



Maritime Security: New Challenges for Asia and Europe

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Abstract

Protecting the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs) is in the core interest of Asian and European nations because most of our bilateral trade is conducted by sea. Combating piracy and maritime terrorism remain common challenges; at present and in the future.

Due to the good cooperation between Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia pirate attacks have decreased significantly in the last few years. While attacks off the coast of Somalia and in the Indian Ocean remain high, the number of incidents in the Gulf of Aden more than halved in 2010; from 117 in 2009 to 53.

Figures from the German Association of Ship Owners show that in 2010 238 million US dollars ransom have been payed and the total damages run to around 1.25 billion US dollars.

For all experts it is very clear that the real solution to the piracy lies not in the waters off Somalia or in the waters of the Indian Ocean, but on shore in Somalia. The answer is in reimposing state authority in the now lawless parts of Somalia. This will require adequate measures, embedded in a security, foreign policy and economic strategy. All this will take time and it would help the process greatly if all concerned would work together to achieve the common aim. However, in the medium term ships will have to take additional measures to protect themselves.

Asia and Europe should also cooperate to combat the potential threat of maritime terrorism. The Al-Qaeda attack against maritime targets underline the terrorists intentions. In the focus of terrorists are also the so-called choke points and mega harbours.

The Container Security Initiative, the International Ship and Port Facility Code and the cooperation between state organisations and industry are measures against potential maritime terror attacks.

If we understand security policy in a more comprehensive way, that means the political, economic, social, ecological and military dimensions must also be considered. Maritime terrorism can only be fought successfully in cooperation with state institutions and the private sector.

About ISPSW

The Institute for Strategic, Political, Security and Economic Consultancy (ISPSW) is a private institute for research and consultancy. The ISPSW is objective and task oriented and is above party politics.

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ISPSW offers a range of services, including strategic analyses, security consultancy, executive coaching and intercultural competency. ISPSW publications examine a wide range of topics connected with politics, economy, international relations, and security/ defense. ISPSW network experts have worked – in some cases for decades– in executive positions and possess a wide range of experience in their respective specialist areas.



ANALYSIS

Chairman,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to attend the workshop “Defence Policies and Maritime Security in Asia” organised by the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation. It is also a privilege that our institute ISPSW could assist the foundation in preparing this high level conference in Hong Kong.

In my statement I would like to concentrate on the subject of piracy and maritime terrorism. Protecting the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs) is in the core interest of Asian and European nations because most of our bilateral trade is conducted by sea.

The Common Threat

Let me give you a few examples underlining the common threat.

In January this year (2011), South Korean commandos from the destroyer *Choi Young* which had been shadowing the high jacked South Korean chemical carrier *Samho Jewelry* for a week, boarded the ship, killing eight pirates and arresting five others, with no loss of life to crew members. The surviving pirates were brought back to South Korea for trial.

On February 10th, the South Korean cargo vessel *Daisy*, which was being chased by multiple speed boats in the Gulf of Aden, was rescued by the Chinese navy. The Chinese frigate *Xuzhou*, operating 40 nautical miles away from the incident, was instructed to act. A helicopter took off from the warship and reached the Korean ship within 20 minutes.

While hovering over the merchant ship the helicopter sent warnings to the pirate boats as the cargo vessel continued to move away from the pirates.

Although South Korea and China are part of the multinational anti-piracy patrol in the area, the goodwill rescue mission had perhaps a positive effect on the bilateral relations, given the strained ties South Korea and China experienced last year over their differences how to deal with North Korea.

Let’s have a look at the German side: On 5th April 2010 six marines from the Dutch navy, rescued the German ship *MS Taipan*; ten pirates were arrested and jailed in the Netherlands. On 21st November, the Somali pirates went on trial for piracy in Hamburg charged with attempting to seize the German container ship.

A disastrous attempt to free the *Beluga Nomination* from the control of Somali pirates failed in January this year (2011). On January 22nd the German multipurpose heavy-lift project carrier was boarded by pirates approximately 435 miles north of the Seychelles. The 12 crew members locked themselves in the vessel’s citadel, sending out emergency signals. On January 25th, the pirates were able to cut their way into the safe



room and capture the crew. A Seychelles coast guard patrol boat reached and attacked the *Nomination* but was not able to recapture the ship from the pirates.

One crew member was shot dead by the pirates. Seven were held hostage. Others could flee in a rescue boat and were rescued by a NATO ship.

On April 13th, the pirates left the ship at the Bay of Haradere and the ship with seven seafarers on board left Somalia. I think that a ransom has been paid.

These cases show that ships from Asia and Europe are facing the same threats and that in some cases common action is helpful in others the pirates are successful.

Let's have now a look at some statistics.

Pirate attacks in Indonesia have been reduced from 121 in the year 2003 to 15 in 2009. But in 2010 we saw an increase to 40 actual or attempted attacks. In the Straits of Malacca we could observe a positive development. In 2004, 38 attacks were recorded, in 2009 and 2010 only two. A similar development can be seen in the Straits of Singapore: eight attacks in 2004, nine attacks in 2009 and a decrease to three in 2010.

While attacks off the coast of Somalia remain high, the number of incidents in the Gulf of Aden more than halved last year, with 53 attacks in 2010 down from 117 in 2009 due to the international naval patrols and positive actions by seafarers.

However, in other parts off Somalia, including the Red Sea and wider Indian Ocean, where naval patrols are not available, attacks have gone up substantially. 80 attacks were reported in the Gulf of Aden, Southern Red Sea and Arabian Sea; 139 at the East coast of Africa and in the Indian Ocean. As of 31 December 2010, suspected Somali pirates held 28 vessels for ransom with 638 crew members of different nationalities as hostages.

On 18 August 2011 the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) reported the following figures for piracy and armed robbery for Somalia in 2011:

Total incidents: 178

Total Hijackings 22

Total Hostages: 362

Total Killed: 7

Current vessels held by Somali pirates: 18

Current hostages held by Somali pirates: 355

Figures from the German Association of Ship Owners (Verband Deutscher Reeder) show that in 2010 238 million US dollars ransom have been paid and the total damage ran into 1.25 billion US dollars.

In our strategic ISPSW publication *Time to rethink the fight against maritime piracy in the Indian Ocean*, by Maxim Worcester, Senior Advisor ISPSW, published in February 2011, we made the following recommendations:



- The first step should be a new look at the Maritime Laws which govern the use of force on the high seas and within the territorial coastal areas. These laws need to be taken into the 21st century and adopted to the threats of today.
- The Rules of Engagement of the naval units charged with protecting the trade routes needs to be coordinated and agreed. Furthermore, a close look needs to be taken at the kind of navel vessels might be required in order to combat piracy more cost effectively.
- The use of Private Security Companies should be regulated and agreed.
- Shipping companies need to conform the basic security requirements when operating in danger areas and should at all times comply with due care for the crew and cargo. They will need to invest in superior passive defence measures and adopt active measures if required.
- Police and the Security Services should actively combat those international crime groups involved in piracy at the earliest possible point in time in order to reduce the attractiveness of piracy. They should also ensure that piracy cannot be used by terrorist organisations to advance their aims.
- The banking community should take a much closer look at money laundering and report all suspicious transactions to the authorities.
- Long term plans to bring the beginning of stability to Somalia and the establishment of an effective Coast Guard need to be drawn up and funding made available. This could be a public-private partnership involving suitably qualified private security companies.

For all experts it is very clear that the real solution to the piracy lies not in the waters off Somalia or in the waters of the Indian Ocean, but onshore in Somalia. The answer is in reimposing state authority in the now lawless parts of Somalia. This will require adequate measures, embedded in a security, foreign policy and economic strategy. All this will take time and it would help the process greatly if all concerned would work together to achieve the common aims.

Let me now turn to maritime terrorism.

Definitions

It is difficult to define maritime terrorism, particularly because the United Nations have so far not been able to find a binding definition for terrorism. The US Department of Defence defines terrorism as “unlawful use or threatened use or force of violence against people or property to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives”. I think that this definition can be useful to describe maritime terrorism too.

It is obvious – if we take a look at the attacks by pirates at the Horn of Africa and in the Indian Ocean – that monetary reasons prevail, acts of hijacking and blackmailing cannot be defined as maritime terrorism but as Organised Crime.



To analyse the maritime terrorist threats it is not enough to examine the capabilities and motives of terrorist groups, but also to examine the maritime industry, shipping practices, the vulnerability of trade shipping as well as countermeasures by the authorities and other institutions which are entrusted with the security of the shipping routes. Let me give some examples of planned or executed maritime terrorist attacks:

July 2010

The last maritime terrorist attack occurred was on July 28 against the *M. Star*, a Japanese oil tanker, in the Strait of Hormuz. The Abdullah Azzam Brigades, a militant group with ties to Al Qaeda, claimed it had carried out a suicide attack against the tanker. One crew member was injured, the hull of the ship heavily damaged. But let's look a few years back:

January 2000

Al-Qaida members carried out an unsuccessful attack in Aden against the *USS Sullivans*. But the boat, overloaded with explosives, sank before it could reach the target.

October 2000

Successful Al-Qaida attack against the US destroyer *USS Cole* in Yemen. 17 US sailors were killed, 39 wounded.

June 2002

Members of Al-Qaida, who had planned attacks against British and US ships in the Strait of Gibraltar, were arrested by Morocco's secret service.

October 2002

A terror group from Yemen, with connections to Al-Qaida, attacked the French oil tanker *Limburg* off the harbour of Ash Shahir. One crew member was killed, others wounded. 90 000 tons of oil polluted in the Gulf of Aden. As a result the monthly container transshipment in Yemen declined from 43,000 to 3,000 containers. 3,000 dockers lost their jobs and the national economy contracted by 1 % GDP.

February 2004

Bomb attack by the Abu Sayyaf group against a passenger ferry in the Philippines. Over 100 people were killed.

August 2005

Israel's security service Shin Bet warned four Israeli cruise liners – on their passage to Turkey – about a possible terror attack and redirected the ships to Cyprus.

July 2009

Egypt's security authorities prevented an attack against the Suez Canal and the adjacent oil pipeline. According to sources in Cairo the terror group consisted of 24 Egyptians and one Palestinian.

January 2010

Egyptian authorities investigated a new suspected terrorist group which planned attacks against US ships in the Suez Canal. This group also planned to deliver weapons and explosives to the Hamas in the Gaza Strip.



Due to the knowledge of Western intelligence services some islamistic terror groups have declared, that it is their aim to interrupt Western supply lines. The former 2nd man of Al-Qaida, Aiman Al-Sawahri, said already a few years ago: "We must stop the West plundering the oil of Muslims."

It is worthwhile to note that during the last 15 years only 2 % of all terrorist attacks could be assigned to maritime terrorism. In this context we should not forget the plans of Al-Qaida chief planner for maritime terrorism, Abd Al Rahman Al Nashiri, also known as the *Prince of the Sea*, who was arrested in November 2002 in the United Arab Emirates. Nashiri had developed a strategy including the following four elements:

- Ramming or blowing up medium-sized ships in the vicinity of other ships or in harbours;
- Attacking super tankers from the air with small planes, laden with explosives;
- Underwater attacks against ships using divers;
- Attacks against cruise liners and taking hostages.

The *Prince of the Sea* somehow forgot to include oil rigs as a potential target. The environmental damage of an exploded oil rig has been well documented in the case of Deepwater Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico. How easy it is to storm an oil rig was demonstrated by Greenpeace in August 2010 when they occupied Cairn Energy's Stena Don oil rig in Baffin Bay, west of Greenland. The rig, by the way, was closely guarded by a Danish warship.

Choke points and mega harbours are in the focus of terrorists

Terrorists will ask themselves at which locations they can decisively hit the infra-structure of the industrialised world because up to now the maritime terrorist attacks have not seriously threatened world trade. They will direct their attention to so-called choke points and mega harbours as 75 % of the international ocean traffic with approximately 50,000 ships is processed in approximately 2,800 harbours.

Straits

The strategically important Straits of Malacca is one of the critical choke points. It connects the Indian Ocean with the South China Sea and the Pacific. It is the most important trade route between the Far East, the Gulf States and Europe. 90,000 ships per year pass the Straits of Malacca. One third of the world trade, 80 % of oil imports for East Asia and two third of the worldwide liquid gas transports go via this route.

A terror attack, for example the sinking of a tanker in the Straits of Malacca, would block the straits. Ships would have to make a detour of 1,000 km via the Indonesian Straits of Sunda and Flores. The ships would have to be at sea for two extra days, which would result in 8 billion US dollars additional costs per year. Freight and insurance rates would increase and the market price for all transported goods would also increase in a short period of time with negative economic effects on the region and world trade.



But terrorist attacks can also be expected at other choke points such as the Straits of Hormuz, Bab al Mandat, the Suez Canal, Bosphorus, Straits of Gibraltar or the Panama Canal. We in Europe should also not forget the English Channel.

Harbours

As many of the biggest harbours in the world are located in East and Southeast Asia and most of the trade is directed via sea routes in this region, terrorists will pay special attention to this region in their target planning. This may include the following harbours: Kobe, Tokyo, Yokohama, Pusan, Shanghai, Kaohsiung, Hong Kong and Singapore. Of course, also mega harbours in the United States and in Europe such as Los Angeles or Rotterdam, may be in the focus of terrorists.

Blown up container ships could block harbours for weeks – quite apart from an attack in one of the 20 mega harbours with a so-called dirty bomb. A closure of the Singapore harbour for example, would cost more than 200 billion US dollars per year. Also the terrorist attack of a fully loaded gas tanker in one of the mega harbours would have a devastating effect on the world trade and provide terrorists with an event comparable to 9/11 – one of their stated goals.

In conclusion we can say that world trade is potentially threatened by maritime terrorism. This includes Asia and Europe.

The presence and the cooperation of international naval forces to fight piracy in the Asian and African region has had a positive effect. Also helpful is the Container Security Initiative (CSI), initiated by the United States in 2002. The aim of this programme is to identify – out of the 230 million containers which are transported by sea every year – those containers with weapons of mass destruction or dangerous nuclear substances which could be used by terrorists for their attacks.

In cooperation with state organisations and industry, technical means are also used to protect against potential terror attacks. For example, the scanning of huge containers, the use of Long-Range Acoustic Devices (LRAD), anti-boarding systems, such as 9,000-Volt-protective-fences for merchant ships make the boarding for pirates or terrorists more difficult. Unmanned ‘inventus systems’ with cameras are capable of searching large ocean areas and transmit data to a ship or to a ground station.

Due to the intensive attacks against ships, the loss of sea freight, the increase of insurance rates and the resulting losses of 16 billion US dollars annually, states are intensifying their cooperation with private security companies, which are specialised in maritime security. In this field, British and US companies are playing a leading role. But also German companies have developed concepts to increase maritime security. We also can see now a greater flexibility within the German Government regarding the deployment of armed private security companies on ships under German flag.



The way ahead

Given the configuration of modern naval warships, designed to counter the threat of other modern navies, it becomes clear that such ships are not very suitable to counter terrorists or counter piracy operations. What is required is a ship design which combines long patrol time, state-of-the-art reconnaissance systems and adequate fire power to combat surface vessels only. Such a solution could be provided for by the private sector. On August 10, Juliet Marine Systems, Inc. (JMS) released photographs of GHOST, the first super-cavitating craft.

If we understand security policy in a more comprehensive way, that means the political, economic, social, ecological and military dimensions must be considered together and must be brought together, then piracy and maritime terrorism can only be fought successfully in cooperation between state institutions and the private sector.

Remarks: Opinions expressed in this contribution are those of the author.

Lecture given by ISPSW President Dr. Peter Roell on September 30, 2011 at the workshop "Defence Policies and Maritime Security in Asia", organised by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Hong Kong.

About the Author of this Issue

Since January 2006 Dr. Peter Roell is president of the Institute for Strategic, Political, Security and Economic Consultancy (ISPSW) in Berlin. Before, he served as senior advisor for foreign and security policy at the Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany to the EU in Brussels. In Germany, Dr. Roell served also as director of the Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Africa (Sub-Sahara) branch and at German embassies in the Near and Middle East and in Asia.

Dr. Roell studied sinology and political sciences at the universities of Bonn, Taipei and Heidelberg and holds a Ph.D. from the Ruprecht-Karls-University in Heidelberg.

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