it only when it has been offloaded, 'parked' and stacked. On the release of the container, the Container Processing Officer signs the documentation to authorise the handing over of the container. (Only designated signatures are accepted.) The owner or agent has 72 hours in which to collect the container. After that he or she will be charged for storage.

When the container has been collected and loaded onto a truck by the owner or agent's designated driver, a further security check is made at the terminal exit

gate, where the driver must hand over all the required documentation as well as his identification book. The container information is again recorded on the RDT in order to confirm that the seal and container numbers match. A photocopy is made of the ID book, and the fingerprints of the driver are taken. These are placed on the back of the copy of the CTO to provide a record of the identity of the person who took the container out. Security personnel also take the documents and physically check the seal and container numbers to see that they match the information on the documents. An additional security check is the requirement that every truck taking out containers has its registration number sandblasted in big letters on the front windscreen window. This is to deter thieves, who in the past avoided detection by merely changing the number plates of the vehicles they used to carry off containers. When all the information has been verified, a Container Inspection Report is filled in to confirm that all the checks have been carried out, and the container is allowed to proceed. If during this exit gate check the seals are found to have been tampered with, the container will be re-routed to the checkpoint and the whole process repeated.

For export containers a similar process is followed. The details, which include the container and client number; the truck it came in on; the train on which it will be transported to the harbour; the harbour from where it will be exported; and the name of the vessel or ship on which it is to be loaded, are punched into the RDT system on arrival. The container will be stacked in the export rows in the container terminal, and sealed with a wire seal near the top of the container, so that it is difficult to cut. Loading times are arranged 24 hours before the train departs, and the container is loaded accordingly.

Physical security at the City Deep Terminal is provided by 24-hour patrols of the perimeter fence (which is not electrified). After 6 p.m. no one is allowed to enter (although Spoornet staff are allowed to exit up to 8 p.m. if they are working overtime). Foot patrols operate right round the outside perimeter, and a supervisor in a vehicle checks point placements. All entry and exit gates have 24-hour guards. No private vehicles are allowed inside the terminal yard area without a permit. During the day only five operators are allowed inside the terminal at any one time, and no-one is allowed to walk inside the terminal. Four CCTV cameras<sup>148</sup> have been installed at various strategic points inside the terminal yard.

Among the improvements that are being planned for the security system at City Deep are the implementation of the digital photo identification card for all personnel working at the City Deep Terminal building and the undertaking of background checks. In addition, Spoornet City Deep security officers have requested the installation of additional CCTV cameras.