Piracy at sea: overview and policy responses

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Section Business and Transport

This note gives a brief overview of the problems facing UK and world shipping from piracy and armed robbery at sea and summarises the actions being taken by the UK Government and international organisations to tackle the problem.

Please note: there are separate notes on the legal issues surrounding the prevention and prosecution of piracy at sea, including legal powers to board and detain ships; the use of private armed security guards; and the prosecution of pirates (SN6237); and on whether Somali piracy has 'developmental effects' (SN6238).

The International Maritime Bureau has interactive maps showing piracy incidents around the world from 2005 onwards.

Further information on shipping and ports matters can be found on the Shipping Topical Page of the Parliament website.

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1 Where does piracy take place and how bad is the problem?

Piracy is considered a serious problem by governments and the shipping industry alike. In January 1999 HM Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) produced a paper which stated that modern piracy was "a real and growing problem". It defined four types of piratical attack:

> Robbery, armed or otherwise, targeted mainly at money, crews' personal effects, and ships' equipment;

> Permanent hijacking of ships (most prevalent in the Far East), sometimes turning them into 'phantom ships' for use in cargo frauds;[1]

> Hijacking ships to steal their cargoes; and

> Possible 'state-involved' hijacking.[2]

The FCO stated that the latter two of these were on the increase.

Piracy in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has tended to come in fits and starts, with the most recent high-profile attacks coming on ships sailing off the Somali coast in East Africa and the Nigerian coast in West Africa. In the 1990s, the number of attacks increased with major 'hotspots' identified in the Caribbean and off the coast of South America; in the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific.

1.1 IMB Piracy Reporting Centre

The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) collates information about piracy attacks. It describes its work as follows:

> The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) recognised a need to establish a reporting centre which would serve as the first point of contact for the shipmaster to report any incident of piracy, armed robbery or even stowaways - thus initiating the process of response. This need prompted the IMB to set up the 24 hour manned Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC).

> The main aim of the PRC is to raise awareness within the shipping industry, which includes the shipmaster, ship-owner, insurance companies, traders, etc, of the areas of high risk associated with piratical attacks or specific ports and anchorages associated with armed robberies on board ships.

> The main function of the PRC is two-fold:

>> 1) To be the single point of contact for ship Masters anywhere in the world who are under piratical or armed robbery attack. The information received from the Masters is immediately relayed to the local law enforcement agencies requesting assistance.

>> 2) The information received from the ship Masters is immediately broadcast to all vessels in the Ocean region - thus highlighting the threat to a Master en-route into the area of risk.

> The PRC works closely with various governments and law enforcement agencies and is involved in information sharing with industry, law enforcement, governments and flag states in an attempt to reduce and ultimately eradicate this crime.

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[1]   'phantom ships' are ships with no real identity – the vessel is registered on the basis of false information provided to the registration authorities about the vessel's previous names and the owner's identity

[2]   FCO, *Focus International: Piracy and armed robbery at sea*, January 1999

The work of the 24 hour manned PRC is vital to shipping in understanding the areas of risk as well as the shifts in these areas of risk.

The services of the PRC are free to the industry. The PRC is funded purely on donations. [3]

The IMB PRC annual report is available by contacting the organisation directly. You can also view the live piracy map showing incidents, attacks and attempted attacks around the world.

1.2 Levels of piracy – generally

The levels of piracy and armed robbery incidents as reported to the IMB PRC in 2012 are as follows:

Worldwide Incidents: updated on 29 Feb 2012

Total Attacks Worldwide: 62

Total Hijackings Worldwide: 6

Between 2007 and 2011 the total number of annual incidents rose from 263 to 439.[4] The IMB PRC has stated that there was a slight drop in the total number of recorded incidents of piracy and armed robbery worldwide: from 445 in 2010 compared to 439 in 2011. The falling numbers come after four consecutive years of increased piracy and armed robbery worldwide:

The 802 crew members taken hostage in 2011 also marks a decrease from the four-year high of 1,181 in 2010. Overall in 2011, there were 45 vessels hijacked, 176 vessels boarded, 113 vessels fired upon and 105 reported attempted attacks. A total of eight crew members were killed throughout the year, the same number as 2010.[5]

It also stated that Nigeria and Benin continue to be piracy hotspots, while the situation continues to improve in South East Asia and the Indian Subcontinent:

Other African hotspots

Elsewhere, Nigeria and Benin continued to be piracy hotspots. While 10 attacks were reported in Nigeria, including two hijackings, IMB warns that this number is not representative of the real threat of Nigeria piracy. Underreporting of attacks in Nigeria continues to be a cause for concern, and IMB states that it is aware of at least another 34 unreported incidents in Nigerian waters.

Also in 2011 a probable extension of Nigerian piracy into neighbouring Benin included 20 incidents against tankers, eight of which were hijacked and had cargoes partly stolen. Although the average length of captivity for ships taken off the coasts of Nigeria and Benin tends to be roughly 10 days, compared to six months in Somali hijackings, IMB warns that these attacks can be more violent.

Improvements in South East Asia, Indian Subcontinent

In South East Asia and the Indian Subcontinent, vessels in Bangladesh reported 10 incidents of armed robbery in the approaches to Chittagong. This is a significant reduction from the 23 incidents reported in 2010 and reflects the initiatives taken by the

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[3]   IMB, H*IMB Piracy Reporting Centre*H [accessed 28 February 2012]

[4]   IMB, *Piracy and armed robbery against ships: report for the period 1 January 2011 – 31 December 2011*, January 2012

[5]   IMB press notice, "HPiracy attacks in East and West Africa dominate world reportH", 19 January 2012

Bangladesh Coast Guard to curb piracy in their waters. Nonetheless, anchorages in the approaches to Chittagong remain an area of concern.

Indonesia has seen a rise in armed robbery for the second straight year. The incidents continue to be local and opportunistic, according to IMB, and usually against anchored vessels. The 46 reported incidents – up from 40 in 2010 – include 41 vessels boarded, two attempted attacks, and three cases of tugs and barges being hijacked whilst underway.

Attacks in the South China Sea fell from 31 in 2010 to 13 in 2011. This included nine boarded vessels, three attempted attacks, and the hijacking of one tug and its barge.[6]

The IMB PRC gives the following information about piracy and armed robbery-prone areas:

SOUTH EAST ASIA AND INDIAN SUB CONTINENT

Bangladesh: Attacks continue but with reduced numbers. Robbers are seen targeting ships preparing to anchor. Most attacks reported at Chittagong anchorages and approaches. Attacks in Bangladesh have fallen significantly over the past few years because of the efforts by the Bangladesh Authorities.

Indonesia: Anambas / Natuna / Mangkai / Subi / Merundung islands / Tanjung Priok – Jakarta / Dumai waters. Pirates / Robbers are normally armed with guns / knives and / or machetes. Generally be vigilant in other areas. Many attacks may have gone unreported. Pirates / Robbers normally attack vessel during the night. When spotted and alarm sounded, pirates / robbers usually abort the attack and move away.

Malacca Straits: Although the number of attacks has dropped substantially due to the increase and aggressive patrols by the littoral states authorities since July 2005, ships are advised to continue maintaining strict anti piracy / robbery watches when transiting the straits. Currently, there are no indications as to how long these patrols will continue or reduce.

Singapore Straits: Attacks are increasing. Vessels are advised to continue maintaining adequate anti piracy watch and measures. Pirates/Robbers attack ships while underway or while anchored at the Straits.

South China Sea: in the vicinity off Anambas / Natuna / Mangkai islands / Subi Besar / Merundung area.

Vietnam: Vung Tau

AFRICA AND RED SEA.

Africa :- Nigeria: Lagos, Bonny river and off the Nigerian / Benin coast up to about 150nm – pirates/robbers are well armed and violent. They attacked and robbed vessels / kidnapped crews along the coast, rivers, anchorages, ports and surrounding waters/off the coast. Crew members were injured/killed in some attacks. Vessels also advise to be vigilant in other areas as many attacks may have gone unreported.

Benin: Cotonou - Attacks are increasing. Pirates / Armed Robbers are violent and in some incidents, ships have been fired upon. A number of ships particularly tankers were attacked and hijacked. Pirates / Armed Robbers forced Masters to sail to unknown location where ship's properties and sometimes part cargos were stolen. Crew members have been injured in the past.

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[6] ibid.

Gulf of Aden / Red Sea : Somali pirates continue to attack vessels in the northern Somali coast in the Gulf of Aden and southern Red Sea in the Bab El Mandeb TSS despite presence of warships. The pirates fire automatic weapons and Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPG) at merchant vessels in an attempt to board and hijack them. Once the attack is successful and the vessel hijacked, they would sail the vessel towards the Somali coast and thereafter demand a ransom for the release of the vessel and crew. All vessels transiting the area are advised to take additional precautionary measures and maintain strict 24 hours visual and radar anti piracy watch using all available means. Watch keeping crews should lookout for small suspicious boats converging to own vessel. Early sightings / detection and accurate assessment will allow Master to increase speed and take evasive manoeuvres to escape from the pirates and at the same time request for assistance from various Authorities / Agencies including the IMB PRC. Monitor and keep clear of all small boats if possible. Adhere to the latest BMP recommendations.

Since 1 February 2009, MSCHOA (www.mschoa.org) has established the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC). Military assets (Naval and Air) will be strategically deployed within the area to best provide protection and support to merchant ships.

Masters using the IRTC are not relieved of their obligation and should continue to maintain a strict 24 hour lookout using all available means to get an early warning of an approaching threat. Some vessels have been attacked/hijacked in the corridor.

Ships / Owners are advised to register their details on the MSCHOA website www.mschoa.org and obtain further information regarding the close support protection details for ships transiting the Gulf of Aden. Ships are encouraged to conduct their passage through the IRTC in groups based on their transit speed of 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18 kts.

Masters are also advised to maintain a listening watch on CH 16, CH 8 and CH 72 in order to hear the Maritime Advisory Calls from the warships in the area who will make general security broadcasts and in turn also listen to merchant ships calling them. Masters are also advised to monitor the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) broadcast and Warnings via Inmarsat C EGC Safety Net. All attempted and actual attacks and suspicious sightings reported to warships should also be reported to the IMB PRC.

[...]

SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN WATERS

Ecuador : Guayaquil. Attacks seen increasing.

REST OF THE WORLD

Arabian Sea / Off Oman: Attacks reported off Oman and Arabian Sea where a number of vessels were attacked and hijacked. Pirates believed to be Somali pirates extending their attack areas.

Indian Ocean / Off Seychelles / Off Madagascar / Off west Maldives: Suspected Somali pirates continue to operate in these waters to conduct piracy attacks**.** At times the pirates use hijacked ocean going fishing vessels and hijacked merchant vessels to conduct piracy operations as "mother vessels" to sail far from Somali coast to attack and hijack passing vessels. Smaller skiffs are launched from the pirate "mother vessel" to attack the merchant vessels. Pirates are heavily armed with automatic

weapons and RPG. Attacks also extend to west coast of Maldives, India and Minicoy island.[7]

Only two incidents of actual or attempted piracy have occurred in the UK (ports, territorial and international waters) since 1993. Both were while ships were berthed in Goole in July 2002; robbers escaped with goods on both occasions.[8] Incidents involving UK-flagged ships have also been relatively rare: between 2003 and 2009 there were 32 incidents on UK flagged ships.[9] In March 2010 the government confirmed that one UK flagged ship, Asian Glory, had been pirated on 1 January 2010 and was being used to support other ships under pirate control from its anchorage in Heredeere, Somalia.[10]

1.3 Levels of piracy – Somalia

The levels of piracy and armed robbery incidents as reported to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre in 2012 are as follows:

Incidents Reported for Somalia: [updated 29 February 2012]

Total Incidents: 26

Total Hijackings:4

Total Hostages: 64

Current vessels held by Somali pirates:

Vessels: 12 Hostages: 177

The IMB PRC has stated that of the 439 attacks reported to the IMB in 2011, 275 attacks took place off Somalia on the east coast and in the Gulf of Guinea on the west coast of Africa:

Somali pirates continue to account for the majority of attacks – approximately 54%. But while the overall number of Somali incidents increased from 219 in 2010 to 237 in 2011, the number of successful hijackings decreased from 49 to 28.

The overall figures for Somali piracy could have been much higher if it were not for the continued efforts of international naval forces, IMB reports. In the last quarter of 2011 alone, pre-emptive strikes by international navies disrupted at least 20 Pirate Action Groups (PAGs) before they could become a threat to commercial fleets. The last quarter of 2010 saw 90 incidents and 19 vessels hijacked; in 2011, those numbers fell to 31 and four, respectively.

"These pre-emptive naval strikes, the hardening of vessels in line with the Best Management Practices (BMP) and the deterrent effect of Privately Contracted Armed Security Personnel (PCASP), have all contributed to this decrease," said Pottengal Mukundan, Director of the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre (IMB PRC), which has been monitoring piracy worldwide since 1991. "The role of the navies is critical to the anti-piracy efforts in this area."

Although the number of vessels employing and reporting the carriage of PCASP increased in 2011, the regulation and vetting of PCASP still needs to be adequately

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[7]   IMB, H*Piracy and armed robbery-prone areas and warnings*H [accessed 28 February 2012]

[8]   "Ships' crews at mercy of pirates on deadly seas", *The Times*, 7 November 2005

[9]   HHL Deb 31 March 2008, c140WAH; and: HHC Deb 14 December 2009, c636W

[10] HHL Deb 3 March 2010, c355WA

addressed, Pottengal Mukundan warned. Until such time as a comprehensive legal framework is in place, owners and Masters should follow the International Maritime Organization and industry guidelines on the carriage of PCASP.

The IMB report shows that Somali pirate attacks were predominantly concentrated within the cross roads of the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden. However, 2011 marked the first hijacking by Somali pirates of an anchored vessel from within the territorial waters of a foreign State – namely, Oman – highlighting the need for ports and vessels at anchorages in the region to be vigilant.[11]

The IMB PRC gives the following information about piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia:

Somalia : Somali pirates continue aggressively to attack vessels in the northern, eastern and southern coast of Somalia. The attacks have spread and taken place very far reaching up to off Kenya, off Tanzania, off Seychelles, off Madagascar off Mozambique/Mozambique Channel and in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea / off Oman and off west coast India and off western Maldives. Somali pirates are dangerous and are prepared to fire their automatic weapons and RPG at vessels in order to stop them. Pirates are believed to be using "mother vessels" to launch attacks at very far distance from coast. Somali pirates are also using hijacked ocean going fishing vessels and hijacked vessels to conduct piracy operations. The "mother vessel" is able to proceed very far out to sea to launch smaller boats or skiffs to attack and hijack unsuspecting passing vessels. Many attacks had taken place more than 1,000 nm from the Somali coast (towards Indian west and south coast in the Indian Ocean). Recent attacks showed that pirates are also attacking vessels close to the coast of Tanzanian, Kenya, Somalia, Yemen and Oman. Masters are cautioned that attacks have taken place as far east as 76°E and as far south as 22°S and as far north as 22 °N. Mariners are advised to report any attacks and suspicious boats to the IMB PRC. A 24 hour visual and radar watch must be maintained at all times while transiting these waters as early sightings / detection and accurate assessment will allow Masters to take evasive actions, increase speed and at the same time request for assistance and escape. Monitor and keep clear of all small boats if possible. Adhere to the latest BMP recommendations.

[...]

A 24 hour visual and radar watch must be maintained at all times while transiting these waters as early sightings / detection and accurate assessment will allow Masters to take evasive actions, increase speed and at the same time request for assistance and escape.[12]

2   Policy responses

2.1   UK policy generally

Please note, UK policy on the use of armed security personnel is dealt with in SN6237.

When the UK Government was asked in the House in March 2004 what steps it was taking to protect UK shipping from piracy, the then Transport Minister listed eight actions/measures, both on a national, but mostly international level that the government was undertaking.[13] In June 2008, the government gave the following list of actions:

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[11] op cit., "HPiracy attacks in East and West Africa dominate world reportH"

[12] op cit., H*Piracy and armed robbery-prone areas and warnings*H [accessed 28 February 2012]

[13] HHC Deb 8 March 2004, cc1245-46WA

The UK Government take a proactive role in working with our international partners, such as the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and foreign governments and the shipping industry to develop international legislation and guidance for shipping transiting trade routes. At both Government and operational levels this includes collaborating with other navies and coastguards through a series of combined operations and strategic alliances to ensure that the vital sea lanes and choke points are safe to navigate. Also, the Government monitor and assess the risk of terrorism to sea lanes and, as appropriate, set the security level for UK and Red Ensign Group registered ships operating in these areas and advise industry accordingly.

The Government also issue guidance to industry in measures to counter piracy and armed robbery and safe distances of transit in piracy hotspots.

Recently, the UK co-sponsored the UNSC resolution addressing the problem of piracy off Somalia. Under the terms of resolution 1816 (2008), which was adopted unanimously, the Security Council decided that states co-operating with the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) would be allowed, for a period of six months, to enter the country's territorial waters and use "all necessary means" to repress acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea, in a manner consistent with relevant provisions of international law.

Furthermore, the Government are committed to ratifying into UK law the 2005 protocols to the convention for the suppression of unlawful acts against the safety of maritime navigation, by way of the proposed Transport Security Bill. Notably, this Bill will provide powers to board ships that are suspected of being involved in acts of piracy.

The UK plays an active role in the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee and Subcommittee on the Safety of Navigation to prevent accidents at sea. In this forum we seek consensus on ships' routeing measures to reduce the risk of groundings or collisions.

Where UK waters are concerned, moreover, the Government have a strategic approach to protecting the UK's seas and coasts which involves all of the following:

- we have put in place a network of shore-based stations around the UK coastline to monitor vessel traffic, using automatic identification system technology;

- we ensure that powerful tug boats (commonly referred to as "emergency towing vessels") are available, so that they can assist ships which lose motive power;

- we have established arrangements whereby a ship requiring assistance, and whose condition needs to be stabilised, can be brought to a place of refuge;

- we have a highly effective structure for command and control of an incident, in which the Secretary of State's representative for maritime salvage and intervention (SOSREP) plays a major role;

- we have a fully developed national contingency plan, consistent with the international convention on oil pollution preparedness, response and co-operation 1990 (the "OPRC Convention"); and

- we participate actively in international assistance and co-operation arrangements of a bipartite, multipartite or regional nature, again consistent with the OPRC convention.[14]

The government developed a new strategy in late 2004 to tackle the continuing high levels of piracy worldwide. The strategy is a joint initiative between the Department for Transport and the FCO and was agreed across Government. It has two aims: to strengthen the protection of UK seafarers from acts of piracy and violent maritime armed robbery around the world and to take a pro-active stance in assisting foreign states which have the highest concentration of attacks within their territorial waters. This strategy was summarised in a paper which was presented to the eightieth session of the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee meeting in May 2005. The paper asked that all other Member States of the IMO review or develop their own strategies for tackling piracy.

The Department for Transport and its predecessors have also provided since 1998 official guidance for all UK seafarers with regard to the measures that they should take to counter piracy, armed robbery and other acts of violence against merchant shipping. The current version was published in August 2011.[15]

The UK Government has yet to ratify the *2005 Protocols to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation*, which would create a number of new offences relating to committing acts of terrorism at sea and giving new powers to enforcement officers (e.g. members of the Royal Navy) as regards piracy. It is hoped that this will happen sometime during this Parliament.

The UK acts in concert with international partners under the auspices of the IMO and other international bodies. The IMO has been working to combat piracy since 1983, when the IMO Assembly passed a resolution calling on governments to take urgent measures to prevent and suppress acts of piracy in or adjacent to their waters.[16] The IMO's initiatives to counter piracy and armed robbery at sea are listed on its website.[17]

2.2   Naval operations to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia

The most complete, and up-to-date overview of the UK Government's involvement in actions taken to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia is given in the Foreign Affairs Select Committee report of January 2012, Piracy off the coast of Somalia*.*

There is now a heavy international naval presence off the coast of Somalia and in the Indian Ocean. Three task forces operate in the area led by NATO, the European Union and the US. These task forces include counter-piracy, counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics and maritime security. The Royal Navy regularly contributes to these operations. In addition, several nations have also deployed vessels independently. These include China, Russia, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, India and Singapore.

The UK provides the Operational Commander and the Operational HQ for *Operation Atalanta*. This is the name of the EU's first ever naval Common Security and Defence Policy operation. It was established in 2008 to escort World Food programme vessels delivering

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[14]   HHC Deb 12 June 2008, cc417-418W
[15]   DfT, H*Best Management Practices for Protection against Somalia Based Piracy (version 4)*H, August 2011
[16]   op cit., *Focus International: Piracy and armed robbery at sea*
[17]   IMO, H*Piracy and armed robbery against ships*H [accessed 28 February 2012]

food aid to Somalia, protect maritime traffic and to counter piracy. Its current mandate runs until December 2012.

The US Commanded *Combined Maritime Forces* is a 25-nation coalition headquartered in Bahrain. It consists of three task forces, each with a slightly different emphasis. CTF-150 focuses on maritime security and counter-terrorism, CTF-151 on counter piracy and CTF-152 on Arabian Gulf security and cooperation. The Royal Navy regularly provides a frigate and is occasionally supported by a Royal Fleet Auxiliary Ship.

NATO conducts counter-piracy operations as *Operation Ocean Shield*. The Royal Navy is a regular contributor to the Standing NATO Maritime Groups and it is commanded out of operational HQ at Northwood.

The Royal Navy has a number of vessels in the Gulf region providing maritime security. HMS Daring, the first of the Navy's new Type 45 destroyers, deployed to the region in early February 2012. Her tasks include counter-piracy and maritime security. She replaces HMS Somerset.

Royal Navy command facilities are as follows: The Operation Commander for EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta commands the operation from the Operational Headquarters (OHQ) at Northwood, United Kingdom. Separately, Admiral Sir Trevor Soar has overall command of NATO's Operation Ocean Shield from Allied Maritime Component Command Headquarters Northwood. Lastly the deputy commander of the US-led Combined Maritime Forces is Commodore Simon Ancona of the Royal Navy.

This activity followed years of warnings about the growing threat from piracy off the Somali coast. The IMB first warned of a rise in acts of piracy in the area in June 2005[18] A further report in August 2005 stated that "acts of piracy are increasing at an alarming rate off the eastern coast of Somalia. Fifteen violent incidents have taken place since mid-March of this year".[19] Captain Pottengal Mukundan, Director of the IMB, called on naval vessels to come to the assistance of hijacked ships in the area as early as October 2005.[20] An International Maritime Organization (IMO) resolution was adopted in November 2005.[21]

2.3   Links between piracy and terrorism

In the twenty-first century, and particularly following the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington DC on September 11 2001, there has been a sharper focus on so-called 'jihad at sea'.[22] A 2004 article in *Foreign Affairs* argued that "unlike the pirates of old, whose sole objective was quick commercial gain, many of today's pirates are maritime terrorists with an ideological bent and a broad political agenda".[23] There exists the fear that ocean-going vessels carrying oil, natural gas or other hazardous cargo could be used as weapons – in the same way that civilian aircraft were on September 11. In a 2005 article for the *Journal of*

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[18]   IMB press notice, "HPiracy heats up in Somali watersH", 21 June 2005
[19]   IMB press notice, "HPiracy increasing on Somali coastH", 15 August 2005
[20]   IMB press notice, "HUnprecedented increase in piracy attacks off SomaliaH", 20 October 2005
[21]   IMO press notice, "HIMO Assembly calls for action on piracy off the coast of SomaliaH", 23 November 2005; aH list of failed statesH is compiled annually by *Foreign Policy* magazine
[22]   for information on international terrorism in general and the evolution of al-Qaeda, see Library Standard Note HSN/IA/3716H; related information can be found on the HTerrorism Topical PageH of the Parliament website
[23]   Gal Luft and Anne Korin, "Terrorism Goes to Sea", *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2004

Counterterrorism & Homeland Security International Ali Koknar argued that terrorist groups are well-organised and well-trained.[24]

The previous Labour Government made it very clear in its response to the Transport Select Committee's 2006 report on piracy that there is no proven link between piracy and terrorism. It assured the Committee that:

> The question of any piracy and terrorism link is kept under constant review by the appropriate autonomous intelligence agency which continually monitors and reassesses all received intelligence regarding piracy and maritime terrorism to see whether any links can be established. Until such a link can be established, it would be both premature and unhelpful to the shipping industry to change the official Government line.[25]

This was reiterated in a June 2008 report by the RAND Corporation for the US Air Force. A press notice accompanying the report stated:

> Acts of piracy and terrorism at sea are on the rise, but there is little evidence to support concerns from some governments and international organizations that pirates and terrorists are beginning to collude with one another … The objectives of the two crimes remain different -- piracy is aimed at financial gain while the goal of terrorism is political. Although both events are increasing, piracy is growing much faster and remains far more common than seaborne terrorism …"The maritime environment will likely remain a favourable theatre for armed violence, crime and terrorism given its expanse, lack of regulation and general importance as a critical conduit for international trade," said Peter Chalk, author of the study ... "While there is no quick fix for eliminating all of this, we can rationally manage the threats within acceptable boundaries." [26]

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[24] Ali M. Koknar, "Corsairs at Starboard: Jihad at sea", *Journal of Counterterrorism & Homeland Security International* (Vol. 11, No. 1), spring 2005

[25] H*Government Response to the Committee's Eight Report of 2005-06*H (sixteenth special report of session 2005-06), HC 1690, 2 November, p10

[26] RAND press notice, "HIncrease In Piracy And Terrorism At SeaH", 5 June 2008; a Hresearch briefH summarising the report is also available