

Security Council

Topic B: Global Maritime Piracy

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I. Committee Background

Established in 1945, the Security Council is one of the main organs of the United Nations. The Security Council is imbued with the powers of establishing peacekeeping operations, establishing international sanctions, and authorizing military action. Its main goal is to solve conflicts through peaceful measures while preventing the need for militaristic or violent force. The first session was held on the 17th of January of 1946 in Church House London. Since then, the Security Council has held sessions all over the world until finding its current, and permanent, residence in New York City. The Council consists of 15 members: five permanent members, and ten elected non-permanent members. These five permanent members, those being China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and United States, are allowed veto power, the ability to overpower the majority. For a resolution to pass through, nine out of the fifteen votes are needed.

II. Introduction and Description

The topic at hand is dealing with global maritime piracy. This has increasingly become an issue of global concern as more and more cargo is lost to pirates in key strategic areas around the world. There has begun many international initiatives to reduce, or potentially eliminate, these threats to international relations and economy but the initiatives can only go so far as long as the nations harboring the criminals responsible do not try to eliminate the problem in their own territory. The nations that make up the Security Council must come to a consensus as to what is the true solution to the issue at hand that would not damage otherwise problematic international relations. If the piracy of cargo being shipped internationally could be reduced, this could create a rippling effect of a better economy and a better usage of resources that will otherwise be used towards the combating of piracy.

III. History of the Topic

Piracy has been around since the times of Antiquity, existing as part of the societies of the Greeks, Romans, and even the Phoenicians. Ancient pirates, as well as taking treasure, acting in kidnapping, selling young men and women as slaves. Moving through history, we reach the Middle Ages and encounter the most notorious pirates, the Vikings. Vikings attacked all throughout Western Europe, even going as far as into the rivers of Eastern Europe. Other pirates during this time period were the Arabs, attacking Rome and damaging the Vatican. Pirates have existed in all time periods and in all areas of the world, allowing people to even go as far as to say that piracy is truly a part of human nature itself. The areas of most maritime piracy that exist today have been that

way since the establishments of important trade routes. The Mediterranean Sea has been an area of great trouble since the Crusades, the increased amount of trading between Arab nations and Western Europe caused this area to gain an even larger focus.

Since man first turned into sea-faring civilizations, the act of attacking and pilfering the goods of ships that any pirate ship could attack. Going more than a thousand years into the future, humanity still contains such a problem. In 2009, as of May 28, there have been 115 reported acts of piracy in international waters, which include the loss of \$13 to 16 billion. The main areas of focus are the Gulf of Aden, the Strait of Malacca, Gulf of Guinea, and the India subcontinent.

The Gulf of Aden, located between the southern coast of Yemen and the coast of Somalia, is the area of most reported acts of piracy, causing it to be nicknamed "Pirate Alley." The relative proximity to the Suez Canal and the Bab-el-Mandeb strait allows pirates in this area access to one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world. Francis Maertens, the UNODC's Director for Operations, spoke of the troubles in Somalia on the 4th of February in 2009, "Maritime piracy, especially along the coast of Somalia, is another recent example of what can happen when the rule of law is absent." This stems from the country's, Somalia that is, rather lack of resources for any criminal justice systems.

The recent acts of piracy, more importantly the raiding of a Ukrainian vessel with a cargo of thirty-three Russian-made tanks. This has sparked the formation of a multi-national called the Combined Task Force 151, containing naval force from about twenty different countries. The main purpose of this task force is to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden, hopefully trying to eliminate any further instances such as the loss of the aforementioned Ukrainian cargo ship. Another instance of piracy, occurring in November of 2008, was the largest ever hijacking. The Sirius Star, a Saudi Arabian oil tanker, was hijacked as it was traveling towards the southern tip of Africa. It was carrying more than \$100 million worth of cargo. This incident sparked the Arab League to begin searching for potential solutions to piracy in the Gulf of Aden. The main issue of concern is the effectiveness of the solutions given that they would have to be employed over a very large area.

Another area of interest is the Strait of Malacca, located between the countries of Malaysia and Singapore. This area is deemed ideal for pirates due to the many rivers and islets that allow for many spots of evasion from authorities. This area is particularly troublesome as not only do ships have to worry from pirates at sea, they also have to worry about shore gangs boarding ships and robbing them of their cargo. These problems are what have called for different measures to be implemented to ensure that cargo is safe. This waterway accounts for about 40% of the world's trade and ships do not plan on traveling through other areas given the commodities provided throughout the Strait. Singapore has tried to provide some means of protection, employing sea and air patrols alongside Indonesia. These patrols, as observed since their implementation around the year 2004, have been able to reduce the acts of piracy by about two-thirds of what they used to be. Though this is a beneficial situation, some more effective means should arise from these efforts to ensure a complete eradication.

It is of utmost importance for these areas to be monitored and controlled. The unrestricted water planes, though means of control are being implemented, have allowed for an uncountable amount of pirates to flourish in the areas. Nations must look towards

find effective solutions that could establish order in rather lawless areas. Working together seems to be the key towards combating global maritime piracy. The areas of the Gulf of Aden, the Strait of Malacca, the Gulf of Guinea, and the India subcontinent are specific areas of interest that are necessary lanes of high economic interest. The safety of these places is necessary to ensure a stable global economy, otherwise being threatened by the actions of these pirates.

IV. Points of View

The common points of view between the nations is to find a solution to this problem. Many have lost large cargoes to the pirates of the world, such is the case for the United States in its efforts to eliminating piracy in the Caribbean. Recently, Victor Yushchenko, the president of Ukraine, has called for the United Nations to increase its efforts to eliminating piracy during his speech in the General Assembly. A small proposal has been for the UN to set up an anti-piracy center in North Africa that could then specialize in specifically the topic of piracy. The United States has focused on prevention rather than latent protection. This prevention is done through the emphasis of raising commercial standards on security that all commercial vessels must employ to be able to protect themselves from the pirates themselves. This method has been implemented by the U.S. Coast Guard through a revision in its Maritime Security Directive so that all ships carrying the U.S. Flag are to follow.

V. Possible Solutions

Only proposed through speeches or comments, countries have brought possible solutions to the UN. As mentioned previously by the president of Ukraine, establishing a UN base in Africa that would have as its priority the safety of the vessels moving through the gulf and eliminating, or incarcerating, any threats they might encounter. Another solution is providing aid to the country of Somalia. Law enforcement and the judicial system of the country need to be given aid as to the issue of pirates and other criminals. Providing some type of aid could allow better training and actual removal of said pirates from the countries territory. This could be another form of prevention that would eliminate the threat from its point of origin. Another possible solution is to establish security measures that could eliminate piracy in the act. Protection from them and keeping the cargo away from them are the priority and measures should be established as to how one should go about doing so. Prevention and elimination seem to be the two priorities of any proposals brought to the United Nations, two effective solutions that exist in the forms of security systems and the Combined Task Force 151.

VI. Current Status

Nations around the world have taken to combating piracy as a group effort, employing parts of their navies towards the Combined Task Force 151. This multinational navy has been stationed in the Gulf of Aden to ensure some governing police force has the upper hand and can defend the cargo ships that could otherwise be left defenseless to

the pirates that control the area. The United Nations has passed several resolutions, four of those in 2008, to the combating of piracy. Many forms of defense against pirates have been sought and implemented. The difficulty of the situation is found in international law when dealing with detained suspects, causing difficulty when trying to prosecute the aforementioned suspected pirates.

VII. Conclusion

There have been many attempts at safeguarding international cargo ships, from high security technology systems to an international combined navy to patrol pirate infested waters. All of these proposals and implementations have allowed for piracy to be reduced, even in the Gulf of Aden that was considered to have caused piracy to increase in 2008. There needs to be an even more effective proposal to allow piracy to be reduced further than it is now. The elimination of this problem will surely allow a true free trade system, as nations would not need to worry about losing their cargo and the growth of their economies to criminals that dwell in international waters, particularly in the aforementioned important economic waterways.