

INTERSEC

The background of the cover is a photograph of Israeli security forces. In the foreground, a man in a dark uniform and a black head covering is aiming a white assault rifle. Behind him, other security personnel are visible, some holding onto the metal frame of a bus. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an indoor or nighttime setting.

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THE ISRAELI POLICY ON HOSTAGE-TAKING AND KIDNAPPING

**DEVELOPMENTS IN DRUG
DETECTION TECHNOLOGY**

**EUROPEAN REGULATION
ON AVIATION SECURITY**

**PERIMETER SECURITY –
ENHANCEMENTS FOR FACILITIES**

PLUS SECURITY FOCUS NIGERIA

Contents

189 Is Al-Qaeda Staging a Comeback?

The reported assertion by a prominent US Government analyst of the threat that al-Qaeda "poses to US interests at home and abroad has slowly decreased since 11 September" seems a little sanguine in light of recent terror attacks. *Julian Thompson* stresses that there is a very long way to go before we can say that al-Qaeda is a diminishing threat.



194 Security of Energy Assets in the Niger Delta

Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta is embroiled in a seemingly unending violence and threat to energy industry assets – including people, infrastructure and operations. Communal clashes, industrial disputes, restive youths and women, kidnapping and arms stockpiling; these are just some of the problems that are occurring in the Niger Delta, which has resulted in thousands of casualties and large-scale destruction of property. Given the cardinal importance of the oil industry to Nigeria's economy and given the fact that oil companies achieve an attractive return on investment from the Niger Delta, *Dr Ona Ekhomu* proposes workable solutions and approaches to the problems, which must be found and implemented in order to eliminate the high threat level that currently exists.

198 Dealing with Hostage-Taking and Kidnapping: The Israeli Approach

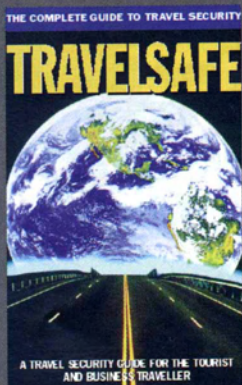
For the past several months, the heads of the Israeli General Security Service and Military Intelligence have repeatedly been warning both the government and the public that the Hamas terrorist organization is about to adopt a new *modus operandi*. Besides focusing on mass killings and bombings, such as those perpetrated



recently in the Israeli urban centres, they will also be concentrating on attempts to kidnap in order to bargain for the release of imprisoned terrorists held in Israeli jails. In light of this evidence, *Eitan Meyr* demonstrates, with examples from real case studies, how any terrorist organization will face a tough and uncompromising Israeli policy if they do try to embark on this path.

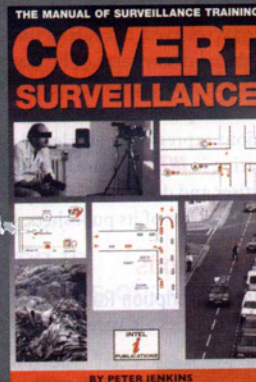
190 Coastline of Terror: Nigerian Pirates Declare War on Shipping

The International Maritime Bureau recently reported in their first quarterly report of the year that piracy attacks have tripled in the last decade, with an alarming 103 attacks in the first three months of 2003. That number is equal to the total for all recorded piracy attacks in all of 1993. A total of 145 mariners were reported killed, assaulted, kidnapped or missing in the same three months. Nigeria was singled out in the report for a jump in attacks, with nine reported in the first quarter of this year, compared to six in 2002. *Kim E. Petersen* examines the dramatic rise in piracy along the coast of Nigeria and the increasing toll this is taking on human lives and the businesses that are the lifeblood of the region.



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COASTLINE OF TERROR: NIGERIAN PIRATES DECLARE WAR ON SHIPPING

Romantic notions of 18th century maritime piracy linger in the minds of the public: dashing brigands swooping onto royal frigates from halyards. With their teeth gripping a dagger and a cutlass in hand, the pirate is viewed as intent on liberating a chest of jewels and pieces of eight from some unlucky crew. Few are aware, however, that piracy is more prevalent today than at anytime in history and the costs in life and property are extraordinary, says Kim E. Petersen.

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It was a grizzly discovery that unlocked a mystery that had baffled maritime investigators for weeks. In their nets, fishermen off the coast of Shantou in China, pulled up the first of several corpses. Each body was weighted down and had its mouth taped. It was soon established that these were the crewmembers of the MV Cheung Son that had recently been reported missing. Pirates had seized the 17,000 gross tonne freighter and killed all 23 crew. They subsequently sold the cargo of cheap metal slag and made off with the ship. The ship has yet to be found. Photographs that were recovered by members of the Chinese investigative team showed the pirates celebrating their victory among the dead sailors. That evidence led to the execution of 13 pirates.



Dionysus punishing the pirates of Tyrrhenian Sea.

Far from the romantic recollections of novelists and moviemakers, pirates in the 21st century are armed with modern assault weapons and show a wanton disregard for the lives of those whose ships are plundered. They can be found around the globe, with over two-thirds of all attacks taking place in Indonesia, Nigeria, India, Bangladesh and the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden. Indonesia, and in particular the Malacca Strait, is well-known as a dangerous transit point for commercial shipping. Less well-known is the dramatic rise in piracy along the coast of Nigeria; and this rise is taking an increasing toll on human lives and the businesses that are the lifeblood of the region.

Increasing Frequency & Violence

It is estimated that maritime piracy costs, due to actual cargo loss and damage or loss to ships, exceed US\$1.8bn per year. While some speculate that the figure is much higher, the exact cost is difficult to calculate as many victims do not qualify as international shipping and losses are never reported outside of the region. It is also

presumed that some ships, which are reported lost due to weather, may instead have been victims of piracy, with the total loss of crew, cargo and ship. There are also deliberate bureaucratic mechanisms that are intended to reduce the value of these losses. One popular method is to define "piracy" so narrowly that most cases are excluded from reports to other countries. For example, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) defines piracy as "any illegal act against ships on the high seas or in a place outside the jurisdiction of any state". By reducing the reported number of piracy incidents, countries with a poor record of combating piracy can avoid the stigma that results in a reduction of ship traffic due to increased insurance rates.

The International Maritime Bureau (IMB), a maritime crime prevention division of the International Chamber of Commerce and the internationally accepted data source for piracy events, defines piracy and armed robbery as "an act of boarding or attempting to board any ship with the apparent intent to commit theft or any other crime and with the apparent intent or capability to use force in furtherance of that act". This definition covers both actual and attempted attacks, whether the ship is berthed, at anchor or at sea. Petty thefts are excluded, unless the thieves are armed.

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The IMB report went on to confirm that Indonesian waters continue to be the most hazardous for mariners, with 28 attacks recorded between January and March. However, Nigeria was singled out in the report for a jump in attacks, with nine reported in the first quarter of this year compared to six in 2002.

Pirates worldwide look for common characteristics in the ships that they target. Older, slow steaming ships that sail at less than 15 knots are favoured, particularly when coupled with a low freeboard, poor outside lighting, lack of deck patrols by the crew and the absence of an aft-mounted radar intended to pick up small, fast-moving speedboats that pirates use to approach from the rear (an area usually blind to most ships' primary radar).

According to the IMB, the most common vessel to be attacked is the bulk carrier.

21st Century Nigerian Piracy

Nigeria has for many years suffered the predations of piracy, though not on the scale seen in recent years. The political and social environment, particularly the feeling of disenfranchisement felt by many in the population, has created an environment that has bred conditions not unlike those found in Indonesia. Indeed, the parallel extends to the physical environment as well. A delta and river system with numerous uninhabited islands makes for an ideal lair for pirates in wait – and such an environment is extremely difficult for coast guard or police forces to effectively patrol. Conducting their raids from these island bases, it is simple for the pirates to place surveillance on ships, waiting for the right target to approach. In some cases, these islands contain remote villages far removed from the control of the central government.

Attacking under the cover of darkness, pirates are often not seen until they appear on a ship's deck. Their retreat is protected by the labyrinth of shoals and islands like Ogogoro, Brass and Nembe that shield their operations. In other words, Nigeria has all of the elements necessary for piracy to thrive.

All forms of shipping have been attacked along the delta and Nigeria's coastline. At least five fishing trawlers were attacked in one week last December by pirates operating in Nigeria's coastal waters. An eyewitness account stated that these attacks had occurred only a few kilometres from the Lagos ports at the Fairway Buoy. The source



This map depicts the locations of piracy of the highest frequency in 2001 as reported to the International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Centre. The activity along the north-west region of Africa, and in particular Nigeria, is relatively high.

disclosed that approximately 20 men who wore masks and face paint carried out the pirate attacks. In another recent attack, the captain of a supply ship was taken hostage. After his ship was attacked and boarded by 10 armed pirates at Bonny River off the port of Onne; he was later released unharmed.

However, the most significant targets of the Niger Delta pirates are shipping concerns associated with Nigeria's extraordinary petroleum reserves. Multinationals such as Chevron, Mobil and Shell have extensive operations

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within the delta that require frequent support by small and large vessels alike. Knowing the purpose of these ships, which is often to supply flow stations, Nigerian pirates historically targeted ships for their mooring lines, paint, life rafts, food supplies and the cash and belongings of the crew. The lines and such are easily converted to cash in any of the many waterfront trading centres in the Niger Delta, like Alaba International Market in Lagos, sometimes being sold back to the ships from which the goods were originally stolen.

Ships are targeted using a variety of intelligence gathering means. For example, pirates are known to possess naval and police radios stolen during operations from the government. Monitoring these and the commercial ship-to-shore radios provides the pirates with information on target vessels and the relative proximity of government response forces. It is also presumed by government authorities that pirate gangs have managed to infiltrate oil and logistics companies with confederates. These employees are ideally placed to report on ship transit times, cargo, payrolls and other details that help in profiling and targeting ships. Another source of information are prostitutes working in the villages and visiting ships and platforms, often receiving sensitive information on ship movements and cargo that they then sell to pirates that operate in the region. Finally, there are suspicions by some mariners that port authority officials and the ships' commercial agents are on occasion bribed for information, such as the type and location of valuable cargo. This is not unlike the allegations that have been made against ports in South America, in particular Brazil and Peru.

There has long been suspicion that pirate gangs may also be involved in the illegal drug trade in Nigeria. Despite efforts to create such a link, there is no solid evidence of complicity between Nigerian pirate gangs and narcotics traffickers or terrorists in the region. There is evidence, however, of pirates employing shakedown tactics to coerce "service fees" from ships transiting routes that pass through areas that they control. Pirate gangs that posture themselves as "local pilots", for example, have victimized Nigerian seaports near Warri. Ships are approached by pirates in small boats and armed with automatic firearms or edged weapons and make demands that they be permitted to pilot the vessel through their waters. If the ship agrees to pay for such a service, usually at a rate far above that of licensed pilots, there is an implied immunity from attack later in the voyage. Fear of reprisals has dampened efforts by the pilot community to lobby for

protection by the government, according to a ship's captain familiar with the situation.

One historical characteristic of Nigerian piracy has been the relative lack of fatalities associated with their attacks. For the most part, this is attributed to an understanding on both sides: the pirates are there for replaceable and insured items and the crew will not be unduly harmed if they co-operate. This is not to say that Nigerian pirates are not capable of violence, and the record demonstrates that pirates in the Niger Delta are armed with weapons that rival those carried by the Nigerian Navy. In addition, there are numerous examples of merchant ship and naval hostages being brutalized by pirates, often for little reason. Recent events along the Nigerian coast may indicate a shift in tactics and the preparedness to use violence against merchant shipping and the oil industry. However, the relative lack of extreme violence and murder lies in stark contrast with Indonesia and the South China Sea.

Bomb Threats & Hostage Taking

Some pirate gangs have begun to change their tactics and their apparent preparedness to use extreme violence in their pursuit of swag. In April, Royal Dutch Shell announced that "criminal elements" had threatened to blow up a floating production storage and offloading vessel (FPSO) for an oil field off the Nigerian coast. The FPSO is an important component of Nigeria's oil production, with a capacity of 170,000 barrels a day. "Shell wishes to draw attention to the threat by some criminal elements to blow up the FPSO for the EA field, also known as the Sea Eagle", Shell's Nigerian unit said in a full-page newspaper advertisement. A Shell executive acknowledged that information had been received that one of their vessels could be boarded by force of arms at any time and set afire. Both Shell and the Nigerian Navy have significantly increased security around the EA field operations and the Sea Eagle, in particular.

This form of economic blackmail strikes at more than the oil companies. For example, the Sea Eagle is permanently moored 15 kilometres off the western delta and has a capacity of 1.4 million barrels of crude. Any attack could result in an economic and environmental disaster. An uprising in March by ethnic Ijaw militants sent shivers through the international oil market already on edge over the war in Iraq, causing Nigeria to deploy hundreds of troops to the islands and marshes of the delta. Eight soldiers were killed along with five oil workers and reportedly scores of villagers, in clashes with Ijaw rebels, according to *Vanguard* in Lagos. Nigeria is putting to bear two 40-metre World War II warships donated by the United States for coastal defence. They now patrol the delta region in a counter-piracy role.

A raging controversy has resulted from a recent hijacking of a ship and crew off the Nigerian coast belonging to the Danish shipping giant AP Møller. After its ship, the Mærsk Shipper was taken by pirates and held for ransom, AP Møller acknowledged to the Danish media that it had paid a US\$2,500 ransom to secure their freedom and the release of the ship. Pirates boarded the Mærsk Shipper on 15 April off the coast of Nigeria while on charter to Royal Dutch Shell. Many in the maritime world, including senior US officials, have criticized the action by AP Møller, saying that they have now set the price for hostages and laid the foundation for a new and profitable enterprise for pirates in the region. AP Møller, on

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The MV
Mærsk Shipper.



the other hand, has said that it took the action out of humanitarian concern for its crew. The debate as to whether or not such a humanitarian action has placed in jeopardy the lives of hundreds of seafarers who ply the waters around Nigeria is likely to continue into the future.

What the Future Holds

Nigeria is well aware of the risks associated with inaction. The Nigerian economy is reliant upon exploiting its oil wealth, and merchant shipping is central to its success. And there is evidence that concerted action is being taken. Banditry on sea and land has prompted Nigeria to plan joint patrols with three other African nations.

Recently, Police Public Relations Officer Haz Iwendi said Nigeria and Niger had agreed to start joint police patrols to combat cross-border infiltration of criminal elements. He said that a committee of police officers from the two countries had been set up to work out funding, staffing and other modalities for effectively policing their border. A few months ago, similar patrols were begun along Nigeria's border with Benin.

On the maritime front, Nigeria and South Africa have agreed to start joint patrols to secure shipping on Africa's Atlantic coast against sea pirates and terrorists, Nigeria's Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Samuel Afolayan, said on 23 November. Afolayan stated at a reception for the visiting chief of the South African Navy that the two countries would undertake joint military exercises next year, which in due course would include joint naval exercises. He said that South Africa would also give Nigeria technical assistance in ship repairs and provide spare parts for its naval fleet.

Commercial ship operators are also taking measures to increase both their vigilance and their physical security practices. Better radio communications, coupled with improved oversight lighting and deck patrols, as well as co-ordination with Nigerian naval elements, should see a reduction of incident reports to the International Maritime Bureau.

Conclusion

The significant problem of piracy along the Nigerian coast is both complex in scope and deeply rooted in social and political grievances. While the security efforts of the maritime industry and the Nigerian Defence Forces are essential to mitigate the threat, it is clear that political alienation along with the failure of the government to ensure wider distribution of services to coastal residents, will continue to serve as a cauldron of discontent. With few other perceived avenues for their survival, pirates will continue to prey upon shipping along the Nigerian coast until fundamental changes take place. ■

Kim E. Petersen is the President of SeaSecure LLC (www.seasecure.com), a port and maritime security consulting company, which has been selected by the state of Florida to become the Senior Advisor on Maritime & Port Security with the primary mission of protecting the ports from transnational threats. Mr Petersen is also the Executive Director of the Maritime Security Council (www.maritimesecurity.org) and is the former Director for Security for Princess Cruises and Renaissance Cruises. Previously, he held senior staff positions with former US Secretaries of State Henry A. Kissinger and Alexander M. Haig and in both the US Senate and US Defense Department in the areas of national security and intelligence.

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