COMBATING MARITIME PIRACY + ARMED ROBBERY

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Abstract

It is very difficult to establish when and where piracy originated. Given the fact that its origins stem from before recorded history, it is fair to assume that piracy occurred when early people discovered nautical travel. As seen throughout history and in the present, it is obvious that piracy is a major security challenge. Essentially, piracy is an act of robbery or criminal violence at sea. When it comes to maritime security, both international law and leading international organizations differentiate the high seas crime of piracy from the act of armed robbery against a ship. Armed robbery against a ship is characterized as a wrongdoing happening inside or within the international waters and territorial sea of a coastal State. Overall, both piracy and armed robbery both threaten trade, and commerce, peace, and regional stability. Therefore, it should be a national interest to use counter piracy efforts to combat these pirates. New strategies, protocols, and regulations should be put into place to deter easy attack points and hot spot areas such as the Gulf of Guinea and the Gulf of Aden.

Further Research/Reading

Gulf of Guinea

Strategically, the Gulf of Guinea is significant for shipping, with a variety of ports and an abundance of hydrocarbon deposits. The significance of this thruway makes the gulf really tempting for pirates, giving them a lot of vessels to attack. Especially, since there is a high margin of unemployment, lack of security, and absence of judicial enforcement of maritime laws. In the previous decade, the strategies and tactics of these criminals have moved alongside the tides of local and worldwide markets. A significant part of the action in West Africa is referred to armed robbery at sea, instead of piracy, since most of it occurs inside international waters.

Gulf of Aden

For many years there has been a huge issue with piracy attacks and hijackings in the Indian Ocean. These Somali pirates have lethal weapons and use violent tactics when attacking vessels. Although there are safe routes and protocols for vessels in case of emergency many still fear being attacked because of the many successful hijackings Somali pirates have had over the years.

Possible Solutions

• POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REFORM ONSHORE
  - The Yaoundé Structure
• ANTI-PIRACY LAWS
• UNDERSTAND THE THREAT
  -Maritime threats are dynamic
• CONDUCT RISK ASSESSMENTS
  -Companies must conduct risk assessments and identify ship protection measures
• IMPLEMENT SHIP PROTECTION MEASURES
  -Harden the ship, brief and train the crew, enhanced lookout, and follow flag state and military guidance
• REPORT
  -Report incidents and suspicious activity Send distress signal when attacked
• COOPERATE
  -Cooperate with other shipping and military forces, law enforcement to preserve evidence, and welfare providers

(Annual Piracy Report - International Maritime Bureau 2019)

(World Food Programme)