The Long Littoral Project: Arabian Sea

A Maritime Perspective on Indo-Pacific Security

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Introduction

This report addresses the major security issues associated with the Arabian Sea. It includes three separate papers that address three central issues: Iran and the Strait of Hormuz, examined in an essay by RADM (ret.) Michael A. McDevitt, Senior Fellow at CNA and Long Littoral Project Director and Dr. Michael Connell, Director of CNA's Iran Studies Program; piracy in the Arabian Sea, explored in a comprehensive assessment by Mr. Martin Murphy of the U.S. Atlantic Council; and the India-Pakistan maritime rivalry in the Arabian Sea, addressed by Dr. Satu Limaye, Director of the East-West Center's Washington, D.C., office.

This report is one of five that are part of CNA's "Long Littoral" project. The term "Long Littoral" refers to the five great maritime basins of the Indo-Pacific—the Sea of Japan, the East China and Yellow Seas, the South China Sea, the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea—in order to provide a different perspective, namely a maritime viewpoint, on security issues that the United States' "rebalance" strategy must address as it focuses on the Indo-Pacific littoral. The project also aims to identify issues that may be common to more than one basin but involve different players in different regions, with the idea that solutions possible in one maritime basin may be applicable in others.

Findings: Iran and the Strait of Hormuz

The Arabian Sea is home to the most potentially serious flashpoint along the long littoral. The possibility of a conflict with Iran over its nuclear program looms large, as does a worry that Iran will close the Strait of Hormuz (SOH). In 2011, total world oil production amounted to approximately 88 million barrels per day (bbl/d), and over one-half was moved by tankers. The international energy market is dependent both upon reliable transport and on open chokepoints that funnel maritime traffic through narrow corridors. These chokepoints are of strategic significance: they are within easy range of shore-based threats from Iran, in the case of Hormuz, or other states or terrorist groups and, since they concentrate ships in relatively small areas of the world's oceans, it is easier for those threats to find maritime targets there. Also, the blockage of a chokepoint, even temporarily, can lead to substantial increases in total energy costs.[1]

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[1] Energy Information Administration (EIA), "World Oil Transit Chokepoints," *EIA Country Analysis Briefs*, December 30, 2011 update, www.eia.doe.gov.

Hormuz is the world's most important oil chokepoint. Each day seventeen million barrels of oil per day (up from between 15.5 and 16.0 bbl/d in 2009-2010) flow through the strait to the Arabian Sea bound for markets around the world. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, in 2011 flows through Hormuz accounted for approximately 35 percent of all seaborne-traded oil, or slightly more than 20 percent of all oil traded worldwide.

Some 33,000 ships transit Hormuz every year—an average of 90 ships every day, or about 4 an hour. Not all of these are tankers; on average, only 28 tankers (14 outbound and 14 inbound) transit each day. Most (85%) of this oil is destined for Asia, with India, Japan, South Korea, and China being the major recipients. If Hormuz were closed for any time, pipelines from the Gulf would not have the capacity to compensate. The 745-mile-long trans-Saudi pipeline to the Red Sea has a maximum capacity of about 5 million bbls per day. Finally, the recently completed pipeline from Abu Dhabi to Fujairah, UAE, on the Arabian Sea has a capacity of 1.5 to 1.8 million bbl per day.

Thus, if Hormuz were closed, around 7 million bbl/d of Persian Gulf oil would be available to the world. That would leave a global shortfall of about ten million bbl/d. Only Hormuz is held hostage by both geography and a regime increasingly at odds with much of the world.

The Strait of Hormuz is vulnerable. The geography and bathometry of the SOH are what create its vulnerability. The strait is relatively narrow, only 21-35 miles wide at its narrowest point. It is relatively shallow, at an average of about 160 feet (deeper toward Oman, shallower toward Iran). But the biggest problem is that it is 90 miles long—a tanker moving at a typical transit speed of 15 knots takes about 6 hours to complete the passage; this is a long time to be "under the Iranian gun."

Iran has the capability to close Hormuz. Iran has capitalized on its geographic advantage by investing in military capabilities that are well suited to the mission of closing the strait and simultaneously complicating U.S.-led efforts to reopen it. It combines traditional area-denial systems, such as mines and submarines, with modern anti-ship cruise missiles and swarm-boat tactics that collectively present a formidable denial capability. There is a general consensus among civilian analysts that Iran has the capability to disrupt the flow of shipping in and out of the Persian Gulf, just as there is a consensus that the United States and its allies could restore the flow of traffic. At issue is how long Iran could keep the SOH closed. There are a great many variables, and military assessments are understandably classified. Civilian analysts working with open source material have made a wide range of educated guesses that range from days to weeks, and perhaps even months, for outside forces to restore peaceful transit of the Strait of Hormuz.

An analysis of how such a scenario might unfold is beyond the scope of this report, but the key tactical problem is clearing a transit lane of mines so that shipping can proceed. That in turn requires the suppression of Iran's road-mobile anti-ship cruise missile batteries so that mine clearance ships could operate without being destroyed by those missiles. Iranian truck-mounted cruise missile batteries would probably be attacked by U.S. tactical aircraft, which in turn would require the destruction of Iranian anti-aircraft systems. An American strike would therefore be a complex air-sea operation, which could probably also involve using Marines to seize the Iran-occupied islands that are in the midst of the shipping channels.[2]

Would Iran be willing to close the strait? Between December 2011 and January 2012 several Iranian officials openly threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz if sanctions were imposed on Iran's oil exports. As of this writing sanctions have been in place of Iran's oil exports, but Iran has not acted on those threats, perhaps because they were bluff in the first place, intended to heighten anxiety, and potential drive a wedge between the US and its Gulf state friends and allies. Other possibilities include a reluctance on the part of Iran's leaders to risk triggering a conflict with the US and many other countries that depend upon Gulf oil, or because Tehran does not believe it has all the capabilities in hand that are needed to credibly execute such a closure plan.

Iran would not be immune to the effects of an SOH closure. Closing the Strait would cause tremendous economic harm to Iran. About 16 percent of oil exported by the SOH is Iranian. By volume, roughly 87 percent of Iran's exports and 90 percent of its imports transit the SOH. Iran relies on imports of refined petroleum, mostly from India, that flow via the SOH. About 76 percent of its export earnings and 62 percent of its government revenues come from oil exports. Therefore, despite the warnings of Iranian officials, Iran is unlikely to take this course of action precipitously. Experts think the Iranians would seriously consider impeding the flow of traffic through the SOH only if they perceived a threat to regime survival, whether the impact of new sanctions on oil exports would eventually pose such a threat remains to be seen.

The Carter Doctrine is still a cornerstone of U.S. strategy in the Persian Gulf. In his 1980 State of the Union Address, President Carter announced: "Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be re-

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[2] See Caitlin Talmadge, "Closing Time: assessing the Iranian Threat to the Strait of Hormuz," *International Security*, Summer 2008, pp. 82-117, and William D. O'Neil and Caitlin Talmadge, "Costs and Difficulties of Blocking the Strait of Hormuz," *International Security*, Winter 2008/09, pp. 190-198.

garded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

While the geostrategic alignment of powers, friends, and allies has changed since the Carter Doctrine was declared, today its message remains relevant—the United States continues to consider the stability and access of the region to be a vital U.S. interest.

Reassurance plays a central role in U.S. strategy. The Persian Gulf is halfway around the world from the United States, and U.S. dependence on oil from the Gulf has been declining dramatically since 1980. Washington has to persuade its friends in the region that the United States is willing to fight in support of undemocratic Arabian Peninsula monarchies facing the possibility of direct destabilization, or worse, by the revolutionary Iranian regime. U.S. reassurance must be based on a combination of deterrent understandings with Gulf monarchies, capacity building through the sale of high-end weapons systems, and a significant military presence in the Gulf and Northern Arabian Sea.

No country other than the United States can play a major role in the security of the Persian Gulf region. The key security issues of managing Iraq's transition, balancing Iran, dealing with Iran's nuclear weapons program, and taking decisive action should Iran attempt to close the Straits of Hormuz, have not gone away. For the foreseeable future, the United States cannot divest itself of these responsibilities.

It will be difficult to assign more high-end combat power to the Pacific because it is still required in the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf area. There was an expectation that after leaving Iraq, the U.S. military would have more forces and capabilities available for assignment to the Pacific as a tangible signal of long-term U.S. strategic intent. But, the reality facing policy-makers in Washington is that as long as conflict with Iran over its nuclear program remains a possibility, high end naval forces are going to be required in this region. Thus, despite an avowed desire to do so, Washington cannot significantly reduce the U.S. focus on the Middle East or its footprint in the Central Command area.

The significance of the Bab el-Mandeb as an oil choke-point is decreasing. The daily amount of oil transiting the Bab-el-Mandeb has been slowly decreasing—only 3.2 million bbl/d transited through it in 2009. Oil traffic is down because the largest tankers (and the most economical to operate) are over 200,000 DWT, and thus are too large for the Suez Canal at the north end of the Red Sea. These crude carriers are increasingly going around the Cape of Good Hope to reach the Western Hemisphere.

Findings: Piracy in the Arabian Sea

Over the past 14 months the piracy problem in the Arabian Sea has improved substantially. This improvement is due to three factors. First, is the success of naval forces in either pre-

venting hijacking in the first place, or recapturing ships that had been seized by pirates. Second, the widespread adoption of the passive protective measures codified in the Best Management Practice (BMP) provided by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) of the UN and the International Shipping Federation to assist ships to avoid becoming victims of piracy. Finally, the increasingly widespread use of well qualified privately contracted armed security detachments to keep pirates from getting on board ships has also been very successful. As of this writing no ship with an armed security detachment has been successfully pirated.

The increased use of "citadels" has been an important factor in reducing pirate success. The concept is aimed at denying pirates human hostages; once pirate boarding cannot be avoided the crew locks itself into a safe room and radios for help. This increases the chances that naval units can rescue crews before the pirates have broken in to the safe room and captured the crew, and then forcing the crew to steam the ship to the pirate base. The citadel innovation is important because, even though the rules of engagement (ROE) for the U.S. and British navies now allow more aggressive action, once pirates have gained control of a merchant vessel Western naval units in general remain reluctant to mount an assault for fear of killing or injuring innocent seafarers.

The efficacy of attacking Somali pirate bases remains open to question. The historical record is clear; piracy has been suppressed only when the pirates' bases have been eliminated. The UN Security Council authorized such action on land when it passed Resolution 1851 in 2008, but no nation chose to take steps to attack pirate bases until spring 2012, when the European Union's Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) announced its intention to conduct raids on pirate boats, vehicles, and fixed infrastructure such as fuel dumps inside Somalia.[3] An attack took place in May 2012 when helicopters launched from warships offshore attacked pirate village destroying five skiffs and a fuel dump.[4] Raids of this sort have the potential to impose

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[3] "EU extends counter-piracy operation by two years," Reuters, 23 March 2012, at
http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/03/23/eu-somalia-piracy-idUSL6E8EN65720120323; "EU expands Somali piracy mission to include attacks on land bases," Associated Press, 23 March 2012, at http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/23/somalia-pirate-mission-expanded-eu; Jason Straziuso, "Somalia: EU antipiracy force to 'seize the initiative,'" Associated Press, 4 April 2012, at
http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hoznyj1Wu3BVKRPVbBr2DlQG83-w?docId=00cb6b66487a483299adf4473f382a1b.

[4] Sabine Hartert, "Germany to vote on new anti-piracy mission in Somalia," *Deutsche Welle*, 10 May 2012, at http://www.dw.de/dw/article/0,,15939314,00.html; "Germany approves expansion of EU anti-piracy mission," AFP, 10 May 2012, at
http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iL0HFjJqJo0AB58qaoP3jj2xokpg?docId=CNG.d01b3b04bd017bbc64afb9aea8f1a67f.771; "EU NAVFOR delivers blow against Somali

new costs and risks on pirate activity. But these modest results suggest that costs will be relatively limited and need to be weighed against the peril of accidental civilian deaths, to which historical pirate hunters gave scant attention. These sorts of operations are heavily dependent on very accurate intelligence which is difficult to obtain.

Long term concerns exist about a nexus between Somali pirates and Yemeni Islamists. The possibility of a relationship between al-Shabaab in Somalia and the Al Qaeda affiliate in Yemen, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), has been a worrisome possibility for years. Yemen dominates the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, which controls access to the southern Red Sea. Al Qaeda strategists have written about attacking the Bab el-Mandeb using mines, piracy, or suicide operatives. Material taken from Bin Laden's compound after his death indicates a continuing interest in attacking oil and gas supplies, perhaps using the small boat tactics employed against the *Limburg* off Yemen in 2002 and the *M Star* in the Strait of Hormuz.

Events in late September and October of 2012, make it likely that al-Shabaab is on the verge of being eliminated as a viable organization by the combination of Kenyan and African Union forces. Al-Shabaab has reportedly been driven from its last major Somali stronghold, the port city of Kismayo, and has been forced to flee from most of its strategic towns and regions of Somalia. This could mean the end of this fundamentalist organization.[5]

The resilience of the pirate enterprise should not be underestimated. Pirates have proved themselves to be capable and adaptable. Fewer successful hijackings have not, so far, dented the one metric that matters to them: their income. In 2011, pirate income was estimated to be in the range of $146 million to $150 million, compared to $81.6 million in 2010 and $70

pirates on shoreline," EU NAVFOR Public Affairs Office, 15 May 2012, at
http://www.eunavfor.eu/2012/05/eu-naval-force-delivers-blow-against-somali-pirates-on-shoreline/; Abdi Guled, "EU navy, helicopters strike pirate supply center," Associated Press, 16 May 2012, at
http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gCtba2K3Hwr7Lg28TRjg7jJlLUKQ?d ocId=4e3f2791b2884b6b9f253eea192686ae. The attack on Handulle was not, however, the first helicopter-borne assault on suspected Somali pirates. After nightfall on 16 April 2012, an unidentified aircraft launched rockets and flares at fishermen on the beach at Gumbah, a village on the Bari coast of Puntland a short distance south of Cape Guardafui. Two fishermen were injured; the nationality of the aircraft has not been identified. Robert Young Pelton, "Terrorists, Pirates or Fishermen: Land-based anti-piracy," *Somalia Report*, 20 April 2012, at
http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3257/Terrorists_Pirates_or_Fishermen.

[5] http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/somalia-kismayos-future-clouded-by-prospected-of-renewed-clan-warfare-say-residents/2012/10/04/83d55bb8-0e2d-11e2-ba6c-07bd866eb71a_story.html

million in 2009. Their past record of success has led expatriate Somali "investors," to back them so they can bargain harder for larger ransoms and, quite possibly, sit out the current naval challenge while they calculate how to overcome the ship self-protection measures and armed teams now in place.

Focusing on piracy financing is within the skill set of organizations such as the US Treasury Department, but resource limitations combined with the higher priorities of counter-terrorism and non-proliferation mean this is a yet to be a fully exploited vulnerability.

Findings: India-Pakistan maritime rivalry in the Arabian Sea

The Arabian Sea is economically significant to both India and Pakistan. India and Pakistan's most important economic centers are along the Arabian Sea. In Pakistan's case, two of its four provinces face the Arabian Sea. Sindh province is home to Karachi, which accounts for about 65 percent of Pakistan's total GDP (and many other things such as customs duties and taxes) and is Pakistan's most populous city, its financial center, and its main port. Balu-chistan, Pakistan's second province bordering the Arabian Sea littoral, is sparsely populated but is stocked with natural gas, coal, copper, and other valuable resources, and is home to the port of Gwadar, which is being developed for both commercial and military uses.

In India's case, the Arabian Sea littoral states of Maharashtra and Gujarat are among the country's top five states in terms of GDP and are the top two states in terms of per capita GDP. It also is home to a significant share of India's foreign direct investment and company headquarters. Three of India's major ports and several intermediate ports are along the Arabian Sea in these two states. In particular, Mumbai city in Maharashtra is estimated to account for 25 percent of India's total economic output, 40 percent of maritime trade, and 70 percent of capital transactions.[6]

India-Pakistan maritime rivalry in the Arabian Sea is derived from, rather than drives, a deep and complex state-to-state competition. In the hierarchy of India-Pakistan dangers and mutual discontent, maritime competition has been a comparatively limited though not insignificant concern and it may remain that way. On the other hand the maritime dimension of the India-Pakistan rivalry could increase and be sustained in the years ahead, for two main reasons. First, a number of recent incidents involving terrorism, piracy, and "loose ships," have highlighted of the maritime dimension of the fraught relationship.

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[6] "India: Mumbai's unique security problems will persist," *Oxford Analytica*, December 23, 2008.

Second, ongoing structural developments in the economic, strategic, and national interests of the two countries are also working to increase the attention and interactions that Islamabad and New Delhi are likely to have in the Arabian Sea.

The India-Pakistan rivalry complicates U.S. relations with both countries and impinges upon U.S. interests and activities in the region. U.S. relations with Pakistan at sea are considerably better than U.S. relations with Pakistan on land. The US Navy-Pakistani Navy rela-relationship is very good, and has been for a number of years. At the same time, many US policy makers regard U.S.-India naval cooperation in the Indian Ocean region as a particularly promising element of the U.S.-India bilateral security relationship. However, Indian politicians and policy-makers who closely supervise Indian security forces regard U.S.-Pakistan cooperation in the Arabian Sea with some suspicion, and, as a result, are less enthusiastic about the U.S.-India security relationship.

Both India and Pakistan trade extensively across the Arabian Sea to the Gulf/Middle East, Europe, Africa, and North America. Both countries trade more across the Arabian Sea than in other directions, such as north overland to and through Central Asia or within South Asia itself. An overwhelming component of this maritime trade for both countries is energy which is critically important to the two economies because both are heavily dependent upon external energy resources.

The Pakistani and Indian navies are concentrated along the Arabian Sea. For Pakistan this has been the case since East Pakistan gained independence as Bangladesh in 1971. In India's case, the navy's Western Command is designated the "sword arm" of the navy; the best officers and capabilities have traditionally been assigned to this command. India's focus on the Arabian Sea will not diminish even as additional attention and resources are assigned to the eastern maritime area.

The Sir Creek dispute is an Arabian Sea littoral issue. The dispute stems from historical dispensation of the marshy area based on pre-independence agreements. Pakistan insists that the entire territory should belong to the province of Sindh based on a 1914 agreement. India rejects this view, saying that subsequent arrangements argue for a division through the mid-channel. Further complicating the picture is that the course of marshy inlet is not fixed; therefore, Pakistan could lose several thousand kilometers of claims to its exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The 1965 India-Pakistan War in part derived from skirmishes around Sir Creek and just after the Kargil War of 1999, Indian military planes shot down Pakistan Navy surveillance aircraft over the area. Unsuccessful efforts to find a compromise on Sir Creek were undertaken as recently as June 2012; although of the three core Indo-Pak territorial disputes (Kashmir and Siachen are the other two); Sir Creek has the best chance for near term resolution.

Terrorist attacks from the sea put the spotlight on shared maritime space. Terrorist attacks launched against Mumbai in November 2008 were the first in which a maritime component was critical. The gunmen travelled by boat from Karachi on Pakistan's Arabian Sea coast into waters close to Mumbai, where they hijacked an Indian fishing trawler and then used small dinghies to land onshore at Mumbai. The episode increased India-Pakistan tension and focused attention on the maritime element of the rivalry in a way that no previous naval engagement between the two states had. Importantly, no one has ever claimed the Pakistani navy was complicit in this attack.

Implications for the United States. There is little evidence that the fundamentals of India-Pakistan relations are moving in a direction of resolving core animosities, suspicions, and disputes. Old, ongoing issues could be complicated by the emergence of a new sector of competition and contestation—the maritime dimension in the Arabian Sea. For Washington, the Arabian Sea which is already fraught because of issues with Iran, access to Hormuz, and piracy, an Indo-Pak maritime rivalry in the same body of water adds another layer of complexity to the security issues it must address, while complicating desires to improve the Indo-US strategic relationship.

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Iran and the Strait of Hormuz

Michael A. McDevitt, RADM, USN (Ret.) and Dr. Michael P. Connell

Figure 1. The Arabian Sea

Source: http://mapsof.net/map/arabian-sea-physical

The Arabian Sea is home to the most potentially serious flashpoint along the long littoral, for two reasons: the possibility of a conflict with Iran over its nuclear program, and the worry that Iran will attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most important oil chokepoint, either as part of, or apart from, such a conflict. Located between Oman and Iran, the Strait of Hormuz (SOH) connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.

Its importance is based on the amount of the world's oil that moves by sea. In 2011, total world oil production amounted to approximately 88 million barrels per day (bbl/d), and over one-half was moved by tankers. By volume of oil transit, the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca are two of the world's most strategic chokepoints. The international energy market is dependent upon reliable transport. Chokepoints, which funnel maritime traffic into narrow corridors, are points of strategic significance, for two reasons: they are

within easy range of shore-based threats; and they concentrate ships in relatively small area thus making it easier for sea-based threats to find intended maritime targets. The blockage of a chokepoint, even temporarily, can lead to substantial increases in total energy costs. In addition, chokepoints leave oil tankers vulnerable to theft from pirates, terrorist attacks, and political unrest. Finally, congested sea lanes in choke points raise the risk of collision, which can lead to disastrous oil spills. [1]

Hormuz is the world's most important oil chokepoint: 17 million barrels per day (up from between 15.5 and 16.0 bbl/d in 2009-2010) of oil flow through the strait to the Arabian Sea bound for markets around the world. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, in 2011 flows through Hormuz accounted for approximately 35 percent of all sea-borne-traded oil, or, put another way, slightly more than 20 percent of all oil traded worldwide.[2]

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[1] Energy Information Administration (EIA), "World Oil Transit Chokepoints," *EIA Country Analysis Briefs*, December 30, 2011 update, www.eia.doe.gov.

[2] Ibid.

Figure 2. Strait of Hormuz[3]

Some 33,000 ships transit Hormuz every year, an average of 90 ships every day, or about 4 an hour. Not all of these are tankers—on average only 28 tankers (14 outbound and 14 in-bound) transit each day. But the outbound tankers ships carry about 35 percent of the total amount of oil that travels by ship. Increasingly, these are big tankers. The strait is wide enough and deep enough to accommodate the world's largest tankers and over 66 percent of the vessels that transit it are over 150,000 deadweight tons (dwt). Most (85%) of this oil is destined for Asia, with India, Japan, South Korea and China being the major recipients. It is difficult to imagine how the world's energy consumers would compensate if Hormuz were closed for any time, because there are no alternative maritime exits and pipelines from the Gulf don't have the capacity to compensate.

When the Suez Canal was closed for eight years as a result of the 1967 Six Day War, the shipping industry was able to adjust to the additional 6,000 miles (about 15 days) that ships were required to travel, rounding Africa's Cape of Good Hope, by simply adding ships to the "tanker stream." That workaround is not possible for Persian Gulf oil. The 745-mile-
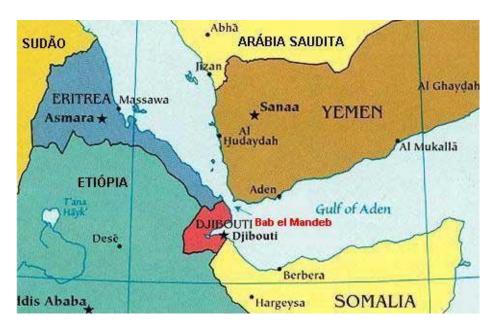
[3] Source: http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.hybridcars.com/files/strait-of-hormuz-map-610.

long trans-Saudi pipeline (known as Petroline) to the Red Sea has a maximum capacity of about 4.8 million bbls per day. Potentially two other pipelines that run parallel to Petroline, and currently are used for natural gas, could be reconfigured to transport crude, but that would only yield another 2 million bbl/d, because they have not been reconfigured the EIA does not include them in its calculations of oil available should Hormuz be closed. Finally, the recently completed pipeline from Abu Dhabi to Fujairah, UAE, on the Arabian Sea will have a capacity of between 1.5 to 1.8 million bbl per day when it reaches full capacity.[4]

Thus, perhaps 7 million bbl/d of Persian Gulf oil would be available to the world if Hormuz were closed. That would leave a global shortfall of about ten million bbl/d. What makes this potential economic impact more credible is the fact that Hormuz is also the world's most threatened chokepoint. The other key global chokepoints—Bab el-Mandeb, Suez, Malacca, the Bosporus, and the Panama Canal—are surrounded by relatively stable governments, and alternative shipping routes are available if for some reason they are closed. Only Hormuz is held hostage by both geography and a regime increasingly at odds with much of the world.

Figure 3. Bab el Mandeb[5]

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[4] Ibid.

[5].http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.eoearth.org/files/111401_111500/111494/2
50px-Bab_el-Mandeb.jpg&imgrefurl.

The Arabian Sea is also home to another important chokepoint, the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb, which separates the Horn of Africa from the Middle East. It is located between Yemen on the east and Djibouti and Eritrea on the west, and connects the Red Sea (and the Suez Canal) with the Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea. It is only 18 miles wide at its narrowest point. The daily amount of oil transiting the Bab-el-Mandeb has been slowly decreasing— only 3.2 million bbl/d crossed it in 2009. Oil traffic is down because the largest tankers (and the most economical to operate) are over 200,000 DWT, and thus are too large for the Suez Canal at the north end of the Red Sea. They are increasingly going around the Cape of Good Hope to reach the Western Hemisphere.

Iran and the Strait of Hormuz

Ambassador Robert E. Hunter has written, "For the past 30 years the US has been preoccupied with the situation, status, role, ambitions, policies, and practices of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This will continue to be true for the foreseeable future whether the Iranian regime persists in its current policies or is replaced by a regime that is more amenable to US interests."[6]

It is not altogether clear that a major change in the governance of the Islamic Republic would result in an Iran that was less ambitious or less conscious of what it sees as its rightful place as a leading player in the region and beyond. No matter what form of government it has, Iran is likely to seek an active role in the region. It is no secret that Iran's nuclear-development program enjoys wide public support.

The Strait of Hormuz's strategic, economic, and cultural significance to Iran predates the 20th century. Historically it served as a gateway to east-west maritime trade—particularly trade between the Middle East and India, and between India and the Levant. In the middle ages, trade was mostly concentrated along the northern littorals of the SOH in what is now Iran. The port city of Hormuz—the Dubai of its age—was a wealthy city-state, attracting merchants from all over the Middle East and South Asia. A Persian proverb says, "If the world were a ring, Hormuz would be the jewel in that ring."[7]

Portugal was the first Western power to recognize the economic and strategic significance of the strait, in the 16th and early 17th centuries. The capture of Hormuz in 1507 was a result of a plan by King Manuel I of Portugal to choke off Muslim trade in the Indian Ocean. In order to do this, he needed to seize three chokepoints: Aden, to block trade enroute to Al-

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[6] Robert E. Hunter, *Building Security in the Gulf,* RAND Corporation, National Security Research Division, Santa Monica, California, 2010, p. 33.

[7] Sir Percy Molesworth Sykes, *A History of Persia* (London: Macmillan, 1921), p. 186.

exandria, Egypt; Hormuz, to block trade destined for Beirut; and Malacca, to control trade with China. At Hormuz, the Portuguese established a ring of fortresses both inside and outside of the Gulf, which they occupied for about 115 years. Shah Abbas I, the Safavid ruler of Iran, with English help, evicted the Portuguese from the Hormuz region in 1622.[8] The Portuguese eviction is still commemorated in Iran today as "Persian Gulf Day." Shah Abbas's primary motivation in conquering Hormuz was to control and tax the lucrative trade in silk and spices between Europe and Mughal India.

What Shah Abbas did not anticipate was that by the early 17th century, most of the east-west seaborne trade was already being diverted away from the Middle East, around the Cape of Good Hope.[9] As trade flows bypassed the region, the Gulf sank into relative obscurity. In fact, for much of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, the Gulf, particularly the area around the southern littorals of the SOH, in addition to pearling, was mainly known for piracy, slave trading, and gun running.

The European powers—particularly Britain—would have ignored the Gulf entirely if it hadn't been for the pirates who were interfering with shipping in the Indian Ocean. Piracy was centered along sparsely inhabited southern littorals (today, the UAE and Oman), which were the Somalia of their day. Britain launched several naval expeditions to subdue pirates, and established a permanent residency in Bushehr, Iran.

In the wake of the Indian Sepoy Mutiny in 1857, the British also established a telegraph repeater station in Musandam, Oman, that linked the European telegraph system with India via the Ottoman Empire. While Iranians were content to let the British subdue pirates, they were not enthusiastic about a standing British military presence in the Gulf—particularly in the wake of the Anglo-Persian War (1856). In contrast, in a preview of today's balance of power in the Persian Gulf, the Arab rulers on their side of the Gulf by and large have come to welcome the British as guarantors of their security.[10] By World War II the Iranians had already established their own navy. The combination of Reza Shah's pro-axis orientation, Russia's desire for lend-lease routes through Iran, and British concern about continued access Abadan oil refineries prompted joint British-Russian occupation of Iran. The Iranian Navy was the only service to put up a fight against the British and Russians and suffer casualties—a mark of pride to this day for that service.

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[8] Bailey W. Diffie, *Foundations of the Portuguese Empire, 1415-1580* (University of Minnesota Press, 1977), pp. 176-185.

[9] http://www.nicolamelis.org/documenti/Melis%20-The%20importance_of_Hormuz_for_Luso-Ottoman.pdf.

[10] J.E. Peterson, "Britain and the Gulf: At the Periphery of Empire," pp. 279-281, in Lawrence G. Potter, ed., *The Persian Gulf in History* (Palgrave Macmillan, January 2009).

The point of this brief historical sketch illustrates that Iran's generally unhappy historical experience with extra-regional involvement especially, with the British, in the Gulf colors the mindset of its current leadership.[11] Iranians believe that their historic presence in the Gulf entitles them to play a special role in the region. They are also convinced that the long history of a Western military presence in the Strait of Hormuz region has generally been detrimental for Iran—challenging, or undercutting, its position as the predominant regional power. According to Iran's historical narrative, outsiders are at best interlopers and, more likely, a threat to Iranian security. This is why the Iranians routinely call for a regional (rather than extra-regional) solution to Gulf security, in contrast to the smaller states in the region, historically have preferred to hedge against Iran by establishing alliances with outside powers, whether British, U.S., or French.

Vulnerability and the Strait of Hormuz

The geography and bathometry of the SOH are what create its vulnerability. It is relatively narrow, only 21-35 miles wide at narrowest point. It is relatively shallow—it averages about 160 feet (deeper toward Oman, shallower toward Iran). Most important, it is 90 miles long— a tanker moving at a typical transit speed of 15 knots takes about 6 hours to complete the passage. This is a long time to be "under the Iranian gun."

Generally speaking, most ships moving through the strait follow a narrow Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS), which separates inbound from outbound traffic in order to reduce the risk of collision. In this scheme, there are two traffic lanes, one inbound and the other outbound, that are two miles wide and are also separated by two miles. However, much more of the strait is navigable, even for very large crude-carrying tankers (VLCCs) and ultra-large crude-carrying tankers (ULCCs) which suggests that were Iran to attempt to close the strait, using mines, they would have cover an area much larger than the two traffic channels

An important contributor to tanker vulnerability comes from the many islands that command the approach to the strait on the Persian Gulf side. Almost all of these (Abu Musa, the Tunbs, Qeshm, Sirri, Larak, etc.) belong to or are otherwise occupied by Iran. Abu Musa, which was seized from the UAE in 1971 and whose ownership the UAE continues to contest, is heavily fortified with Iranian troops. The confined nature of the strait and the fact that the Iranians dominate its northern littorals and inside approaches would give the

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[11] It is noteworthy that the period of British imperialism in Persia roughly coincides with China's "century of humiliation," also triggered by the British.

Iranians a significant military advantage should they wish to either close it or inhibit the entry or exit of warships.

Figure 4. Iranian Capabilities and Strait of Hormuz[12]

Relevant Iranian capabilities

Iran enhances its geographic advantage by investing in military capabilities that are well suited to the mission of closing the strait and simultaneously dealing with U.S.-led efforts both to reopen it and suppress Iran's ability to continue to threaten tanker traffic. Sometimes called "asymmetric," these capabilities combine traditional area-denial systems such as mines and submarines, with modern anti-ship cruise missiles and the swarm-boat tactics (which may include suicide ramming) perfected by the Tamil Tigers of the long-running Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) insurgency in Sri Lanka. Altogether, these present what, on paper, appears to be a formidable denial capability.

- **Mines:** There are over 2,000 in Iran's inventory, including magnetic, pressure sensitive, acoustic, bottom moored, and floating mines. They can be

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[12] Source: http://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-comments/past-issues/volume-18-2012/february/strait-of-hormuz-irans-disruptive-military-options.

laid covertly—with dhows or other commercial vessels, as during the Iran-Iraq war in the late 1980s. They are useful and low cost.

- **Anti-ship cruise missiles:** Iran possesses whole family of Chinese-inspired missiles (C801, C802, C701, C704) that are truck mounted and have been modified as necessary for use in a land-clutter environment such as the SOH. "Shoot and scoot" tactics and excellent camouflage make these hard to locate. These are capable systems: Hezbollah fired a truck-mounted salvo of C-802 cruise missiles at an Israeli corvette off of Lebanon in 2006. One missile hit the Israeli warship; the other over flew it and struck a transiting merchant ship 60 miles away.[13]

- **Small boats:** The IRGC Navy has a fleet of small boats that are intended to be employed in "swarming" tactics. The concept is to deploy dozens, or even hundreds of small boats, some armed with cruise missiles, to attack a discrete target such as a warship or a large tanker. These tactics could be particularly effective in the confined waters of the SOH. The IRGC Navy inventory includes ten China-supplied Hudong-class missile patrol boats equipped with C-802 cruise missiles; nine C-14 missile boats also made by China; about 40 Iran-made patrol craft of the Peykaap class, and 30 to 40 Swedish-made Boghammer fast patrol boats. Iran also has an unspecified number of small high-speed boats based on the Italian-designed Fabio Buzzi racing boats.[14]

- **Submarines:** The Iranian Navy has three Russian-built Kilo-class submarines and nearly a dozen mini or midget submarines. After the 2010 sinking of the South Korean corvette *Cheonan* by a North Korean midget submarine in shallow coastal waters, the threat of small submarines operating in confined waters has to be taken very seriously.

- **UAVs:** The key to success in any maritime conflict is surveillance, and to this end there are Iranian press reports that indicate that Iran, like many other states, has developed UAVs both for surveillance and as guided weapons that would crash into targets. UAVs are most successful when operating in a permissive or benign air defense environment, because they can be shot down by an effective air defense system. In the case of hostile

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[13] Dov S. Zakheim, *The United States Navy and the Israeli Navy: Background, current issues, scenarios and prospects,* CNA Occasional Paper D0026727.A.1/ Final, February 2012, pp. 26-27, at www.cna.org.

[14] Kenneth Katzman et al., *Iran's Threat to the Strait of Hormuz,* CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service, January 23, 2012, CRS 7-5700, p. 6, www.crs.gov.

action aimed at closing the SOH, UAVs would be very vulnerable to U.S. and GCC air defenses.[15]

- **ASBM:** Iran is also working to develop an anti-ship ballistic missile, which would provide it with a capability to strike ships operating in the Northern Arabian Sea that were approaching Iran.

The Iranians' strategy calls for a layered defense, with overlapping fields of fire. Iran would likely use minefields to channel enemy vessels into kill zones—a tactic that both the British and Germans employed in the North Sea during World War I. The objective is to surprise and overwhelm the adversary's sensors.

Most of these capabilities, with exception of Iran's submarine force, are the preserve of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Navy (IRGCN). It is widely assumed that the regular Iranian Navy (IRIN) would be sunk within the opening moves of a conflict, as much of it was during the U.S. Navy's Operation Praying Mantis in 1989.[16]

There is a general consensus that Iran has the capability to disrupt the flow of shipping in and out of the Persian Gulf, just as there is a consensus that the United States and its allies could restore the flow of traffic. At issue is, how long could Iran keep the SOH closed? There are a great many variables, and military estimates are understandably classified. Non-military analysts, who are not privy to classified plans, make educated guesses that range from days to weeks, and perhaps even months.[17]

An analysis of how such a scenario might unfold is beyond the scope of this paper, but the key tactical problem would be clearing a transit lane of mines so that shipping could proceed. That in turn would require the suppression of Iran's road-mobile anti-ship cruise missile batteries so that mine clearance ships could operate without being destroyed by cruise missiles. These truck-mounted batteries would probably be attacked by U.S. tactical aircraft, which in turn would require the destruction of Iranian anti-aircraft missiles. It would be a complex air-sea operation, which would probably also involve using Marines to seize the Iran-occupied islands that are in the midst of the shipping channels. It is difficult

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[15] "Iran's Entry Pass into Advanced UAV League," *Mashreg News* (on line edition) October 19, 2011 and October 24, 2011. http[://www.mashreghnews.ir/. Accessed on 15 December 2011.

[16] http://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-comments/past-issues/volume-18-2012/february/strait-of-hormuz-irans-disruptive-military-options.

[17] Katzman, *Iran's Threat to the Strait of Hormuz*, CRS, p 9.

to predict how long such an operation would take. Open source assessments suggest weeks not days before achieving success.[18]

Would Iran be willing to close the strait?

Between December 2011 and January 2012, several Iranian officials openly threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz if sanctions were imposed on Iran's oil exports. These threats coincided with a major Iranian naval exercise that was intended to demonstrate Iran's capability to actually carry out this threat. The exercise included live anti-ship cruise missile firings. As of this writing Iran has not acted on these threats, perhaps because they were bluffs in the first place, intended to heighten anxiety, and potentially drive a wedge between the US and its Gulf state friends and allies.

Other possibilities include a reluctance on the part of Iran's leaders to risk triggering a conflict with the US and many other counties that depend upon Gulf oil, or because Tehran does not believe it has all the capabilities in hand that are needed to credibility execute a closure plan. In any case, US security officials have taken the threat seriously, and have been improving naval capabilities in the Gulf. In the future, it would be foolish to discount threats of this sort, because Iran's economy is beginning to be seriously impacted by the embargo on oil exports, and the prospect of economic collapse might trigger a desperate military response.[19]

During Iran-Iraq War, the Iranians largely avoided operations in the SOH; instead, they concentrated their efforts inside the Gulf. However, given the importance of the SOH, they might wish to "advertise" their capabilities to a "watching world," by disrupting the flow of maritime traffic through the SOH, which would be useful for deterrent purposes. Iranian officials routinely indicate that they would be willing to close the SOH if provoked. These attempts to shape the international debate do have consequences: they often cause oil prices to spike, as they did in the December 2011-January 2012 period.[20]

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[18] The best-informed unclassified discussion of how a campaign would unfold is found in Caitlin Talmadge, "Closing Time: assessing the Iranian Threat to the Strait of Hormuz," *International Security*, Summer 2008, pp. 82-117, and the rejoinder article by William D. O'Neil and Caitlin Talmadge, "Costs and Difficulties of Blocking the Strait of Hormuz," *International Security*, Winter 2008/09, pp. 190-198.

[19] Katzman, *Iran's Threat to the Strait of Hormuz*, CRS, p. 1.

[20] In December 2011, Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Rez Rahimi was the first to threaten closure of the strait. Prices initially rose almost daily from this point, peaking a week later almost 4 percent higher, before declining. Katzman, *Iran's Threat to the Strait of Hormuz*, CRS, p. 17.

Most experts think the Iranians would seriously consider impeding the flow of traffic through the SOH only if they perceived a threat to regime survival. For Tehran, this is a credible contingency: it has observed the United States and its allies invade and overthrow the regimes of two neighboring countries.

U.S. Strategy in the Persian Gulf

In 1979 the "twin shocks" of the Iranian Revolution (and the resulting U.S. Embassy hostage crisis) and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan called into question critical U.S. assumptions about security in and around the Persian Gulf. This led to a number of security-oriented initiatives, including the establishment of a U.S. military command with responsibility for this region—the so-called Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, which over time became the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM).

To rationalize greater U.S. involvement in the region, President Carter announced in his 1980 State of the Union Address: "Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

This quickly became known as the Carter Doctrine. At the time, this "doctrine" was explicitly aimed at the Soviets. The administration feared that the Soviets might move from Afghanistan into Iran, and hence put a hostile power in control of Hormuz. Although the geostrategic alignment of powers, friends, and allies has changed since the Carter Doctrine was declared, today its message has remained consistent—the United States considers stability and access of the region to be a vital interest of the United States. While the Soviet Union is long gone, the strategic arguments that rationalized the Carter Doctrine remain valid today.[21]

What also has not changed is the central role that reassurance plays in U.S. policy. The Persian Gulf is halfway around the world from the United States, and U.S. dependence on oil from the Gulf has been declining dramatically since 1979. Nevertheless, now, as then, Washington recognizes that it has to persuade friends and allies that the U.S. commitment to Gulf security is credible. It must persuade its friends in the region that the United States is willing to fight in support of undemocratic Arabian Peninsula monarchies that face the possibility of direct destabilization, or worse, by the revolutionary Iranian regime. Adding to concerns about destabilization from Shia minorities (majority in Bahrain), Iran has in place a credible power-projection capability with its ballistic missiles— missiles that could in

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[21] Hunter, *Building Security in the Gulf,* pp. 16-26.

the future be armed with nuclear weapons. Hence, U.S. reassurance is based on a combination of security partnerships with Gulf monarchies that deter aggression because of an implied US security guarantee to these regimes, capacity building through the sale of high-end weapons systems, and a significant military presence in the Gulf and Northern Arabian Sea.

During the early 1980s, Washington took a number of actions that set the stage for the current U.S. posture in the region. These included gaining more extensive rights from the United Kingdom to use and develop Diego Garcia, in the mid Indian Ocean, as a logistics hub and a long-range bomber base; expanding the Middle East Force and transforming it into the Fifth Fleet; beefing up the U.S. support activity at Bahrain, which is now the home of the U.S. Fifth Fleet and a vital logistics hub for U.S. presence; and establishing a military headquarters (now known as Central Command) that was responsible for contingency planning in the Gulf region.

These moves were explicitly designed to reassure U.S. friends in the region of the U.S. commitment to the security and stability of the Gulf region. At the time, there was acute sensitivity in Washington about adverse popular reaction in the region if there was too much military presence on the ground, and an important objective was to find places where the U.S. military could operate from over the horizon. It also meant that any forward-deployed "reassurance force" was to be primarily Air Force and Navy. Army ground forces were not to be stationed in the region; in times of crisis, Army involvement would come from bases in Europe or the United States itself.[22]

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 dramatically changed U.S. assumptions regarding the most appropriate posture for U.S. forces in the Gulf. It brought a significant U.S. ground presence to the region, which remained until the final withdrawal from Iraq at the end of 2011.

Today the U.S. posture in the Persian Gulf region is closer to what was envisioned in the 1980s: to have a major reliance on naval and air power as a stabilizing force to prevent aggression; to keep the SOH open should Iran attempt to close it; and to provide credibility to any option that uses force to halt Iran's nuclear weapons program by carrying out "disarming" air strikes. The major exception today to that concept is the presence of some 13,500 US Army soldiers in Kuwait. They are there to provide stability along the Iraq-Kuwait frontier, and to act as a contingency force should the situation in Iraq become unstable.

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[22] Ibid., pp. 19-21.

The unbalancing impact of the 2003 invasion of Iraq

The 2003 invasion of Iraq effectively destroyed the decades-old security framework of the Gulf. It removed the major regional balancer to Iran,[23] and, as a result, reshaped the traditional strategic balance of the Gulf for the foreseeable future. The 2003 invasion removed Iraq as a potential threat to GCC hydrocarbon exports—a threat it posed when it invaded Kuwait in 1990. Iran remains the only credible military threat (as opposed to commercial interruption, like the OPEC embargo) to oil exports through the Strait of Hormuz. Terrorists and non-state actors are more likely to take action against production facilities and pipelines than to try to halt tankers from entering or leaving the Strait of Hormuz.

In sum

Now that the U.S. Army and Marine Corps are out of Iraq (and Saudi Arabia), U.S. presence in the region is primarily air and naval, located in countries where, so far, the presence of U.S. forces has not had a lightning rod effect on public opinion. Today, those locations are in Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE and Bahrain, and to a lesser degree Oman.

The extant U.S. Navy maritime strategy clearly acknowledges that one of the two forward operating hubs for major U.S. naval forces is the Persian Gulf region (the other is the Western Pacific). It is widely understood that one of the primary responsibilities for the naval forces in this region is assuring freedom of navigation through the Straits of Hormuz.

But there was an expectation that after the U.S. military left Iraq, it would have more forces and capabilities available for assignment to the Pacific as a tangible signal of long-term U.S. strategic intent. This expectation was clear in the speeches and public rhetoric surrounding the widely ballyhooed shift in strategy by the Obama administration, the so-called "pivot to Asia."

The reality facing policy-makers in Washington is that as long as conflict with Iran over its nuclear program remains a possibility, there is no country other than the United States that can play a major role in the security of the Persian Gulf region. Thus, despite an avowed desire to do so, Washington cannot yet reduce its focus on the Gulf region or its footprint there. The key security issues— managing Iraq's transition, balancing Iran, and taking decisive action should Iran attempt to close the Straits of Hormuz—have not gone away. For the foreseeable future, the United States cannot divest itself of these responsibilities. As a result,

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[23] Saudi capabilities are also important in the Gulf strategic calculus, but unlike Iraq they do not share a border with Iran, nor do they have the population base of an Iraq. As a result Saudi is not able, on its own, to provide a strategic balance to Iran.

at least in terms of naval forces the current posture of two aircraft carrier strike groups in Persian Gulf/Northern Arabian Sea region means that assigning more carrier strike group power on a permanent basis to the Western Pacific will not be possible.

Maintaining the security of the Gulf region (which, of course, includes access via Hormuz) has been a national security priority of the United States for the past 30 years, and that does not seem likely to change. Collectively, the United States and its friends and allies in the Gulf are in a new era after the US withdrawal from Iraq, because the region will not be able to count on either Iraq or the presence of significant U.S. ground combat power in Iraq, to counterbalance the power of Iran. This is a different military posture from the one that existed between 1991 and 2011.

It is a posture that depends more on air power and sea power, and it is one that places a premium on a less visible and more off-shore military posture. When one depends on off-shore presence for deterrence, as opposed to boots on the ground, the capabilities of the offshore forces have to be carefully considered lest they be perceived as too weak, and as a result, invite aggression. Making certain that Iran does not misjudge US commitment to the security and stability of the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz region will be an important facet of US strategy for the foreseeable future.

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Piracy in the Arabian Sea

<div align="center">Dr. Martin N. Murphy</div>

The current situation

Over the past 14 months the piracy problem in the Arabian Sea has improved substantially. This improvement is due to three factors. First, is the success of naval forces in either preventing hijacking in the first place, or recapturing ships that had been seized by pirates. Second, is the widespread adoption of the passive protective measures codified in the Best Management Practice (BMP) provided by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) of the UN and the International Shipping Federation to assist ships to avoid becoming victims of piracy. These best practices are specifically aimed at "providing specific practical advice to avoid, deter or delay pirate attacks" [1] and include informing the naval authorities of a ship's presence, conscientious watch-keeping, securing spaces, and installing anti-piracy equipment ranging from razor-wire to secure "citadels. Finally, the increasingly widespread use of well qualified privately contracted armed security detachments to keep pirates from getting on board ships has also been very successful. As of this writing no ship with an armed security detachment has been successfully pirated.

These three factors will be examined in greater detail below, as will an assessment of what this suggests regarding the piracy problem in the Arabian Sea over the longer term.

Naval success

Ships of many nations have contributed to the antipiracy mission: 28 states have so far deployed ships on anti-piracy missions off Somalia, although the largest contributions have been those of the United States and its European allies, which have formed the backbone of the three multilateral task forces: Combined Task Force (CTF) 151; NATO's "Ocean Shield," and the European Union Naval Force Somalia (EU NAVFOR). Another element of naval success has been the increasingly successful coordination of naval activity in the Gulf of Aden across the task forces, and between the navies that have remained under national control, specifically Russia, China, Japan and India. This has greatly improved over the past four years thanks to a deconfliction procedure, known as Shared Awareness and

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[1] International Chamber of Shipping/International Shipping Federation ICS/ISF Best Management Practices, http:www.marisec.org/piracybmp.html

Deconfliction (SHADE), as well growing competence and confidence by national forces on regular anti-piracy deployments like the PLA Navy.[2] SHADE was organized by the Commander of the US Fifth Fleet, as a forum that meets regularly in Bahrain where all countries that contribute to the anti-piracy mission can meet routinely to develop and agree upon better means of coordination. For example, one SHADE objective is to prevent ships from multiple national fleets all rushing to the scene of an incident or distress call, thereby leaving other commercial ships open to pirate attack.

Naval activity began to have an impact on the level of piracy in the fall of 2011, and continued into the first half of 2012. In October 2011, U.S. and U.K. Special Forces recaptured the MV *Montecristo* and rescued its crew, who had retreated to a safe room— known as a "citadel" — which the pirates could not access.[3] Early in January, the USS *Kidd,* serving with the *John C. Stennis* carrier strike group in the busy shipping lanes approaching the Straits of Hormuz, rescued Iranian sailors held captive by pirates.[4] A few days later another pirate group was foolish enough to attack a Spanish naval vessel serving as the flagship for the EU Naval Forces (NAVFOR) mission and came off second-best.[5] On January 12th, the British naval auxiliary RFA *Fort Victoria* prevented the hijacked cargo ship *Liquid Velvet* from being deployed as a mother-ship.[6] In May 2012, the Iranian Navy claimed credit for saving an American ship, the *Maersk Texas,* from being overwhelmed by a swarm of pirate boats in the Gulf of Oman.[7]

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[2] PLA Navy lessons learned and professional growth occasioned by participation in anti-piracy operations is addressed in Michael McDevitt, " PLA Naval Exercises with International Partners," a paper for the 2011 U.S. Army War College/NBR Conference on the PLA. Forthcoming in an edited volume.

[3] Andrew Mangura and James Deperani, "MV Montecristo freed by special operations team," *Somalia Report,* 10 October 2011, at http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/1737.

[4] C.J. Chivers, "For Iranians held by pirates, US to the rescue," *New York Times,* 6 January 2012, at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/07/world/middleeast/for-iranians-held-by-pirates-us-to-the-rescue.html?pagewanted=all.

[5] "Spanish navy thwarts pirate attack in Indian Ocean," *Voice of America,* 12 January 2012, at http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/east/Spanish-Navy-Thwarts-Pirate-Attack-in-Indian-Ocean-137193373.html.

[6] Holly Watt, "Navy prevents attack by Somali pirate 'mother ship,'" *Daily Telegraph,* 12 January 2012, at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/piracy/9008682/Navy-prevents-attack-by-Somali-pirate-mothership.html.

[7] Adam Schrek, "Suspected attack foiled on US cargo ship," Associated Press, 24 May 2012, at http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5i4tdfrqam40B5yTtTCPAiGSwXyVQ?d ocId=ddf828191d97469da11bfe5ce7a57d82; "Iran navy saves US cargo ship from pirates," *Daily*

The increased use of "citadels" has made a difference. The concept is aimed at denying pirates human hostages; once pirate boarding cannot be avoided the crew locks itself into a safe room and radios for help. This increases the chances that naval units can rescue crews before the pirates have broken in to the safe room and captured the crew, and then forcing the crew to steam the ship to the pirate base. The citadel innovation is important because, even though the rules of engagement (ROE) for the U.S. and British navies now allow more aggressive action, once pirates have gained control of a merchant vessel Western naval units in general remain reluctant to mount an assault for fear of killing or injuring innocent seafarers.

It is important to note that rules of engagement vary by country or organization. In January 2011, for example, South Korean naval commandoes regained control of the *Samho Jewelry* in a five-hour battle during which eight pirates were killed and the ship's captain wounded.[8]

The interdiction of pirate vessels as they attempt to leave their Somali bases and enter the Indian Ocean shipping lanes presents a different challenge. EU NAVFOR forces attempted to bottle-up pirates in their beach bases in late 2010 but were defeated when the pirates started using large captured vessels as mother-ships with the hostages still on board as human shields.[9] Nevertheless, one year on, the navies have been more successful. There are no definitive explanations why, only suggestions: First, pirates have stopped using large merchant vessels as "mother-ships," probably because they consume large quantities of fuel and are easier to track than small and anonymous dhows. Second, pressure from the semi-autonomous region of Puntland in the north of Somalia and the Islamist insurgent group al-Shabaab from the south has shrunk the "pirate coast" small enough for the navies to monitor by using manned and unmanned aerial surveillance vehicles (UAVs).[10] The

Telegraph, 24 May 2012, at
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/9287488/Iran-navy-saves-US-cargo-ship-from-pirates.html.

[8] Sy-Hyan Lee and Kevin Drew, "South Korea rescues crew and ship from pirates," *New York Times*, 21 January 2011, at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/22/world/asia/22pirates.html; and "South Korea rescues Samho Jewelry crew from pirates," Associated Press, 21 January 2011, at http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article1108391.ece.

[9] "Why are mother ships still operating?" *Somalia Report*, 19 March 2011, at http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/334/Why_Are_Mother_Ships_Still_Operating.

[10] Julian E. Barnes, "US expands drone flights to take aim at East Africa," *Wall Street Journal*, 21 September 2011, at http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111904106704576583012923076634.html; Jo-Anne Allen, "US reports cite UAV base growth in E Africa," Reuters, 21 September 2011, at http://www.aviationweek.com/aw/generic/story.jsp?topicName=unmanned&id=news/awx/2011/09/21/awx_09_21_2011_p0-

pirates appear intimidated by the presence of UAVs. Better surveillance means that pirate ship movements can be observed more easily and surface assets vectored to make interceptions more reliably.

Private remedies

The successes that the navies have chalked up over the past year should not disguise the fact that better ship self-protection measures have almost certainly had a greater effect. The passive protection measures developed by industry and endorsed by NATO, EU NAVFOR and the UK Maritime Trade Office (MTO) in Dubai are a clear, and easily understood set of procedures for civilian ship owners and masters transiting the pirate infested waters of the Northern Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden. The recommendations, known as Best Management Practices (BMP)include informing the naval authorities of a ship's presence, conscientious watch-keeping, securing spaces, and installing anti-piracy equipment ranging from razor-wire to secure "citadels" have been effective by making it much more difficult for pirates operating from small skiffs to board high freeboard commercial ships. Improved coordination between navies and improved communications between the naval and merchant fleets has also meant that more ships are being re-routed away, not merely from the Somali coast but tactically from suspected pirate vessels.[11]

Nonetheless, the increased use of privately contracted armed security detachments has become commonplace, with over 100 security companies, mostly British and American, now competing for market share. Obviously these security teams are only embarked on the ships whose owners can afford them, which for the most part means large and professionally run ships. Estimates of how many of even these ships carry armed teams range from a high of 50 percent to a low of 10 percent—but, whatever it might be, the overall effect is to displace the risk from ships that can afford them to those that cannot.[12] Moreover, whatever the current proportion of ships with armed teams on them might be, the private protection industry appears to be confident that piracy is not going to end soon—and that even if it does end off of Somalia, a precedent will have been set for other places where shipping is at risk, such as the Gulf of Guinea.

372540.xml&headline=U.S.%20Reports%20Cite%20UAV%20Base%20Growth%20in%20E%20 Africa&channel=&from=topicalreports.

[11] The most recent update to Best Management Practices, or BMP, is found at http://www.gard.no/webdocs/BMP4.pdf

[12] Carol Huang, "Boats under radar at risk," *The National*, 10 April 2012, at http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/boats-under-radar-at-risk.

The move towards the adoption of private security detachments became widespread after the UN's International Maritime Organization issued guidelines for the employment of armed guards on ships in May 2011.[13]

According to the Lowy Institute in Australia:

> It is difficult to determine how many individual private security contractors are currently working in the Indian Ocean, as there is no central registry for their licensing or qualification. Based on the number of ships officially reporting the use of armed teams, and assuming a minimum team size of four, it is likely at least 2700 armed guards are operating onboard commercial ships. And this number is increasing. A large British contractor increased employment by 150 per cent last year and plans to employ a total of 1000 this year. Hundreds more staff are employed providing support services for the industry on land. Most contractors are British or American; however, contractors from Australia and New Zealand are common too because their military training is interoperable with the US and UK.[14]

Ship owners have come to the conclusion that they have no option other than to protect their ships militarily.[15]

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[13] Katrina Manson and Robert Wright, "Somali pirates spawn lucrative security trade," *Financial Times*, 8 February 2012, at http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/410d1b40-45b0-11e1-acc9-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1mScX49Qv.

[14] James Brown, "Pirates and privateers: Managing the Indian Ocean private security boom," Lowy Institute for International Policy, September 12, 2012.

[15] See, for example, Charlotte Eager, "To catch a pirate," *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2011, at http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/moslive/article-2071108/British-ex-servicemen-battling-protect-international-shipping-Somali-pirates.html; "Piracy: Prepare to repel boarders," *The Economist*, Schumpeter Blog, 13 October 2011, at http://www.economist.com/blogs/schumpeter/2011/10/piracy; David Axe, "Pirate-fighters, Inc.: How mercenaries became ship's best defense," Wired Blog Network *Danger Room*, 23 August 2011, at http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2011/08/pirate-fighters-inc/all/1; "Ships turn to private security to fight pirates," *MaritimeSecurity.Asia*, 22 July 2011, at http://maritimesecurity.asia/free-2/piracy-update/ships-turn-to-private-security-to-fight-pirates/; "Merchant ship guard rules might change," *DefenceManagement.com*, 8 July 2011, at http://www.defencemanagement.com/news_story.asp?id=16838; "China shipping giant to hire armed guards," *Straits Times*, 14 July 2011, at http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/Asia/Story/STIStory_690529.html; "Norway strengthens ruling on use of armed guards for country's flagships," *Lloyd's List*, 30 June 2011; "Germany seeks EU support of plan to counter piracy," *Edmonton Journal*, 24 August 2011, at http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Germany+seeks+support+plan+combat+piracy/5298228/story.html?id=5298228; "Ships with Indian crew can have armed guards," *Indian Express*, 30 August 2011, at http://www.indianexpress.com/news/ships-with-indian-crew-can-have-armed-

Importantly, these private efforts should not be confused with what are called Vessel Protection Detachments (VPDs). These are small teams of regular armed forces personnel placed on board merchant vessels under government command. Nevertheless, there simply are too many ships to be protected, and too few soldiers or marines to put aboard each ship transiting the high risk areas in the Gulf of Aden and Northern Arabian Sea. Consequently, professional private security companies, which first gained prominence and proliferated during the Iraq War, are now "going to sea" for the same reasons they flourished in Middle East combat zones but the requisite number of suitably qualified and experienced military staff required to staff them are in short supply.

The privatization of naval force is a new phenomenon generated by piracy in the Arabian Sea;[16]and some have opined that this is leading to the establishment of "private navies." This assertion is more hyperbole than reality, although some private firms are reputedly looking at buying and arming small craft to use in conjunction with the armed security forces on commercial ships.[17]

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guards/838994/; "Armed guards to protect British ships from pirates," *Daily Telegraph*, 30 October 2011, at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/piracy/8858159/Armed-guards-to-protect-British-ships-from-pirates.html; "Greece plans armed guards on ships to protect against piracy," *IFW-NET*, 2 December 2011, at http://www.ifw-net.com/freightpubs/ifw/index/greece-plans-armed-guards-on-ships-to-protect-against-piracy/20017923136.htm.

[16] The sheer scale of this effort must not be underestimated. One company announced its intention to deploy 1,000 ex-Royal Marines to the theater In 2012. Isaac Arnsdorf, "Ex-marines fighting pirates off Africa as world shipping lanes attacked," *Bloomberg*, 18 October 2011, at http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-10-17/ex-royal-marines-fighting-somali-pirates-as-world-shipping-lanes-attacked.html.

[17] A British insurer plans to establish a "private navy" operating under naval direction to protect ships transiting the Gulf of Aden. Cahan Milmo, "Insurance firms plan private navy to take on Somali pirates," *The Independent*, 28 December 2010, at http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/insurance-firms-plan-private-navy-to-take-on-somali-pirates-2091298.html; Michael Bradford, "JLT plans launch of private navy," *Business Insurance*, 23 January 2012, at http://www.businessinsurance.com/article/20110123/ISSUE01/301239976#; Sharon Weinberger, "Support grows for private anti-piracy fleet," *AOL News*, 5 March 2011, at http://www.aolnews.com/2011/03/05/support-grows-for-private-anti-pirate-fleet/; David Black, "Private navy planned to counter pirate raids," *The National*, 13 May 2012, at http://www.thenational.ae/business/economy/private-navy-planned-to-counter-pirate-raids; Eloise Lee, "The most dangerous shipping route in the world is getting its own navy," *Business Insider*, 15 May 2012, at http://articles.businessinsider.com/2012-05-15/news/31707284_1_merchant-ship-ship-owners-vessels. A British company Typhon, which is backed by the CEO of what of the world's largest commodity traders, is fitting out three boats to be staffed by up to 40 ex-Royal Marines to protect convoys of client ships anywhere in the "at

Talk or shoot: what about landward remedies

The historical record is clear: more often than not, piracy has been suppressed only when the pirates' bases have been eliminated. The UN Security Council authorized action on land when it passed Resolution 1851 in 2008, but no nation chose to take steps to attack pirate bases until spring 2012, when EU NAVFOR announced its intention to conduct raids on pirate boats, vehicles, and fixed infrastructure such as fuel dumps inside Somalia.[18] It stressed that no troops would be deployed and assured hesitant European parliaments—the Bundestag, in particular—that any action would be limited to helicopter attacks and naval gunfire.[19] In May, shortly after German approval had been received, EU NAVFOR helicopters launched from warships offshore attacked the village of Handulle, 11 miles north of Haradheere, destroying five skiffs and a fuel dump.[20]

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risk" area. Martin Plaut, "Private patrol boats to tackle Somali pirates," *BBC News*, 30 May 2012, at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18209357.

[18] "EU extends counter-piracy operation by two years," Reuters, 23 March 2012, at http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/03/23/eu-somalia-piracy-idUSL6E8EN65720120323; "EU expands Somali piracy mission to include attacks on land bases," Associated Press, 23 March 2012, at http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/23/somalia-pirate-mission-expanded-eu; Jason Straziuso, "Somalia: EU antipiracy force to 'seize the initiative,'" Associated Press, 4 April 2012, at http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hoznyj1Wu3BVKRPVbBr2DlQG83-w?docId=00cb6b66487a483299adf4473f382a1b.

[19] Matthias Gebauer, "Somalia mission expands: EU to target pirates up to two kilometers inland," *Spiegel Online*, 27 March 2012, at http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,824030,00.html; Judy Dempsey, "The risks of chasing pirates on land," *New York Times*, 2 April 2012, at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/03/world/europe/03iht-letter03.html?_r=1.

[20] Sabine Hartert, "Germany to vote on new anti-piracy mission in Somalia," *Deutsche Welle*, 10 May 2012, at http://www.dw.de/dw/article/0,,15939314,00.html; "Germany approves expansion of EU anti-piracy mission," AFP, 10 May 2012, at http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iL0HFjJqJo0AB58qaoP3jj2xokpg?docId=CNG.d01b3b04bd017bbc64afb9aea8f1a67f.771; "EU NAVFOR delivers blow against Somali pirates on shoreline," EU NAVFOR Public Affairs Office, 15 May 2012, at http://www.eunavfor.eu/2012/05/eu-naval-force-delivers-blow-against-somali-pirates-on-shoreline/; Abdi Guled, "EU navy, helicopters strike pirate supply center," Associated Press, 16 May 2012, at http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gCtba2K3Hwr7Lg28TRjg7jJlLUKQ?docId=4e3f2791b2884b6b9f253eea192686ae. The attack on Handulle was not, however, the first helicopter-borne assault on suspected Somali pirates. After nightfall on 16 April 2012, an unidentified aircraft launched rockets and flares at fishermen on the beach at Gumbah, a village on

Raids of this sort will impose new costs and risks on pirate activity. If, however, this is the extent of the EU's military ambitions, these costs will be relatively limited and need to be weighed against the peril of accidental civilian deaths, to which historical pirate hunters gave scant regard. Attacks on villages and towns along the Somali littoral also run the more serious political risk of further alienating a Somali population, which already views foreign concerns about piracy as largely misplaced compared to the risks they face in their own lives every day.[21]

To be effective, attacks on pirate bases require accurate intelligence. This is something all counter-piracy forces lack. Technical measures, whether these are tapping local cell phone networks or using aerial reconnaissance, can achieve only so much. They work well in support of the coastal interdiction effort. Ensuring that targets are pirates and not fishermen or other innocents, however, requires access to reliable human informants, who, while not hard to find, have not been cultivated carefully over time nor had the reliability of their information evaluated.

Misidentification already causes problems: one U.S. commander has admitted that it is becoming harder to distinguish legitimate fishermen from pirates, as they both "go to sea in the same places, in the same sort of dhows and armed with the same sort of guns."[22]

This is not to say that pirate bases should be held immune from attack. An attack strategy is possible, provided it is nested within a coherent political strategy that has been communicated adequately to Somalis in the affected areas. No such strategy exists in the public do-

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the Bari coast of Puntland a short distance south of Cape Guardafui. Two fishermen were injured; the nationality of the aircraft has not been identified. Robert Young Pelton, "Terrorists, Pirates or Fishermen: Land-based anti-piracy," *Somalia Report*, 20 April 2012, at http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3257/Terrorists_Pirates_or_Fishermen.

[21] "Somali fishermen beg to end anti-piracy air strikes," AFP, 19 May 2012, at http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5geO4mma5XDBvvpM097xWa5lgvTlg?docId=CNG.acf68785b74fc99190c108c221c97cfa.591. Puntland's government also appears to have taken the EU's lesson to heart by mounting its own helicopter raid on a suspected pirate. "Official: Somali pirate leader targeted in helicopter attack," *Washington Post*, 6 June 2012, at http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/official-somali-pirate-leader-targeted-in-helicopter-attack/2012/06/06/gJQAQTJqIV_story.html.

[22] Nick Hopkins, "Outgunned Somali pirates can hardly believe their luck," *The Guardian*, 8 May 2012, at http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/may/08/outgunned-somali-pirates-luck?newsfeed=true; JD, "Fishing vessel attacked by naval forces," *Somalia Report*, 26 March 2012, at http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3152/Fishing_Vessel_Attacked_by_Naval_Forces.

main.[23] Claims made by officials that the EU has an engagement strategy for the Horn of Africa as a whole count for nothing at the local level. One reason for reluctance to aggressively attack pirate bases is that pirates could take relatively simple counter-measures such as murdering hostages publically and repeatedly.[24]

Pirates may be down, but not out

Pirates have proved to be highly adaptable: To begin with, so far there has been a continuing supply of eager young men who can serve as rapid replacements for pirates who are captured. Second, pirate leaders can send extra boats to evade the naval patrols. Moreover, if pirates are caught, they will be returned with useful intelligence on naval positions and tactics, thanks to the policy of "catch-and-release." [25] Indeed, despite pre-existing agreements, both the United States and United Kingdom found it difficult to offload their recent pirate captures onto regional states for trial.[26]

The pirates have other tactics as well. Instead of trying to overwhelm naval patrols with numbers, pirates could use diversionary tactics to draw naval vessels off station, thereby allowing pirate attack craft to slip out to sea. Beyond the coast, out of sight of land, pirates have shown no hesitation about operating at range, as the seizure of the Iranian-owned *Eglantine* off the Maldives demonstrated.[27] As one observer put it, following pirate attacks and

[23] "European ground offensive in Somalia would put civilians in harm's way," *Defence Report*, 1 April 2012, at http://defencereport.com/european-ground-offensive-in-somalia-would-put-civilians-in-harms-way/; Hans-Georg Ehrhart and Kerstin Petretto, *The EU and Somalia: Counter-Piracy and the Question of a Comprehensive Approach* (Hamburg: Study for the Greens/ European Free Alliance, February 2012), at http://www.greens-efa.eu/fileadmin/dam/Documents/Studies/Ehrhart_Petretto_EUandSomalia_2012_fin.pdf.

[24] Mohamed Beerdhige, "Pirates threaten to kill hostages if attacked," *Somalia Report*, 16 May 2012, at http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3361

[25] Hopkins, "Outgunned Somali pirates."

[26] Mike Pflantz, "Royal Navy may have to set pirates free," *Daily Telegraph*, 18 January 2012, at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/9023768/Royal-Navy-may-have-to-set-pirates-free.html; C.J. Chivers, "Seized pirates in legal limbo, with no formula for trials," *New York Times*, 27 January 2012, at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/28/world/africa/seized-pirates-in-legal-limbo-with-no-formula-for-trials.html. Also, Brian Brady, "Navy frees four out of five suspected Somali pirates," *The Independent*, 8 April 2012, at http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/navy-frees-four-out-of-five-suspected-somali-pirates-7626977.html.

[27] "Somali pirates 'seize ship off Maldives,'" *BBC News*, 26th March 2012 at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-17518631. This is probably the ship that the Iranian Navy re-captured in a violent two-day confrontation. "Iran frees vessel hijacked in Indian Ocean,"

seizures as far away as Oman and Iran, piracy was no longer an "off the coast of Somalia problem. This is also an Arabian Sea problem." [28]

Finally, an influx of new capital from criminal syndicates outside Somalia may be paying for the pirates to be patient negotiators, holding out for higher ransom payments. By removing the need to monetize their captures quickly, the pirates can prolong negotiations to the point that ship owners need to settle at higher terms to avoid having their cargo spoil and causing the cargo, and perhaps the vessel, to become a total loss.

The pirate economy

In 2011, pirate income was estimated to be in the range of $146 million to $150 million, compared to $81.6 million in 2010 and $70 million in 2009.[29] This influx of money into the pirate areas of Somalia has had a pernicious social effect in drug and alcohol abuse, prostitution, and social division.[30] Nonetheless, its financial benefits have been considerable. There is anecdotal evidence of new buildings and flashy cars, and pirate leaders have freely admitted that they are rich. Anja Shortland, in an important Chatham House report, used satellite images to make this point. She demonstrates that significant development has occurred in Garowe the administrative capital of Puntland and in Puntland's northern port of Bossasso. Conversely, little has taken place in the coastal regions, which suggests that the major beneficiaries are Puntland' s elites.

This elite enrichment has been recognized for some time. However, the beneficiaries have not been confined to this group alone. Huge profits have unquestionably created a criminal class whose wealth gives them significant political influence. Equally, there is also evidence that income from pirate ransoms has been spread widely through clan connections to the point that possibly thousands of people throughout Puntland in particular have ben-

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Reuters, 3 April 2012, at
http://af.reuters.com/article/commoditiesNews/idAFL6E8F3AJR20120403.

[28] Ivan Gale, "Piracy threatens coastal economy," *The National*, 23 August 2011, at
http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/industry-insights/economics/piracy-threatens-coastal-economy.

[29] Insurance industry sources.

[30] Robyn Hunter, "Somali pirates living the high life," *BBC News*, 28 October 2008 at
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7650415.stm; "Somali pirate attacks decline; hopes sparked for end of scourge," Associated Press, 26 September 2012 at
http://www.heraldandnews.com/members/news/inside/article_5fbb7418-0777-11e2-b946-0019bb2963f4.html.

efitted from piracy's success. What impact the major setback that al-Shabaab has suffered (see below) will have on the disbursement of ransom money is unknown at this time.

However, the biggest endorsement for Shortland's findings was provided by the Puntland government, which released a statement that denied her assertions in terms so vehement that it succeeded only in provoking the feeling that it "doth protest too much." [31] While the government pointed out correctly that Puntland had incarcerated large numbers of pirates, the fact remains that few pirate organizers and negotiators have been arrested and, while the pirate operating bases may now be concentrated south of Puntland in the Galmudug autonomous region of Somalia, organizers and higher ups in the pirate enterprise remain in Puntland, and only small fry or those who embarrass the Puntland regime are arrested.[32]

The nexus of piracy and terrorism

A worry about possible links between pirates and terrorists has been a concern for a number of years. It took on added urgency when Islamists emerged as a notable political presence in Somalia in 2006, when the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) took control between Mogadishu and the Kenyan border. When al-Shabaab appeared out of the rubble of the

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[31] "Somalia: 'Pirate research' insult to common sense," *Garowe Online*, 15 January 2012, at http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Piracy_Research_Insult_to_Common_Sense.shtml. See also Robert Young Pelton's strangely intemperate response, "Plunder, Politics, Presumption and Puntland," *Somalia Report*, 14 January 2012, at http://piracyreport.com/index.php/post/2530/Plunder_Politics_Presumption_and_Puntland, and the subsequent more detailed commentary by H.E. Saeed Mohamed Rage, Puntland's Minister for Maritime Transport, Ports and Counter-Piracy, "Rebuttal to 'Somalia Piracy Research' by Dr. Anja Shortland," *Garowe Online*, 5 February 2012, at http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Rebuttal_to_Somalia_Piracy_Research_by_Dr_Anja_Shortland.shtml.

[32] Shine Omar, "Puntland, Somaliland prepares to fight pirates," *Somalia Report*, 20 January 2012, at http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/2575/Puntland_Somaliland_Prepare_to_Fight_Pirates; Ahmed Abdi and Robert Young Pelton, "The Negotiators – the Business Side of Pirate Ransoms," *Somalia Report*, 3 May 2012, at http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3308. The pirates arrested in May 2012, for example, were the gang that had kidnapped and brutalized the Johansen family and then held off a previous rescue attempt, killing five soldiers in the process. "Somalia's Puntland police arrest 11 pirates," Reuters, 28 May 2012, at http://af.reuters.com/article/commoditiesNews/idAFL5E8GR2JT20120528, and "Bid to rescue Danish hostages from Somali pirates' fails," *BBC News*, 10 March 2011, at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12708168.

ICU's defeat in early 2007 concerns rose again.[33] Objectively, it would seem that pirates understand the risks to their enterprise should they be directly linked to terrorist groups. Certainly the relatively restrained use of force against pirates might change dramatically should they be found to be a terrorist enterprise. Nonetheless, press reports in 2011 suggested that pirate money was flowing to al-Shabaab, which led that reporter to conclude that the long-anticipated pirate-terrorist nexus had been finally been realized.[34] Further investigation indicates that the pirates were paying off al-Shabaab to prevent further interference in their business. The United National Monitoring Group (UNMG), in its 2011 report, described the payments as similar to those expected by local clan leaders within the context of clan relationships.[35]

While Somali pirates may want nothing to do with terrorists, terrorist groups have studied piracy tactics, and the extent and future direction of the relationship between al-Shabaab pirates, even if it is simply payoff's, and al-Shabaab and the Al Qaeda affiliate in Yemen, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), cannot be ignored, because al-Shabaab does have contacts with pirates and because Yemen "dominates the Bab el-Mandeb strait, which controls access to the southern Red Sea." [36]

Islamist groups are far from blind to the opportunity that disrupting shipping may present. The Al Qaeda strategist al-Suri has written about attacking the Bab el-Mandeb using mines, piracy, or suicide operatives.[37] There has also been "chatter" on Islamist websites suggesting more than a passing interest in what the pirates have achieved.[38] Suggestions have been

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[33] See for example, Gal Luft and Anne Korin, "Terrorism goes to sea, " *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2004. http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/60266/gal-luft-and-anne-korin/terrorism-goes-to-sea. For a history of Islamism in Somalia and significance of al-Shabaab militancy see Martin N. Murphy, *Somalia the New Barbary? Piracy and Islam in the Horn of Africa* (New York and London: Columbia University Press/Hurst, 2011), pp. 139-143 and 149-156.

[34] Richard Lough, "Pirate ransom cash ends up with Somali militants," Reuters, 6 July 2011, at http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/07/06/somalia-piracy-idUSLDE7650U320110706.

[35] United Nations, *Report on the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council Resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009)*, S/2011/433, 18 July 2011, pp. 27-32, at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2011/433

[36] W. Andrew Terrill, *The Conflicts in Yemen and U.S. National Security* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2011), p. 75.

[37] Brynjar Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al-Qaida Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri* (London: Hurst & Co, 2007), p. 401.

[38] See, for example, "Jihadist website commentary argues 'maritime terrorism' strategic necessity," *Biyokulule Online*, 29 April 2008. This website is a known venue for supporters rather than operatives, but similar rhetoric has been noted on extremist sites that are associated more closely with

made that Al Qaeda might launch attacks on shipping from Yemen and cooperate with al-Shabaab.[39] Material taken from Bin Laden's compound after his death indicated a continuing interest in attacking oil and gas supplies (perhaps using the small boats tactics employed against the *Limburg* off Yemen in 2002), and the attack on the *M Star* in the Strait of Hormuz that prompted the Department of Homeland Security to issue an advisory in May 2011.[40] Another report emerged subsequently, pointing to continuing Al Qaeda interest in attacking cruise ships.[41]

Yemen is not yet a failed state. Its plight is not yet as dire as Somalia's, but it is politically fragile and economically weak.[42] It is fair to say that it is unclear how substantial a threat AQAP actually presents. However, Al Qaeda's two successful maritime operations were both launched from there: the suicide boat attack on the USS *Cole* in Aden harbor in 2000, and the attack on the *Limburg*.

Even if it would be too strong to suggest that al-Shabaab and AQAP are working together, the picture painted by U.S. intelligence certainly implies a desire to cooperate and coordinate their activities to mutual benefit. Whether or not this is a salient factor, the United States has clearly made the decision to mount a sustained campaign of drone strikes against

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Al Qaeda. A summary of the contents of this posting can also be found at "Al-Qaeda Affiliated E-Journal: 'The Sea is The Next Strategic Step Towards Controlling The World And Restoring The Islamic Caliphate,'" MEMRI, 1 May 2008, at http://www.memrijttm.org/content/en/blog_personal.htm?id=378.

[39] For example, "Qaeda trained for attacks in Arabian Sea: report," *Alarabiya.net,* 7 January 2010, at http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2010/01/07/96583.pdf, and "Al Qaeda threatens to close key oil artery," UPI, 24 February 2010, at http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2010/02/24/Al-Qaida-threatens-to-close-key-oil-artery/UPI-27151267027462/.

[40] Eileen Sullivan and Matt Apuzzo, "Al-Qaida eyed oil tankers as bombing targets," Associated Press, 20 May 2011, at http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43115189/ns/us_news-security/t/al-qaida-eyed-oil-tankers-bombing-targets/#.TmU_u2rtcZs; on the *M Star,* see Justin McCurry, "Japanese oil tanker attacked by terrorists, says UAE," *Christian Science Monitor,* 6 August 2010, at http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2010/0806/Japanese-oil-tanker-attacked-by-terrorists-says-UAE; on the *Limburg,* see Martin N. Murphy, *Small Boats, Weak States, Dirty Money: Piracy and Maritime Terrorism in the Modern World* (New York and London: Columbia University Press/Hurst, 2009), pp. 202-3.

[41] Nic Robertson, Paul Cruickshank, and Tim Lister, "Documents reveal al-Qaeda's plans for seizing cruise ships, carnage in Europe," CNN, 1 May 2012, at http://www.cnn.com/2012/04/30/world/al-qaeda-documents-future/index.html?hpt=hp_c2.

[42] United States Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, "Al Qaeda in Yemen and Somalia: A Ticking Time Bomb," 21 January 2010, pp. 8-9, at http://foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Yemen.pdf.

both groups.[43] Open-source analysts can find evidence of mutual rhetorical support in both organizations' public statements, but evidence of a firm operational link has proved elusive.[44]

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[43] Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, "US expands its drone war into Somalia," *New York Times*, 1 July 2011, at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/02/world/africa/02somalia.html?_r=1&ref=somalia; Craig Whitlock and Greg Miller, "US assembling secret drone bases in Africa, Arabian Peninsula, officials say," *Washington Post*, 20 September 2011, at http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-building-secret-drone-bases-in-africa-arabian-peninsula-officials-say/2011/09/20/gIQAJ8rOjK_story.html. For an investigation into the drone program as a whole and the international network of bases that support it, see Nick Turse, "America's secret empire of drone bases," *Huffington Post*, 17 October 2011, at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nick-turse/americas-secret-empire-of_b_1016206.html. In December 2011, however, the United States revealed that it now doubted the Yemeni-supplied intelligence that was the basis for at least one strike in which a government critic was killed: Adam Entous and Julian E. Barnes, "US doubts intelligence that led to Yemen strike," *Wall Street Journal*, 29 December 2011, at http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203899504577126883574284126.html (30 December 2011). Whether as a direct result of these doubts or not, wider questions were raised about political oversight of both CIA and Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) drone operations. Adam Entous and Siobhan Gorman, "Tensions rising over drone secrecy," *Wall Street Journal*, 30 December 2011, at http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203899504577129014177012028.html?mod=WSJ_article_forsub (30 December 2011). It is unclear whether these doubts were resolved or the perceived benefits of the program outweighed the risks, because in spring 2012 the United States announced that it was relaxing engagement rules on drone use (Adam Entous, Siobhan Gorman, and Julian E. Barnes, "US relaxes drone rules," *Wall Street Journal*, 26 April 2012, at http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304723304577366251852418174.html), and that it was also making details of the program more public (Julian E. Barnes, "US rethinks secrecy on drone program," *Wall Street Journal*, 17 May 2012, at http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303879604577410481496895786.html). Details of the process emerged subsequently in the *New York Times*: Jo Becker and Scott Shane, "Secret 'kill list' tests Obama's principles," *New York Times*, 29 May 2012, at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/29/world/obamas-leadership-in-war-on-al-qaeda.html?pagewanted=1&ref=general&src=me. For a list of possible attacks, see *Yemen: reported US covert action 2012*, Bureau of Investigative Reporting, 8 May 2012, at http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/2012/05/08/yemen-reported-us-covert-action-2012/; and *Yemen: reported US covert actions 2001-2011*, Bureau of Investigative Reporting, 29 March 2012, at http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/2012/03/29/yemen-reported-us-covert-actions-since-2001/.

[44] Christopher Anzalone, "Dangerous Liaisons? Evaluating Relations with Al-Shabab and Al-Qaeda," *Open Security*, 13 August 2011, at http://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/christopher-

Al-Shabaab reportedly swore to support AQAP and exploit the opportunity for the conflicts on either side of the Gulf of Aden to become "increasingly intertwined," in the words of Mukhtar Robow, the al-Shabaab spokesman.[45] Reports suggested that a year later several hundred Somalis with possible Islamist connections may have slipped across the Gulf of Aden into Yemen mingling with the migrant traffic that cross the Gulf for decades.[46] Subsequent reports based on material retrieved from Bin Laden's Abbotabad compound, and interrogations conducted with al-Shabaab members captured in Mogadishu, suggested that AQAP had acted as the go-between for Bin Laden and al-Shabaab and that before his death Bin Laden had agreed to grant al-Shabaab equivalent status. Despite this inducement, al-Shabaab's leaders apparently refused to shift the focus away from Somalia and onto U.S. and Western targets, or to change the group's name to Al Qaeda in East Africa, fearing heightened U.S. interest.[47] Events in late September and October of 2012, make it likely that al-Shabaab is on the verge of being eliminated as a viable organization by the combination of Kenyan and African Union forces. Al-Shabaab has reportedly been driven from its last major Somali stronghold, the port city of Kismayo, and has been forced to flee from most of its strategic towns and regions of Somalia. It would be premature to claim that al-Shabaab has been permanently eliminated from Somalia; the option of reverting to guerilla operations remains. Nonetheless, they have suffered a major defeat because support from

anzalone/dangerous-liaison-evaluating-relations-between-al-shabab-and-al-qa; and Healy and Hill, *Yemen and Somalia*, p. 8. Author discussion with Matt Bryden of UNMG, Washington, D.C., 20 July 2011.

[45] Scott Baldauf, "Is al Qaeda in Yemen connected to al Qaeda in Somalia?" *Christian Science Monitor*, 7 January 2010, at http://www.csmonitor.com/World/2010/0107/Is-Al-Qaeda-in-Yemen-connected-to-Al-Qaeda-in-Somalia; Mohammed Ibrahim, "Somali rebels pledge to send fighters to aid Yemen jihad," *New York Times*, 2 January 2010, at http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/02/world/africa/02somalia.html; Sally Healy and Ginny Hill, *Yemen and Somalia: terrorism, Shadow Networks and the Limitations of State Building*, Chatham House Briefing Paper, October 2010, pp. 7-8.

[46] Nasser Arrabyee, "Somali fighters arrive in Yemen as troops, tribesmen tighten noose on Al Qaeda," *Yemen Observer*, 25 August 2011, at http://www.yobserver.com/front-page/10021309.html.

[47] Brian Bennett, "Al Qaeda's Yemen branch has aided Somali militants, US says," *Los Angeles Times*, 18 July 2011, at http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jul/18/world/la-fg-bin-laden-somalia-20110718.

the clan's that are the bedrock of Somali society is always contingent upon success. This could mean the end of this fundamentalist organization.[48]

While al-Shabaab has taken a major below, Indian analysts worry about another potential aspect of the pirate-terrorist nexus. They have expressed concern that there could be cooperation between Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the Pakistani based terrorist organization that attacked India's Parliament in 2001 and Mumbai in 2008, and Somali pirates. This potential linkage remains speculative, but for Indian security specialists the problem of piracy in the Arabian Sea has a more troubling potential than the act of piracy itself.[49]

While any realistic threat of complete closure of the Gulf of Aden would provoke a major political and military response, much the same effect could be achieved using low-level attacks to persuade the international shipping and insurance industries that the transit risks were too great. Like almost everything else relating to terrorism, the threat must not be overstated; attacking large merchant vessels requires specialized training, tailored weapons, and a logistics base that is potentially detectable.[50] One of the principal reasons why Al Qaeda was unable to build on its early maritime attacks was because it was unable to establish such a base.[51] However, the increasing availability and rapidly decreasing cost of truck-mounted anti-ship missiles, lightweight guided weapons small enough to be fired from small craft, and sophisticated naval mines could alter this calculation.[52]

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[48] http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/somalia-kismayos-future-clouded-by-prospected-of-renewed-clan-warfare-say-residents/2012/10/04/83d55bb8-0e2d-11e2-ba6c-07bd866eb71a_story.html

[49] http://soodvikram.blogspot.com/2012/01/pirates-of-arabian-sea-and-other.html.

[50] For a discussion of the difficulties and a review of some of the weapon options, see Murphy, *Small Boats, Weak States, Dirty Money*, pp. 231-241 and 254-259. Also, Jonathan Saul, "ANALYSIS – Vital shipping lanes can weather turmoil in Yemen," Reuters, 3 June 2011, at http://af.reuters.com/article/energyOilNews/idAFLDE7520RS20110603?sp=true; and "Al Qaida's plan to attack oil tankers possible, but experts say tankers not so easy to blow up," Associated Press, 21 May 2011, at http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/al-qaidas-plan-to-hijack-oil-tankers-possible-but-experts-say-tankers-not-so-easy-to-blow-up/2011/05/21/AFHjaZ8G_story.html.

[51] Martin N. Murphy, "Piracy and the Exploitation of Sanctuary," in Jeffrey H. Norwitz (ed.), *Armed Groups: Studies in National Security, Counterterrorism, and Counterinsurgency* (Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, 2008, p. 167).

[52] Murphy, *Somalia the New Barbary?* pp. 177-8.

Conclusions: Implications of reduction in pirate attacks?

The number of successful hijackings declined in the second half of 2011, and this decline appears to be continuing. Is this enough to justify a reduction in the numbers of warships that the world's leading maritime nations have committed to the anti-piracy mission? The cost for the navies has undoubtedly been high—and domestic austerity measures have not made the argument for sustaining today's level of commitment any easier.

The United States, in particular, remains the ultimate guarantor of global maritime security. Because of the extent to which Somali pirates have expanded their operations, and the number of navies that have deployed to the region to counter them, the problem can no longer be separated from wider Indian Ocean geo-politics. A naval withdrawal would put seafarers at immediate risk. Ship self-protection measures need back-up. If they fail and crews need to retreat to a citadel, the only way they can be rescued is by naval force. Without it, pirates can take as long as they like to break down the citadel door and capture those inside.

On land, the government of Puntland continues to present a Janus face to the world. On the one side, it has arrested around 300 pirates and established a maritime police force (PMPF) although now that financial support from the UAE has been withdrawn along with the original contractor, its continuing viability must be in doubt;[53] on the other, it has arrested only two of the kingpins known to operate from its territory. The suggestion that it is happy to sweep up unimportant foot soldiers while allowing the organizers to reap profits from their operations in below its southern border, has not been allayed.

The role of outside investors and their links with the pirate kingpins inside Somalia is important. The links between them need to be exposed, the money flows disrupted, and the interests of all those who benefit from pirate income put in jeopardy. Tracing these investors and tracking the money flows back and forth is difficult, but not insurmountable.[54]

The U.S. Treasury Department has the skills to track money flows, but its resources are already stretched severely by tracking terrorist money flows and countering other financial crimes. Interpol also has the necessary skills and additionally has the means to extend its

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[53] Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, 'Private army formed to fight Somali pirates leaves troubled legacy'. *New York Times*, 4 October 2012 at
http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/05/world/africa/private-army-leaves-troubled-legacy-in-somalia.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

[54] "Suspected pirate financier arrested," *Somalia Report*, 18 April 2011, at
http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/559/Suspected_Pirate_Financier_Arrested.

investigative reach to make connections between investors, kingpins, and individual pirate operations. It has made some initial moves, but, like the U.S. Treasury, it is short of resources. Britain and the Seychelles have stood up an information fusion center called the Regional Anti-Piracy Prosecutions Intelligence Coordination Center (RAPPICC) near the islands' capital, Victoria. Its purpose is to facilitate the capture and prosecution of pirate organizers and financiers, and it is a further step in the right direction.[55]

The Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) has worked hard to find solutions to many of the early obstacles to effective counter-piracy operations, particularly in the realms of law, judicial capacity, and self-protection measures, including the adoption of armed guards onboard merchant ships. However, CGPCS lacks any clear political and operational focus. Arguably, it needs to be supplemented by a body drawn from states with the will and the resources to be able to bridge the gap between sea- and land-based responses, and coordinate these more closely with international intelligence-gathering and law enforcement efforts. Continuing pirate activity in the Arabian Sea is a formula for further disruption in an already unsettled region.

For their part, the pirates have proved themselves to be capable and adaptable enemies of peaceful commerce. Fewer successful hijackings have not, so far, dented the one metric that matters to them: their income. There is no suggestion that the pirates have lost their appetite for income. Some, at least among the kingpin organizers, have accumulated considerable resources. Their past record of success has led investors, some overseas, to back them— apparently to the point where they can bargain harder for larger ransoms. J. Peter Pham of the Atlantic Council suggests that investors are often ethnic Somali businessmen living overseas and suggest starting a piracy business to a relative inside Somalia.[56]

Given Somalia's close proximity to the world's most vital source of oil, and the naval focus needed to deter Iran from disrupting shipments through the Straits of Hormuz, a reduc-

[55] Colin Freeman, "British police to launch Seychelles pirate hunting base," *Daily Telegraph*, 8 October 2011, at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/piracy/8815552/British-police-to-launch-Seychelles-pirate-hunting-base.html; Foreign & Commonwealth Office, "International community targets pirate kingpins," 21 February 2012, at http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=733048382; United States Department of State, "Piracy: Where We Are Today," remarks of Thomas P. Kelly, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs at the American Petroleum Institute, Biennial Tanker Conference, Orlando, FL, 21 May 2012, at http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/rm/191603.htm.

[56] Chana Joffe-Walt, "Behind The Business Plan Of Pirates Inc.," NPR, 30 April 2009 http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=103657301.

tion of naval presence would introduce further uncertainty into an already trouble Arabian Sea littoral. It may turn out that private security forces do become the best and most long lasting anti-piracy measure, but until there is enough data to reach this judgment it is the combination of naval presence and best management practices supported by private security that seems to offer the best hope for keeping the problem of Arabian Sea piracy at a tolerable level.[57]

[57] http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/09/25/party-appears-to-be-ending-for-somali-pirates/ and http://www.heraldandnews.com/members/news/inside/article_5fbb7418-0777-11e2-b946-0019bb2963f4.html

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India-Pakistan maritime rivalry in the Arabian Sea

Dr. Satu Limaye

Introduction

The India-Pakistan maritime rivalry in the Arabian Sea must be assessed in the context of the broader rivalry between the two countries. The contemporary interstate contest between Islamabad and New Delhi has its origins in British colonial rule; the Indian nationalist struggle for independence from Great Britain; the partition of British India into two successor states; and their subsequent wars, crises, and competitive foreign and security policies, including acquisitions of advanced military capabilities such as nuclear weapons and missiles.

India-Pakistan maritime rivalry in the Arabian Sea derives from and expresses, rather than drives, a deep and complex state-to-state competition. In the hierarchy of India-Pakistan dangers and mutual discontent, maritime competition has been a comparatively limited though not insignificant concern and it may remain that way. On the other hand the maritime dimension of the India-Pakistan rivalry could increase and be sustained in the years ahead, for two main reasons. First, a number of recent incidents involving terrorism, piracy, and "loose ships," have highlighted of the maritime dimension of the fraught relationship.

Second, ongoing structural developments in the economic, strategic, and national interests of the two countries are also working to increase the attention and interactions that Islamabad and New Delhi are likely to have in the Arabian Sea. Some of these structural changes include India's "Look West" policy. This policy includes a naval diplomacy component across the Arabian Sea littoral as well as India's rising emphasis on its role in the Indian Ocean. Pakistan meanwhile has been playing an active participant and leadership role in U.S.-led maritime security and counter-piracy efforts—increasing Islamabad's own role in the area

An India-Pakistan maritime rivalry could complicate U.S. relations with both countries, and impinges upon U.S. interests and activities in the region. It is worth noting here that U.S. relations with Pakistan and the Pakistani Navy in the maritime domain are considerably better than U.S. relations with Pakistan on land—notwithstanding the recent announcement that Pakistan would re-open an overland supply route for NATO forces operating in Af-

ghanistan. Given the otherwise troubled U.S.-Pakistani security relationship, constructive and cooperative maritime security ties should be welcomed and further developed.

US-India naval cooperation in the Indian Ocean region is a promising element of the U.S.-India bilateral security relationship. However, the Indian navy/military as well as the Indian politicians and policy-makers who closely supervise Indian security forces regard U.S.-Pakistan cooperation as a security issue. During several Track 1.5 meetings this author has been told anything that improves Pakistani naval capabilities is viewed with concern because the Indians see themselves as the only likely "target." Such an Indian perspective has an impact on US-Indian "trust."

The significance of the Arabian Sea to India and Pakistan

Beyond history, the Arabian Sea area is critical to both India and Pakistan for many material reasons. Specifically, the Arabian Sea "economic and energy intensity" of both Pakistan and India makes the region increasingly important as an intersection point of each other's interests—and vulnerabilities. Hence, their rivalry is increasingly likely to be expressed in this realm.

India's and Pakistan's most important economic centers are along the Arabian Sea. In Pakistan's case, two of its four provinces face the Arabian Sea. Sindh province is home to Karachi, which accounts for about 65 percent of Pakistan's total GDP (and many other things such as customs duties, and taxes) and is Pakistan's most populous city, its financial center, and its main port. Baluchistan, Pakistan's second province bordering the Arabian Sea littoral, is sparsely populated but is stocked with natural gas, coal, copper, and other valuable resources. It also is beset with a long-running insurgency; is a haven (especially in the northern section of the province around the city of Quetta) for militants fighting the Afghanistan government and ISAF/NATO/US troops in Afghanistan; and is home to the port of Gwadar, which is being developed for both commercial and military uses. Though both Sindh and Baluchistan provinces are important economically, Punjab province—which is inland, bordering India and untouched by the Arabian Sea—remains Pakistan's historical, political, social, and even psychological center.

In India's case, the Arabian Sea littoral states of Maharashtra and Gujarat are among the country's top five states in terms of GDP and are the two top states in terms of per capita GDPs. Mumbai city in Maharashtra is estimated to account for 25 percent of India's total economic output, 40 percent of maritime trade, and 70 percent of capital transactions, [1] and is home to a significant share of India's foreign direct investment and company head-

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[1] "India: Mumbai's unique security problems will persist," *Oxford Analytica*, December 23, 2008.

quarters. Three of India's major ports and several intermediate ports are along the Arabian Sea in these two states.

Second, both India and Pakistan trade extensively across the Arabian Sea to the Gulf/Middle East, Europe, Africa, and North America. Both countries trade more to their west across the Arabian Sea than in other directions such as north overland to and through Central Asia or within South Asia itself—though in India's case trade with East Asia is beginning to grow and assume some significance. An overwhelming component of this "West-oriented" trade for both countries is energy; therefore, this trade is critically important to the two economies, which are heavily dependent upon external energy resources and severely affected by price increases for those energy resources. In addition to purchasing energy and having it shipped across the Arabian Sea, both countries have plans for land-based pipelines inland along the Arabian Sea, and there are also plans for a deep-sea pipeline from Oman to India.

The first land-based plan calls for a Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline (TAPI). The second proposal is the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline (IPI). In May 2012, news reports stated that India and Pakistan would sign an agreement to move ahead with plans to buy Turkmenistan gas and move it to both countries through the pipeline.[2] However, full implementation of these energy pipelines, either over land or in the deep sea, is far from complete and therefore unlikely to relieve the importance of the Arabian Sea to both countries in the foreseeable future.

Third, the Pakistani and Indian navies are concentrated along the Arabian Sea. For Pakistan, this has always been the case, especially since East Pakistan gained independence as Bangladesh in 1971 and Pakistan therefore no longer based national naval and maritime assets in the Bay of Bengal. Simply, Pakistan's navy is now concentrated in its "near waters." In India's case, the navy's Western Command is designated the "sword arm" of the navy: the best officers and capabilities have traditionally been assigned to this command. There is evidence that as India's interests in East Asia develop, more infrastructure, personnel, and assets are being based on the eastern side of India.[3] However, India's focus on the Arabian Sea will not diminish even if additional attention and resources are assigned to the eastern maritime area. (This point is discussed further below in the section "Elements of the India-Pakistan maritime rivalry in the Arabian Sea.")

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[2] See Tom Wright and Santanu Choudhury, "India, Pakistan Agree on Gas Pipeline," *Wall Street Journal*, May 23, 2012, p. A7.

[3] On relative priorities given to the Indian Navy's Western and Eastern Commands, see Sudha Ramachandran, "Indian navy pumps up eastern muscle," *Asia Times*, August 20, 2011, and Sujan Dutta, "Navy priority signal to eastern ports," *The Telegraph*, August 9, 2011.

A final factor making the Arabian Sea more important for both India and Pakistan is the narrowing of the geographical scope of the India-Pakistan competitive area. With the creation of independent Bangladesh from East Pakistan in the wake of the 1971 India-Pakistan War, India-Pakistan's *physical* competition is restricted to contested land borders, the Kashmir territory, and the Arabian Sea in the west (which also includes the ongoing dispute over Sir Creek in the Rann of Kutch.)

The Sir Creek dispute is important in the context of this analysis because it directly implicates India-Pakistan rivalry along the Arabian Sea littoral—though given the topography and nature of the dispute, there does not appear to be any *direct* operational role for either navy. Basically, the dispute stems from historical dispensation of the marshy area based on pre-independence agreements. Pakistan insists that the entire territory should belong to the province of Sindh, based on a 1914 agreement between the provincial government and the Princely State of Kutch. India rejects this view, saying that subsequent arrangements argue for a division through the mid-channel.

Pakistani arguments are essentially historical. Indian arguments are a combination of legal and technical. Further complicating the picture is that the course of marshy inlet is not fixed; therefore, Pakistan could lose several thousand kilometers of claims to its EEZ. The dispute has played a direct role in the rivalry though not so much in the naval realm. The 1965 India-Pakistan War in part derived from skirmishes around Sir Creek and just after the Kargil War in 1999, Indian military planes shot down a Pakistan navy surveillance aircraft over the area. Despite many rounds of discussions, no resolution has been reached. Unsuccessful efforts to find a compromise on Sir Creek occurred as recently as June 2012.

Elements of India-Pakistan maritime rivalry in the Arabian Sea

India-Pakistan maritime rivalry in the Arabian Sea manifests itself in many ways. First, India-Pakistan wars and crises have been played out in and around the Arabian Sea. Of their four major conflicts, only the first, in 1947-1948, had no maritime component. The 1965, 1971, and 1999 conflicts between India and Pakistan all had maritime components. During the 1965 India-Pakistan War, India restricted its naval power to patrolling in the Arabian Sea. On the other hand, Pakistan put its navy to good use, and attacked India's coastal radars at Dwarka.[4] The action remains an important milestone in Pakistan's naval tradition and is one of two actions that are highlighted on the Pakistan Navy webpage (the other is the sink-

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[4] http://www.scribd.com/doc/23104079/Mohammed-Khalid-India-s-Naval-Strategy-in-Changing-Indian-Ocean-Geopolitics.

ing of the INS *Khukri* during the 1971 war).[5] Though not as important as land-based operations, the Arabian Sea was a site of significant India-Pakistan naval action during the 1971 war.[6]

Even the 1999 non-war over Kargil had a maritime dimension in the Arabian Sea.[7] Just a month after the land-based skirmish, a Pakistan Atlantique naval surveillance plane was shot down by the Indian Air Force over the Rann of Kutch adjacent to the Arabian Sea.

Even in periods of acute India-Pakistan crises, such as the one following the attacks on India's parliament in 2001, a maritime component of the rivalry has existed. According to an Indian analysis, during that crisis and the subsequent mobilization, India "demonstrated that it could proactively handle Pakistan by shifting naval assets from the eastern seaboard."[8]

Second, in a broader rather than strictly maritime sense, India-Pakistan rivalry expresses itself in competition for relationships around the Arabian Sea littoral, notably in the Persian Gulf. The rivalry is particularly centered in the Arabian Sea for a complex of historical, religious, and foreign policy reasons. India's 2005 "Look West" policy in 2005 to match its "Look East" policy was specifically targeted on Gulf States.[9] A maritime/naval dimension is an important element of the "Look West" policy. Both India and Pakistan compete to increase maritime roles and relationships around the Arabian Sea and build up their capabilities and assets there.[10]

More recently, a number of additional factors have contributed to growing maritime rivalry in the Arabian Sea between India and Pakistan. Terrorist attacks launched against Mumbai in November 2008 were the first in which a maritime component was critical. The gunmen

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[5] For a Pakistan Navy perspective of key naval conflicts with India, see www.paknavy.gov.pk/history.htm.

[6] For details on naval actions both on the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal, see http://www.ndu.edu/nesa/docs/Gill%20atlas%20final%20version.pdf.

[7] http://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2011-03/indias-cold-start-too-hot.

[8] http://www.claws.in/index.php?action=master&task=586&u_id=94.

[9] PM launches "Look West" policy to boost cooperation with the Gulf, press release, Prime Minister's Office, Government of India, http://pmindia.nic.in/press-details.php?nodeid=271.

[10] See Sanjaya Baru, "Look West policy," *Business Standard*, March 8, 2010, in which he discusses the Indian Navy's launch of its own "Look West" policy to increase maritime engagement of the Gulf states following the Prime Minister's 2005 announcement. See also David Scott, "India's 'Extended Neighborhood' Concept: Power Projection for a Rising Power," *India Review* 8:2, esp. pp. 133-136.

appear to have travelled by boat from Karachi on Pakistan's Arabian Sea coast into waters close to Mumbai, where they hijacked an Indian fishing trawler and then used small dinghies to land onshore at Mumbai. The episode increased India-Pakistan tension and focused attention on the maritime element of the rivalry in a way that no previous naval engagement between the two states had.

Not directly related to the 2008 terrorist attacks, but a sign of ongoing public and political attention, was an incident in which the discarded cargo vessel MV *Wisdom* mysteriously ran aground at Juhu beach in Mumbai in May 2010. There were considerable recriminations in India that the navy and/or coast guard should have spotted the ship and stopped it from running aground at Mumbai—the country's economic capital. Indian analysts have also expressed concern that there could be cooperation between Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a terrorist organization, and Somali pirates, which could lead to further dangers from and in the Arabian Sea. Indeed, leading Indian security specialists have said, "Piracy in the Arabian Sea has been coming dangerously close to the Indian shores."[11] Another ongoing concern has been the capture of fishermen from both countries fishing illegally across the maritime boundary of the two countries in the Arabian Sea. In June 2012, some of these detained fishermen were repatriated as part of a goodwill gesture from both sides.

There have also been recent complaints from Pakistan about India's naval buildup. During an interview in early 2012, Pakistan's naval chief, Asif Sandila, brought up the issue of what he characterized as a "massive Indian naval buildup."[12] While Pakistan's concerns seem to be concentrated on the Indian naval buildup in the Arabian Sea, Pakistani commentators have also suggested in the past that "in any future conflict, Pakistan naval forces should be capable of selectively operating on India's eastern seaboard, threatening its shipping and tying down a portion of the Indian navy in the east."[13]

Similarly, India watches Pakistan's naval buildup.[14] Indian officials and commentators also regularly refer to Sino-Pakistan military and nuclear cooperation, and argue that it is in-

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[11] http://soodvikram.blogspot.com/2012/01/pirates-of-arabian-sea-and-other.html.

[12] The interview with Defense News is accessible at
   http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120220/DEFREG03/302200008/Interview-Adm-Asif-Sandila-Chief-Naval-Staff-Pakistan-Navy.

[13] This comment, from the *Defence Journal of Pakistan*, is cited in "Pakistan's 21st Century Naval Modernisation Programme," May 9, 2012, accessed at
   http://www.futuredirections.org.au/publications/south-west-asia/37-south-a-west-asia-swa/516-pakistans-21st-century-naval-modernisation-programme.html.

[14] An Indian view of the Pakistani naval buildup from mid-2011 is viewable at
   http://maritimeindia.org/perry-pakistan-%E2%80%93-rapid-modernisation-pakistan-navy.

tended to undermine India. Recently, a senior retired Indian Navy officer, speaking publicly and on the record in Washington, D.C., stated that China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) "has already found the way into the Arabian Sea." The former admiral further hinted that, given the close Sino-Pakistan military relationship, India is concerned not just with the Pakistan Navy alone but also perhaps with joint Sino-Pakistan naval collusion. They argue the presence of Chinese ships will boost the morale of the Pakistan Navy and enhance Sino-Pakistan navy-to-navy collaboration which is already growing thanks to the joint Sino-Pak ship building program. (The first Jiangwei class Frigate having been commissioned in China as 'Zulfiqar' and delivered to Pakistan). They correctly assume that subsequent associated technical, professional and tactical interactions will only serve to bolster Sino-Pak maritime co-operation.

Clearly IN contingency planning regarding another crisis/conflict with Pakistan is evolving to take into account the recent phenomena of sustained PLAN presence nearby. They worry that if the need ever arises the capacity of Indian Navy to exercise sea control or sea denial will be severely restricted because it will have to factor in the presence of Chinese naval ships in the vicinity. The USN deployment of USS Enterprise to the Indian Ocean in 1971, to show support for the Pakistanis is never far Indian Navy thinking and is cited is a example of how a third party naval presence can complicate Indian planning. It is not likely that China would be willing to get between India and Pakistan if shooting actually started. But, farfetched or not, the IN must at least consider those implications.

Outside specialists, such as Christophe Jaffrelot, have asserted that there is already a "Chinese-Indian Rivalry for the Arabian Sea."15 He specifically focuses on competing ports or facilities around the littoral, noting that India began to cooperate on a port at Chabahar in Iran less than a hundred miles from the Pakistani port of Gwadar soon after the latter began to be constructed. And now India is also building a new navy-only base (the first) at Karwar, south of Goa.

India-Pakistan rivalry is also exacerbated by the two countries' interactions in counter-piracy activities around the Arabian Sea. Pakistan has been a participant and rotational leader of both the US organized Task Force 150 and Task Force 151.[16] India has refused to join either

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[15] http://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2011/01/14/a_chinese-indian_rivalry_for_the_arabian_sea_99355.html.

16. Task Force 150 is a multinational coalition of warships that conducts maritime security operations in the vicinity of the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf. It boards and inspects ships suspected of transporting terrorists and contraband that could be useful in terrorist activity. Task Force 151 is also an international naval task force that was established to combat pirate attacks of the coast of Somalia and with the Gulf of Aden.

of these task forces, on the grounds that they are not sanctioned by the United Nations. However, India has conducted independent anti-piracy patrols in the internationally recommended transit corridor (IRTC). And at the beginning of 2012, India, along with China and Japan, agreed to coordinate their independent patrols and share information. There is a "bridge" between the independent patrols and Task Force 151 in the form of the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE), which meets quarterly in Bahrain to facilitate information sharing. In this environment, an incident between the Indian and Pakistani navies occurred in June 2011 that created considerable friction—though all the precise details are not available in the public domain.

The contretemps occurred following Pakistani assistance to an Egyptian-flagged MV *Suez* (including Pakistani and Indian crewmen) taken by pirates in the East-West International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) in the Gulf of Aden that is patrolled by warships. Immediately after the incident, India's external affairs minister publicly thanked the Pakistan Navy.[17] However, very shortly after that statement, there were mutual accusations by the two navies that the other's ship had carried out "risky" maneuvers. Pakistan, for example, argued that the INS *Godavari* had "brushed" the PNS *Babur*. India claimed that the PNS *Babur* had damaged Indian aircraft nets on the INS *Godavari*. Both countries lodged protests against the other. This incident took place just days before a previously scheduled meeting of the two countries' foreign secretaries, which had the goal of preparing the ground for a meeting of the two foreign ministers. There is some confusion about the details of the incident itself (e.g., a YouTube video shows an Indian crewman being critical of the Indian Navy for being too slow to respond, whereas other unconfirmed reports suggest that the Pakistani skipper in charge of the MV *Suez* chose to wait for Pakistani rather than Indian naval assistance). There is also confusion over the subsequent mutual responses (it is worth noting that Pakistan seems to have filed the first protest, followed by India), including the gratitude expressed by India's foreign minister for the freeing of Indian captives on the MV *Suez* and the connection of the incident to the upcoming foreign secretary level talks.

India-Pakistan maritime rivalry in the Arabian Sea: implications for the United States

The India-Pakistan rivalry already implicates the United States because it is a critical if constrained partner with both countries. For half a century, the United States has played a role in nudging along the bilateral dialogue process between the two antagonists, and, on occasion, has engaged more actively to defuse acute India-Pakistan tensions. In recent years, and particularly since the end of the Cold War, India and Pakistan have both sought to restrain

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[17] The statement is available at "EAM relieved at safe return of Indian sailors, appreciates Pak assistance," http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530117771.

the other by eliciting pressure from Washington—thereby "outsourcing" to Washington their respective coercive diplomacy.

The United States may now also be implicated in the India-Pakistan maritime rivalry in the Arabian Sea. The main reason is that all three countries have increased their naval presence and activities in the area. The expanded U.S. presence and role in the area stems from the 9/11 attacks, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the growth of Somali piracy and dangers posed by Iran. The expanded U.S. role and activities in the Arabian Sea since 2011 have created asymmetric engagements with India and Pakistan in the Arabian Sea. The U.S. creation of Task Force 150 and Task Force 151 has created a particularly direct and important partnership with Pakistan that has taken a rotational leadership role in both efforts—most recently of Task Force 151, from September 2011 to January 2012.

An example of how India-Pakistan maritime rivalry implicates the United States is the case of the June 2011 India-Pakistan spat over the alleged incident of each other's naval vessels conducting prohibited maneuvers vis-à-vis each other. The incident surely came to the attention of the U.S. Navy, both because of Pakistan's role in Task Force 151 and because of India's participation in SHADE. There is little information available in the public domain about how this incident was handled in either of these mechanisms, and still less publicly available information about how India views Pakistan participation in Task Force 151 and how that participation may or may not have played a role in the incident. It is conceivable that India might believe that Pakistan's navy would feel emboldened in its activities due to its leadership role in Task Force 151.

India, has played an independent but cooperative role in counter-piracy activities. Indian government officials seem particularly insistent (and elliptically defensive) about their contributions to counter-piracy outside the American-led task force framework. For example, speaking to the National Maritime Foundation in July 2011, India's Ambassador the United States Nirupama Rao went into a detailed and somewhat lengthy explanation of India's role without any reference whatsoever to other ongoing activities (such as the U.S.-led task forces, for example).[18]

As Ambassador Rao explains, "With increased presence of naval forces off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, pirates have moved to other areas and increased pirate activity has been witnessed in the larger Indian Ocean area outside the Internationally

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[18].The speech deserves a close reading.

http://www.maritimeindia.org/sites/all/files/pdf/Speech%20by%20Foreign%20Secretary%20Nirupama%20Rao.pdf.

Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC), including close to the West Coast of India. As the piracy prone area has expanded eastwards, the Indian Navy has made additional deployments off the Eastern and North Eastern Arabian Sea."[19]

A year earlier and just a year after Task Force 151 was established, Ambassador Rao gave a major address at India's National Maritime Foundation in which she called fighting piracy of Somalia's coast a "cooperative burden sharing" and praised the Indian Navy, saying that it has "discharged its responsibilities with distinction and is viewed as an indispensable partner not just by regional states but by the UN, EU and NATO naval forces."[20] It is striking that she made no reference to Task Force 151 or the United States in this context.

There are several other instances of Indian officials noting that the current counter-piracy operations are complicating rather than alleviating Indian concerns. India has made few public statements about Pakistan's role in U.S.-led counter-piracy efforts. However, as noted above, it could be intuited that some Indian officials might see the maritime cooperative relationship between the two countries with wariness—especially as it is an exception to the otherwise troubled state of U.S.-Pakistan relations and could be seen as emboldening Pakistani "adventurism" (as perceived by India).

Conclusion

India-Pakistan rivalry is multi-faceted. The naval dimension of the rivalry is an important but not a driving factor. However, there are many reasons that the naval rivalry in the Arabian Sea is likely to be more important in the future. These reasons include: the greater economic, strategic, and national interests that both countries have in and around the Arabian Sea littoral—including naval defense diplomacy with surrounding states; the higher levels of economic and energy dependence in and through the region; India's Indian Ocean ambitions; and Pakistan's participation and rotational leadership in U.S.-led counter-piracy efforts. The fact that there have been incidents of sea-based terrorism against India and direct navy-to-navy incidents between the two countries further exacerbates the situation.

Counter to this trend are some signs of "thawing" in the deep freeze of India-Pakistan relations since the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in November 2008. Over the past few months, there have been small gestures, such as the release of fisherman caught in each other's waters, foreign secretary level talks, and the announcement just last week that the countries would resume bilateral cricket matches that had been suspended since 2008. The Indian

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[19] Ibid.

[20] http://www.maritimeindia.org/sites/all/files/pdf/FS_speech_at_NMF_Nov2010.pdf.

foreign minister, who is slated to visit Pakistan in September, is quoted as saying, "I think this will be further cementing the bilateral relationship, which is improving by the day."[21]

Despite this optimism, there is little evidence that the fundamentals of India-Pakistan relations are moving in a direction of resolving core animosities, suspicions, and disputes. Old, ongoing issues are now likely to be complicated by the emergence of a new sector of competition, contestation, and even possibly conflict—the maritime navy dimension in the Arabian Sea.

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[21] Michele Langevine Leiby, "Cricket diplomacy: Resumption of India matches fuels détente hopes," *The Washington Post*, July 23, 2012, p. A12.

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