



BY MICHAEL PETERS

# SIGHTLINES

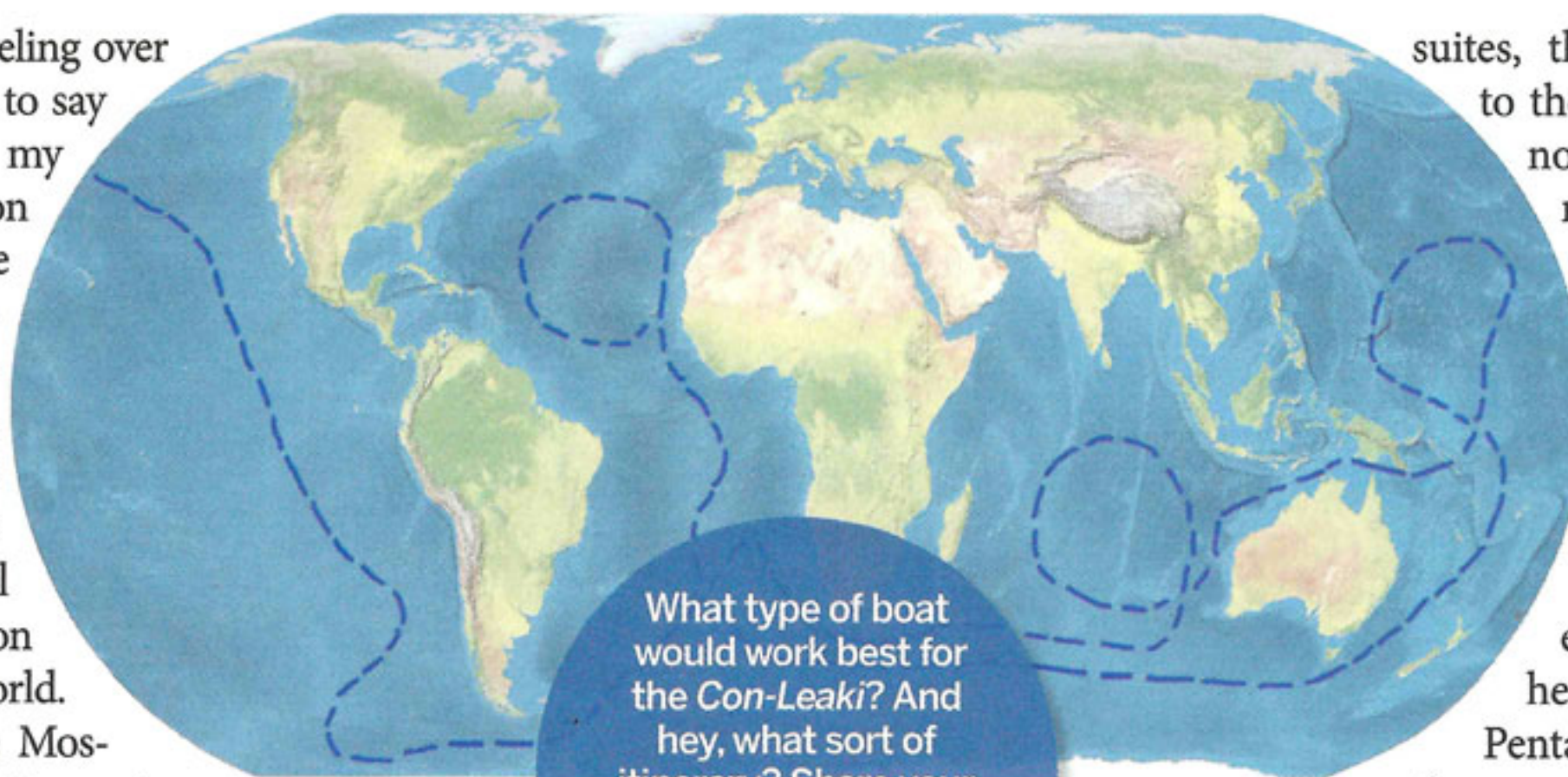
## The Con-Leaki

A FLOATING ASYLUM FOR THE WORLD'S WHISTLEBLOWERS.

I have done a lot of traveling over the years, and I'd have to say airports are among my least favorite places on earth. Can you imagine being holed up in a Moscow transit zone for a couple of months? Well this is where our friend Mr. Snowden ended up after leaking National Security Administration secrets to the whole world. I can't imagine that the Moscow Airport transit zone is as nice as, say, Dubai's Duty Free Zone, so you have to think this must really suck. But who would have thought you could hide out in plain sight in an airport and no one, not even the most powerful country on earth, could touch you? Why didn't bin Laden think of this?

No matter what you think of Snowden, hero or traitor or chump, it seems obvious he didn't think this thing out too well. While I applaud his right to be a whistleblower and even am happy to know a bit of the spilled beans, I have to think he had an "ah-shit" moment when he realized he didn't have an exit strategy. He probably thought he could count on communist dictators or Third World countries to give him asylum, but I am sure he didn't expect to have the world's air routes shut down just to keep him put. What must it be like to have absolutely nowhere to go and no way to get there?

This got me thinking. Snowden may be the beginning of a trend and there may be a developing need for a safe haven that is not counted among the world's countries. What whistleblowers and dissidents need is not a country to take them in, but a boat: A boat that stays in international waters all the time. All it has to do is stay 12 miles offshore and no foreign power can claim it is treading on its territory. It could be like the cruise ship *The World*, only for people who are on the perpetual run, but have the need to stay in touch electronically. It could be a floating asylum with its own sovereignty for guys that want to leak secrets. They would book their long-term stays aboard the boat in advance, go to their destination long before anyone is chasing them, get comfortable in their



What type of boat would work best for the *Con-Leaki*? And hey, what sort of itinerary? Share your thoughts with Michael at [inbox@pmymag.com](mailto:inbox@pmymag.com).

suites, then leak their secrets to the world. Nice and safe, no passport required, no fear of extradition. This haven of secrets could boast Edward Snowden and Julian Assange as permanent residents and invite Daniel Ellsberg along as a guest lecturer to give tips on how he successfully leaked the Pentagon Papers. Press conferences could be held aboard

and the press could have a field day reporting the most damaging releases. The press could even dub the vessel something catchy like the *Con-Leaki*.

A group like WikiLeaks could sponsor the vessel and raise funds from worldwide sympathizers and anarchists via the Internet. They could all support the boat just for the purpose of housing these guys with the intent of never touching land again. I am sure they wouldn't have much trouble attracting donors like Apple, which has already embraced the idea of sheltering its money offshore, and Apple cofounder Steve Wozniak who has already come out in support of Snowden, calling him a hero. If there were a shortage of leakers to fill out the cabins, funds could be raised by giving deposed rulers refuge along with their bags of money to help with long-term financial support. Surely this vessel would be more appealing to them than, say, Elba or Guantanamo. To keep sympathy up and expenses down, the yacht wouldn't even need to be too fancy, just a bit nicer than an airport or a jail cell.

Time will tell if history judges Edward Snowden as hero or traitor or chump. Now, at least we all know that our own government is recording its citizens' phone calls and Internet activities in the name of national security. Via this column I hope to do a little data mining of my own and see if our men in black read *Power & Motoryacht*. If they do, I'm expecting a few more government subscriptions after this piece is published and perhaps a knock on my door. Oh, I just had an "ah-shit" moment—I hope there is room onboard the *Con-Leaki* for me too? □