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14. ABSTRACT Coalition forces have patrolled the waters of the Horn of Africa (HOA) in a concerted effort to maintain maritime domain awareness in the region for nearly a decade. In spite of this presence, piracy actions rose to a record level in 2008 and increased at an alarming rate. In the context of a continued naval presence in the waters of the HOA, this paper analyzes how our navies are being employed in the region and if there are more effective measures to achieve positive results from our U.S. and Coalition partners. This paper discusses past efforts at combating the pirate threat in the HOA, background on difficulties encountered in the pursuit of pirates, and focuses on the Coalition command and control structures that direct naval forces and the manner in which military assets are allocated to achieve mission objectives. Improvements in the manner that forces are employed are then considered as a means to recommend a more effective approach to decrease the pirate threat.								
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OPTIMIZING THE NAVAL FORCE FOR THE HORN OF AFRICA ANTI-PIRACY
MISSION

By

Michael Richmond Jarrett, Jr.

Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper represent my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____

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ABSTRACT

Coalition forces patrolled the waters of the Horn of Africa (HOA) in a concerted effort to maintain maritime domain awareness in the region for nearly a decade. In spite of this presence, piracy actions rose to a record level in 2008 and increased at an alarming rate. With a continuation of anti-piracy missions for naval forces in the waters of the HOA, this paper analyzes how our navies are being employed in the region and if there are more effective measures to achieve positive results from our U.S. and Coalition partners. This paper discusses past efforts at combating the pirate threat in the HOA, background on difficulties encountered in the pursuit of pirates, and focuses on the Coalition command and control structures that direct naval forces and the manner in which military assets are allocated to achieve mission objectives. Improvements in the manner that forces are employed are then considered as a means to recommend a more effective approach to decrease the pirate threat.

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INTRODUCTION

The dramatic events surrounding the pirate attack on the Maersk Alabama in April 2009 offer punctuation to a problem that drastically escalated in the waters off the Horn of Africa (HOA) over the course of the past two years. While pirate events previously existed in this region, the number and magnitude of attacks is only a recent phenomenon. The United States and Coalition Navies' involvement necessarily increased to meet the threat. U.S. maritime presence in the region is not new, however. Coalition forces patrolled the waters of the North Arabian Sea (NAS), Gulf of Aden (GOA), and HOA in a concerted effort to maintain maritime domain awareness in the region for nearly a decade. In spite of this presence, piracy actions continue to rise.

Aside from the involvement of military forces, the international community is also using political and diplomatic tools available to combat seagoing pirates. In recent years, cooperation of governments fighting pirates met challenges from conflicting national policies on the issue and lack of an overarching global strategy to thwart pirate acts. The political climate recently underwent some significant changes to address our ability to operate with coalition forces and governments in pursuit of a common objective. Additionally, the United States formally stated its own national policy objectives on countering piracy off the Horn of Africa in December 2008.

Naval and other military forces play a vital role in the fight against maritime piracy even as political and legal cases are improved. In the context of a continued naval presence in the waters off the HOA, it is worth analyzing how our navies are being employed in the region and if there are more effective measures to achieve positive results from our U.S. and

Coalition partners. This paper will discuss past efforts at combating the pirate threat in the HOA, with a focus on the Coalition command and control structures that direct naval forces and the manner in which military assets are allocated to achieve mission objectives. Improvements in the manner that forces are employed will then be considered as a means to recommend a more effective approach to decreasing the pirate threat.

BACKGROUND

The HOA is the epicenter for the recent rise in pirate acts, with the number of reported incidents double of those found in the second most active region for piracy, Southeast Asia.¹ Largely based out of the failed state of Somalia, pirates take advantage of the lack of law enforcement or coastal regulatory authority. The maritime domain for merchant shipping operating as many as 400 nautical miles off the HOA is enormous – 2.5 million square miles of ocean bounded by a 2,300 mile Somali coast.² There is no Somali coast guard to patrol these waters, nor is there a naval presence in place by other east African nations.

Global piracy increased 11% from 2007 to 2008.³ All of the increase in pirate activity was attributable to events in the HOA where reported pirate attacks skyrocketed nearly 200% to a total of 111 incidents. In all previous years, HOA pirate activity remained relatively stable and below twenty reported attacks per year.⁴ The bulk of 2008 HOA pirate events took place in the GOA. However, a new trend emerged for an increased number of

¹ International Chamber of Commerce International Maritime Bureau. *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships Annual Report*. Jan 2009, 7.

² United States of America National Security Council. *Countering Piracy Off the Horn of Africa: Partnership & Action Plan*. Dec 2008, 3.

³ International Chamber of Commerce International Maritime Bureau. *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships Annual Report*. Jan 2009, 26.

⁴ *Ibid*, 5.

ship hijackings and attacks in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Somalia as well as waters off the coast of Nigeria. The rapid escalation of pirate attacks indicates a concerted effort among pirate groups in East Africa to exploit global shipping routes in the region, as opposed to non-coordinated and sporadic attacks of previous years.

In the first quarter of 2009, the trends for piracy actions in the HOA continue to increase on the same pace as 2008. The Somalia-based pirates also continued to operate in the more open waters of east Africa and away from the more confined water of the GOA. As of this writing, the most notable of these recent attacks was the hijacking of the U.S. flagged Maersk Alabama in the Indian Ocean waters east of Somalia. The eventual U.S. Navy intervention to rescue the ship's master made international headlines. The Maersk Alabama hijacking followed a recent pattern of operations for Somali pirates. The ship was seized by pirates wielding semi-automatic weapons and operating from several small boats that were dispatched from a larger mother ship. The pirate actions were conducted over 100 miles from the Somali coast with the aid of commercial global positioning system (GPS) navigation and automatic identification systems (AIS) to identify merchant shipping at sea. The tactics of using mother ships and attacks on vessels further offshore with the aid of commercial navigation systems are increasingly the mode of operation for Somali pirates.⁵

With the increased pirate activity, the number of Coalition naval actions against pirates is also on the rise. The U.S. Navy cruiser VELLA GULF and destroyer MAHAN interdicted and apprehended 16 pirates in the GOA during operations in February 2009.⁶ Similar actions were carried out by Coalition forces representing the United States, Denmark,

⁵ Cummins, Chip and Childress, Sara. "On the Maersk: 'I Hope If I Die, I Die a Brave Person'" The Wall Street Journal. 16 Apr 2009.

⁶ Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/ 5th Fleet Public Affairs. "More Suspected Pirates Apprehended in the Gulf of Aden." Release #028-09. 12 Feb 2009.

Turkey, and Germany. On 14 March 2009, the Danish warship HDMS ABSALOM and the Turkish frigate TCG GIRESUN successfully deterred a pirate attack on a Vietnamese-flagged vessel.⁷

COALITION OPERATIONS

In January 2009, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command established Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 with the sole mission of conducting counter-piracy operations in the GOA and HOA region. CTF 151 is a Coalition force under the command of United States naval commanders, with ships apportioned from those already operating in the Fifth Fleet AOR.⁸ Another combined task force, CTF 150, was already operating in the North Arabian Sea, GOA, and HOA prior to the establishment of CTF 151. CTF 150 was created in late 2001 with the mandate to thwart the use of shipping lanes by global and regional terrorist organizations, but had no specific mission to combat piracy. CTF 150 forces were known to collect extensive data on shipping patterns and the identity of vessels in the region, but did not conduct specific efforts to interdict suspected pirate vessels.⁹ Coalition nations have frequently rotated command of CTF 150 assets. The United States, France, United Kingdom, Canada, Pakistan, and Germany have all commanded CTF 150 during the course of its existence.¹⁰ While the participation of foreign navies can provide a force-multiplying effect on the coverage of the vast maritime domain in the HOA, the pursuit of pirates has often been a contentious area for nations with varying policies on how their navies may be

⁷ Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/ 5th Fleet Public Affairs. "Pirate Attack Thwarted in the Gulf of Aden." *Release #031-09*. 26 Feb 2009.

⁸ Gortney, Bill. "Counter-piracy and Combined Task Force 151." *Rhumb Lines*. 16 Jan 2009, 1.

⁹ Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/ 5th Fleet Public Affairs. "New Counter-Piracy Task Force Established" *Release #001-09*. 8 Jan 2009.

¹⁰ Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/U.S. Fifth Fleet/Combined Maritime Forces. "Combined Task Force 150." <http://www.cusnc.navy.mil/command/ctf150.html> (accessed 2 May 2009).

employed to protect commercial vessels of varying flags. Some nations, like Germany, have specific national policies on the pursuit of maritime pirates while others maintain a much less aggressive approach to the problem.¹¹

The establishment of CTF 151 may mitigate some of the previous concerns with conflicting policies of coalition partners. The new combined task force leverages the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1851 (UNSCR 1851), adopted in December 2008, as a mandate for multi-national collaboration on anti-piracy operations. UNSCR 1851 provides a common framework for all nations to combat and prosecute acts of piracy based in Somalia.¹² In creating a task force separate from CTF 150, the United States also opens the door to nations that are willing to use their naval forces in the pursuit of pirates even though they may not be aligned with United States objectives in the Global War on Terror.¹³ CTF 151 has already garnered interest from international naval forces in Ghana, India, Singapore, and Indonesia – all strong navies that did not participate in CTF 150 operations.¹⁴ CTF 151 also encourages the cooperation of other nations that are don't participate in the task force but maintain a naval presence in the region. China, Russia, and Saudi Arabia all operate naval forces in the HOA to protect their shipping and could contribute to the efforts of the new coalition task force.¹⁵ In consideration of the aforementioned size of the maritime area in HOA, a task force framework that creates an environment of inclusiveness for all nations to fight a common pirate threat can only help multiply the forces available in the region. By the U.S. Navy's own estimates, it would take 61 ships to adequately patrol the shipping

¹¹ Pritchett, Raymond. "Observing the Establishment of CTF 151." U.S. Naval Institute Blogs. 9 Jan 2009. <http://blog.usni.org/?p-735> (accessed 18 Mar 2009).

¹² Gortney, Bill. "Counter-piracy and Combined Task Force 151." *Rhumb Lines*. 16 Jan 2009, 1.

¹³ Ho, Joshua. "Singapore's Gulf Anti-Piracy Operations: A Shift in Strategic Thinking." *RSIS Commentaries*. 24 Feb 2009, 2.

¹⁴ Kraska, James and Wilson, Brian. "Fighting Piracy." *Armed Forces Journal*. Feb 2009, 12.

¹⁵ Gortney, Bill. "Counter-piracy and Combined Task Force 151." *Rhumb Lines*. 16 Jan 2009, 1.

routes in the GOA and HOA.¹⁶ CTF 151 attempts to achieve the size of force required for anti-piracy patrols and also exemplifies recent U.S. Navy concepts for “1,000 Ship Navy” comprised of coalition partners.

With the backing of stronger UNSC resolutions and a new combined task force framework for coalition operations, the fight against piracy has overcome some of the political hurdles that may have hindered previous efforts. Some legal hurdles still remain. The detention of captured pirates is a key concern for naval forces and their governments. In 2006, USS WINSTON S CHURCHILL interdicted a pirate attack off the Somali coast and detained 10 pirates.¹⁷ However, there was no process established for criminal prosecution of the detained pirates or an established mechanism for the warship to turn over control to another jurisdiction. The pirates were held onboard for weeks and prevented the destroyer from conducting other operations in the theater for the duration of the detainment. It is not uncommon for flag states of the vessels under pirate attack to have insufficient resources or will to prosecute captured pirates. The varying interests in the flag state of the vessel, ownership of the goods being transported, and nationality of the crews involved all confuse the issue of rightful jurisdiction for prosecution of any pirates seized on the high seas. In the CHURCHILL case, an agreement was eventually reached with Kenya to take custody and prosecute the pirates.¹⁸ Kenya now holds standing agreements with the European Union, United States, and Great Britain to handle their HOA piracy cases.¹⁹ There were also legal issues with respect to the Law of the Sea that hinder the pursuit of pirates into a sovereign nation’s territorial seas. It is common practice for Somali pirates to hold captured vessels

¹⁶ Ibid, 1.

¹⁷ Kraska, James and Wilson, Brian. “Fighting Piracy.” *Armed Forces Journal*. Feb 2009, 12.

¹⁸ Ibid, 13.

¹⁹ Gettleman, Jeffrey. “The West Turns to Kenya as Piracy Criminal Court.” *The New York Times*. 24 Apr 2009, A8.

and their crews within the 12-mile territorial seas limit for Somalia until they are able to extract their ransom from a shipping company. Without a coast guard or any other law enforcement authority, the Somali government is unable to police these activities within its territorial sea and other nations are not inclined to infringe upon Somalia's territorial rights to interdict pirates within the 12-mile limit. In June 2008, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1816 to address the legal concerns associated with maritime piracy off of coastal Somalia.²⁰ UNSCR 1816 authorizes naval forces from other nations to pursue pirates within Somali territorial seas. The resolution also encourages the cooperation of international governments and businesses to quickly determine the appropriate jurisdiction for prosecuting crimes of piracy on the high seas.

CURRENT OPERATIONS

CTF 151 came into being on 8 January 2008. In the months since its inception, a number of successful pirate interdictions occurred. At its outset, the combined task force was placed under the command of RADM Terence McKnight, commander of Expeditionary Strike Group 2 based in Norfolk, VA. The initial command assignment was in contrast to the operating construct for CTF 150, which traditionally rotates among non-American coalition commanders. USS SAN ANTONIO (LPD-17) acted as flagship for CTF 151 during the first two weeks of the task force, with other ship platforms being assigned the flagship role on a rotating basis until USS BOXER arrived in theater on 10 March 2009.²¹ Forces are not permanently assigned to CTF 151, but rotate in and out of the task force as assets are available in the normal rotation of ships throughout the Fifth Fleet. At any given time, an

²⁰ Kraska, James and Wilson, Brian. "Fighting Piracy." *Armed Forces Journal*. Feb 2009, 15.
²¹ Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/ 5th Fleet Public Affairs. "USS BOXER Becomes Flagship for CTF 151." *Release #040-09*. 10 Mar 2009.

average of two United States warships are assigned to CTF 151 in addition to 3 or 4 warships from foreign navies.

With only a small number of platforms available to patrol an enormous operating area, the initial operations of CTF 151 concentrated effort in the relatively confined waters of the GOA. Even with recent trends of piracy being conducted further offshore, the GOA still constitutes the bulk of pirate activity in the HOA. CTF 151 ships engaged in several successful pirate interdictions at the onset of operations. USS VELLA GULF and USS MAHAN were the first vessels to capture pirates under the new task force and detained 16 individuals associated with an attack on two merchant vessels in the GOA. Unlike the previous pirate detention in USS WINSTON S CHURCHILL, which tied the ship up for weeks and prevented continuing operations, detention facilities were made available on U.S. Navy supply ships in the region to allow combatants to return to the mission quickly.²² Four additional pirate attacks were deterred by CTF 151 forces in the first 2 months of the task force.²³

Despite the newly formed task force and mission focus for CTF 151, Somali pirates showed great resolve operating undeterred in the region. High profile captures of pirate vessels and their crews did not result in a reduction of piracy events in the early months of 2009. At the end of the 4th quarter of 2009, hijackings were already on pace to double the number of events reported in 2008 and number of pirate incidents was nearly threefold the numbers from one year prior.²⁴ The Somali pirates have also become bolder in their attacks,

²² Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/ 5th Fleet Public Affairs. "More Suspected Pirates Apprehended in the Gulf of Aden." *Release #028-09*. 12 Feb 2009.

²³ Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/ 5th Fleet Public Affairs. "Suspected Pirates Apprehended and Released in the Gulf of Aden." *Release #047-09*. 21 Mar 2009.

²⁴ Maritime Security Center/ICC International Maritime Bureau. "EU NAVFOR OPATLANTA & IMB Industry Update." *Update No. 02*. 17 Mar 2009.

including an attack on a German military supply ship that was successfully thwarted by an embarked security team.²⁵ While the piracy trends were continuing upward throughout the start of 2009, the problem became widely recognized on a global scale after the hijacking of the U.S.-flagged Maersk Alabama on 8 April, 2009. Intervention by U.S. naval forces resulted in the killing of three pirates and detention of a fourth. Despite the outcome against the pirates, attempted hijackings in the region showed no immediate decline and continued on a daily basis in the GOA and HOA after the Maersk Alabama was returned to its crew and the ship's master rescued.²⁶

With an increased naval presence and focused effort on an anti-piracy mission, why are the piracy events continuing to rise? It's particularly worth noting that winter months in the North Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean offer a typically harsh weather environment for maritime activities. Even with poor weather and more naval presence, the pirates are expanding their efforts. In response, at least sixteen nations maintained a naval presence in the HOA by the end of March 2009, either as a part of CTF 151 or operating independently in defense of shipping from individual states. While a large presence of naval combatants certainly provides capability to deter pirate acts, coordination among the vessels is still lacking. Only about one third of the nations contributing naval units to the HOA are operating under the single command and control umbrella of CTF 151.

The large area that requires patrolling also requires extensive over-the-horizon communications between naval units – a capability that is not available to all foreign navies.

²⁵ Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/ 5th Fleet Public Affairs. "Boxer Supports International Counter-Piracy Effort in Gulf of Aden Other Attacks Increase off Somali Coast" *Release #053-09*. 30 Mar 2009.

²⁶ International Chamber of Commerce Commercial Crime Services. "Live Piracy Report." http://www.icc-ccs.org/index.php?option=com_fabrik&view=table&tableid=26&calculations=0&Itemid=82 (accessed 2 May 2009).

With the aforementioned estimate that 61 ships would be required to adequately cover the HOA maritime domain, the current coalition efforts are about two-thirds short of that number in the ships deployed there. Exacerbating the issue of area coverage is the lack of developed ports and facilities for maritime force sustainment in the region. The U.S. navy maintains an effective logistics presence in the North Arabian Sea and also operates out of Djibouti in the GOA. However, the east coast of Africa offers few logistics bases for ships operating in the Indian Ocean. With the bulk of naval forces concentrated in the GOA and North Arabian Sea where operating bases are more prevalent, it is not hard to see how pirates have come to adapt their tactics to exploit the Indian Ocean maritime routes.

Within the CTF 151 command and control organization, ships are provided from assets already deployed and operating in the Fifth Fleet. An analysis of the Fifth Fleet press releases for ships participating in CTF 151 reveals the average duration of an American ship's assignment to CTF 151 is roughly two to three weeks. Ships arrive and depart from the task force primarily during transits through the GOA when forces are entering and leaving the AOR via the Suez Canal. As an example, VELLA GULF was named CTF 151 flagship on 3 Feb 2009, less than 4 weeks prior to her subsequent departure from Fifth Fleet on 27 February.²⁷ In the earliest months of the task force, the CTF 151 flagship changed four times in the span of 10 weeks prior to the arrival of USS BOXER at the end of March 2009.²⁸ The nature in which forces are assigned to CTF 151 presents conflicting priorities to the commanders of ships involved in the anti-piracy mission. With most units assigned based on circumstances of their current or upcoming transit location through the Gulf of Aden, the

²⁷ Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/ 5th Fleet Public Affairs. "VELLA GULF Assumes Duties as Counterpiracy Task Force Flagship." *Release #022-09*. 6 Feb 2009.

²⁸ Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/ 5th Fleet Public Affairs. "USS BOXER Becomes Flagship for CTF 151." *Release #040-09*. 10 Mar 2009.

focus of these ships for patrolling specific areas of pirate activity can be lost as the need to progress toward other destinations in the Fifth Fleet assumes primacy. If a ship is assigned for CTF 151 in conjunction with an already planned transit to or from the Suez Canal or Strait of Hormuz, up to a week in on station time can be lost to the need for transit or logistical sustainment. In an environment where local knowledge of the operating patterns for pirate activity is essential to interdict the threat, the ability for ships to conduct sustained operations in specific patrol areas is essential. The CTF 151 commander cannot maintain full command and control over ships assigned when they are confronted with competing transit objectives.

Additionally, the naval assets rotating through assignment to CTF 151 bring differences that do not always equate to a force with a consistent level of inherent capability or interoperability. U.S. ships assigned to CTF 151 have included amphibious units with robust aviation facilities to surface combatants with maneuverability and speed but lacking embarked aviation detachments. With vast amounts of ocean to cover, the ability to observe the environment from the air is essential and not all surface combatants are equally matched to achieve this task. The use of UAVs on ships without embarked aviations attachments has improved the ability to conduct surveillance, but does not bring the offensive power of an armed helicopter to the fight if pirates need to be engaged or deterred.²⁹

The Maersk Alabama incident exemplifies some of these inherent problems in how forces are deployed to CTF 151. Upon the initial hijacking, USS BAINBRIDGE was the closest U.S. Navy unit operating some 300 nautical miles away from the merchant vessel upon the initial pirate attack on 7 April that proved unsuccessful. The pirates seized the

²⁹ Hilley, Monique K. "Mahan UAV at Forefront of 21st Century Readiness." http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=42801 24 Feb 2009 (accessed 3 May 2009).

vessel in a second attack on 8 April. Between the time of the initial attack and the seizure, USS BAINBRIDGE was not directed to close the scene of the reported incident. The Fifth Fleet commander, VADM William Gortney, described the decision to not respond to the first attack as a matter of standard procedure for pirate events that appeared to be unsuccessful.³⁰ However, the need to maintain U.S. ships on a tether to logistic bases or upcoming transit routes may also have played a role in not deploying USS BAINBRIDGE to pursue the pirates sooner. Once the destroyer arrived on the scene, a day after the successful seizure of the container ship, it brought formidable surface combatant capabilities but no embarked aviation detachment. An embarked UAV did provide important capabilities for sustained surveillance of the pirates. It was another two days before the frigate USS HALYBUTON arrived on the scene with its embarked helicopters, followed shortly thereafter by the amphibious assault ship USS BOXER. In hindsight, the ability to deploy BAINBRIDGE to the vicinity of the Maersk Alabama upon the initial pirate incident might have prevented the seizure of the vessel and ensuing standoff.

Our current anti-piracy strategy has also not yet adapted to the changing patterns in high seas pirate attacks that involve the use of mother ships to deploy pirate skiffs to ships transiting the coast of East Africa. Coalition navies typically respond to pirates attacks after they are reported by merchant shipping, essentially acting as the maritime equivalent of a “911” call. To date, there has been no interdiction of pirates transiting to or from a mother vessel, even when attacks are unsuccessful and the movements of pirates can be monitored back to an afloat base of operations. The mother ship employed in the Maersk Alabama

³⁰ Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense. “DoD News Briefing With Vice Adm. Gortney From Bahrain.” <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4400> 12 Apr 2009. (Accessed 3 May 2009).

hijacking was never pursued by Coalition forces at any time during or after the standoff.³¹

Countering the use of mother ships could significantly reduce the number of pirate attacks in the Indian Ocean since these platforms are used to launch multiple attacks. The ability to stop pirates before they deploy from mother ships also prevents damage to merchant shipping incurred in these attacks. Intelligence collection is a key to this effort and the use of imagery from UAVs, communications monitoring, and human intelligence collected in the HOA should be of central importance in the implementation of anti-piracy operations.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The rise in HOA piracy has certainly gained notice among maritime nations across the globe. With increased political and legal cooperation over the past year, the number of naval assets made available by a coalition of international navies is rising to meet the challenge. The United States maintains an important leadership role through its establishment of CTF 151 in the Fifth Fleet and the operational direction of forces assigned there. To date, the efforts of CTF 151 or the longstanding CTF 150 coalitions are not reducing pirate activity. While CTF 151 is still a new and unfolding organization, several operational lessons learned might be applied to provide a more effective naval force in the HOA. Specifically, adjustments in the duration of naval force assignments, location of HOA anti-piracy patrols, and adjustment of operational objectives to focus on pirate mother ships could improve coalition success in curbing pirate events.

Coalition forces cannot gain strong local knowledge of pirate shipping activities without persistent presence in the HOA. The current cycle for U.S. assignment of ships to

³¹ Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense. "DoD News Briefing With Vice Adm. Gortney From Bahrain." <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4400> 12 Apr 2009. (Accessed 3 May 2009).

CTF 151 should be adjusted to allow naval vessels attached to the task force a longer duration exposure to the HOA maritime environment. Two to three week assignments of ships to CTF 151 are insufficient to allow commanders and their crews the opportunity to gain familiarity with local shipping patterns, marine radio communications, and cooperation with law-abiding mariners that sail in the HOA. Additionally, assignment to CTF 151 should not always be tied to a transit of the Suez Canal as ships enter or depart Fifth Fleet. The objectives of patrolling waters to deter pirate activity are not always met by a ship that must also weigh the importance of meeting an impending transit schedule. The need to sustain ships at sea and provide opportunities for port visits will dictate that ships transit off station from the immediate vicinity of pirate activity, but every effort should be made to return ships back to CTF 151 upon completion of logistics requirements. The determination of a warship's assignment to CTF 151 should be made as early in the pre-deployment operational planning process as possible. With limited assets available to fulfill a broad array of Fifth Fleet theater requirements, a priority should be established to define the composition of CTF 151 so that ships can prepare for the anti-piracy mission during the pre-deployment training cycle and other scheduling priorities are de-conflicted to maximize the amount of time a ship can dedicate to patrolling the HOA.

CTF 151 forces must also adapt to the changing environment of pirate activity. Specifically, an increased emphasis on monitoring of shipping along Africa's east coast is needed in order to keep up with the rising number of pirate attacks there. Assignment of Indian Ocean patrol areas in addition to the Gulf of Aden is challenging due to an austere logistics capability. The assignment of fleet replenishment assets along with the necessary surface combatants is an essential component of any successful anti-piracy effort in the

Indian Ocean. As the number of naval assets increases in the more confined waters of the GOA, it is likely that pirates will continue to exploit the less frequently patrolled waters of Somalia's eastern shores.

Adaptation of anti-piracy objectives to focus on the prosecution of mother ships hosting multiple pirate crews should also be pursued with greater vigor. The employment of mother ships has allowed Somali pirates to introduce economies of scale in their pursuit of multiple merchant ships from a single seaborne command and control platform. However, these mother ships can also be vulnerable in that their seizure can pre-empt pirate activity before attacks are levied and significantly reduce the capability of pirates to operate on the high seas away from coastal havens.

Finally, the employment of operational intelligence should be expanded and emphasized to seek out pirates before they are able to attack. UAVs organic to fleet assets and also based from shore facilities should be assigned to provide persistent airborne reconnaissance of shipping lanes. Additionally, CTF 151 forces should be assigned based upon the intelligence collection capabilities they offer. A surface combatant without an embarked aviation detachment or cryptologic capability offers very little intelligence gathering resources aside from what can be collect by a ship's lookouts and radar operators. The HOA pirates exploit the latest consumer technologies in GPS, AIS, and marine radio communications to seek out their merchant shipping targets, and naval intelligence assets need to exploit these same technologies to detect and engage pirate threats.

Despite the alarming trends in HOA pirate attacks, international navies are in a better position than ever to intercept and capture pirates than ever before. Cooperation among coalition navies is solidly aligned against the threat to global shipping and involves

participation from both the eastern and western world. With some adjustment in the operational employment of naval assets to introduce force multipliers and efficiencies in the prosecution of pirate shipping, it is likely that these criminal acts can be curbed substantially in the region.

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