

Somali Piracy: Relation Between Crew Nationality and a Vessel's Vulnerability to Seajacking

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ABSTRACT: This paper constitutes an effort to substantiate whether there are certain nationalities of crews which are for ethnic and / or cultural reasons more (or less) vulnerable to fall victims of Pirates off Somalia. Such groups (if there are any) in effect indirectly 'support' Somali piracy and for this reason they are being re-ferred to throughout the paper as "Passively Supportive Crews".

The method (and the rational) in use within this paper is straightforward. Over a three and a half year period (2007 – June/2010) an analysis is being conducted of all the reported (to the I.M.O. and I.M.B.) attacks in the region off Somalia.

The analysis focuses on the crew composition of the attacked vessels with special interest cast upon those Ships (meaning the crews) which eventually succumbed to the pirates and were in the end seajacked.

1 INTRODUCTION (ASSOCIATED PRESS, MARCH 2010)

On Thursday the 4th of March 2010, Somali pirates hit a Spanish fishing boat off the coast of Kenya with a rocket-propelled grenade as private security on board returned fire at the would-be seajackers. The successful defense of the fishing vessel Albacan illustrated two trends driving up the stakes for sailors and pirates off the Horn of Africa:

Better trained and protected crews are increasingly able to repel attacks, but Pirates eager for multi-million-dollar ransoms are now resorting to violence much more often to capture ships.

Two-thirds of attacks by Somali Pirates are being repelled by crews alone, without the aid of the coalition warships that patrol the Gulf of Aden, according to an analysis by the London-based International Maritime Bureau. Most did so without the use of armed guards, although in 2009 private security contractors helped repel pirates in at least five incidents off the Somali coast.

As it gets harder for pirates to capture ships, the Somali gangs are more likely to fire at sailors with automatic weapons in order to force vessels to stop. The IMB states that only seven ships were fired up-

on worldwide in 2004 but that 114 ships were fired upon in 2009 off the Somali coast alone. That is up from thirty-nine incidents off Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden in 2008.

Most crews now post extra lookouts, register with maritime authorities and practice anti-piracy drills. Increasing speed and maneuvering, so that a ship produces more wake or heads into rough waves, can also make it more difficult for pirates.

The International Maritime Bureau does not recommend using armed guards due to potential legal issues and fears of starting an arms race with the pirates or increasing the danger to crews. Armed guards on ships may encourage pirates to use their weapons more — a prediction that appears to have become reality.

Some ships have been forced to rely on sailors' ingenuity. Crews have thrown everything from oil drums to wooden planks at would-be seajackers clambering up ladders. In 2009, a crew played the sound of dogs barking over an amplifier to frighten off attackers.

Better training and preparation means that although 2009 saw 217 Somali pirate attacks — the highest number on record — most were unsuccessful. Forty-seven ships were taken, about the same as

in 2008, which saw 111 attacks, according to the International Maritime Bureau.

The attacks are becoming more dangerous for crew members though. In 2009, more than twenty ships were fired upon with rocket-propelled grenades, including tankers and chemical tankers. In one incident, two grenades lodged in the door of a ship's bridge — the area where the captain steers from. Many other ships were damaged by small-arms fire, according to reports from IMB.

Four sailors died and ten were injured off Somalia in 2009. Two were killed during rescue attempts — one by Yemeni forces and one by the French — and another died in captivity. The fourth was killed by a bullet during the attack.

In 2009, the average ransom was around \$2 million, giving the pirates a total haul of around \$100 million during that year. According to industry officials just up to April 2010, two ransoms paid were around \$3 million and \$7 million.

As an industry analyst wryly puts it: “There's a commercial calculation as well as a humanitarian one..... It's cheaper to pay a bit more a bit more quickly than a bit less over a longer period of time, because of associated costs like compensation to the sailors, lost work time, and possibly a loss in the value of the cargo.”

As we are still tackling piracy in accordance with the ‘International Law in Time of Peace’, it is a matter of cooperation between the various stakeholders. It is in this goal that Private (Vessel Owners, Ship Management Companies), National (Flag States, Port States) and Supranational (UN, IMO, EU etc) interests and objectives should converge.

Unfortunately many believe that ‘off-the-shelf’ solutions like barbed wire, high pressure water hoses or even armed guards on board vessels can on their own effectively counter the piracy scourge. This is a fallacy and a very costly-one if not fatal. Only cooperation among all kinds of relevant authorities / market players can create the right environment for Maritime Security to come to fruition.

All in all, as the Athenian philosopher Socrates put it squarely right some 2,500 years ago: “The Man is the Ultimate measure of Everything.....”

1.1 Literature review (Gekara 2008)

Although the forces of economic globalization have greatly diminished national economic barriers in the past four decades, labour is yet to enjoy the same global mobility that capital and finance enjoy. In the main, labour continues to be locally and nationally organized and the state still wields immense regulatory control through immigration restrictions across borders (Holton, 1998). Other obstacles like cultural,

and language barriers, and variations in the education, training and qualification systems of different countries also restrict the international movement of labour (Lauder and Brown, 2006).

However, in shipping, the growth of the Global Labour Market for seafarers has significantly increased the mobility of seafarers in the past few years (Wu, 2004). Furthermore, the mobile nature of seafaring employment, combined with the international harmonization of training and certification in the profession and the use of English as the accepted international language of seafaring, defines seafaring in distinctive ways.

Ship-owners have, over the years, designed crewing policies which enable them to increase their competitive advantage in terms of cost effectiveness. These policies direct their recruitment strategies and have, over the years, resulted in increasing the prevalence of seafarers from low-wage developing countries.

The worldwide supply of seafarers in 2005 was estimated to be 466,000 officers and 721,000 ratings (BIMCO / ISF, 2005). The OECD countries (North America, Western Europe, Japan etc.) remained an important source of officers, although Eastern Europe has become increasingly significant with a large increase in officer numbers. The Far East and South East Asia (the “Far East”), and the Indian sub-continent remain the largest sources of supply of ratings and are rapidly becoming a key source of officers.

On the other hand, the 2005 estimate of worldwide demand for seafarers was 476,000 officers and 586,000 ratings.

2 SOMALI PIRACY (INTERNATIONAL MARITIME BUREAU, 2007-2010 Q2 REPORTS)

2.1 Review of the recent past (January 2010 – June 2010)

Somali pirates attack vessels in and around the following areas:

Coasts along the northern, eastern and southern Somalia;

- Red and Arabian Seas;
- Western Indian Ocean (more than 1,000 nm away from the eastern Africa basin);
- Gulf of Aden;
- Seas off the coasts of Kenya, Tanzania. Seychelles, Madagascar and Oman;
- Straits of Bab el Mandeb.

Table 1, Vessel Seajacks off Somalia from January 2007 till June 2010

INDE	SHIP NAME	VESSEL TYPE	MONTH	YEAR
1	ROZEN	GENERAL CARGO	February	2007
2	DANICA WHITE	GENERAL CARGO	June	2007
3	GOLDEN NORI	CHEMICAL TANKER	October	2007
4	SVITZER KORSAKOV	TUG	February	2008
5	LE PONTANT	PASSENGER VESSEL	April	2008
6	AMIYA SCAN	GENERAL CARGO	May	2008
7	LEHMAN TIMBER	GENERAL CARGO	May	2008
8	YENEGOA OCEAN	TUG	August	2008
9	IRENE	CHEMICAL TANKER	August	2008
10	BBC TRINIDAD	GENERAL CARGO	August	2008
11	AL MANSURAH	GENERAL CARGO	September	2008
12	GENIUS	TANKER	September	2008
13	CENTAURI	BULK CARRIER	September	2008
14	CAPTAIN STEFANOS	BULK CARRIER	September	2008
15	CARRE D' AS IV	YACHT	September	2008
16	STOLT VALOR	TANKER	September	2008
17	GREAT CREATION	BULK CARRIER	September	2008
18	WAEEL H.	GENERAL CARGO	October	2008
19	ACTION	CHEMICAL TANKER	October	2008
20	AFRICA SANDERLING	BULK CARRIER	October	2008
21	YASA NESHLIHAN	BULK CARRIER	October	2008
22	CHEMSTAR VENUS	TANKER	November	2008
23	SIRIUS STAR	TANKER	November	2008
24	BISCAGLIA	CHEMICAL TANKER	November	2008
25	CEC FUTURE	GENERAL CARGO	November	2008
26	DELIGHT	BULK CARRIER	November	2008
27	TIANYU N.8	FISHING TRAWLER	November	2008
28	KARAGOL	CHEMICAL TANKER	November	2008
29	BOSPHORUS PRODIGY	GENERAL CARGO	December	2008
30	LONGCHAMP	TANKER	January	2009
31	SALDANHA	BULK CARRIER	February	2009
32	NIPAYIA	CHEMICAL TANKER	March	2009
33	TITAN	BULK CARRIER	March	2009
34	BOW ASIR	CHEMICAL TANKER	March	2009
35	MALASPINA CASTLE	GENERAL CARGO	April	2009
36	PATRIOT	BULK CARRIER	April	2009
37	BUCCANEER	TUG	April	2009
38	MAERSK ALABAMA	CONTAINER VESSEL	April	2009
39	TANIT	YACHT	April	2009
40	IRENE E.M.	BULK CARRIER	April	2009
41	HANSA STAVANGER	CONTAINER VESSEL	April	2009
42	ALMEZAAN	GENERAL CARGO	May	2009
43	ARIANA	BULK CARRIER	May	2009
44	VICTORIA	GENERAL CARGO	May	2009
45	MARATHON	GENERAL CARGO	May	2009
46	CHARELLE	GENERAL CARGO	June	2009
47	HORIZON 1	BULK CARRIER	July	2009
48	AL KHALIQ	BULK CARRIER	October	2009
49	LYNN RIVAL	YACHT	October	2009
50	KOTA WAJAR	CONTAINER VESSEL	October	2009
51	DELVINA	BULK CARRIER	November	2009
52	FILITSA	BULK CARRIER	November	2009
53	MAERSK ALABAMA	CONTAINER VESSEL	November	2009
54	MARAN CENTAURUS	TANKER	November	2009
55	NAVIOS APOLLON	BULK CARRIER	December	2009
56	ST. JAMES PARK	CHEMICAL TANKER	December	2009
57	PRAMONI	CHEMICAL TANKER	January	2010
58	ASIAN GLORY	VEHICLE CARRIER	January	2010
59	RIM	GENERAL CARGO	February	2010
60	AL NISHR AL SAUDI	TANKER	March	2010
61	UBT OCEAN	CHEMICAL TANKER	March	2010
62	FRIGIA	BULK CARRIER	March	2010
63	TALCA	REEFER	March	2010
64	ICEBERG I	RO-RO	March	2010
65	VISHVA KALYAN VRL	DHOW	April	2010
66	JIH CHUN TSAI	FISHING TRAWLER	April	2010
67	SAMHO DREAM	VEHICLE CARRIER	April	2010
68	RAK AFRIKANA	GENERAL CARGO	April	2010
69	PRANTALAY 11	FISHING TRAWLER	April	2010
70	PRANTALAY 12	FISHING TRAWLER	April	2010
71	PRANTALAY 14	FISHING TRAWLER	April	2010
72	VOC DAISY	BULK CARRIER	April	2010
73	AL-ASA'A	DHOW	May	2010
74	MOSCOW UNIVERSITY	TANKER	May	2010
75	TAI YUAN No 227	FISHING TRAWLER	May	2010
76	MARIDA MARGUERITE	CHEMICAL TANKER	May	2010
77	PANEGA	CHEMICAL TANKER	May	2010
78	ELENI P	BULK CARRIER	May	2010
79	AL JAWAT	DHOW	June	2010
80	QSM DUBAI	GENERAL CARGO	June	2010
81	GOLDEN BLESSING	CHEMICAL TANKER	June	2010

Source: International Maritime Organisation, I.M.O., Monthly Reports on acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships from January 2007 till June 2010

From January to June 2010, there have been reports of 100 incidents carried out by suspected Somali pirates. The incidents varied in geographical location encompassing the waters already mentioned above. A total of 544 crew members have been taken hostage and a further 10 have been injured. There have been 51 attacks off the East and South coasts of Somalia, another 33 attacks in the Gulf of Aden, 14 attacks in the Southern Red Sea, 2 reported in the Arabian Sea. 27 vessels have been reported seajacked in this period.

As of the 30th of June 2010, suspected Somali pirates held 18 vessels for ransom with 360 crew members of various nationalities as hostages.

Somali pirates attack all kinds of vessels: General Cargo, Bulk Carriers, Tankers, Ro-Ro, Liners, Fishing vessels, Sailing Yachts and Tugboats.

The piratical activities peak each year from September until April and then their numbers start to drop due to the monsoons that prevail in the area. On a 24 hr per day analysis basis, the most dangerous periods for piratical attacks are the dusk and the daybreak.

Over the years the Somali pirates have evolved in their use of weapons and tactics. Currently they are using automatic rifles and rocket propelled grenades (RPGs). They have also advanced from using dilapidated fishing boats to launch their attacks into using large pirated trawlers as mother-ships to support smaller attack units.

2.2 Cumulative picture (January 2007 – June 2010)

For the purpose of the present analysis a compilation has been created of all the successful vessel seajacks off Somalia (Table 1).

The compilation includes the vessel's name, her type, flag, gross tonnage, the date of the seajack, but above all the break-down of her crew in terms of nationalities. In total 81 Seajackings have been recorded from January 2007 until June 2010 and they feature a great variety in terms of vessel types, registries, gross tonnage etc.

Based on the compilation a matrix was produced on the crew nationalities of the vessels which eventually succumbed to the Somali Pirates and they were taken to captivity (Table 2).

It seems that mainly the citizens of the Philippines (26.58%), India (9.02%), China (6.58%), Turkey (5.56%), Russia (5.49%), Ukraine (5.29%) and Thailand (5.22%) bore the brunt of Somali Piracy.

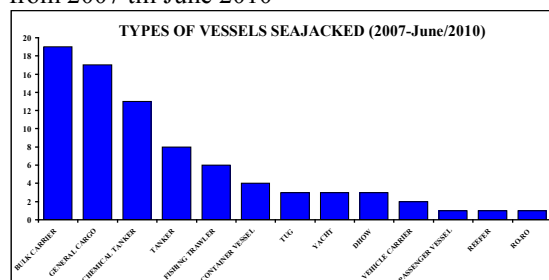
The incident compilation also enabled the production of the phenomenon's statistical profile in terms both of the vessel type (Table 3) and registry (Table 4).

Table 2, Break Down of Seajacked Vessels Crew Nationalities (Vessel Seajacks off Somalia from 2007 till June 2010)

INDEX	COUNTRY	INCIDENT LEVELS	2003 INTERN. LEVELS	Number of Seamen
1	Philippines	26,58%	27,80%	392
2	India	9,02%	6,60%	133
3	China	6,58%	6,10%	97
4	Turkey	5,56%	4,00%	82
5	Russia	5,49%	7,00%	81
6	Ukraine	5,29%	6,40%	78
7	Thailand	5,22%		77
8	Sri Lanka	3,73%		55
9	Romania	3,05%		45
10	Bulgaria	2,98%		44
11	U.S.A.	2,85%		42
12	Burma	2,78%	2,20%	41
13	Indonesia	2,51%	3,50%	37
14	France	1,97%		29
15	Syria	1,83%		27
16	Egypt	1,69%		25
17	Poland	1,42%	3,00%	21
18	Georgia	1,29%		19
19	Greece	1,15%	2,80%	17
20	Kenya	0,88%		13
21	S. Korea	0,81%		12
22	Nigeria	0,75%		11
23	Tuvalu	0,75%		11
24	Yemen	0,75%		11
25	Italy	0,68%		10
26	Pakistan	0,54%		8
27	Vietnam	0,54%		8
28	Iran	0,47%		7
29	Bangladesh	0,34%		5
30	Danemark	0,34%		5
31	Germany	0,34%		5
32	U.K.	0,34%		5
33	Croatia	0,14%		2
34	Ghana	0,14%		2
35	Mozambique	0,14%		2
36	Singapore	0,14%		2
37	Somalia	0,14%		2
38	Taiwan	0,14%		2
39	Cameroon	0,07%		1
40	Estonia	0,07%		1
41	Fiji	0,07%		1
42	Hong Kong	0,07%		1
43	Ireland	0,07%		1
44	Japan	0,07%		1
45	Lithuania	0,07%		1
46	S. Arabia	0,07%		1
47	Serbia	0,07%		1
48	Slovakia	0,07%		1
Total		100%		1.475

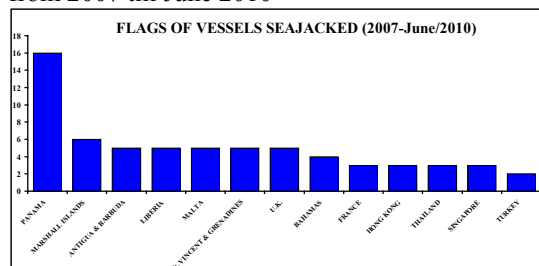
Source: Various Internet based Press Reports

Table 3, Types of Vessels successfully Seajacked off Somalia from 2007 till June 2010



Source: International Maritime Organisation, I.M.O., Monthly Reports on acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships from January 2007 till June 2010

Table 4, Flags of Vessels successfully Seajacked off Somalia from 2007 till June 2010



Source: International Maritime Organisation, I.M.O., Monthly Reports on acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships from January 2007 till June 2010

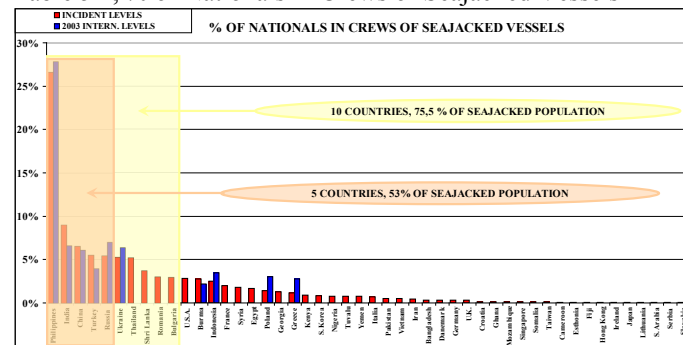
In this case, it seems that Somali Pirates have shown preference both for bulk carriers (23.4% of all seajacks within the study's timeframe) and the registry of Panama (20.2%). Both findings are statistically in line with the industry's "ground realities" since bulk carriers represent 35% of the international high-seas commercial fleet and the Registry of Panama is by far the largest worldwide, with 14% of the International Fleet under its flag.

3 COMPARATIVE STATISTICS ON CREWS OF SEAJACKED VESSELS

In 2003 the Seafarers International Research Centre (S.I.R.C.) of Cardiff University published its most recent report / survey on "The Global Labour Market for Seafarers Working aboard Merchant Cargo Ships" (The Global Labour Market for Seafarers Working aboard Merchant Cargo Ships, 2003).

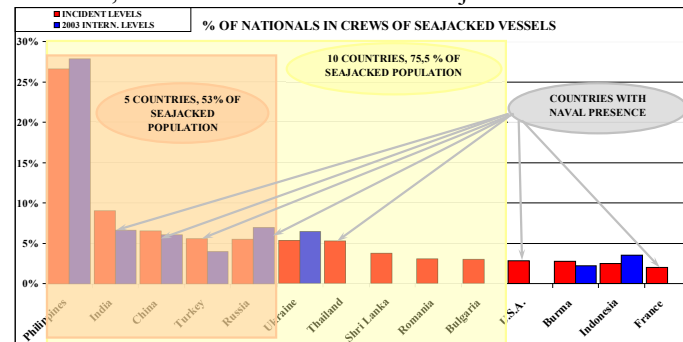
Philippines were found to dominate the global seafarer labour market with 28% of the sample studied holding Filipino nationality. Russians, Indians, Ukrainians, and Chinese nationals all constituted a similar proportion of the sample (between 6% and 7%) followed by Turkey, Indonesia, Poland, Greece and Myanmar in descending order (Tables 5A & 5B).

Table 5A, % of Nationals in Crews of Seajacked Vessels



Source: The Global Labour Market for Seafarers Working Aboard Merchant Cargo Ships (2003) and Various Internet based Press Reports

Table 5B, % of Nationals in Crews of Seajacked Vessels



Source: The Global Labour Market for Seafarers Working Aboard Merchant Cargo Ships (2003) and Various Internet based Press Reports

These ten nationalities constitute 70% of the total sample.

By far the largest group of ratings by nationality is Filipino. Filipino seafarers constitute more than a third of all ratings. Their domination of the ratings labour market is significant and all of the other nationalities, even in the top ten represented amongst ratings, can be considered to represent minor groupings by comparison.

Whilst seafarers from the Philippines dominate the labour market overall, their domination (compared with other nationalities) is less marked with regard to senior officer positions. They remain the largest nationality group (both in absolute and relative terms) amongst senior officers; however nationalities are much more evenly distributed in the senior officer category than they are in general. Filipinos constituting roughly 11% of senior officers are closely followed by Russians who account for almost 10% of senior officers. Ukrainians, Greeks, and Indians account for approximately 6-7% of senior officers each, and Chinese, Polish, South Korean, German and Turkish officers are all represented at the level of around 4% (each). There is a greater variety of nationalities represented at senior officer level than there is across the board.

Amongst junior officers the domination of the labour market by Filipinos appears as a marked feature. 24% of junior officers were found to be of Filipino nationality and this proportion is considerably larger than the one featured by the second largest national group, Russians, who made up approximately 9% of the sample. Indian, Ukrainian, and Chinese nationals constitute between around 7% and 8% of the sample (each), with Polish, South Korean, Indonesian, and Romanian seafarers constituting smaller groups amongst the top ten nationalities of junior officer. *Ceteris paribus*, this distribution of junior officers suggests that in the future Filipinos will constitute a much larger proportion of senior officers across the global fleet. However, should there be any barriers to the transition of Filipino seafarers from junior to senior officer status; these figures could suggest that there may be problems in later years for companies wishing to recruit senior officers.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Analysts around the world have focused on the proximate cause(s) of Somali Piracy and many have come to silently believe (if not publicly suggest) that at least in some cases the Somali Pirates enjoy help from the inside. As mentioned in the introductory paragraph, the purpose of this paper is to investigate potential links between the crew nationalities of

seajacked vessels and the occurrence of the seajacks themselves.

Within this study, a comparison was undertaken between the crew nationalities of seajacked vessels against the overall composition of crew nationalities of the global mariner population. Although the latter profile is fairly outdated (most recently produced in 2003) it can still provide a good insight into the status quo in terms of the nationalities of the international shipping crews.

The analysis performed bore no proof whatsoever that there are 'passively supportive crews' of Somali Piracy. The breakdown by nationality of the crews falling victim of piracy is broadly (and within the statistical error-area of $\pm 3\%$) in line with the overall participation of crew nationalities in international shipping.

In more detail (Tables 5A & 5B):

- Filipinos represent 27.8% of the international seafarer population and 26.6% of the seajacked crews.
- Correspondingly, Indians represent 6.6% of the seafarer population and 9% of seajacked crews.
- Last but not least, the Chinese nationals feature almost an "utter balance" within the two groups with 6.1% and 6.6% respectively.

This conclusion does not imply that the crew composition and the training are not factors of value to be considered when combating piracy. It simply suggests that the crew nationality does not appear as an "operational driver" in the case of successful seajacks.

Amongst secondary observations the following ones stand out conspicuously:

- 1 The five nations (Philippines, India, China, Turkey and Russia) that provide international shipping with more than half of its seafarers (51.5%) bear (through their nationals - seafarers) the main brunt (53.22%) of seajacks off the coast of Somalia.
- 2 Among 48 countries in the "seajacked" crew population from 2007 until June 2010, 3 out of 4 seafarers are nationals of 10 countries (Philippines, India, China, Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Thailand, Sri-Lanka, Romania and Bulgaria).
- 3 It seems that the presence of a country's Navy (India, China, Turkey and Russia) off Eastern Africa has no impact whatsoever on the number of its nationals that fall victims of Somali seajacks.
- 4 A remarkable observation though demands some extra attention:
- 5 Although more than one out of four seafarers employed onboard seajacked vessels is a Filipino,

this island country and indeed maritime nation has no naval presence off Somalia.

The commercial impact of piracy on the shipping industry has been massive with more than \$100 million paid as ransom worldwide in 2009 alone. The insurance premium for passage through the Gulf of Aden has increased 10-fold and continues to increase further fuelling the 'kidnap-for-ransom' marine insurance industry. Every ship operating firm can always re-route its voyages via the Cape of Good Hope, a decision though that eventually entails higher cost(s) for the cargo movement. This diversion also affects the delivery - times of commodities worldwide.

The shipping industry (and global trade on the whole) has been badly affected and international authorities and governments should take a different and more aggressive approach to end the pirate menace off Somalia. Given the recent post 9/11 example, declaring war against pirates appears the logical step after this long period of international procrastination. It is worth remembering that the Golden Age of Piracy came to an end shortly after the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 when, in effect, the European states declared war on piracy and sent their fleets after them. The results were remarkably immediate and the rest became history.

In such a dire situation, it is of no surprise for plot-scenarios to come to the surface and to suggest that there may be some "operational drivers" (nationalities of crews among other things) behind the spike of seajack cases off Somalia.

This paper did not aim to exonerate a certain professional group let alone to extol an existing prac-

tice. It just intended to shed a glimmer of light on a scientifically "uncharted territory" and consequently investigate a potential nexus between seajacked-vessel's crew nationalities and the seajack itself.

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