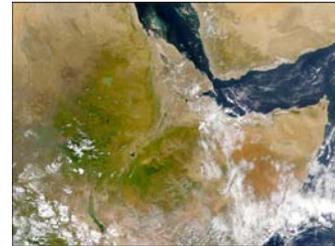


Maritime Security – Anti-Piracy measures

Introduction

The level of threat of piracy for ships in territorial waters is normally set out in the ships security plan as a specific security level, however, there will always be local and geographical variations to the stated level. Various national intelligence services may possess more detailed local information, provided these areas are of special interest to that nation's government. Unfortunately, this type of information and assessments are normally restricted or classified. Shipowners' are reliant on the local knowledge and experience of their own crews, however, they can purchase assessment reports from specialised private firms.



All ships, regardless of the level of threat in the waters in which they operate, should have an up to date security plan. The ship security plan should contain measures to be taken corresponding to the levels of threat which may be encountered. The number and scope of the measures, including restrictions on normal shipboard tasks, must be in accordance with the different levels of threat the security plan is intended to meet. All crew members must be familiar with their responsibilities as set out in the plan. The measures set out in the plan must also form part of the training exercises to be undertaken at regular intervals. Crew members may learn and understand the plan and their respective responsibilities, but it is only through training exercises that the plan can be properly tested and any weak points discovered.

Preparedness

The number of crew involved in security related duties must be adequate in reflection to the level of threat. Where a high state of alert is maintained over a long period of time, fatigue is inevitable, especially when sailing in potentially dangerous areas for days at a time. The ship's master must take these factors into consideration and plan accordingly.

General vigilance

When entering waters where pirate attacks are more likely to occur, it is vital to emphasise to the entire crew the importance of general vigilance. Current threat assessments for high risks areas and the corresponding level of preparedness should be the decisive factor as to the number of crew assigned with specific security duties. However, all crew members should be more vigilant as to possible threats or suspicious activity, whether on or off duty, and whether the vessel is anchored or in port. Prior to entering high risk areas the anti-piracy measures referred to in the security plan should be put in place.

Watch keeping

A watch should be kept on the stern covering radar "blind spots" and night vision (infrared) binoculars should also be used during hours of darkness when approaching high risk areas, in addition to constant radar monitoring. The element of surprise is important to any attackers, and an early detection may very well result in the attack being aborted. Early detection will also give the ship time to raise the alarm and prevent the crew from being caught unprepared.

For more information please contact: Loss Prevention Manager Trygve C Nøkleby, email trygve.nokleby@gard.no,

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Radio watch

A continuous radio watch should also be maintained on safety frequencies, for both shore and naval authorities, in order to monitor maritime safety broadcasts for the area. If an attack on the ship is detected, in addition to activating the ship's security alarm system, the master may consider if a distress message should be broadcasted, however, always bearing in mind the possibility that attackers may be monitoring the ship's communication systems and intercepting transmissions.

Time at anchor

Anchored ships are the most frequent target of attacks by pirates. Where possible, owners should aim to reduce time at anchor. Slow steaming whilst awaiting berthing prospects can help in reducing the period during which the ship will be at higher risk. If security guards are employed, ensure that the security company and their employees are vetted by the appropriate authorities. Employment of a security company should be regarded as an enforcement of the security measures, and guidelines, tasks and limitations for the use of such measures should be stated in the security plan. Prior and after leaving the port or anchorage, the ship should be thoroughly searched. Anchored and berthed ships should use all lighting available, especially along the ship's sides and at the stern. The lighting will expose the attackers in the most vulnerable phase of their operation, and may result in the attackers reconsidering attacking the ship.

The above list of measures is not exhaustive but the intention is to highlight some of the issues. We are grateful to Bestia Risk Consulting for the above information. www.bestia.no

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