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**WHAT CAN BE DONE TO COUNTER SOMALI PIRACY?**

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Irrespective of the political and policy decisions that may or may not be debated in the capitals of the world as well as the UN and other IGO's, the basic fact is that piracy is news because the pirates are capturing ships by boarding. This article examines what possibilities exist at ship level to prevent this. Obviously the options discussed below will not fix the longer term and deeper causes of piracy, but if each individual attack is made more difficult and costly the effects can be reduced while a strategic approach is worked out. If the latter does not occur, then tactical developments will determine how costly piracy will remain.

There are a number of different angles from which the tactical options need to be looked at. Obviously there are the individual merchant ships. Then there are naval escorts with their associated weapons and aircraft. Then there are limitations imposed by the environment and by the nature of international law. Finally, there are the pirates themselves, who as a group, constantly adapt and react. In modern times, this may well be the first asymmetric naval campaign.

What is clear is that the current defences used by merchant shipping are not effective enough. The number of vessels taken increased month on month throughout 2008. Both the range of ship size and location has expanded, with the case of the Sirius Star being a very nasty surprise on both counts.

"...the 2005 piracy attempt against U.S.-flagged Seabourn Spirit serves as a testament to anti-piracy best practices. The cruise liner, carrying several hundred vacationers, escaped hijacking by Somali pirates. The attack failed because the captain reacted to the approaching vessels immediately, heading out to open sea at full speed, and conducting evasive

manoeuvres to prevent a boarding. The pirates gave chase, fired rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons at the liner, and did not break off until the Seabourn Spirit employed a long-range acoustic device, which generates focused, painful noise. In theory, if mariners heed warnings and regulations and implement prudent anti-piracy measures, this could eliminate the market for Somali pirates, making the practice unprofitable."1

Although the above passage shows how a captain can defeat a pirate attack, there are a number of points to be made. First, the captain spotted the pirates early. It was a clear day, a big advantage. Moreover, this ship was carrying approximately 650 passengers and 300 crew, that is well beyond the manning levels of the average merchant ship. The attackers were more likely to be spotted. This is important because pirate craft give off very small - if any - radar signatures. The captain had far more bodies available to take whatever measures he chose. This is not to belittle him, because he made a series of very clear minded choices, but merely to say he enjoyed two initial advantages, one by luck (time of day), one by design (crew size). Second, he headed to open sea at full speed. His ship was faster than many cargo ships/tankers and handled better. Cruise ships are designed and built to very different specifications than they typical merchant. (They can also accelerate faster). Again, a larger crew meant he had more information feeding back to him at all times than the master of the Sirius Star. Warships also enjoy these advantages. The combination of his speed, manoeuvres and open seas would make the approach of his attackers far more demanding - again a reflection of the captain exploiting the design of his ship to good effect, but these options are absent from vessels that have been taken.

The third factor to note is the ship's last active line of defence - a sonic weapon. Being non-lethal, it does not (as yet) face the legal minefield small arms do. In 2005, this weapon system gave the pirates a nasty shock. But in the taking of the MV Biscaglia on 28 November, 2008, the three man security detail used a similar device and found the pirates just ignored it. Worse still, they responded with gunfire aimed at the system. Rather than driving the pirates off, it escalated the attack and the level of violence. The pirates are not beginners, they adapt to defences. Therefore it is pointless to try to construct the 'perfect plan' it is preferable to aim for an effective one than greatly reduces the pirates' chances of success. Indeed, a key aspect is that the defence merely has to drive the pirates off. The objective of the attack is profit not patriotism. If a target is dangerous, difficult or not cost-effective, the attack will be broken off - or not attempted at all.

The current defences rely on non-lethal force and evasion. The first choice is distance. If the pirates cannot close with the ship, the attack will fail. Visibility and sea state are key variables. As noted above, a fully laden merchant ship is not going to be as fast or as agile as the attackers are. The pirates - like big cats on the savannah - will attempt to close the gap by stealth then speed. Distance as a defence may well be a fleeting factor. As November's

attack shows, non-lethal defences - including fire hoses - are irritate rather than drive the pirates back. The size of the potential ransom means the discomfort these defences cause are less than the rewards of success. Instead, given the level of financial reward each pirate stands to gain, non-lethal defences will not on their own ward off an attack either physically or by breaking the pirates' morale.

There is one further method has been used: electric fences. A company in the Netherlands has come up with a 9000 volt electric fence. Secure Ship is a set of electrified guard rails surrounding the ship, which the manufactures say is similar to systems used to protect military installations.

The International Maritime Bureau manager Cyrus Moudi said that the Secure Ship system has its uses, but isn't suitable for every ship.

"The electric fence is non-lethal and can help deter attackers. But it's not strictly safe and you cannot use it on vessels carrying flammable cargo. Electricity and explosive vapour is not a good mix," he said.

"We don't advocate the use or carriage of weapons on board a vessel. There are better ways of securing your ship. And the primary defence is having a good lookout." 2

There could well be arguments about how non-lethal such a fence is when a pirate is hurled backwards into the sea. There are plenty of activist NGO's who would take up the cause of a dead or severely injured pirate irrespective of what mainstream opinion holds to.

The arming of ships' crews with small arms is not an option at present, as can be seen by the opinion of Cyrus Moudi above. First of all, people do not join the merchant navy to fight. They have other skills and duties on board ship. Training them to use small arms is counter-productive in terms of time and effectiveness. Most crews wouldn't stand up to the return fire, would be incapable of aimed, non-automatic fire and blaze away at targets that were out of range while expending vast amounts of rounds. Quite apart from the problems of faulty handling and resultant deaths and wounds, 3 most companies fear crew arguments that turn heated would end in gunshot deaths. Furthermore, captured ships would yield more arms and ammunition for the pirates. Most crews would realize that deaths suffered by the pirates as they took a ship would cause retribution once the merchant ship was boarded. Moreover, port authorities do not want weapons aboard while in their territorial waters. If weapons are permitted on board (and that is extremely rare) then not just ammunition but also the firing pins have to be kept in three separate and locked locations. Thus reassembling and loading such weapons at sea would take so much time, the pirates might well have already taken the ship anyway.

The use of armed guards from PSC's (Private Security Companies) face the same legal restrictions, although in many but not all cases, their personnel are all ex-military, so their weapon handling and tactical sense is far higher. In addition, they are not part of the

regular crew, so they do not weaken the normal running of ship by being diverted from other on board duties and roles. Even so, at a wage of 10,000 GBP a month per man they are not cheap.<sup>4</sup> The world of PSC's is murky with some companies offering professional services and others being far more dubious. With current restrictions on weapons, they too are limited to sonic devices, flares and water cannons.<sup>5</sup> While again they handle these systems far more effectively and resolutely than crew members, the three guards on the MV Biscaglia stated they were unable to repel the pirate attacks, but merely delay the eventual boarding and thereby make themselves the objects of the pirates' wrath.

The current solution favoured by the French (and others) is to deploy regular marines on ships in small groups armed with their personal weapons. Legally this is an option for national flagged ships, but most merchants operate under flags of convenience. There is also the problem finding enough troops to go round and given the ever widening area being threatened by the pirates, there are too many ships that are too far flung for this solution to work except when ships are in convoy. Convoying is a measure that most shipping companies are unhappy about, even though the Gulf of Aden is where most attacks occur. Ships already face delays as they move through the Suez Canal, further delays as convoys form up will cost money, with more owners deciding to risk it and plunge ahead. Even convoys themselves are not without problems as described below.

There is the suggestion that heavy weapons rather than small arms could be deployed on ships. There are a number of obvious advantages. First, there is almost no danger of the crew using the weapons during a disagreement among themselves. Second, weapons such as 40mm Bofors guns can easily outrange anything the pirates can mount on a small craft. (They would probably outrange anything on a mother ship too.)<sup>6</sup> Third, they are of a large enough calibre to attempt to sink pirate craft themselves, rather than aiming at individuals. This means once such a weapon system starts to engage a pirate craft, the morale of the pirates as a group rather than as individuals will suffer. The calibre is still small enough to allow rapid fire.<sup>7</sup> (The target is going to be small and fast moving, volume rather than accuracy will be the deciding factor. Also there's a greater chance the pirates will break off an attack when faced with the level of fire-power generated rather than close the distance to attempt boarding). Combined with tracer shells, the noise and force themselves should be frightening enough to cause most pirates to disengage. The weapon is heavy enough that it can be bolted to the superstructure. If pirates successfully board a ship equipped with such weapons they won't be able to take them away quickly or easily. Nor could they readily mount them on any vessel, even their mother ships.<sup>8</sup> Acquiring ammunition and spare parts would be very difficult too. Moreover, such weapons can be given gun shields or turrets that withstand small arms fire. In the attack on the MV Biscaglia attempting to beat off a pirate attack using a sonic weapon, found the pirates started to target the weapon rather than the ship with AK-47's



forcing the security personnel manning it to take cover - effectively silencing the sonic system. Likewise, a ship also targeted the same week had a French soldier on-board badly wounded while using a similar system. It also failed to prevent an RPG round from being fired at the hull. The pirates - as adaptable as ever - have realised non-lethal defences can be overcome by endurance and suppressive fire. This makes these systems expensive and more dangerous for the men using them than for the pirates they are supposed to deter. Even lightly armoured weapon systems will enable the crews to continue to engage for longer and more effectively - thus increasing the chances of forcing the pirates to break off the attack or naval or aerial units to intervene.

The obvious reaction to such systems would be for pirates to attempt night attacks. Again WWII gives us answers. Star shells and flares were critical in breaking up night attacks by fast light craft such as E-Boats and surfaced U-Boats. When an enemy relies on low visibility and a combination of 'shoot and scoot' and the environment is so cluttered with vessels that radar plots are crowded, artificial light is key to stripping away this advantage. again it must be emphasised that the key to the defence is to convince the pirates there are no easy victims to be had and therefore the best course for them is to break off their attack. As mentioned before pirates attack for profit not from a sense of duty or patriotism. A defence simply has to be robust not overwhelming. However, to date only one pirate attack has been recorded as taking place at night, and that was under a full moon with 94% illumination.

A further point is that a successful defence can simply be one that buys time. As more naval forces are stationed in the area, so the greater the chance is of help arriving. It is also the case that certain ships can outrun the pirates at top speed, but it takes time for the ship to reach such speeds (it isn't normal operating procedure to run at top speed as it is costly in terms of fuel). The ship also needs searoom as demonstrated by the example of the cruise ship mentioned above. But speed is not an option for larger tankers or heavily laden ships low in the water. They can't outrun the pursuit. With larger tankers, there are also the problems of danger to other shipping and the impossibility for such vessels to stop over short distances. The final time buying defence is for the ship to be far more compartmentalised. By being able to seal off the bridge and the engine room, the crew can gain valuable time.<sup>9</sup> The pirates will make for the bridge as it gives them control over the ship. Any delay will help. As long as military forces are close enough to react, then this too will deny the pirates success. But this comes at the cost of lowering operating efficiency and possibly raising costs too. Note none of the above would have saved the Sirius Star.

Helicopters would appear to be a key weapon in the suppression of piracy. There are a number of major reasons for this. First, they are readily available in that all major warships carry one or more of them. Second, they can cover a large area quickly but also loiter over potential targets and carefully check out possible pirate craft. They also have a key deterrent

effect. Their presence is often enough to cause pirate craft to break contact. Third, helicopters can carry a variety of weapons, light, heavy, stand off, as well as carrying marines/commandos. The last could possibly be inserted onto a ship about to be boarded. Fourth, they can recover survivors both pirates and crew (for example the three British based security guards rescued by the German Navy in late November). Finally helicopter crews can make on the spot judgements better than remote UAV operators - given they can see and sense a lot of the environment around them. UAV's share quite a few of the abilities of helicopters but they lack troop carrying abilities, as well as SAR10 nor do they have the same defence capabilities. They lack the flexibility of helicopters but they are cheaper - and in the event of a shoot down or crash, the political cost is negligible. Psychologically, which will affect pirate morale more - a human crewed helicopter or a UAV - and hence act as a greater deterrent, is a question that needs to be investigated but is beyond the scope of this article.

If helicopters are so effective against pirates and their activities then it is only a matter of time before the pirates attempt to shoot one down - especially given how adaptable the pirates have been up to now. The most commonly discussed scenario is that the pirates will use a MANPAD to do this. The weapon system would almost certainly be a Soviet SA-7 or one of its derivatives. The effect would be that even if the pirates couldn't shoot down a helicopter, helicopter crews would act with a lot more circumspection around pirate craft (or even possible ones) thus greatly reducing their effectiveness.

However, there are a number of factors which suggest an SA-7 (or most other MANPADs) wouldn't be widely used. First, a small, fast boat isn't a good platform to try to launch such a weapon from. To start with there is the problem of stability. Pirate craft rely on speed and manoeuvrability to close in on and board their targets. Naturally, it is not an easy platform to launch accurate shots from. While RPG-7 rockets have been fired at ship superstructures from pirate boats, they are firing at very large, slow-moving targets. A helicopter is much smaller and much faster.<sup>11</sup> The RPG firers that brought down the Blackhawks in Mogadishu were using ambush tactics from concealed positions.<sup>12</sup> (Much as YouTube videos of Chechens using SA-7 family missiles from cover to take down Russian helicopters). The pirates are not going to enjoy such an advantage. The sea is bare. The pirates' only cover is to look like local fishing boats, once that cover is blown, the only defence they have left against a helicopter is the rules of engagement the latter is operating under. Once they've committed themselves to an attack, their ability to hide is non-existent. Worse still both weapons (the SA-7 and RPG-7) have short ranges, 300 metres being their effective limit.

Then there is the problem of backblast. As videos make clear, both weapons produce quite a lot of it. The difference is that an RPG aimed at a ship is aimed while pointing over the side of the pirate both and its target is largely horizontal. The firer has plenty of time. The

backblast will be away from the craft. A MANPAD will not get the luxury of time, especially if helicopters close from ahead or astern of the craft. The firing position is going to be vertical (making keeping the firer's body stable very hard) and the target is small and fast moving (and shooting back). MANPAD systems won't work very well under those conditions. And the backblast? On a small boat packed with men, weapons and fuel, not a risk most crews would seriously entertain. Once again, piracy is commercially driven, the motivation is to make a profit, not to die for one's country.

The next problem is cost. An AK-47 can retail at anywhere between \$30 to 150 in the region<sup>13</sup>. Ammunition is cheap and plentiful. An RPG or a PK machine gun will cost slightly more, but success will mean it is an investment worth making.<sup>14</sup> Besides both weapon systems are easy to find as is the ammunition. But an SA-7 comes at \$30,000 a piece. Then there's the ammunition. After that the fact that the launcher has a maximum life of five shots. Although compared to other MANPAD systems, the SA-7 family is simple, it still has some electronics. If hot, dusty desert isn't good for it, then the saltiness of the sea will be even worse. And of course, how do you practise using it? The other weapons are all cheap and available enough to do just as you see in a Hollywood film, a home made range, stones, tin cans etc. But even well funded western armies struggle to practice the live firing of MANPADs.<sup>15</sup>

It would seem unlikely that SA-7's and their variants will feature heavily for the pirate forces as it is too expensive, short lived, limited use (and can't be used against ships) and very difficult to use. RPG-7's, on the other hand, are readily available, cheap and well-liked. They have a good reputation as helicopter killers locally (although under very different circumstances). They are also believed to have caused a number of hits/kills on helicopters in Iraq. One other nasty feature is that a RPG rocket self destructs after 4 1/2 seconds of flight if it hasn't hit anything first. It can be fired as an area weapon, if a helicopter is obliging enough to hover or move slowly. It might be unlikely to hit a helicopter but it could still force a crew to stand off - giving the pirates some possibility of escape or evasion. AK-47's and PK machine guns fire 7.62 mm bullets and have little chance against a properly updated modern helicopter. The big killer/wounder of helicopters is still 12.7/14.5 mm machine guns - which are probably too heavy for the light craft pirates use to board shipping with. <sup>16</sup>

Although the pirates can pose a limited threat to helicopters, the latter are still a major weapon, both actively (through aggression) and passively (through deterrence) in countering pirates at all stages of the problem. The successes in repelling pirates in early January 2009, underlined this.

Another system used to check up on and attack pirates are assault boats and rigid raiders. These are crewed by sailors and marines/commandos. While flexible and able to distinguish between pirates and fishing boats as well as being able to affect captures, these craft have

severe limitations. First, they don't have a decisive technological edge over the pirates. In a hot contact, the losses are more likely to evenly spread. Indeed this would make pirates more likely to exchange fire as they stand a chance of forcing their opponents back. In political and strategic terms, trading off well-trained elite crews against pirates is a poor exchange militarily and unlikely to be sustainable at home in the long run. Second, such craft need cover either from above (helicopters) or behind (mother ships). The experience of HMS Cornwall near Iran shows how a low tech foe can quickly turn the tables on such forces. To lose the very forces who are supposed to be suppressing piracy as hostages would be even worse. The Iranians managed to overwhelm the British by numbers and by craft mounting heavier machine guns (and thus out-ranging them) as well as a willingness to take losses. To imagine the Somalis are not capable of similar feats would be dangerous over confidence.<sup>17</sup>

Yet if we look back on naval history, such small craft are ideal for cutting out captured ships held in hostile harbours, landing ground forces by stealth, or for pursuit into narrow, shallow or confined waters. In the past, their vulnerability was largely accepted, now that would not be the case - even for the Russians or the Chinese. To say they shouldn't be employed is a mistake, but to deploy them recklessly could damage anti-piracy operations at beyond just the tactical level. This is borne out by the naval fiasco with Iran which severely shook the standing of the British Royal Navy.

Besides active measures, there are also other factors that inhibit the pirates. Although these are beyond the control of shipping companies or the navies deployed to the area, they do offer possibilities that can be exploited if operations centres are aware of them.

First, there are local bodies that inhibit the pirates' radius of action. Unlike the successful anti-piracy campaign in and around the Straits of Malacca, neighboring states' navies are not going to be large or effective enough to suppress piracy while being close to their home ports. However, the Red Sea as far south as Bab el Mandeb (where it joins with the Gulf of Aden) is pirate free for larger ships.<sup>18</sup>

Although various navies claim this is due to its proximity to Djibouti - where the EU anti-piracy patrol is based - it is more due to another set of illegal operators, namely Yemen based smugglers. Unwilling to have their trade disrupted by outside navies, the smugglers have made sure the pirates can find no bases or cover in the Red Sea itself. This has been backed up by violence. The smugglers have no interest in attempting to board large ships, although they will attack yachts with the aim of robbing them but largely avoid the use of force if they are not resisted. Djibouti itself could be used as a bigger base but is worried about doing anything on a larger scale fearing pirate attacks by land or just possibly by sea.

Within former Somalia itself, the successors to the Islamic Courts Movement, notably al-Shabaab, are very anti-pirate. This partly for clan reasons and partly due to the pirates' less than Islamic lifestyle. What it does mean is as the southern third of Somalia collapses, if any

of the Islamic groups come out on top they will attempt to advance into Puntland. The Islamic Courts were doing this just before the Ethiopian invasion in late 2006. A similar advance would be good news for shipping but bad news for the wider world.

Apparently, in January 2009, the various governments have been congratulating themselves on the drop in pirate attacks believing increased patrolling, more wide ranging rules of engagement and general political pressure have been the reason for this decline. However, at least one former naval officer has pointed out the weather is a more probable factor.

I have noticed that there are reports that the 20+ ships of world navies may have reduced piracy - only four "captures" by Somali pirates in recent days.

In keeping with an earlier U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence analysis, I wonder if the 15 - 20 knot winds in the Gulf of Aden are slowing the pirates down?

... the sea winds in the Gulf of Aden are running 10 -25 knots - a little steep, I would think, for the small boats operated by the pirates.<sup>19</sup> This would imply that given a little warning, there are sea states that would allow shipping to make the transit through the Gulf of Aden, knowing that the sea was too rough for the pirates. A better study of local climatic and metrological conditions might well prove to be the cheapest form of defence.

Finally, Yemen could help by granting basing rights on Socotra. This is the main island in a group that lies literally just off the Horn of Africa. It has been a base for the British (up to the 1960's) and for the Soviet Navy (after until the end of the Cold War). This would give the naval forces a semi-permanent centre of operations. It would also place forces very close to the main ports of Puntland. It would make resupply much easier as well as giving aircraft more flexibility<sup>20</sup>. It would also make it possible to deploy smaller craft in the area too. In addition, not being part of the mainland, the Yemeni government would have less trouble with its own local militants. (It is worth remembering the attack on the USS Cole took place in Aden harbour).

Overall, it would seem that for individual ships, speed, searoom and sharp lookouts are the best defences at the moment. A ship that appears to be a difficult target may well get away unmolested. A high speed run through the Gulf of Aden, taking advantage of night and/or strong winds and rough seas could be used - but only when nature sees fit to provide there.<sup>21</sup> Non-lethal defences have lost much of their effectiveness as the pirates have adapted to them. Also certain cargoes and certain ship classes are more vulnerable. Simply diverting around the Cape of Good Hope may well not be enough - as the Sirius Star demonstrated. In addition, the Sirius Star is warning not to under-estimate the pirates nor their range of action or abilities.

The whole situation is made worse by the costs incurred. The expenses borne by the maritime insurance companies are being passed on to shipping as a whole. Moreover, some

crews have succeeded in having their wages greatly increased in light of the higher risk. For individual shipping lines, the capture of a vessel means the delay of the cargo carried - with the penalties that incurs and possible loss of reputation - just as the world economy is contracting with attendant reduction in the quantity of cargoes to be moved.

The use of weapons and Private Security Companies, are expensive and unpredictable from a legal and financial point of view. Up to now, it has been very difficult to determine which ones are actually reliable enough to justify their fees.<sup>22</sup> As for heavier weapons, they might be the answer if piracy becomes a permanent feature - either around the Horn of Africa alone or in other areas such as the Niger Delta. These weapons will require gun crews, raising costs and would see larger, more valuable ships becoming like the Indiamen of old - merchant ships with limited firepower - enough to counter pirates, but not purpose-built warships. Convoying - at present - does not seem justified by the additional expense. Normally it takes attacks by military units to do that (such as the Iran-Iraq War). But no matter what course is chosen, expenses will increase and profit margins shrink as long as piracy exists in the area.

For naval forces, and their attendant governments, the question is how much force they are prepared to commit but also actually use. More helicopters would undoubtedly help, meaning light carrier types of warship might well be a good choice to provide overhead cover, while frigates and destroyers provide close escort. Again, there is a debate over whether close escort or active hunting is the more effective choice. The former is reassuring and the latter may well deter attacks before they begin.

Even so, what has been done so far has been merely an attempt to limit the symptoms and not the causes. General John Craddock, Nato's top commander, last week said: "You do not stop piracy on the seas. You stop piracy on the land."

Seyoum Mesfin, the Foreign Minister of Somalia's neighbour Ethiopia, added: "The pirates are not fish who just sprang up out of the sea. They came out of Somalia. It is far-fetched to try to clamp down on piracy without first having put the situation in mainland Somalia under control." <sup>23</sup>

These are decisions that can only be taken by governments and Inter-governmental Organisations. Whether special forces will be allowed to operate openly on dry land and use 'hot pursuit' and how International Law and Rules of Engagement should be applied are political more than military decisions. One possibility is holding out the prospect of recognition for Puntland in return for suppression of piracy and its attendant bases by the local authorities. Unless the anarchy that has been allowed to engulf Somalia since 1991 is dealt with, deployments to the region will become long term.

In conclusion, ship owners can only address the immediate problems thrown up by piracy. Navies can only do as much as their political masters will let them - and that in itself may not be enough to do more than contain piracy to within 'acceptable' levels. It is

governments and IGO's that must make the final choice about the degree they wish to deal with piracy. But what should be borne in mind, is Somalia might be the worse area for piracy, but the practice is spreading elsewhere too. Rather than being a one off, it may well prove to be a test case.

#### **Footnotes:**

- 1) The Overstated Threat By Commander John Patch, U.S. Navy (Retired) November 2008, [https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/story.asp?STORY\\_ID=1694](https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/story.asp?STORY_ID=1694)
- 2) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/7735685.stm> 2008/11/18 17:40:14 GMT
- 3) In similar way, the airline industry does not issue parachutes to passengers.
- 4) On the other hand, diverting shipping around the Cape of Good Hope adds \$20,000 - 30,000 a day to operating costs. Also see: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/top-stories/2008/12/07/heroic-brit-trio-take-on-somali-pirates-before-escaping-into-sea-115875-20951441/> giving the wages the guards earned - so the shipping companies are paying the PSC more.
- 5) On 17 December 2008, a Chinese vessel, the Zhouhua 4, fought off pirates using Molotov Cocktails once the pirates had boarded, but the use of fire-bombs on board many vessels is far too dangerous. In addition, the crew were very exposed to return fire. These tactics did however buy time for intervention forces to arrive. On 2 January 2009, a Greek vessel, the Kriti Episkopi, used a combination of fire-hoses, flares and manoeuvre to evade boarding until help arrived.
- 6) Such weapons were effective against surfaced submarines in WWII.
- 7) The weapon was originally designed for naval vessels as an anti-aircraft gun.
- 8) Doing so would be a clear indication that the vessel was a pirate thus robbing it of its disguise - a key pirate advantage.
- 9) Although in the case of the Sirius Star, one gunshot was enough to persuade the captain to unlock the bridge door.
- 10) SAR has another use - namely in non-pirate related accidents for local and international shipping. A mild amount of soft power that might slightly offset the large hard power projection into the area. Even so, as the tempo of operations in the Red Sea/ Horn of Africa area increases, so will local resentment.
- 11) Again, where ships have been hit, the rockets have hit something rather than aimed shots at the bridge. The effect is psychological rather than military.
- 12) They had also dug pits to absorb the backblast. Many sources claim they were veterans of the Afghan War and had adopted these tactics there. Also, the US forces seemed unaware of the threat posed.
- 13) <http://dusteye.wordpress.com/2007/03/20/ak-47-price-drops-from-10-cows-in-1986-to-2-cows-today/> and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AK-47>
- 14) Some source claim that irregular forces are switching to RPG's as their main weapon, notably veterans of Chechnya.
- 15) As in the story of the 1980's when two US instructors were sent to train the SAS in the use of the US Stinger SAM. The instructors themselves had fired 2 missiles a year. They asked if any of the SAS had fired one ever. Only one soldier said he had - in the Falklands War. This refers to two elite groups. Most other operators get to use simulators. Everyone, like SA-7 operators usually find their first time is for real. Now work through the story where you are paying for the weapon, not your employer. Hence the use of simulators (an option not open to Somalis).
- 16) The Iranian craft mounting such heavy machine guns mentioned below were military vessels with a military mission - whereas the pirates are engaged in a criminal undertaking.

- 17) Having said that the Royal Navy publicly demonstrated its new more heavily armed and armoured assault boat on 24 January, 2009. See <http://informationdissemination.blogspot.com/2009/01/new-royal-marines-offshore-raiding.html>
- 18) But not for yachts etc.
- 19) <http://www.eaglespeak.us/2009/01/somali-pirates-decline-not-so-fast.html>
- 20) Turn around times on land for military aircraft are much faster than on board ship.
- 21) As of late January 2009, the designated corridor has been moved to the south (away from the Yemen coast) where there are far fewer fishing boats for the pirates to hide among.
- 22) Size alone is no guarantee - look at the scandals surrounding Blackwater.
- 23) Times 08/12/08 <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article5309165.ece>

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