



General Assembly

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Identity and Conflict

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Topic: Implementing measures to combat global piracy while simultaneously enhancing maritime security.

Chair: Camille Rodgers

Position: Chair

Introduction

The earliest instance of piracy occurred in the 14th century BC when the 'Sea People', a group of ocean raiders from the Late Bronze Age, attacked the ships of the Aegean and Mediterranean civilizations. The Somali pirates are the most famous example of piracy in the modern age. They gained prominence in the 2010s as Somalia became a failed state. The act of theft or criminal violence known as piracy typically takes place in international waters and is motivated by the desire to steal valuables, cargo, or hostages. Modern piracy involves automatic weapons such as assault rifles, machine guns, and rocket-propelled grenades. This has led to the issue becoming a threat to global security as well as a challenge to national stability, and the safety of international waters.

Piracy presents a significant challenge, affecting not only global security but also economic stability and maritime safety. It is an economic issue, as it disrupts international trade and shipping routes, posing a global economic challenge. These ramifications are especially observed in piracy hotspots, since economic losses disproportionately impact these countries, causing severe chaos and instability. Often, these hotspots are often located near LDCs (Least Developed Countries) creating a more significant security and economic problem for these already struggling nations. In 2023 alone, the global financial losses due to piracy estimated to be around \$25 billion, a figure which has nearly doubled in the last 20 years.

Furthermore, piracy poses a military and national security threat. Pirates who hijack these vessels endanger the safety of the crew, using illegally obtained weapons to attack them. Moreover, this is also a military concern as it involves kidnapping people and holding them hostage for ransom.

These pirates are non-state actors, meaning they are not affiliated with any country, and they use violence to achieve their goals. This underscores a global shift in power from states to non-state entities. From a military standpoint, nations must now redirect their attention from inter-state military threats to external dangers like piracy.

Definition of Key Terms

Piracy

Piracy is the criminal act of attacking and stealing ships at sea, usually involving violence or threats. It occurs outside the bounds of any nation and is universally condemned under international law. Piracy can also include acts such as hijacking vessels, seizing cargo, and harming crew members.

Pirate

A pirate is an individual who is involved in robberies or violence at sea, typically hijacking ships illegally. Pirates target vessels beyond the limits of international law and often use violence or weapons to seize goods or take control of vessels. Their activities are considered criminal under national law.

Exclusive Economic Zones - EEZ

An Exclusive Economic Zone is a maritime area extending approximately 370 kilometers from a country's coast, over which the nation has exclusive rights concerning the exploration and use of marine resources. Within this zone, the state has the power to handle fishing, oil mining, and other economic activities, as well as the responsibility to protect the marine environment. However, other states have the right to navigate and fly over these zones, as long as they do not exploit their resources and violate any other EEZ guidelines.

Non-State Actor

A non-state actor is a person or organization with a significant political influence that is not directly linked with any specific country or state. These actors can include international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), armed groups, and other corporations that

operate independently of a state's control. Non-state actors often play crucial roles in global affairs, sometimes cooperating with states, and sometimes challenging them.

High Seas/International Waters

High seas are areas of the sea that do not fall under the control of any specific country. They are administered by international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which allows all nations the freedom for navigation and fishing. The high seas are considered a shared region, meaning they are accessible to all although they must adhere to international regulations to ensure their sustainable use.

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea - UNCLOS

UNCLOS is an international resolution establishing a legal structure for all marine activities. It addresses multiple aspects of maritime law, such as determining territorial areas and exclusive economic zones (EEZs).

Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction refers to the legal authority of a state to govern and enforce laws over maritime areas, including oceans, seas, and other waters.

Background Information

Piracy has evolved and has reached different levels of prominence. Piracy destabilizes target countries, driving them into a permanent state of war, harming their citizens, and preventing any sort of development for the state. In Western societies, the impact is felt in disrupted supply chains, which causes delays in shipping, increasing the price of products. But equally important, those countries ravaged by piracy suffer disproportionately. The most commonly affected areas by piracy are the Gulf of Aden and the Horn of Africa, the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa, Southeast Asia and the South China Sea, and Waters around the Indian subcontinent. Piracy happens most often in areas where there is political and economical instability. In countries like Somalia, Nigeria, and Yemen, where governments struggle to control their waters and provide jobs, many people turn to piracy as a way to survive. These regions often lack proper law enforcement, making it easier for

criminals and rebel groups to use piracy to fund their activities. As a result, piracy becomes not just a crime, but also a way to profit from the chaos in these countries, making them even more unstable.

The effects of piracy on these target countries are severe. Piracy disrupts local economies and worsens existing problems like poverty and violence. For example, in the Gulf of Guinea, pirates often attack oil tankers and steal valuable resources, harming the economy and strengthening criminal networks. In Southeast Asia, piracy affects shipping routes and local fishing industries, making it harder for people to earn a living. Because these governments can't fully protect their waters, it also weakens people's trust in their ability to lead, making it harder for the government to establish control and provide basic services.

Western countries, including NATO and the European Union, have responded to piracy by increasing naval patrols and helping regional governments improve their maritime security. Operations like NATO's Ocean Shield and the EU's Atalanta have reduced pirate attacks, especially in places like the Gulf of Aden. In West Africa, Western nations have supported local navies with training and equipment to strengthen their ability to combat piracy. However, despite these efforts, piracy remains a major issue because it is tied to deeper problems like poverty, weak governance, and organized crime. Addressing these causes requires long-term investment in development and security, making the solution to piracy as much about development as it is about defense.

Several significant incidents in recent years have highlighted the growing threat of piracy and increased awareness of the issue among Western states. Three key events awoke the world to this consistently growing disaster.

In 2005, Somali pirates attempted to hijack the *Seabourn Spirit*, a cruise ship filled with Western tourists; fortunately, the vessel was able to escape. The strike on the cruise showed how even high-end vessels were vulnerable to piracy, creating a greater sense of danger and awareness for the rest of the world.

Following this event, in 2008, Somali pirates hijacked the *MV Faina*, a Ukrainian ship transporting tanks and grenades for Sudan. The pirates demanded a \$35 million ransom to release

the ship and crew. Distressed by this demand, the United States and Russia sent their navies to monitor the situation and ensure the pirates did not remove the weapons from the vessel. The attack on the international ship prompted naval involvement and led the UN Council to begin adopting resolutions to combat this issue.

Subsequently, in 2009, four Somali pirates boarded the Maersk Alabama, a Danish/US container ship carrying food aid for Somalia and Uganda. The pirates held the crew hostage and demanded \$2 million. The US sent in Navy SEALs with snipers and managed to kill 3 out of the 4 pirates. The seizing of the vessel prompted more naval presence in piracy hotspots, leading to increased patrols and anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast. Additionally, the incident encouraged shipping companies to implement more enhanced security protocols and anti-piracy measures on their ships.

Recently, in the past year, there have been uncontrollable attacks from a Yemen-based group called the Houthis, who have been seizing hold of ships. Between October 2023 and March 2024, the Houthis targeted over 60 vessels in the Red Sea. To evade these attacks, numerous trading ships have been redirected to sail around South Africa. The Houthis' actions in the Red Sea have prompted a military response from several countries.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Somalia

Somalia's main source of income and food has always relied on fishing. However, during the 1990s and early 2000s, foreign vessels, particularly from Europe and Asia, began to exploit Somali waters. These external ships would fish illegally, unreported, and unregulated, leaving Somalia in a state of economic difficulty and food scarcity. Due to the collapse of the Somali government in 1991, Somalia lacked governmental control over their waters, meaning they had no protection against foreign overfishing. This threatened the livelihoods of many local fishermen, causing them to resort to piracy as an act of revenge or retaliation. Piracy began with the hijacking of vessels with the intent to "defend their domestic waters and natural resources". The pirates referred to themselves as "coastal guards" as they sought to protect their waters from foreign overfishing. These unemployed local fishermen believed that their actions were justified, although this conflict quickly escalated. What began as infrequent acts of piracy turned into a large-scale criminal organization. Pirates

realized that these vessels could be held for ransom, leading these activities to be more profitable than fishing. Since November 2023, Somali pirates have been involved in over 30 incidents escalating the conflict even further. In the region of the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, Somali pirates often use automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), posing significant threats to the global community. Piracy has become prevalent in Somalia due to the country's political instability, lack of effective governance, and economic hardships. Tackling these underlying issues is essential to reducing piracy and bringing stability back to the region.

Yemen

In recent months, the situation of maritime piracy in Yemen has quickly escalated. Yemen's strategic location borders two of the world's busiest maritime trading regions: the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and the Gulf of Aden. The Bab el-Mandeb Strait is a narrow passage between the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa, connecting the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean. These waters are vital for international trade, linking Europe and North America to the Middle East via the Suez Canal. Moreover, Yemen's civil war, ongoing since 2014, has severely impacted the nation's ability to enforce maritime law and monitor piracy in its internal waters.

The conflict between the Houthi rebel group, the Yemeni government, and other sectors has left the country with limited law enforcement in its waters. Since November 2023, 133 incidents have been reported in the region, with the Houthi militia responsible for many of these attacks. In recent months the Houthis have attacked any Israel-linked ships, including USA, UK and other nations vessels. Due to the Houthis' over 60 ship hijacks between October 2023 and March 2024, the Red Sea Crisis is directly linked to the Israel-Hamas conflict. A large number of ships have been redirected to sail around South Africa in order to prevent the risk of an attack. The Houthi attacks provoked a response from many countries, including the US and UK sending air missiles and strikes towards the Houthi terrorist group, and the patrolling of waters by many other nations. The actions by this militia have not only disrupted shipping routes but also drawn international military responses, highlighting the increasing threat they pose in the region.

Nigeria

Nigeria is located near the most pirate affected regions in the world, the Gulf of Guinea, which has had a notable rise in strikes, most commonly against oil tankers. In 2023 alone, 30 attacks were reported, with estimates indicating the attacks could be twice as high. Oil companies have long been exploiting the Niger Delta, one of the world's richest oil producing regions, for energy resources. As a form of retaliation many local individuals have resorted to piracy. These pirates see these exploited resources as their own rightful oil and believe that the local communities deserve a share of the wealth generated by the natural resources. Therefore, Nigerian pirates tend to board oil tankers to reclaim or retrieve back the oil that they believe was taken from them. Unlike Somali pirates, who hijack vessels for ransom, West African pirates primarily kidnap crews in the practice of obtaining valuable goods, using the force of coercion. The country's economic challenges, corruption, and insecurity in the Niger Delta contribute to the persistence of maritime crime. Although efforts like the Deep Blue Project, a framework that protects the Nigerian waters from any illegal activities, including piracy and overfishing, have shown promise.

United States of America

Mainly through its naval presence and international collaboration, the United States plays a major role in worldwide efforts to combat piracy. Although piracy isn't a major issue in American waters, the U.S. Navy has been actively fighting piracy in areas like the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, especially through participation in NATO's Operation Ocean Shield and missions like Combined Task Force 151. In order to exchange intelligence, provide security escorts for U.S. vessels, and strengthen other nations' abilities, the United States also maintains tight ties with its foreign allies. While these operations have reduced piracy incidents, emerging threats in places like the Gulf of Guinea continue to require vigilance and ongoing international cooperation.

United Kingdom

With its naval assets and international alliances, the UK contributes significantly to the worldwide fight to combat piracy. The Royal Navy has taken a leading role in operations like EU Operation Atalanta, which attempts to prevent pirate attacks and safeguard shipping lanes off the coast of Somalia. In addition, the UK has sent warships to accompany vulnerable vessels and patrol pirate hotspots as part of NATO's Operation Ocean Shield. In addition to its military engagement, the

UK participates in skill-development programs that help regional navies, especially those in Africa, become more capable of ensuring maritime security by providing training and assistance.

The Malacca Strait & Singapore Strait

The Malacca and the Singapore Strait consist of Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. These are key water passages that lead to the South China Sea and are crucial to global trade as they handle 40% of global commodities, particularly oil and gas shipments. The long sea lanes contain thousands of little islands, making it ideal for pirates to escape and evade capture. Piracy in the Malacca and Singapore Strait often includes armed robberies, where pirates board the targeted vessel to steal cargo, valuables, or equipment. This type of piracy is generally less violent than high-seas hijacking but can still pose significant risks to crews and ships. The majority of these robberies take place during the night. Despite improved security measures, the region is still vulnerable because of its strategic importance and the difficulty of patrolling such a busy and complex water passage. Ongoing international cooperation and advanced surveillance are essential to tackling these threats effectively.

International Maritime Organization - IMO

The International Maritime Organization (IMO), is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for regulating shipping, as well as it includes efforts to combat piracy. It was established in 1948 and came into force in 1958. Its primary purposes are: Improving the safety and security of international shipping, preventing marine pollution from ships, and developing and maintaining a comprehensive regulatory framework for shipping. Headquartered in London, UK, the IMO plays a crucial role in ensuring safe, secure, and environmentally friendly shipping practices across the globe.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
January 1991	After the fall of President Siad Barre's rule, Somalia plunged into a civil war, leaving the

nation without any structure or central government, creating instability throughout the country. The collapse of the Somali government led to the first acts of modern piracy to surge in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean.

2005

By 2005, in Somalia, the formation of pirate groups became more developed and structured, with several well-organized pirate groups arising. These organizations were frequently located in small coastal towns like Eyl, Haradhere, and Hobyo. Many of the pirates were former fishermen who'd lost their jobs to illegal fishing by foreign vessels in Somali waters. These pirate gangs carried weapons and were often launched from "mother ships", to attack much larger ships.

2005

A decrease in the number of recorded pirate events is recorded, due to the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency being founded in 2005 to prevent piracy and safeguard shipping lanes in the Strait of Malacca.

2005

The rise in piracy is acknowledged by the European Union and other maritime organizations, who then begin working together

to solve the problem. Additionally, international cooperation in the fight against piracy begins to be a primary topic of discussion at the UN.

2008

In 2008, the UN Security Council adopted several resolutions, including Resolution 1816, permitting international naval forces to combat piracy in Somali waters. This marked the beginning of a coordinated global effort to address the problem.

2007

An increase of instances of piracy is documented in the Caribbean, especially in the seas near Trinidad & Tobago and Venezuela. Moreover, attacks on yachts and small vessels began to grow.

April 2009

One of the biggest scandals during piracy's peak time was the hijacking of the American cargo ship, Maersk Alabama, off the coast of Somalia. The pirates responsible for this attack took Captain Richard Phillips hostage, prompting an intense standoff with the U.S. Navy. The situation was resolved when the Navy Seals rescued the crew and the captain, killing three pirates. This incident brought further global attention to the issue of maritime piracy.

2009	The European Union launched Operation Atlanta in 2009, to protect humanitarian shipments and combat piracy in the Horn of Africa. Other countries, including the United States, China, and Russia, also sent naval forces to this region to aid the situation.
12th of January, 2009	The Combined Task Force 151, one of the five of the Combined Maritime Forces was established to counter piracy in 2009.
February 2010	In an effort to improve maritime security and combat piracy in the area, the Malaysian and Singaporean naval forces collaborated on coordinated exercises in the Strait of Malacca in February 2010.
March 2010	In an effort to improve maritime security and combat piracy in the area, the Malaysian and Singaporean naval forces collaborated on joint drills in the Strait of Malacca in February 2010.

Relevant UN Treaties and Resolutions

Resolution 1816

Acts of piracy and armed robbery against vessels in territorial waters and on the high seas off the coast of Somalia are covered by Security Council Resolution 1816, which was approved on June 2, 2008. This resolution firmly condemns piracy and the strikes on ships near Somalia, urging nations that rely on shipping routes near Somalia and countries with military forces near the piracy

hotspots to be cooperative. For six months, the resolution affirms that countries working alongside the TFG may enter Somali water to combat piracy, using any necessary actions, as long as they abide by international law.

Resolution 2634

Resolution 2634 is a text that urges Member States in the Gulf of Guinea region to make piracy and armed robbery at sea illegal under their national laws. In accordance with applicable international law, it also asks these states to look into, prosecute, or deport anyone who commits these crimes as well as any people or groups that encourage, fund, or knowingly assist in such actions. The resolution promotes the creation and application of national maritime security strategy. The African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Gulf of Guinea Commission are among the organizations that are advised to strengthen their international cooperation and security in this text.

Somalia.

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is an international treaty often referred to as the "constitution of the oceans," which was approved in 1982 and became effective in 1994. It is widely regarded as a crucial agreement for maintaining international peace, security, and cooperation in maritime matters. It covers key points such as territorial seas, exclusive economic zones, high seas, continental shelves, navigation, and overflight. More specifically nations have jurisdiction over a 12-nautical-mile zone extending from their coastline, including the airspace above and the seabed below. Countries also possess exclusive rights to access marine resources within 200 nautical miles of their coastlines. UNCLOS is essential for managing maritime boundaries and resources, helping countries protect their interests while promoting global cooperation and sustainability.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Rerouting Ships

Rerouting ships to avoid pirate-infested waters provided a temporary solution but proved unsuitable in the future due to several downsides. The detour added thousands of extra nautical miles, resulting in higher shipping costs and increased fuel expenses. This approach also lacked efficiency, as the longer voyages caused disruptions in supply chains and delays in deliveries. These challenges highlighted the need for a more sustainable and effective solution to address piracy.

Resolution 1518

Resolution 1518, adopted by the UN Security Council in 2003, was centered on combating terrorism and the rapid increase of weapons of mass destruction, with additional references to maritime security. While it included some methods to counter piracy, it required more specific measures to address the problem directly. As a result, the resolution did not improve maritime piracy or security due to the broad procedures suggested, failing to provide the focused, actionable strategies needed to effectively tackle the escalating issue.

East African Standby Force - EASF

The East African Standby Force (EASF), created methods to address regional security challenges, although was incapable of combating maritime piracy due to several factors. The force focused on very broad and general security, rather than specific anti-piracy operations, leaving it inadequately prepared to address the specific challenges posed by maritime threats. The EASF additionally lacked resources, including funding and equipment, which impeded its ability to operate effectively. As a result, the EASF's limitations made it ineffective against maritime piracy, showing the need for more targeted solutions.

European Union and NATO Navy Operations

Naval operations from the EU and NATO, such as Operation Atalanta, an initiative to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia, and Operation Ocean Shield, a complementary framework to the one established by the EU, have proven to be very effective. However, these operations did not address the root issues of poverty, instability, and lack of governance in Somalia. Despite this, they were still successful because Somali pirates were largely decentralized and not well organized. With new piracy threats emerging from groups like the Houthis and Iran, it seems these operations may not be sufficient to counter large non-state actors with significant military power.

Possible Solutions

Naval Patrols

Naval patrols have been crucial in combating maritime piracy, particularly in areas where piracy remains a persistent problem. Operations such as NATO's Operation Ocean Shield and the EU's Operation Atlanta, have played a key role in reducing pirate attacks by escorting commercial ships and maintaining a steady military presence in areas where piracy is most common. Additionally, all the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council all coordinated several anti-piracy naval operations. These operations often involve collaboration among multiple navies from distinct countries, who work together to protect these maritime zones.

Economic Development & Stability

To address maritime piracy, focusing on its root causes will aid the situation. In areas where poverty and political instability drive piracy, creating jobs, improving infrastructure, and offering education will support the country even further. Strengthening governance by building institutions, enforcing laws, and reducing corruption is also fundamental. By tackling these underlying issues, the international community can help create a more stable environment and reduce piracy.

Private Maritime Security Companies - PMSC

In 2011, the International Maritime Organization noted that the most successful strategy when combating piracy is the use of private maritime security companies (PMSCs). While similar to private military companies (PMCs), PMSCs specialize in maritime security and are private companies that offer military and/or security services. These companies ensure that security personnel and equipment are stationed at the correct time and place. They board vessels and offer protection when passing through hazardous piracy hotspots, like the Red Sea or the Indian Ocean, and disembark after navigating through these regions. Their specialized skills and careful planning help keep ships safe from pirates in the most dangerous waters.

Ship Protection

Modifying ships to include physical barriers or change their structure is a commonly used method to counter piracy. Examples of ship protection measures include barbed wire, water cannons, obstacles on staircases, grills on window panes, and long-range sound devices. Pirates often target the bridge, so enclosing it with bulletproof glass is a strategic approach. Additionally, equipment such as helmets, vests, and sandbags are kept on the bridge in case of an attack. These modifications help make ships more resilient against pirates and improve the safety of everyone on board.

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