

# OPRF MARINT Monthly Report

## November 2008



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Somali Piracy and its Status

Enclosure: Information by OPRF on the status of Hijacking incidents off Gulf of Aden and Somalia in 2008  
(As of December 15)

This monthly report is edited/ summarized by publisher and staff writers based on published news resources.

Each resource is referenced with bracket below each title and is displayed as link URL on the last page of this report.

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## Major Events in November 2008

**Security:** In November, piracy incidents continue in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia. A noteworthy incident in November is hijacking of the Liberia-flagged very large crude carrier (VLCC) MT *Sirius Star* (318,000 DWT), which was attacked and seized in open waters 450 miles southeast of Kenyan port of Mombasa on the 15th. The MT *Sirius Star* is the largest type of vessel among the vessels which have ever been hijacked by the Somali pirates, and that in the farthest area from the coast.

Under this situation, escort and patrol duties by the naval vessels dispatched by each nation are becoming active, of which two events were most noteworthy. One incident is shooting the pirate-suspects to death by the British commandos. According to an announcement of the British Ministry of Defense (BMD) on the 12th, British navy's commandos in rigid hull inflatable boats (RHIB's) launched from the navy frigate, which was conducting NATO's maritime security operations in the Gulf of Aden mission, shot and killed the pirate-suspects on Yemeni dhow in the area about 60 miles south of the Yemeni coast on the 11th. So far, BMD says details of the incident are still under investigation.

Another incident is that Somali pirates hijacked a Thai fishing boat in the Gulf of Aden on the 18th. Right after hijacking, the fishing boat, being regarded to be a mother ship of the Somali pirates, was sunk by the Indian navy frigate that was on patrol in the area. The truth of the incident was revealed from a talk of one of the crew of the fishing boat who was found drifting in the area. Later, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) confirmed this fact.

We have summed up the status of Somali piracy in the article 2 Intelligence Assessment in this monthly report, analyzing pieces of information from various sources.

**Military:** A task force from Russia's Northern Fleet arrived at La Guaira near Venezuelan capital of Caracas on the 25th. It is the first such deployment of the Russian fleet to the Caribbean Sea since the end of the Cold War. According to the Russian naval authorities, joint exercises between the two countries are due to take place on December 1. Live firing exercises and joint search and rescue drills will be conducted, observing the international law on the high seas 150 miles off the coast.

The ceremony for launching the second Aegis destroyer of South Korea Navy named *Yulgok Yi* (7,600 tons) was held at Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering Co. on the 14th. The ceremony was attended by Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee, and Navy Chief of Staff Admiral Jung Ok-geun. Seoul launched first-ever Aegis destroyer, *King Sejong*, in 2007. The third Aegis destroyer is to be constructed by 2012

"The world should not be surprised if China builds an aircraft carrier but Beijing would use such a vessel only for offshore defense," Major General (Maj. Gen) Qian Lihua, director of the ministry's Foreign Affairs Office, has said to the Financial Times. Maj. Gen Qian avoided commenting whether or not China has decided to build the aircraft carriers.

**Diplomacy and International relations:** On the 17th, Bangladesh Foreign Minister (FM) Iftexhar Ahmed Chowdhury told that, although a two-day negotiation over the maritime borders between the two countries ended in failure, Bangladesh and Myanmar will hold more talks over this issue. In early November, while a South Korean company began to test exploring in the waters involving the conflicts over the maritime border between the two countries, Myanmar escorted it by sending two naval ships. Reacting to this action, Bangladesh deployed four ships to the area, causing a tense situation over four days.

**Shipping, Resources, Environment and Miscellaneous:** As a countermeasure to rising piracy incidents in the Gulf of Aden and Somali maritime area, some shipping companies have changed the transiting route from the Suez Canal to the Cape of Good Hope. Svitzer, a world's major tug and salvage company in Denmark, has become the first major shipping company openly to confirm that it is rerouting all vessels around the Cape of Good Hope at all times, in preference to transiting the Suez Canal, seeking to avoid the risk of pirate attack in waters close to Somalia. On the 10th, Norwegian shipping company Odfjell said it would no longer sail through the pirate-plagued Gulf of Aden, choosing instead the longer, more expensive but also safer route around Cape of Good Hope. Also, on the 20th, Danish major shipping company, A.P. Moller-Maersk, said vessels without adequate speed or freeboard will for the time being seek alternative routing south of the Cape of Good Hope and east of Madagascar. However, based upon availability of escorts, these vessels may join naval convoy transit in the Gulf of Aden. According to the company, this policy is applied primarily to their tanker vessels, and only three container vessels will be affected.

China is set to commence construction in the first half of 2009 on a giant pipeline project that will connect Sittwe, on the Bay of Bengal in Burma (Myanmar), with China's Yunnan Province. The project will include the construction of two separate pipelines.

# 1. Information Digest

## 1.1 Security

### **November 1 “Egyptian foreign ministry calls an urgent meeting of Arab countries to fight piracy” (AFP, November 1, 2008)**

On November 1, Egyptian foreign ministry (FM) has called for an urgent meeting of Arab countries bordering the Red Sea to combat rampant piracy off Somalia. As Yemen is planning to hold the similar meeting later this month, FM's of two nations are coordinating the conference. Egyptian FM stresses a solution must be found to the root problems that have led to piracy off Somalia, citing the chaotic political situation there.

### **November 2 “Danish Navy foils pirates in Gulf of Aden” (AP, November 2, 2008)**

On November 2, the Danish Navy said that pirates opened fire on a Danish tanker in a failed attempt to commandeer the ship in the Gulf of Aden. The navy said no crew members were wounded in the incident and the pirates disappeared by the time a Danish Navy helicopter arrived. The tanker took measures, including spraying water from high-pressure hoses, to prevent the pirates from taking it over.

### **November 3 “Russian warship begins escort mission off Somalia”(RIA Novosti, November 3, 2008)**

A Russian frigate has commenced an escort mission of protecting merchant ships from pirates off Somalia, a naval source said on the 2nd. According to the source, entering waters off Somali coast at the end of October, the frigate *Neustrashimy* is escorting a Russian merchant ship through the shipping zone. The source added that the Baltic Fleet's frigate *Yelnya* is expected to join the *Neustrashimy* in the near future. The Russian frigate's commander said he was maintaining contact with NATO ships in the area as part of a coordinated approach to fighting piracy in the region.

### **November 3 “Global shipping industry bodies urge action over piracy in Gulf of Aden with open letter to governments” (Maritime Global Net, November 3, 2008)**

On the 3rd, a consortium of seven major global shipping industry bodies - International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), International Shipping Federation (ISF), Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO), Intercargo, Intertanko, InterManager, International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) – has sent an open letter to all governments urging action over piracy in the Gulf of Aden. The letter to all governments has made a plea for three points below.

- (1) Governments are urged to commit sufficient numbers of warships, military aircraft and surveillance assets to the region and to coordinate their command and control under the auspices of a United Nations mandate,

- (2) The existing UN Security Council resolutions 1816 and 1838 must be enhanced with a further resolution with more explicit text on action required against the criminal gangs and with a time frame adequate to reaching a final solution,
- (3) Of equal importance is the need to establish a legal jurisdiction to bring arrested criminals to justice and subsequent punishment. In this regard States are particularly urged to review and amend national legislation to include such due process, noting their obligations under the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, 1988 (SUA Convention).

Notes: “Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation) shall obligate the Parties to the Convention either to extradite the criminal or suspect to the nation concerned or to entrust the incident for an impeachment to the authorities of its own nation, after obligating the Parties to establish jurisdiction and designate such acts as extradition crime, in order that criminal or suspect of illegal acts against unlawful acts against the safety of maritime navigation, including illegal seizure of the ships by force and their destruction, shall not escape the criminal proceedings. The Convention was drafted in Rome, Italy in 1988, and entered into force in March 1993. Japan joined the Convention in April 1998, and it came into force in Japan in July of the same year.

(From HP of the Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

[http://www.mofa.go.jp/Mofaj/press/danwa/17/dga\\_1014.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/Mofaj/press/danwa/17/dga_1014.html)

#### **November 4 “Somali pirates demand ransom for Turkish vessel” (AFP, November 4, 2008)**

On October 29, a merchant ship operated by Turkish Yasa Company - MV Yasa Neslihan (under the Marshall Islands flag) was hijacked by pirates in the Gulf of Aden with its 20-man crew. According to the company, the hijackers contacted them and demanded ransom [in return for the release of the vessel] on the 4th. Although the company did not reveal the amount of the ransom, it is considering what action to take. The Ankara government has requested help from a NATO naval force, including also a Turkish warship.

#### **November 6 “SNMG2 commander: dispatching vessels is temporary” (The Standard, Kenya, November 7, 2008)**

Speaking during a media briefing aboard Italian navy destroyer at the port of Mombasa, Kenya on the 6th, Rear Admiral Giovanni Gumiero of Italian navy, commander of Standing Nato Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) dispatched to Somali waters, said patrol activities by NATO ships is ‘temporary’ and added as follows. (1) Three ships — one Italian naval destroyer, one Royal navy frigate and one Greek navy frigate - are currently deployed off Somalia coast. (2)The Royal navy frigate is now patrolling the Gulf of Aden while the remaining two warships are escorting WFP chartered vessels.

Notes: According to NATO Allied Maritime Component Command Naples, News Releases dated

October 15, SNMG2 fleet eventually comprises seven ships - Italian navy destroyers ITS *Durand de la Penne* as the flag ship, German navy frigate FGS *Karlsruhe* and supply ship FGS Rhon, Greek navy frigate HS *Themistokles*, Turkish navy frigate TCG *Gokova*, Royal navy frigate HMS *Cumberland* and U. S. navy destroyer USS *The Sullivans*.

### **November 7 “Somali pirates seize Danish ship” (AP, November 8, 2008)**

Noel Choong, head of the Piracy Reporting Center (PRC) in Kuala Lumpur, says pirates have hijacked a Danish bulk cargo ship, MV *CEC Future*, in the Gulf of Aden on the 7th. The ship with 13 crew members was sailing from the Middle East to Asia when it was seized. According to Choong, there have been 81 attacks this year, with 32 ships hijacked. Currently, 11 vessels remain in the hands of pirates along with more than 200 crew members.

### **November 10 “EU launches patrol mission off Somalia” (AFP, November 10, 2008)**

On the 10th, the European Union (EU) endorsed an anti-piracy security operation off Somalia at talks of the bloc’s defense ministers in Brussels. This is the first ever naval mission of EU, dubbed Operation Atalanta. EU ships will escort the vessels seeking to transport UN aid into Somalia as well as provide navigational support to other vessels in the area. The patrol will be made up of at least seven ships, including three frigates and a supply vessel. It will also be backed by surveillance aircraft. The mission will be run from a headquarters at Northwood near London, with contributions from France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands and Spain, with Portugal, Sweden and non-EU nation Norway also likely to take part.

### **November 10 “Somali pirates seize Philippine ship” (AP, November 11, 2008)**

On the 10th, a chemical tanker was attacked and seized in the Gulf of Aden by pirates armed with automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades, said Noel Choong, who heads the Piracy Reporting Center (PRC) in Kuala Lumpur. Philippine Foreign Ministry spokesman said they identified the chemical tanker as the MT *Stolt Strength* (33,209 DWT), a Philippines-flagged carrier with 23 crew-members of all Filipinos. The ship was en route to Kandla, India from Senegal and was carrying phosphoric acid. According to the ship’s operator, MT *Stolt Strength* was sailing within the designated corridor in the Gulf of Aden at the time of the hijacking.

### **November 10 “Piracy incident occurs in Singapore Strait” (The Straits Times, November 12, 2008)**

On the 10th, pirates made an attack on Singapore-registered barge and an Indonesian-registered tugboat, robbing crew members of the vessels of cash and personal belongings. Late at night of the 10th, five armed marauders boarded the *Maju Daya 3*, which was sailing northeast of Batu Berhenti. The robbers took cash, mobile phones and watches worth 3,200 US dollars before escaping in a wooden boat equipped with an outboard motor. The 10 crew members were not hurt and the ship captain reported the incident to Singapore's Port Operations Control Center. The tugboat was towing the sand-filled *Marcopolo 188* barge. This is the fourth

time since early September that the robbers, all believed to be from the same gang, have struck near and around the Batu Berhenti.

The scene of the incidents near and around the Batu Berhenti

[http://www.straitstimes.com/Breaking%2BNews/Singapore/Story/STIStory\\_301346.html](http://www.straitstimes.com/Breaking%2BNews/Singapore/Story/STIStory_301346.html)

### **November 11 “Russian frigate begins escorting Danish ship” (AP, November 11, 2008)**

Russian frigate *Neustrashimy* began escorting a Danish-operated cargo ship MV *CEC Commander* on the 11th, officials from both countries said. The crew of MV *CEC Commander* includes 15 Russians. The Danish shipping company requested for Russian escort to the ship, as most of the crew members employed by the company which owns MV *CEC Commander* are Russians and another vessel of the same company was also hijacked by the pirates. MV *CEC Future*, with 13 crew member includes 11 Russians, was recently hijacked in the Gulf of Aden on the 7th. It is the first such protection mission for the *Neustrashimy*.

### **November 11 “British commandos kill pirate suspects” (The Guardian, November 12, 2008, Daily Mail Online, November 13, 2008, and others)**

On the 11th, launched from the frigate HMS *Cumberland* in rigid hull inflatable boats (RHIB's), British commandos killed two suspected pirates in a Yemeni-flagged dhow off the coast of Yemen, British Ministry of Defense (BMD) said on the 12th. The HMS *Cumberland* was conducting routine NATO maritime security operations in the area about 60 miles south of the Yemeni coast. According to the BMD, the RHIB's attempted to stop the dhow in non-forcible methods, but people on the dhow did not stop. The commandos in the RHIB have circled the dhow to stop it, but people on the dhow fired at the British commandos. Commandos returned fire in self-defense, and the crew on dhow surrendered. Boarding the dhow, commando found two bodies which are estimated to be Somali, and one Yemeni injured. He later died, despite receiving emergency treatment from the *Cumberland*'s doctor. (The Guardian, November 12)

Before this incident, there was another incident in which the HMS *Cumberland* prevented hijacking of Danish cargo vessel MV *Powerful* (Panama-flagged) on the 11th. In this case Russian frigate *Neustrashimy* was also involved. According to the Russian navy's chief spokesman, pirates fired on the vessel and attempted to seize it twice. Helicopters were launched from a Russian and



the British frigate. When requested for rescue, the *Neustrashimy* was escorting another Danish vessel. (Shiptalk, November 12)

According to BMD, the aforementioned dhow which was tying up a fast-speed boat at the stern is regarded to be the mother ship of hijackers who attacked the Danish ship. But so far British Navy has failed to provide evidence which would prove it, and says details of the incident are still under investigation. (Ecoterra international, November 13)

Dhow before being encircled by RHIB with Commando (with a speed boat tied astern)

RHIB with commandos on board encircling dhow  
(In circle: Pirate suspects surrender, putting their hands up)

Source: Daily Mail Online, November 13, 2008

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/worldnews/article-1085204/Pictured-The-moment-Royal-Navy-sailors-shot-dead-Somali-pirates-try-hijack-cargo-ship.html>

**【Related Story】****“British navy holds Somali nationals only” (Maritime Global Net, November 17, 2008)**

According to the UK Ministry of Defense, there were 17 men excluding three dead on board the dhow. The British navy transferred eight Somali nationals detained in HMS Cumberland to Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel Wave Knight by the 14th. The surviving Yemenis sailed their dhow back to their home port.

**November 11 “Indian warships avert pirate attacks” (Ecoterra international, November 11, 2008)**

In the Gulf of Aden, the Indian Navy averted an attack against Indian and Saudi merchant vessels on November 11. In an action, destroyer INS *Tabar* intervened to thwart two attacks by pirates on bulk carriers - an Indian flag MV *Jag Arnav* (38,265 tons) and a Saudi flag MV *NCC Thihama* sailing in the area. Also, armed helicopters with marine commandos on-board were dispatched from Indian navy destroyer INS *Gomti* that was on patrol duty in the region. A naval helicopter fired on the pirates, who then fled from the scene. Having transited the Suez Canal, MV *Jag Arnav* was eastward bound in the Gulf of Aden when she came under attack from pirates in the region 60 nautical miles east of Aden. As of now MV *Jag Arnav* is being escorted to safe waters by another Indian warship, INS *Sabar*. This anti-piracy operation marks a first for the Indian Navy as it was deployed in the region. Indian Navy chief Admiral Sureesh Mehta said, “Indian Naval Ships operating in the areas are always in a high state of alert and have the capability to intervene by air or ship borne weapons. Their mandate is to ensure that the safety of our sovereign assets is maintained.”

**November 12 “Somali pirates hijack Turkey-flagged vessel” (Trade Winds, November 13, 2008)**

On the 12th, Somali pirates seized a Turkish chemical tanker *Karagol* (6,000 DWT) in the Gulf of Aden, 26 miles off the coast of Yemen. The tanker has 14 crew members on board.

MT *Karagol* (6,000DWT)

<http://cruelkev2.blogspot.com/2008/11/india-bound-turkish-ship-hijacked.html>

### **November 13 “Chinese fishing boat hijacked by Somali pirates” (Xinhua, November 14, 2008)**

On the 13th, a Chinese fishing boat was hijacked by pirates armed with grenade launchers and automatic weapons off the coast of Kenya. The boat was being held off the coast of the southern Somalia port city of Kismayo on the 14th. The 24 crew members - Japanese captain, three Filipinos and four Vietnamese, and 16 Chinese - on board are reported to be fine. The abducted Chinese tuna-fishing boat, named *Tian Yu.8*, belongs to Tianjin Ocean Fishing Company. It is the first time pirate activities were reported off the southern Somali coast. Somali pirates claimed that they are protecting Somali national resources from illegal fishing and waste dumping, and said that they have captured ships fishing off the coast of Somalia.

#### Chinese fishing boat, *Tian Yu.8*

Source: Left: Dawn, November 25, 2008

<http://www.dawn.net/wps/wcm/connect/Dawn%20Content%20Library/dawn/news/pakistan/pakistan-offers-un-navy-help-to-combat-piracy-qs>

Right: Spiegel Online, November 24, 2008

<http://www.spiegel.de/fotostrecke/fotostrecke-37406-9.html#backToArticle=592433>

### **November 15 “Japanese-controlled vessel seized by Somali pirates” (Bloomberg, November 17, 2008)**

On the 15th, a chemical tanker related with Iino Marine Service named MT *Chemstar Venus* (20,000 tons and Panama-flagged) was seized by Somali pirates in the Gulf of Aden. The ship has a crew of 18 Filipinos and five South Koreans.

### **November 15 “Somali pirates seize VLCC” (AFP, November 17, 2008 and others)**

On the 15th, Somali pirates attacked and took control of a very large crude carrier (VLCC), MT *Sirius Star* (318,000DWT), chartered by Vela International, a spokesman for the US Navy 5th fleet said. The VLCC (which is owned by Saudi Aramco) came under attack more than 450 nautical miles southeast of Mombassa, Kenya. The ship carried 25 crew members - one from Croatia, two from Britain, 19 from the Philippines, two from Poland and one from Saudi Arabia.

MT *Sirius Star* was the largest ship ever Somali pirates have seized, and the farthest out to sea they have successfully struck. When attacked, the tanker was loaded with crude oil, but there

were no reports of damage to the ship. (International Herald Tribune, November 17, 2008)

The tanker is reported to be laden with an estimated two million barrels of oil, which has been worth about 100 million US dollars. (BBC News, November 18, 2008)

Organizing a countermeasure team, Vela International has entered into negotiations on having the pirates release the crew safely. (Shiptalk, November 18, 2008)

Built by the Daewoo Shipping and Marine Engineering Co. LTD, the tanker just began its maiden voyage in March 2008, Vela International said. (Vela International HP)

#### MT *Sirius Star* (318,000DWT)

Source: BBC News, November 19, 2008  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7735507.stm>

#### **【Related Story 1】**

**“Hijackers make contact with owners of ship” (The Times Online, November 18, 2008)**

Pirates, who hijacked MT *Sirius Star*, have begun to negotiate with the vessel’s owners on the 17th. The ship is sailing toward Harardhere, the US Navy has said. All 25 crew members are reported to be safe and there is no change to the vessel which is fully laden with two million barrels of oil, according to the ship's operating company Vela International. A Vela response team has been established and is working to ensure the safe release of the crew members and the vessel.

#### **【Related Story 2】**

**“Pirates demand \$25M for ransom” (AFP, November 21, 2008)**

On the 20th, pirates who hijacked MT *Sirius Star* demanded a ransom of 25 million US dollars (USD), and set a 10-day deadline for the ransom payment. “We are demanding 25 million USD from the Saudi owners of the tanker. We do not want long-term discussions to resolve the matter.

If they do not comply with the deadline, we will take action that could be disastrous,” a pirate named Mohamed Said told AFP from the ship now anchored at the Somali pirate lair of Harardhere.

Later, on the 24th, both of an Islamist leader and regional maritime groups elaborated that they had reduced their ransom demand to 15 million USD.

### **November 16 “Somali pirates release Hong Kong-flagged vessel” (gulfnews.com, November 16, 2008)**

On the 16th, Somali pirates have released a Hong Kong-flagged vessel MT *Stolt Valor* which was related with Japan. Reportedly, a ransom of 1.1 million US dollars was paid for its release. The *Stolt Valor* with 22 crew members, including 18 Indians onboard, was seized in the Gulf of Aden on September 15. According to National Union of Seafarers of India, all the crew members on board the ship are safe and in healthy condition.

### **November 18 “Somali pirates hijack Thai fishing boat” (AP, November 19, 2008)**

On the 18th, Somali pirates hijacked a Thai fishing boat in the Gulf of Aden, said Noel Choong of the International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Center (PRC) in Kuala Lumpur. According to Thai fishing company, Sirichai Fisheries Co., Ltd., the fishing boat is called *Ekawat Nava 5*. Flying a flag from Kiribati, the ship was heading from Oman to Yemen to deliver fishing equipment. Of the 16 crew members, 15 are Thai and one is Cambodian. The boat made a distress call as it was being chased by pirates in two speedboats but the phone connection was cut off midway.

#### **【Related Story 1】**

### **“Indian navy ship destroys Somali pirate ‘mother ship’ (BBC News, November 19, 2008)**

On the 18th, an Indian warship INS *Tabar* hit and sank a suspected Somali pirate “mother ship” while patrolling 285 nautical miles south-west of Salalah in Oman, an Indian navy statement said. When INS *Tabar* demanded the vessel to stop for investigation, the ship responded by threatening to “blow up the naval warship if it closed on her.” The navy said the pirates on board were armed with guns and rocket propelled grenade launchers. When the Indian warship fired on the pirate ship, an explosion was heard, possibly due to exploding ammunition that was stored in the vessel. Although some of the pirates tried to escape on two speedboats, the Indian navy gave chase. One boat was later found abandoned, while a second boat escaped.

#### **【Related Story 2】**

### **“‘Mother ship’ sunk found to be hijacked Thai fishing boat” (CNN, November 25, 2008)**

On the 25th, Thai shipping owner of FV *Ekawat Nava 5* said the vessel which was regarded to be a ‘mother ship’ and hit and sunk by the Indian Navy’s stealth frigate INS *Tabar* may have been

a Thai trawler. According to the shipping owner, of 16 crew members 14 are still missing, one crewman was found alive after six days adrift in the Gulf of Aden, and one is confirmed dead. When FV *Ekawat Nava 5* encountered the INS *Tabar*, the pirates were seizing control of the boat. The shipping owner learned the fate of his vessel from a Cambodian crew member who survived.

### **【Related Story 3】**

#### **“IMB confirms “mother ship” sunk by Indian navy was Thai fishing boat” (BBC News, November 26, 2008)**

On the 26th, Noel Choong, who heads the International Maritime Bureau's (IMB) piracy reporting center (PRC) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, confirmed that the vessel, which the Indian navy's stealth frigate INS *Tabar* may have taken as the “mother ship” of the pirates and hit and sank, proved to be Thai fishing boat *Ekawat Nava 5*. When *Ekawat Nava 5* encountered the Indian frigate, the fishing boat had already been hijacked and crew members had been held by pirates, Choong said. “It's an unfortunate tragedy,” he said. “We hope that this incident won't affect the anti-piracy operation by the multi-coalition navies there.” On the other hand, the Indian navy has not changed its position in the beginning that hitting and sinking the boat should be justified. Thai foreign ministry had summoned the Indian ambassador to Bangkok to issue a complaint.

The owner of *Ekawat Nava 5* said his company had informed the IMB the boat had been hijacked and had asked for assistance. The IMB sent an alert to other multi-coalition patrol vessels but Choong said it was unclear whether the Indian warship had received it, or whether it had no direct IMB links.

#### **November 18 “Somali pirates hijack Hong Kong-flagged ship” (Reuters, November 19, 2008)**

According to Hong Kong's Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Center, a Hong Kong-flagged ship MV *Delight* (25,768 GT) loaded with wheat bound for Iran was hijacked by Somali pirates off Yemen on the 18th. Operated by Iran's state shipping lines, MV *Delight* was the third ship sailing under a Hong Kong flag alone to be seized in the area since September. The 25 crew members on MV *Delight* are from Iran, Pakistan, the Philippines and Guyana.

MV *Delight* (25,768GT)

<http://www.shipspotting.com/modules/mvalbum/photo.php?lid=747509>

**November 18 “NATO eyes long operations off Somalia” (AFP, November 18, 2008)**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is considering whether to launch long-term missions to counter piracy, a spokesperson said on the 18th. At present, NATO has four ships - from Britain, Greece, Italy and Turkey - on patrol in the waters off Somalia, with two protecting the United Nations (UN) food aid convoys to Somalia. The mission, NATO's first-ever against pirates and which is commanded from Naples, ends in mid-December when the bigger European Union (EU) Operation with more warships is to be put in place.

**November 19 “Somali pirates release Hong Kong-flagged cargo ship” (Nasdaq, November 20, 2008)**

Somali pirates have released a Hong Kong-flagged bulk carrier MV *Great Creation* on the 19th. The MV *Great Creation* was hijacked while it was on its way to India from Tunisia on September 18. According to Andrew Mwangura of the East African Seafarers' Assistance Program, the freighter, whose 25 crew members - 24 Chinese and one Sri Lankan - are safe, is now on its way to Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates.

**November 20 “Arab Red Sea states blame piracy off Somalia” (AFP, November 20, 2008)**

Holding the meeting in Cairo, the delegates from the Red Sea nations and the Arab states blamed the piracy off Somalia's coast on the 20th. The meeting, co-hosted by Yemen and Egypt, was attended by representatives from Somalia's transitional government, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates, Djibouti and Jordan. In a statement issued after the meeting, the delegates expressed their anxiety toward the growth of the phenomenon of piracy, and told to establish military commissions to make recommendations on how to counter the piracy. Arab Red Sea states will support international counter-piracy operations, so long as they conform to international law, and respect the sovereignty of countries on their lands and in their waters, the statement added. Prior to the meeting, Yemen complained that the heavy deployment of multinational naval forces in the Gulf of Aden to combat piracy could pose a threat to Arab security.

**November 20 “UNSC adopts resolution on Somali situation” (Reuters, November 20, 2008)**

On the 20th, the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) adopted unanimously the resolution 1844 on the situation of Somalia. The British-drafted resolution aims to impose sanctions, including asset freezes and travel bans, on individuals or companies engaging in or supporting violence and deterioration of security in Somalia. The measure also targets individuals or companies obstructing delivery of humanitarian assistance to Somalia.

Notes: As to the full text of the resolution, refer to web-site below:

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/611/31/PDF/N0861131.pdf?OpenElement>

**November 20 “Somali Pirates free Liberia-flagged ship” (Bloomberg, November 22, 2008)**

On the 20th, Somali pirates freed a chemical tanker, MV *Genius*, chartered by the Greek shipping company. The company confirmed they paid a ransom for its release, but declined to give further details. The MV *Genius* was hijacked in the Gulf of Aden on September 26. After being freed on November 20, the chemical tanker is heading toward the United Arab Emirates.

**November 21 “Russian warship protects international convoy” (RIA Novosti, November 21, 2008)**

Russia's missile frigate *Neustrashimy* is escorting an international convoy of nine vessels past the “Horn of Africa” to protect them from Somali pirate attacks, a Russian Navy spokesman said on the 21st. The convoy is composed of one vessel from each of Russia, the Marshall Islands and the Cayman Islands, and six Liberian ships. The spokesman said: The Russian Navy will continue its presence in the region with the aim of providing safe shipping. However, regarding the possibility of deploying more warships to the area, he rejected it by saying that it is too early as the Russian navy has no permanent bases in the region.

**November 25 “Somali pirates hijack Yemen-flagged vessel” (Maritime Global Net, November 26, 2008)**

According to Andrew Mwangura of the East African Seafarers' Assistance Program, Somali pirates hijacked Yemeni cargo ship MV *Amani* in the Gulf of Aden on the 25th.

**【Related Story】****“Yemen-flagged ship freed without ransom” (Al Jazeera, December 1, 2008)**

Somali pirates freed a Yemeni cargo ship they seized on the 30th. This was realized after talks between Puntland autonomous government authorities, local clan elders and the pirates. On December 1, State minister of Somalia's autonomous province said, “The Yemeni ship was released last night after long discussion. It left Eyl and is heading to Yemen. The crew members are safe and no ransom was paid.” The MV *Amani*, owned by Yemeni shipping firm, has seven sailors on board. It was seized on November 25 as it steaming, carrying 507 tons of steel from Yemen's Mukalla port to Socotra Island.

**November 28 “ROK postpones plan to send warships off Somalia” (Yonhap News, November 29, 2008)**

The Republic of South Korea (ROK) delayed a plan to send naval ships to Somali waters, the ROK government officials said on the 28th. ROK government had initially planned to seek parliamentary approval before the end of 2008 for the action, which calls for the dispatch of warships [to patrol Somali waters]. During a Cabinet meeting on the 26th, President Lee Myung-bak requested “more prudence” before submitting the draft bill for dispatching [naval forces] to the National Assembly, citing the financial burden of 45 billion won (31 million US



dollars) necessary to carry out the plan. But it is estimated to be unlikely that the draft bill will be submitted to the February Assembly Session.

### **November 28 “Somali pirates seize Liberia-flagged ship” (Lloyd’s List, November 28, and Shiptalk, November 29, 2008)**

On the 28th, Somali pirates hijacked the Liberia-flagged chemical tanker *Biscaglia* (27,350 dwt) in the Gulf of Aden. The vessel has a crew of 28, of which three men – two British and one Irish – are unarmed security staff and other crew members are from Indian and Bangladesh. Three security staff members belong to the Anti-Piracy Maritime Security Solutions (APMSS), the civilian shipping security company based in London, and they were all former British soldiers. After the ship was hijacked, three of our unarmed security staff jumped overboard and were rescued by a German navy helicopter and flown to a French frigate. The leader of the APMSS said, as a talk of three security guards, that they were forced to leave the vessel after every effort was made to ensure the safety of the ship's crew. While in the water, the security team was again fired upon by the hijackers aboard the ship.

Left: MT *Biscaglia* (27,350DWT)

Source: Al Jazeera, November 30, 2008

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/2008/11/200811301551825218.html>

Right: A German military helicopter rescues three crewmen of MT *Biscaglia*

Source: Shiptalk, November 29, 2008

<http://www.shiptalk.com/index.asp?ItemID=4075&rcid=217&pcid=148&cid=217#anch>

### **November 30 “Somali pirates fires on Oceania Cruises” (Fairplay Daily News, November 30, 2008)**

On the 30th, a small high-speed boat (skiff) opened fire on Oceania Cruises’ 684-passenger ship *Nautica* (30,277 GT) while sailing in the safe corridor in the Gulf of Aden. According to the Oceania Cruise, the officer on duty sighted two skiffs deemed potentially hostile while the vessel sailed past several groups of non-hostile fishing vessels. The skiffs, approaching from a range of approximately 1000 meters (m), attempted to intercept the vessel’s course. The vessel immediately began evasive maneuvers. One of the skiffs did manage to close the range to approximately 275m and fired eight rifle shots in the direction of the vessel before trailing off. The

*Nautica* was able to outrun the skiffs at high speed, and no one aboard it was harmed and no damage was sustained.

This is the third regional pirate attack on cruise ships, following the first attack on the gorgeous passenger ship *Seabourn Spirit* in November 2005 (refer to 3. Special report in OPRF MARINT Monthly Report, November 2005) and the second attack on the French luxury sail cruiser *Le Ponant* in April 2008 (refer to 1.1 Security in OPRF MARINT Monthly Report, April 2008,).

MV *Nautica* (30,277GT)

<http://www.nowpublic.com/world/oceania-cruises-nautica>

### **November 30 “Ukrainian freighter may reach deal on ransom” (The New York Times, November 30, 2008)**

On November 30, Andrew Mwangura of the East African Seafarers’ Assistance Program, said the Somali pirates have reached an agreement with the ship's owners on a ransom for releasing the Ukrainian ship MV *Faina*. The only thing left to figure out, Mwangura said, is how to get the ransom to the pirates and regain the ship, which is no simple feat with a band of pirates aboard and American and European naval vessels circling the freighter. Although no price of ransom has been revealed, as for now the pirates are said to be demanding around three to five million US dollars.

The crews and hijackers on MV *Faina*

Source: BBC News, November 30, 2008  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7757259.stm>

## 1.2 Military

### **November 7 “Russian warships to visit Venezuela after mid-November” (RIA Novosti, November 7, 2008)**

A task force from Russia's Northern Fleet led by the *Pyotr Veliky* missile cruiser will visit Caracas, Venezuela on November 24-30, a spokesman for the Venezuelan Defense Ministry announced on the 7th. The joint naval exercises are due to take place, the spokesman said. The Northern Fleet task force also includes the large anti-submarine warfare ship Admiral Chabanenko. The Russian ships are currently in the Mediterranean, after calling at a French naval base of Toulon for the first time on the 5th. Another Northern Fleet task force, led by the missile cruiser *Admiral Kuznetsov*, will conduct joint exercises with Black Sea Fleet warships in the Mediterranean in December.

#### **【Related Story】**

### **“Russian warships dock in Venezuela” (VOA News, November 25, 2008)**

On the 25th, Russian warships arrived at the port of La Guaira, near Venezuela's capital of Caracas, marking Russia's first deployment in the Caribbean since the end of the Cold War. On the 24th, the U.S. State Department said the United States will keep a close eye on the military exercises, but it dismissed the notion that they represent a challenge to U.S. influence in the region. Also, on the 24th, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez expressed the same idea, saying the exercises are not a provocation.

According to Russian navy authorities, a series of joint naval exercises between Russia and Venezuela is planned to be held on December 1. Involving joint sea rescue operations, maneuvering, and firing drills, the exercises will be conducted in open waters 150 nautical miles from Venezuelan coast in accordance with international law. All shipping in the area will be halted for the duration of the exercises. From Venezuelan navy, two or three warships will participate in the exercises. After its termination of the exercises, the Russian task force is to rendezvous with ships from Russia's Pacific Fleet to take part in a joint exercise due to be held with the Indian Navy in January 2009. (RIA Novosti, November 25, 2008)

### **November 14 “S. Korea launches second Aegis destroyer” (Yonhap News Agency, November 14, 2008)**

The ceremony for launching the second Aegis destroyer of South Korea Navy named *Yulgok Yi* (7,600-ton) was held at Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering Co. on the 14th. The ceremony was attended by Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee, and Navy Chief of Staff Adm. Jung Ok-geun. Seoul launched first-ever Aegis destroyer, King Sejong, in 2007. The third Aegis destroyer is to be constructed by 2012. *Yulgok Yi* I is Korea's most prominent Confucian scholars.

*Yulgok Yi* (7,600-ton class Aegis destroyer)

<http://joongangdaily.joins.com/article/view.asp?aid=2897390>

**November 16 “China’s defense official talks about aircraft carrier project” (The Financial Times, November 16, 2008)**

“The world should not be surprised if China builds an aircraft carrier but Beijing would use such a vessel only for offshore defense,” Major General (Maj. Gen) Qian Lihua, director of the ministry’s Foreign Affairs Office, has said to the Financial Times. Although Maj. Gen Qian avoided commenting whether or not China has decided to build the aircraft carriers, his words are regarded to have most frankly told that China has every right to build the aircraft carriers. Expressing “The navy of any great power has the dream to have one or more aircraft carriers,” Maj. Gen Qian has pointed out, “The question is not whether you have an aircraft carrier, but what you do with your aircraft carrier.” Additionally, although he did not mention the US by name, Maj Gen Qian stressed: “Navies of great powers with more than 10 aircraft carrier battle groups with strategic military objectives have a different purpose from countries with only one or two carriers used for offshore defense. Even if one day we have an aircraft carrier, unlike another country, we will not use it to pursue global deployment or global reach.”

However, that pledge is unlikely to reassure those in the region concerned about the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) navy’s emergence as a blue-water force. An effective Chinese carrier could have serious implications for any conflict involving Taiwan by strengthening the mainland’s ability to counter the island’s air force and control its sea-lanes. Taiwanese separatism was the “biggest threat” China currently faced, Maj Gen Qian said.

**November 24 “South Korea, China set up military hotlines” (AFP, November 24, 2008)**

On the 24th, South Korea and China opened military hotlines to help prevent clashes in the Yellow Sea. The lines were set up between the two countries' navy and air force command headquarters.

### 1.3 Diplomacy and International Relations

#### November 17 “Bangladesh, Myanmar fail to promote maritime border talks” (AFP, November 17, 2008 and others)

On the 17th, Bangladesh Foreign Minister (FM) Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury told that, although a two-day negotiation over a maritime demarcation with Burma ended in failure, Bangladesh and Myanmar will hold more talks over the issue. FM Chowdhury stressed, “We have agreed that the differences can be resolved through peaceful means.”

In early November, when South Korean company tested to explore in the water area involving the conflict over the maritime border between the two countries, Myanmar escorted it by sending two naval ships [to the area]. Reacting to Myanmar’s action, Bangladesh immediately deployed four ships [to the area], causing a tense situation over four days.

Eventually, on the 8th, the Daewoo-Myanmar of the Republic of Korea (ROK), which was allowed by Myanmar to develop oil and natural gas in the Bay of Bengal, stopped test-drilling which was being conducted about 50 miles south of St. Martin Island in the Bangladesh territory. (The Daily Star, 12 November 2008) However, mobilizing forces on the land border, Myanmar is amassing four naval vessels in Sittwe. (Mizzima News, November 7, 2008)

The disputed area between Burma and Bangladesh is located 60 miles southwest of St. Martin Island, which is located at the mouth of the Naff River. Both Bangladesh and Burma have proclaimed that the waters in question fall within their own territory. (Narinjara, November 5, 2008)

Source: World Atlas

## **1.4 Shipping, Resources, Environment, and Miscellaneous**

### **November 6 “Svitzer reroutes vessels around Cape of Good Hope” (Lloyd’s List, November 6, 2008)**

Svitzer, a world’s major tug and salvage company, has become the first major shipping company openly to confirm that it is rerouting all vessels around the Cape of Good Hope at all times, in preference to transiting the Suez Canal, seeking to avoid the risk of pirate attack in waters close to Somalia. The decision comes after the towage and salvage contractor earlier this year became the victim of a vicious vessel hijack, which saw Somali pirates seize its tug Svitzer Korsakov on a voyage from St Petersburg to Sakhalin in February 2008. The unit with its crew of six was released the following month, reportedly on payment of a ransom widely reported at 700,000 US dollars. The company declined to go into full details, citing security considerations. Although the Cape route adds around three weeks to east-west transit times, Svitzer did not wish to discuss costs.

### **November 10 “Norwegian shipping company chooses Cape route” (News 24, November 11, 2008)**

On the 10th, Norwegian shipping company Odfjell said it would no longer sail through the pirate-plagued Gulf of Aden, choosing instead the longer, more expensive but also safer route around Cape of Good Hope. According to Odfjell, the decision to send all of their ships around South Africa's Cape of Good Hope instead of through the waters off Somalia would take effect immediately. “We will no longer expose our crew to the risk of being hijacked and held for ransom by pirates in the Gulf of Aden,” Odfjell chief executive (OCE) said in a statement. “We trust our customers will appreciate this decision which we have taken to safeguard not only our crews and ships, but also the ships' cargo,” OCE said. “The re-routing will entail extra sailing days and later cargo deliveries. This will incur significant extra cost, but we expect our customers' support and contribution to cover the costs,” he added. According to OCE, it was difficult to say how much changing the shipping route would cost the company, but said it would likely add six to 12 days to the average trip. Odfjell's fleet counts 92 ships that are mainly used for transporting chemicals and other liquids, and that sail routes between the United States, Europe, Asia, the Middle East and South America. So far, none of the company's ships have recently been targeted by pirates.

### **November 12 “U.S. Supreme Court rules for Navy’s use of sonar” (The Honolulu Advertiser, November 12, 2008)**

On November 12, the U.S. Supreme Court decided to allow the Navy to use sonar in training exercises off the California coast. Environmental groups had persuaded to impose restrictions on sonar use in submarine-hunting exercises to protect whales and other marine mammals. Regarding this issue, Bush administration argued that there is little evidence of harm to marine life in more than 40 years of exercises off the California coast.

**November 20 “Danish major shipping company adopts Cape route” (MAERSK HP, Press Release, November 20, 2008)**

On the 20th, Danish major shipping company – A.P. Moller-Maersk – said vessels without adequate speed or freeboard will for the time being seek alternative routing south of the Cape of Good Hope and east of Madagascar. However, based upon availability of escorts these vessels may join naval convoy transit in the Gulf of Aden. According to the company, this policy is applied primarily to their tanker vessels, and only three container vessels will be affected. They expect to further limit the impact by redeployment. In the statement, the company stresses that piracy in the Gulf of Aden is a threat to important international trade lanes and it is not an issue to be solved by the shipping industry alone. Therefore, it must be addressed by relevant authorities and the international community.

On the other hand, the Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO) is calling on all vulnerable vessels – tankers – to sail east of Madagascar around the Cape of Good Hope. The distance from the Middle East to northwest Europe through Suez is estimated at 6,150 miles and 14 days steaming time; the comparative figures when sailing past South Africa are 10,950 miles and 33 voyage days.

**November 19 “China to start constructing pipelines through Burma in 1st half of 2009” (Mizzima News, November 19, 2008)**

China is set to commence construction in the first half of 2009 on a giant pipeline project that will connect Sittwe on the Bay of Bengal in Burma (Myanmar) with China's Yunnan Province. According to the China Daily newspaper, the China Natural Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), with a 50.9 percent stake in the project, will head the US \$2.5 billion pipeline project. The remaining stake will be held by the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE). The project will include the construction of two separate pipelines, a US \$1.5 billion oil pipeline and a US \$1.4 billion gas pipeline. Once completed, the pipelines are expected to provide an alternative route for China's crude imports from West Asia and Africa. Currently, 80 percent of China's annual crude imports of 200 million tons must pass through the Strait of Malacca, which is located more than 1,800 kilometers farther to the east than Sittwe.

## 2. Intelligence Assessment

### Somali Piracy and its Status

#### 1. Background and Situation of Pirate Groups

In Somalia, since its dictator Mohamed Siad Barre had been ousted from power in 1991, a country with Africa's longest coast line of about 3,000 kilometers and a population of over seven millions has no central government which effectively controls the whole country. A situation, where local warlords defend their own territories, continues. The Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) controls a southern part of the country centering in the capital of Mogadishu.

This internal situation is said to be the major factor which causes the pirates to be rampant along the coastal area. As we mention it later, this is why the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1838 emphasizes that it is necessary to strengthen more than anything else the internal peace and stability in Somalia as well as state institutions and to establish the rule of law in order eradicate the piracy incidents.

According to the annual report of the London-based International Maritime Bureau (IMB) (hereafter report), as shown in the table below, the year 2005 is the first year, in which the piracy incidents off Somalia became rampant, which continues today. In 2006, the attacks off Somalia total 10 cases, which have dramatically decreased compared to 35 cases in 2005. According to the report released in January, this reduction is due to increased patrols by the coalition naval forces as well as a result of anti-piracy measures by the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) which has recently taken control of the middle and southern areas in Somalia. However, the report points out that, as the interim government of Somalia supported militarily by Ethiopian forces has successfully driven out the UIC, it is feared that the old militias may resume piracy attacks on ships in order to raise revenue. This has indicated that establishing a government which will effectively control the whole country is essential for anti-piracy measures in Somalia, and the development thereafter is in progress as predicted in this report.

Transition of the Piracy Incidents in Gulf of Aden and off Somalia during the past 5 years  
(including attempted cases)

Area	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Gulf of Aden & Red Sea	8	10	10	13	51*
Somalia	2	35	10	31	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>63**</b>

Source: "Piracy And Armed Robbery Against Ships: 1 January – 31 December 2007," ICC International Maritime Bureau, January 9, 2008, p.5, and "Piracy And Armed Robbery Against Ships: 1 January – 30 September 2008," ICC International Maritime Bureau, October 2008, pp.6-7.

Note \*: No attacks in the Red sea have been reported. Also, the attacks in this area were made by Somali pirates.



Note \*\*: Total number of attacks which have occurred in 2008 marks the total number noted during the period until the end of the third quarter (January 1 – September 30), not all year round. As of the status of hijacking incidents in 2008, please refer to information in the enclosure.

Regarding the status of Somali pirate groups, the Danish Risk Intelligence largely mentions it as follows, by separating the pirates largely into two groups in its paper of “Somalia Piracy Background Briefing” dated October 13 (hereafter paper). One group is based in Kismayo in the southern part of Somalia, and the other group is based in Hobyo-Harardhere region. The first was put out of business in 2006 and has not resumed its activities on any notable scale, while the second, also known under the name Somali Marines, returned to its operational area in January 2007. The Somali Marines are not connected or based on a single clan but recruits their members from other military clans. According to this paper, the majority of hijackings during 2007 were carried out by this group but in late 2007 we started to see other groups engaging in piracy.

This paper is pointing out that since 2007 the size and number of ransoms demanded by the pirates over releasing the hostages have increased tremendously which has bred a trend of regarding piracy as a business and has increased the applicants for piracy. As a group of four or five members with various skills becomes involved in piracy acts, hijacking incidents have increased and ransom payments became higher (lying in the range of one to two million US dollars on average), and more and more persons will be involved in piracy, causing a dangerous spiral.

Regarding why the pirate attacks in 2008 are occurring more in the Gulf of Aden than off the coast of Somalia, the briefing paper (BP) – Piracy in Somalia, Chatham House Briefing Paper, October 2008 – points out that Puntland in the northwestern part of Somalia is the poorest area, which makes the financial attraction of piracy strong. Moreover, according to the BP, Somalia’s fishing industry has collapsed in the last fifteen years and its waters are being heavily fished by European, Asian and African nations. Some pirates have claimed that they are involved in protecting Somalia’s natural resources and that ransom payments should be viewed as legitimate taxation.

As shown in the table below, regarding why piracy occurs more frequently in the Gulf Aden than the Gulf of Aden, the previous report of the Risk Intelligence points out the factors, including: (1) International shipping has understood that they need to be well clear more than the 200 NM from the East Coast of Somalia after the attacks during 2007; (2) The World Food Program (WFP) escorts have also provided some collateral protection to other vessels near by; and (3) The pirates have simply understood that the traffic in the Gulf of Aden is so much more interesting and lucrative compared to what sails down off the coast of Somalia, and the number and level of ransom paid has well surpassed any previous levels.

Most hijacked vessels are moored off Eyl in the central part of Somalia facing the Indian Ocean. A. Mwangura who heads the East African Seafarers’ Assistance Program says, “In Eyl pirates are getting strong support from local people. Here was established a fishing base in 1973, which has been abandoned since then. This place is isolated, and pirates are regarding the place a

safe land where outsider cannot enter.” (Reuters, September 2, 2008)

## 2. Attacking methods and vessels vulnerable to attacks

Transition of hijacking incidents by Somali pirates is as shown in information attached in the enclosure. The bulk carriers are most frequently attacked by the pirates. The size of bulk carriers hijacked is around 10,000 – 20,000 tons on average. Among the hijacked bulk carriers, the large type of the vessels is Panama-flagged MV *Capt Stephanos* (74,077 DWT), which is owned by Greek shipping company, and was hijacked on September 21. Somali pirates hijacked Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier MV *Yasa Neslihan* (82,849 DWT) in the Gulf of Aden on October 20.

The vessels hijacked by Somali pirates are relatively low-decked and with slow-speed (below 15 knots) and a small crew (more or less 20 members on average). According to Danish Risk Intelligence, pirates usually attack the targets with two to five small high-speed boats which have specifically been made and launched from the “mother-ship” on the sea. The pirates are armed with four to five-meter long rope-ladders to get onboard the target-vessel. Also, the pirates are heavily armed with AK 47 rifles and RPG7 rockets to use them for stopping to embark the target ship and to suppress the crew. However, Somali pirates know well that the hostages are the greatest assets in the negotiations for ransoms, and it is their aim to hijack the target ships without hurting the crew.

On the other hand, on April 21, there was a case in which a very large crude carrier (VLCC) of the Nippon Yusen Company, *Takayama* (150,000 GT) was fired and hit by a small unidentified boat. Although it was regarded to be difficult for the pirates to hijack such a large VLCC like *Takayama*, Somali pirates hijacked Liberia-flagged VLCC, MT *Sirius Star* (318,000 DWT) owned by Saudi Aramco and chartered by Vela International on the high seas 450 miles southeast of Kenyan port of Mombassa on November 15. The vessel is the largest type ever, which was hijacked by the Somali pirates and the farthest from the coast in the area of attack.

In an interview on November 17, regarding hijacking incident of MT *Sirius Star*, Admiral Mullen, Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, said he was stunned and surprised by the range of the attack, less so than he was the size of vessel. Adm. Mullen added that was the longest distance he had seen for any of those hijacking incidents. (U.S. DOD, News Briefing, November 17, 2008)

When hijacked, MV *Sirius Star* was carrying two million barrels of crude oil. While the tanker was loading crude oil, as you see in the photograph below, its waterline was downward and gunwale was low. It may not have been impossible for the pirates to get on board the VLCC. As a crew member of MT *Stolt Valor* who was released on November 16 said, ‘Once pirates are aboard, the game is over.’

MT *Sirius Star* in Rotterdam on October 17, 2008

Source: Sky News, December 11, 2008

Location of MT *Sirius Star* was attacked and pirates attacked other vessels in 2008.

Source: Spiegel Online, November 24, 2008

<http://www.spiegel.de/fotostrecke/fotostrecke-37406-15.html#backToArticle=592433>

As for the capability of making attacks in the area far away from the coast, the pirates in this area are using the “mother ship” which can launch and recover the small high speed boats to attack the target vessels. According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), this boat is regarded to be used as a mother ship when the pirates are launched for attacks in the Gulf of Aden. There are two suspected vessels that are operating. Two trawlers have the names of *BURUM OCEAN* and *ARENA* or *ATHENA* of Russian-made stern trawlers.

*BURUM OCEAN*

*ARENA (or ATHENA)*

Source: IMB, August 21, 2008.  
[http://www.icc-ccs.org/main/piracy\\_al.php?newsid=20](http://www.icc-ccs.org/main/piracy_al.php?newsid=20)

Pirates on speedboat approach their mother ship in Eyl, Somalia

Source: Sky News, December 11, 2008

### **【Related story】**

#### **‘Once pirates are aboard, the game is over’- Interview with sailor who was held by pirates, but freed later (The Hindustan Times, November 17, 2008)**

In an interview with the Indian newspaper - The Hindustan Times (HT), a crew member of MT *Stolt Valor* who was freed on the 17th told in the form of questions (Q) and answers (A) about the situation in which the ship was hijacked as follows. HT estimates a ransom amount of up to 25,000 US dollars was paid to the pirates.

Q: What's a day like for you while sailing through pirate-infested waters?

A: All entrance to accommodation is locked and additional lookouts are placed on the bridge to keep track of all passing or approaching boats. But if pirates attack, we can only send distress calls. Once they are aboard, the game is over.

Q: How do pirates take over a ship on the high seas?

A: Pirates usually approach from the stern (rear end) with two or more skiffs (small boats). They also attack from the port quarter as staff on the watch tend to concentrate on the starboard side for crossing traffic. The skiffs move at 20-25 knots. They are faster than most merchant ships that move at 13-14 knots.

Q: Do merchant vessels have a security drill in place?

A: All vessels have a contingency plan and security systems. But what can unarmed crew do against armed pirates. Merchant ships do not carry any weapons except some Israeli vessels, which have guns on board.

Q: Is there any standard operating procedure that merchant vessels follow?

A: Vessels normally take action by evasive maneuvers such as creating a large wake to reduce maneuverability of approaching speedboats. It is suggested that high-pressure jets of water be used to drive away pirates. But that's not realistic. If pirates board the vessel, then there is no option but to surrender.

Q: Do seafarers feel secure with different navies, including the Indian Navy, patrolling the waters?

A: No, it is not adequate. Chemical tanker Stolt Strength was hijacked on November 10. It was just 24 miles behind our ship. It was desperately calling for assistance but no warship responded.

Enclosure: Information by Ocean Policy Research Foundation on the Status of Hijacking Incidents off  
Gulf of Aden and Somalia in 2008 (As of December 15)

Hijacked	Date	Date released (Days held)	Crew (killed)	Vessel	Flag State
<i>Svitzer Korsakov</i>	2.1	3.18(46)	6	Tug	St.Vincent & Grenadines
<i>Brum Ocean</i>	4.1	4.1(1)	34	Fishing vessel	Yemen
<i>Playa De Bakio</i>	4.2	4.25(23)	26	Fishing vessel	Canary Islands
<i>Le Ponant</i>	4.4	4.11(7)	30	Passenger Vessel	France
<i>Al-Khaleej</i>	4.21	4.21(1)	16		UAE
<i>Victoria</i>	5.17	5.23(6)	21	General Cargo	Jordan
<i>Amiya Scan</i>	5.25	6.24(30)	9	General Cargo	Antigua & Barbuda
<i>Lehmann Timber</i>	5.28	7.7(40)	15	General Cargo	Gibraltar
<i>Rockall</i>	6.23		3		
<i>Stella Maris *</i>	7.20	10.9 (81)	20	Bulk Carrier	Panama
<i>Yenagoa Ocean</i>	8.5		8	Tug/Supply Vessel	Panama
<i>Thor Star</i>	8.12	10.16 (64)	28	Bulk Carrier	Thailand
<i>Bunga Melati Dua</i>	8.19	9.29 (40)	39 (1)	Chemical Tanker	Malaysia
<i>Iran Deyanat</i>	8.21	10.10 (49)	29	Bulk Carrier	Iran
<i>BBC Trinidad</i>	8.21	9.11 (20)	13	Bulk Carrier	Antigua & Barbuda
<i>Irene *</i>	8.21	10.8 (47)	19	Tanker	Panama
<i>Bunga Melati Lima</i>	8.29	9.27 (28)	41	Chemical Tanker	Malaysia
<i>Carre D'as IV</i>	9.2	9.15 (13)	3	Yacht	Venezuela
<i>Al Mansourah</i>	9.3	9.27 (24)	25	Bulk Carrier	Egypt
<i>Bright Ruby</i>	9.10	10.16 (36)	21	Bulk Carrier	South Korea
<i>Stolt Valor *</i>	9.15	11.16 (62)	22	Chemical Tanker	Hong Kong
<i>Great Creation</i>	9.17	11.19 (63)	25	Bulk Carrier	Hong Kong
<i>Centauri</i>	9.18	11.27 (70)	25	Bulk Carrier	Marta
<i>Capt Stefanos</i>	9.21	12.9 (79)	19	Bulk Carrier	Bahamas
<i>Faina</i>	9.25		21(1)	Ro-Ro vessel	Belize
<i>Genoius</i>	9.26	11.20 (54)	19	Chemical Tanker	Liberia
<i>Wail</i>	10.9	10.14 (5)	11	General Cargo	Panama
<i>Action</i>	10.10	12.13 (64)	20 (3)	Chemical Tanker	Panama
<i>African Sanderling *</i>	10.15		21	Bulk Carrier	Panama
<i>Yasa Neslihan</i>	10.29		20	Bulk Carrier	Marshall Island
<i>CEC Future</i>	11.7		13	General Cargo	Bahamas
<i>Stolt Strength</i>	11.10		23	Chemical Tanker	Philippines
<i>Stolt Venture</i>	11.11		21	Chemical Tanker	Philippines
<i>Karagol</i>	11.12		14	Chemical Tanker	Turkey

Hijacked	Date	Date released (Days held)	Crew (killed)	Vessel	Flag State
<i>Tian Yu.8*</i>	11.13		24	Fishing Boat	China
<i>Sirius Star**</i>	11.15		25	Crude Oil Tanker	Liberia
<i>Chemstar Venus*</i>	11.15		23	Chemical Tanker	Panama
<i>Delight</i>	11.18		25	Bulk Carrier	Hong Kong
<i>Ekawat Nava 5***</i>	11.18		16 (2)	Fishing Boat	Kiribati
<i>Amani</i>	11.25	11.30 (5)	7	General Cargo	Yemen
<i>Biscaglia</i>	11.28		31	Chemical Tanker	Liberia

Sources: "Piracy And Armed Robbery Against Ships: 1 January – 30 September 2008," ICC International Maritime Bureau, October 2008, pp.51-65., and

Hans Tino Hansen, "Somalia Piracy Background Briefing," Version 1.3, RiskIntelligence, October 13, pp.4-5.

<http://www.riskintelligence.eu/gfx/somalia%20briefing%202%20october%202008%20version%201.3.pdf>

In addition to the above-listed sources, we have also used data from other sources of information for compiling this table.

Note 1: Blanks in the columns of Type of Vessel and Flag State show no data are available.

Remarks \*: [\*] in the column of the ship name hijacked indicates the vessel is Japanese-related.

MV *Stella Maris* and *Irene* are related to Koyo Kaiun Shipping Company, and MV *African Sanderling* is to Nagashiki Steamship Company. MT *Stolt Valor* is also related to the Japanese shipping company. MT *Chemstar Venus* is related to the Iino Marine Service. FV *Tian Yu.8* (Tuna fishing boat) belongs to China's Tianjin Ocean Fishing Company, and the captain of the ship is Japanese.

Remarks \*\*: MT *Sirius Star* was the largest ship ever that Somali pirates have hijacked, and the farthest out to sea from the coast they have successfully struck.

Remarks \*\*\*: FV *Ekawat Nava 5* was later found to be the same vessel that Indian navy stealth frigate INS *Tabar* may have taken as the "mother ship" of the pirates and hit and sunk on November 18. Of 16 crew members 14 are still missing, one crewman was found alive and rescued after six days adrift in the Gulf of Aden, and one is confirmed dead. When FV *Ekawat Nava 5* encountered INS *Tabar*, the fishing boat had already been kept under control of the pirates.

## Links

AFP	<a href="http://www.afp.com/home/">http://www.afp.com/home/</a>
Al Jazeera	<a href="http://english.aljazeera.net/">http://english.aljazeera.net/</a>
AP	<a href="http://www.ap.org/">http://www.ap.org/</a>
BBC News	<a href="http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/">http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/</a>
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CNN	<a href="http://www.cnn.com/">http://www.cnn.com/</a>
Daily Mail Online	<a href="http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/index.html">http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/index.html</a>
Ecoterra International	<a href="http://www.businesspatrol.com/country-links/ecoterra-international,9870.html">http://www.businesspatrol.com/country-links/ecoterra-international,9870.html</a>
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NATO Allied Maritime Component Command Naples	<a href="http://www.afsouth.nato.int/organization/CC_MAR_Naples/index.htm">http://www.afsouth.nato.int/organization/CC_MAR_Naples/index.htm</a>
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The "Ship & Ocean Foundation" is operating under the name of "Ocean Policy Research Foundation"