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SECTION 1 OF 9

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UNCLASSIFIED

page 103

UNCLASSIFIED

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(Attachment not included: AFP20090416636012001.jpg) United States Africa Command

Public Affairs Office

15 April 2009

AFRICOM-related news stories

A summary of news stories related to United States Africa Command Military deploy gunboats in search of militants

Vanguard - By Emmanuel Aziken & Samuel Oyadongha

15 April 2009

<http://www.vanguardngr.com/content/view/33599/41/>

New pirate attack against US ship

BBC News - By non-attributed author

15 April 2009

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7999350.stm>

Pentagon looks to move battle against pirates ashore

CNN - By non-attributed author

14 April 2009

<http://edition.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/04/14/obama.pirates/>

Pirate's Youth May Complicate Prosecution Decision

The Washington Post - By Carrie Johnson

15 April 2009

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/04/14/AR2009041402856.html>

Will pirates join forces with Islamist militias in Somalia?

Christian Science Monitor - By Scott Baldauf

13 April 2009

[http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0413/p06s04-woaf.html?page\(-EQUAL-\)1](http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0413/p06s04-woaf.html?page(-EQUAL-)1)

US weighs tough action on pirates

Boston Globe - By Bryan Bender

14 April 2009

<http://www.boston.com/news/nation/washington/articles/2009/04/14/u>

UNCLASSIFIED

page 104

UNCLASSIFIED

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(-UNDERSCORE-)on(-UNDERSCORE-)pirates/?page(-EQUAL-)1

Inside the (Hypothetical) Somalia War Room

Wired - By Nathan Hodge

14 April 2009

<http://blog.wired.com/defense/2009/04/a-glimpse-of-th.html>

U.S. to seek armada of allies against piracy threat

New York Daily Times - By Richard Sisk

14 April 2009

<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/us>

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Military deploy gunboats in search of militants

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 2 *****/

CITE OSC RESTON VA 701847

Vanguard - By Emmanuel Aziken & Samuel Oyadongha

15 April 2009

MILITANTS in the Niger Delta have incurred the wrath of the military with Monday's reprisal on soldiers at Okilo Creek, near Ighomotoru River, Tebideba route, Bayelsa State.

Yesterday, military authorities bared their fangs by deploying three gunboats in the troubled Nembe Creek to intensify the manhunt for militants who killed two naval ratings and injured four others guarding a Shell facility in the deep swamp of the state.

A gunboat is usually a small undecked vessel carrying a single smoothbore (weapon which has a gun barrel without rifling. They range from handheld firearms to powerful tank guns and large artillery mortar).

This move has put fear in the minds of residents of the coastal enclave.

A security source who spoke on condition of anonymity said each of the vessels which had about ten heavily armed military personnel onboard were dispatched from Yenagoa in the troubled creek on Monday.

No fewer than 20 people, including two security operatives, were reportedly killed during the Easter day bloody skirmishes involving men of the JTF and militants.

Vanguard gathered that the JTF was spreading its dragnet around the Nembe environs covering adjoining routes to the scene of the violent clash where the militants also carted away four speed

UNCLASSIFIED

page 105

UNCLASSIFIED

boats belonging to the Anglo-Dutch oil giant, Shell Petroleum Development Company.

Sources from the area said although there was calm, but that the terrified locals in the adjoining communities who fled their homes in the wake of the deafening gunshots during the clash were yet to return ostensibly due to fear of reprisals by the security forces.

Fishing activities which is the major occupation of the people in the area had been abandoned as nobody would want to be caught in any possible crossfire in the volatile creek.

Though the commander of the JTF in Bayelsa State, Lt.-Col Nkana Efik, could not be reached as his line was not going through but a security source said the deployment was a routine exercise and as such "there was no cause for alarm."

Also, the Coordinator of the Joint Media Campaign Centre, Col. Rabe Abubakar, allayed the fears of the general public, assuring that the hoodlums would be brought to book and urged law abiding citizens to go about their businesses without fear of molestation.

He said the security outfit had re-doubled efforts at capturing the militants responsible for the killings.

Col. Abubakar in a telephone chat said the JTF had devised strategies towards recovering the speedboats carted away by the militants.

The JTF spokesman had earlier in a statement claimed two militants' camps operated by Kitikata and Fara Dagogo, jointly carried out the Monday attack, adding that "it was however foiled, regrettably and in the process of defending the facility one naval rating was killed, 2 sustained minor injuries and 4 Shell speedboats were carted away by the miscreants".

Col. Abubakar who described the militants' offensive as "unprovoked attack on our troops", said "it was a retaliatory attack on the earlier sinking of six militant speedboats which led to their occupants being drowned" near Igbomotoru, Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Senators seek details of amnesty for militants

Senators from the Niger Delta are demanding for details of the presidential amnesty recently proposed for aggrieved militants embedded in the creeks of the oil rich region.

The lawmakers including Senator James Manager, chairman of the Senate Committee on Niger Delta in separate reactions to the amnesty affirmed that progress in peace talks would achieve

UNCLASSIFIED

page 106

UNCLASSIFIED

little unless the details of the amnesty were unfolded.

Other Senators from the region who commented on the amnesty recently proposed by President Umaru Yar'Adua were Senators Lee Maeba (PDP, Rivers Southeast); Ehigie Uzamere (PDP, Edo South) and Odion Ugbesia (PDP, Edo Central).

While welcoming the amnesty for the militants as an eventual part of any meaningful reconciliation in the region, Senator Maeba was, however, quick to buttress a case for the rehabilitation of the region. According to him, any amnesty plan that does not address the situation that led to the insurgency would be meaningless.

Senator Uzamere in welcoming any proposal for peace in the region nevertheless claimed ignorance of the contents of the presidential initiative even as Senator Ugbesia upheld the amnesty as a presidential prerogative that cannot be questioned. Senator Manager said:

"We await the details for the amnesty. The president, I want to believe, means well; the people in the region are also anxious to know what the details are all about. So, it is the details that will definitely entice the people. Because the details are not out, people are still being suspicious and doubtful about the

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 3 *****/

CITE OSC RESTON VA 701847

true intentions of government.

"As far as I am concerned, the President means well and because he means well, I am excited about it, but we need to know the details of the amnesty and I am sure that once the details are out, it will definitely douse the tension.

"I want to urge Mr. President to ensure that the details are robust enough to accommodate all interest groups so that we can solve this problem once and for all," Manager (PDP, Delta South) said.

Claiming ignorance of the details of the amnesty offer, Senator Uzamere said:

"I don't know the nature of the agreement reached with the militants, however, I welcome the development and hope that it will bring peace to the region."

But asserting the need for the rehabilitation of the region as a requisite for peace in the region, Senator Maeba said: "If you want to settle peace there must be total rehabilitation facilities in place and then you tell the people 'amnesty for you if you drop your gun and come to the rehabilitation camp,'

UNCLASSIFIED

page 107

UNCLASSIFIED

amnesty for you if you drop your gun and embrace government plans to find you meaningful employment."

Endorsing the offer by the President as better than nothing, Senator Ugbesia said: "It is in exercise of his own powers, you can't question that. The man has the powers to do that as enshrined in our Constitution so he should be allowed to exercise his power.

"It is better to try something than not to try anything, he should be seen to have tried out this one, so let's see how it works out."

New pirate attack against US ship

BBC News - By non-attributed author

15 April 2009

Pirates failed to seize a US cargo ship off the coast of Somalia, in the latest of a spate of attacks in the area.

The pirates fired rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons at the Liberty Sun but were not able to board.

It was a narrow escape, again proving the defiance and danger posed by pirates off the Somali coast, says the BBC's Jonathan Beale in Washington.

The US has vowed to quell piracy, but over the past two days four vessels have been successfully seized.

The fresh attacks also come in the wake of the liberation of a US skipper in operations that left three bandits dead on Sunday.

Captain Richard Phillips, who was rescued after five days in captivity, is due to fly back to the US from Mombasa, Kenya, later on Wednesday.

Somali pirate leaders - who have generally treated captives well in the hope of winning big ransom payouts - vowed on Monday to avenge the deaths.

Destroyer

The ship's owner and the US military have confirmed reports of this latest, failed attack, which took place on Tuesday lunchtime local time.

After coming under fire, the Liberty Sun immediately requested assistance from the USS Bainbridge, said owners Liberty Maritime Corp in a statement.

The navy destroyer - which was involved in Sunday's dramatic rescue of Captain Phillips - arrived some hours later, by which time the pirates had gone.

"We are grateful and pleased that no-one was injured and the crew and the ship are safe," said the Liberty Maritime Corp statement.

UNCLASSIFIED

page 108

UNCLASSIFIED

The ship did sustain some damage, it said, but was able to resume its journey to Mombasa.

In the 48 hours prior to the attack, four vessels have been seized in the same area:

--A Lebanese-owned cargo ship, the MV Sea Horse, was taken by gunmen in up to four skiffs

--A Greek-owned bulk carrier, the MV Irene was also seized

--Two Egyptian fishing boats were held the previous day

Meanwhile, three **Somali pirates** who had taken French hostages are in custody in France, French prosecutors say.

The pirates were captured during a military operation to free hostages taken on the Tanit, a French yacht overtaken by hostages in the Gulf of Aden on 4 April.

The boat's French skipper and two other pirates were killed in the operation by French commandoes.

'Peaks and troughs'

US President Barack Obama promised on Monday to "halt the rise of piracy" in one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 4 *****/

CITE OSC RESTON VA 701847

Cdr Chris Davis, chief public affairs officer for Nato, told the BBC the surge in attacks could be simply down to chance.

"We do see peaks and troughs. Often weather-related and often it's just the situation as it arises and the opportunity - and that's what the pirates are, they are opportunistic."

Shipping companies last year handed over about \$80m

((-VERTICAL-BAR-)54m) in ransom payments to **Somali pirates**.

The Horn of Africa nation has been without an effective government since 1991, fuelling the lawlessness which has allowed the pirates to thrive.

Efforts to stop the raiders have so far had only limited success, with international naval patrols struggling to cover the vast areas of ocean where the gangs operate.

Pentagon looks to move battle against pirates ashore

CNN - By non-attributed author

14 April 2009

As the Defense Department weighs options to prevent a repeat of the drama that unfolded on the seas this weekend, those who patrol the waters say pirates must be rooted out before they leave land.

International naval patrols have been stepped up in the Gulf of Aden following increased pirate attacks.

UNCLASSIFIED

page 109

UNCLASSIFIED

Pentagon planners are preparing a variety of options for dealing with **Somali pirates**, and a United Nations resolution gives them the authority to conduct operations inside Somalia.

"The ultimate solution for piracy is on land," said Vice Adm. William Gortney, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and the Combined Maritime Forces.

"Piracy around the world stems from activity where there is lawlessness, lack of governance, economic instability; things of that nature. And wherever you have that, you're going to have criminal activity at sea," he said at a Monday briefing.

Ethiopia invaded Somalia in December 2006 to prop up a U.N.-backed transitional government in Mogadishu after a hardline Islamist group overtook the capital and seized power. Earlier this year, Ethiopia withdrew all of its troops.

Efforts to replace the Ethiopians with an African Union-led peacekeeping mission faltered as the violence worsened, and heavy fighting in Mogadishu and other cities drove hundreds of thousands from their homes.

The lawlessness also spilled onto the seas off the Horn of Africa, where international vessels are routinely hijacked by pirates, suspected to be Somali, who demand large ransoms.

The U.S. military on Sunday killed three pirates who had been holding the captain of the U.S.-flagged Maersk Alabama hostage on a lifeboat off the coast of Somalia for nearly five days. Snipers shot the pirates and rescued Capt. Richard Phillips.

Obama praised the efforts of the U.S. military and other departments involved in the rescue operation, and said he is determined to halt the rise of piracy in the region.

"To achieve that goal, we're going to have to continue to work with our partners to prevent future attacks. We have to continue to be prepared to confront them when they arise. And we have to ensure that those who commit acts of piracy are held accountable for their crimes," he said.

Between January and February, only two pirate attacks were reported off the east coast of Somalia, according to the International Maritime Bureau, which tracks piracy worldwide. In March, attacks in the same area spiked to 15, according to the bureau, and the attacks have continued into April.

The sudden surge of pirate attacks has prompted the U.S. military to put out a new alert to mariners, warning of increased danger in the region.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Monday the military alone

UNCLASSIFIED

page 110

UNCLASSIFIED

can't solve the problem.

"There is no purely military solution to it," he said at the Marine Corps War College in Quantico, Virginia. "And as long as you've got this incredible number of poor people and the risks are relatively small, there's really no way in my view to control it unless you get something on land that begins to change the equation for these kids."

The fight at sea can be treacherous. The area involved off the coasts of Somalia and Kenya, including the Gulf of Aden, is more than 1.1 million square miles -- four times the size of the state of Texas.

The military has aerial surveillance and unmanned drones, but even a limited strike risks injuring Somali civilians.

"Quick, targeted special operations strikes would do much more to very quickly bring the piracy to an end than would very spotty enforcement at sea," said Chas Henry, with the U.S. Naval Institute.

State Department spokesman Robert Wood said Monday that it's crucial to deal with the "root cause" of the piracy issue, which he said is lawlessness and the lack of a stable government in Somalia.

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 5 *****/

CITE OSC RESTON VA 701847

"What we're trying to do is work with a number of countries in the region and around the world to ... help bring some political and economic stability to Somalia," he said at a news briefing.

Wood said the United States has been encouraging governments to prosecute suspected pirates.

He said the government is also "working with industry and with the International Maritime Organization to help ships try to avoid these types of piracy incidents."

Last June, the United States co-sponsored U.N. Security Council Resolution 1851, which authorized nations to enter the territorial waters of Somalia and use "all necessary means" to repress acts of piracy.

In January, an official Contact Group of more than 20 nations focused on the issue was created. Wood said the group is working "to provide countries in that area with increased capabilities, information sharing, better coordination in terms of trying to deal with these incidents of piracy."

Defense officials note that piracy is a crime, not an act of war or terrorism. And, so, the solutions are being planned in

UNCLASSIFIED

page 111

UNCLASSIFIED

conjunction with other U.S. departments' focus on diplomacy and legal matters.

Some defense officials say private shipping companies have to step up to deter pirates, whether it be using evasive maneuvers or stringing barbed wire along their ships.

But shipping companies tend to pay the ransom rather than worry about having to equip their ships, said security expert Karin Von Hippel, because it's far cheaper for them to just pay up.

Experts in the region say that in the long run, Somalia has to change -- and be changed -- and that Somalis must be convinced that the pirates they see as heroes protecting their coastline are actually thugs who are preventing their country from receiving aid.

Pirate's Youth May Complicate Prosecution Decision

The Washington Post - By Carrie Johnson

15 April 2009

Authorities investigating the seizure of a U.S. ship continued to sift through fingerprint and DNA evidence yesterday as they deliberated whether to bring to this country a young **Somali pirate** who surrendered last weekend before three of his associates were killed by American snipers.

The youth, whose age is one of many inconsistencies facing investigators, could be charged with piracy or kidnapping offenses for his role in the capture of Vermont sea captain Richard Phillips off the Horn of Africa last week, according to two sources familiar with the deliberations.

International law allows for piracy suspects to be charged with a crime anywhere across the globe, maritime scholars said, but one likely scenario would send the boy to a federal court in New York City. More than a dozen FBI agents from that city's field office traveled to Somalia last weekend to interview crew members on the Maersk Alabama and gather evidence from the vessel.

Phillips, who was unharmed, was rescued Sunday in a dramatic evening surge by Navy **SEALs** who took only three shots to kill his captors.

The sole surviving piracy suspect initially gave his age as 19 when he boarded a U.S. ship early Sunday, seeking medical attention for a stab wound on his hand incurred during the initial attack on the Maersk, according to accounts from government officials. But the youth later said he was 16, which would make him a juvenile in the eyes of the U.S. court system. Law enforcement officials would need to make a determination to

UNCLASSIFIED

page 112

UNCLASSIFIED

try him as an adult, something that is not uncommon in other kinds of cases, including violent drug gangs, for example, lawyers said. Birth records in his home country, Somalia, are difficult to obtain, posing another challenge for federal investigators.

Authorities are deliberating whether to send the youth to Kenya for trial or into the American court system. The Kenyan government has agreed to accept piracy suspects and try them in courts there under the terms of an international agreement. But such trials involve costly security measures that could burden the East African nation.

If the youth were indicted by a U.S. grand jury and brought to this country, it would offer the first major test in years of American anti-piracy laws, which date to the 19th century, according to law professors who follow the issue.

Immigration law could also come into play. If the suspect were convicted in an American court and served prison time here, it would be difficult to send him back to Somalia upon his release, posing a question for immigration officials at the Department of Homeland Security.

"Trying pirates in the U.S. for an attack on an American vessel makes more sense than any other scenario I can think of," said piracy law expert Samuel P.

Menefec, who has written nearly four dozen articles on maritime issues. "If there are any problems with American law, certainly now is the time to find out so that we can bring our law on the subject into the 21st century."

A decision on where and how to prosecute could be days away, officials said.

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 6 *****/

CITE OSC RESTON VA 701847

"The Justice Department continues to review all evidence and other issues related to this matter and is committed to bringing a prosecution if the evidence so warrants," department spokesman Dean Boyd said yesterday.

Will pirates join forces with Islamist militias in Somalia?

Christian Science Monitor - By Scott Baldauf

13 April 2009.

The four-day hostage ordeal, with **Somali pirates** holding a US merchant ship captain in a lifeboat, ended in a hail of sniper fire Sunday and the safe return of the captain to his crew.

UNCLASSIFIED

page 113

UNCLASSIFIED

But the twin rescues this past week by the French and American navies off Somalia are unlikely to end the problem of piracy. Quite the opposite, say analysts. The pirates, they say, are likely to increase their use of violence, and that could lead them into the arms of Somalia's small but powerful Islamist militias for protection and support.

As the crew of the Maersk Alabama celebrated the return of Capt. Richard Phillips Sunday, Somalia's radical Islamists praised the dead or captured pirates as mujahideen, or "holy warriors." Meanwhile, self-described pirates told reporters by cellphone that they would be more violent with hostages next time. "Every country will be treated the way it treats us," Abdullahi Lami, one of the pirates holding a Greek ship in the central Somali port of Gaan, told the Associated Press by phone. "In the future, America will be the one mourning and crying. We will retaliate for the killings of our men."

Even Vice Adm. William Gortney, head of the US Naval Central Command, told a Pentagon press briefing Sunday, "This could escalate violence in this part of the world, no question about it."

Escalation could radicalize pirates

With 2.5 million square miles to patrol, even the navies of 16 nations (including the US, NATO, India, France, China, and Iran) have only just begun to come to grips with the problem of Somali piracy. It is a relatively new phenomenon, the result of a complete breakdown of law and order, and of the country's economy. Hundreds of Somali fishermen and criminal gangs have gone out to the open seas for the only source of income they can find, taking and holding hostage the largely unprotected commercial ships that pass through Somali waters on their way into and out of the Suez Canal to ports beyond.

Short-term solutions, such as the current foreign naval maneuvers, may rescue ships on the high seas, but the only longer-term solution is full restoration of a stable Somali government, most experts agree. In the meantime, foreign naval operations can cause as many problems as they solve.

"The fact is that the Somali pirates had a code of conduct, although it sounds funny to people outside of Somalia to hear that," says an official with Ecoterra International, a nongovernmental organization that works with the Somali fishing community on sustainable fishing practices. It also made good business sense to keep hostages alive. More than 200 mariners are

UNCLASSIFIED

page 114

UNCLASSIFIED

still being held by **Somali pirates**. To date, there have been few instances of hostages being seriously harmed by pirates. But if pirates are pushed into a corner by foreign navies, they might become more ready to shoot.

"We fear that this escalation spiral, which we've seen in the past few months, will push the pirates into a readiness to shoot," says the Ecoterra aid official. "I foresee this will push some groups which use violence, and radicalize them. It could also encourage some Somali fundamentalists to take over the modus operandi of the pirates" and take on Western commercial shipping vessels as political targets.

Decision to fire on pirates

Following just days after a similar French military rescue mission of a French yacht, in which the French commandos killed two **Somali pirates**, along with the yacht's captain, the US Navy rescue mission had all the drama of a Hollywood movie.

Admiral Gortney told a Pentagon briefing that the commander of the ship gave the order to Navy **SEAL** snipers to kill the three **Somali pirates**, after negotiations with them broke down. The lifeboat was within 100 feet of from the USS Bainbridge at the time, and was effectively in tow.

Admiral Gortney defended the decision at the Pentagon briefing. "He Captain Phillips had a weapon aimed at him; that would be my interpretation of imminent danger," said Gortney.

But unlike the 19th-century gunboat policies of Britain and the US, which stamped out the Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean or the pirates of the Caribbean, foreign naval operations off Somalia are unlikely to bring long-term solutions - nor are they designed to. The areas in which the pirates operate are too large to be patrolled effectively.

Somali government stopped piracy, then went into exile

Largely ungoverned since the fall of the government of Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991, Somalia today is mostly under the control of a collection of warring Islamist militias. Its

government-in-exile, led by a moderate Islamist leader, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, has vowed to contain piracy if it achieves full control of the country. Under the brief tenure of the Islamist Courts Union government in 2006, Somali piracy was, indeed, cut back nearly to zero.

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 7 *****/

CITE OSC RESTON VA 701847

UNCLASSIFIED

page 115

UNCLASSIFIED

But more radical Islamist groups, among them Al Shabab, which reportedly has ties with Al Qaeda, have recently praised pirates. In Baidoa, Al Shabab spokesman Muktar Robow "Abu Mansur" told reporters that pirates were "protecting the Somali coast."

"Foreign powers want to divide the country," he said, "and the pirates are protecting the coast against the enemies of Allah."

Al Qaeda-linked group could join piracy fight

"Given that people tend to look for opportunities to amass wealth, and that in the past year ransoms have ranged from \$50 million to \$100 million for a single ship, piracy is likely to continue," says Iqbal Jhazbhay, an expert on Somalia at the University of South Africa in Tshwane, as Pretoria is now called.

Like most other experts, Jhazbhay says there is no current link between Islamist groups and pirates, the latter primarily composed of criminal gangs with no political ambitions other than making money - although the Monitor reported in December that some of that money is flowing back to Islamists. But with so many Western naval ships off the coast, radical Islamist groups such as Al Shabab, could turn to high-seas piracy as a means for striking Western - and especially American - interests and to bring on a confrontation with the West.

With the French and American rescue missions, commercial shippers have been forced toward a turning point. "The signal has been sent that the old approach of pay ransom and move on ... isn't going to work anymore," says Mr. Jhazbhay. "The danger is that if Al Shabab want to dramatize the situation and bring another 'Black Hawk Down,' then it's likely to see that approach more often. It all depends on what the Islamists want to do next."

US weighs tough action on pirates

Boston Globe - By Bryan Bender

14 April 2009

Pentagon officials said planning is underway to determine how US and allied military forces, using troops, ships, and aircraft, could disrupt the pirate's safe havens in coastal villages of Somalia. Despite the impoverished nation that surrounds them, the villages are thriving from the tens of millions of dollars in ransom money extorted from shipping companies.

But some analysts expressed concern that the drumbeat for a more muscular US approach - repeated yesterday by some members of Congress - focused too narrowly on a mere symptom of a much larger problem: the failed state of Somalia.

"The idea that you are going to bomb the pirates into the Stone

UNCLASSIFIED

page 116

UNCLASSIFIED

Age is completely naive and it won't work," said Senator Russell Feingold, Democrat of Wisconsin, who has traveled extensively in the region. "It is a much broader problem that has to do with Somalia itself."

Feingold called on the Obama administration to use the current crisis to strengthen the Somali government's ability to provide economic opportunities to its destitute people, some of whom have turned to piracy in desperation. Others, he noted, have been recruited into terrorism by Islamic militants, who are using Somalia as a training ground for global attacks.

But military officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said they were acting on orders from the White House to come up with a more aggressive approach to combat piracy, which they believe is emanating from the semi-autonomous Puntland region of Somalia. Yesterday afternoon, President Obama reiterated that his administration is "resolved to halt the rise of piracy in that region. And to achieve that goal we're going to have to continue to work with our partners to prevent future attacks, we have to continue to be prepared to confront them when they arise, and we have to ensure that those who commit acts of piracy are held accountable for their crimes."

The Pentagon officials said that if President Obama gives them the go-ahead, they will take military action. In December, the United Nations Security Council unanimously approved a resolution giving UN member nations the authority to go into Somalia to pursue pirates.

The pirates operate in a vast expanse of water - equivalent to nearly the entire eastern half of the United States - where there is little local naval or coast guard presence.

The armed hijackers, many only in their teens, travel in fishing vessels known as "mother ships." Switching to small speedboats, they use global positioning systems and grappling hooks to locate and then climb aboard targeted vessels - usually merchant ships carrying cargo to or from the Suez Canal.

Last year, **Somali pirates** were responsible for at least 111 hijackings, according to the International Chamber of Commerce. Although estimates differ, there are at least 270 crew members from various nations, none of them Americans, being held captive in the region.

The attacks have steadily become more brazen. For example, a massive Saudi oil tanker, the Sirius Star, was released in January after the ship's owners paid a \$3 million ransom. In the

UNCLASSIFIED

page 117

UNCLASSIFIED

most recent incident, on Saturday, an Italian ship and its crew of 16 were seized and are being held off the Somali coast. Some leading members of Congress yesterday called on the Obama administration to use military force to keep the shipping lanes open.

"Such measures could justifiably include hot pursuit

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 8 *****/

(-ILLEGAL-CHARACTER-)u(-ILLEGAL-CHARACTER-)attacking and destroying pirate infrastructure at their home bases," said Senator James Webb, a Virginia Democrat and former Navy secretary.

Representative Ike Skelton, a Missouri Democrat and chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, insisted that "we cannot allow the criminals who threaten the safety of the seas to remain unchallenged."

Analysts said any military response must have a clear plan and limited objectives.

"We need a multinational force to take down these pirate areas and destroy their resources, logistics, and ability to project power to sea," said Kurt S. Lippold, the retired Navy officer who was commander of the USS Cole when it was attacked by Al Qaeda suicide bombers in Aden harbor in Yemen in 2000. "We can put surveillance assets in that region to observe where the pirate vessels come out from. We can pinpoint their bases, ships, and take down their ability to operate."

But Feingold, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations and Intelligence committees, and others expressed concern that Sunday's successful rescue after a five-day standoff with pirates would inflate expectations about what military force can achieve.

"It rarely happens like it did with the rescue of Captain Phillips," said Tom Wilkerson, a retired Marine Corps major general and president of the US Naval Institute in Annapolis, Md., referring to the Navy SEALs raid that freed Phillips, of Vermont, on Sunday. "It is not pristine. It is not surgical."

Wilkerson also agreed with Feingold that the US and its allies need a more comprehensive policy toward Somalia that includes assisting the local government.

"For efforts to combat piracy to succeed on a long-term basis, there needs to be some form of central government" in Mogadishu, the Somali capital, Wilkerson said.

Feingold said far more is at stake now than the threat to merchant

UNCLASSIFIED

page 118

UNCLASSIFIED

vessels, noting that the Somali government - which has sought international help to deal with the piracy problem - is also at risk of being overthrown by Islamic militants linked to Al Qaeda.

"Our country needs to wake up to the reality that this is not just some African backwater but central to our national security," he said.

Inside the (Hypothetical) Somalia War Room

Wired - By Nathan Hodge

14 April 2009

Inside the U.S. government, there's a growing sense that the problem of East Africa's ocean-going pirates is only going to be solved on land, perhaps by doing some nation-building in Somalia. Last year, I got a chance to see how such a project might work. I paid a visit to Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, to observe part of Unified Quest 2008, an Army wargame that tests the U.S. government's response to fictitious crises in the not-so-distant future. Last year's Unified Quest focused on the potential ways in which globalization, competition for energy resources, population growth and failing states could create a recipe for "persistent conflict" in different parts of the world; it included a Somalia scenario that took place in 2025.

The 2025 wargame was supposed to test how the newly-formed U.S. Africa Command could respond to a crisis in the Somalia's neighborhood, the Horn of Africa. James Embrey, a retired army colonel with the Army's Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, played the head of a task force that leads the Somalia nation-building coalition; he said the scenario showed how a unique command like AFRICOM could employ soft power (diplomatic skills and conflict prevention) instead of resorting to force. And to drive home the point, the exercise included representatives from academia, foreign militaries and other agencies of government.

"The supposition that we are making here is that the whole-of-government interagency planning and framework has been cured, there have been the proper structures built in terms of a special co-ordinator for reconstruction and stability -- a planning element, if you will -- and, in turn, the requisite civilian expertise in terms of civilian response corps, additional subject matter experts that are almost like an interagency reserve force, have come online," he said.

To translate the Pentagonese, Embrey was talking about a civilian

UNCLASSIFIED

page 119

UNCLASSIFIED

nation-building reserve that would be on standby to support reconstruction missions overseas. The State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization in the process of creating an active and standby force, but a true civilian reserve is still in its embryonic stages.

The whole point of the exercise was to intervene in the hypothetical crisis before it spiraled out of control. As Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman suggested yesterday, lots of "non-kinetic" options are available in Somalia, from humanitarian aid to military training. "If that last couple of days have taught us anything, it reinforces the fact that piracy is a complicated and international problem that needs to be addressed broadly," he said. "I am fairly certain in the days ahead that this will be an issue that not only this department, but the government at large ... could be doing as a national effort and with other international organizations, and with allies in the region as well."

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 9 *****/

Whitman's talking points could have been drawn from last year's Unified Quest exercise. In an Army news article, Lt. Col. John Miller, deputy chief of future warfare at the Army Capabilities Integration Center, said the main lesson was better understanding how to coordinate and solve problems before the shooting starts. "If we have to put troops on the ground, something has failed," he said.

U.S. to seek armada of allies against piracy threat
New York Daily Times - By Richard Sisk
14 April 2009

Secretary of State Clinton will push other nations to build naval forces against the piracy threat off East Africa and engage regional governments in stabilizing Somalia, State Department officials said Monday.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates said, "There is no purely military solution to" the piracy plague.

"What we're trying to do is work with a number of countries in the region and around the world to help bring some political and economic stability to Somalia," said State Department spokesman Robert Wood.

Clinton was looking to convene the international contact group of European and African states on the unrest in East Africa.

"Somalia doesn't have a stable government, a stable political

UNCLASSIFIED

page 120

UNCLASSIFIED

system at this moment," Wood said. "We're working to try to bring that about, but it's not easy."

The problem for the diplomats was that Somalia existed in one of the "ungoverned spaces" of the world, said White House press secretary Robert Gibbs.

As the pirates threatened retaliation, the immediate U.S. focus was on pushing other states to contribute more of their warships to policing the shipping lanes.

Initially, there were differing views within the U.S. military on whether the daring rescue of the U.S. captain had made the mission more difficult.

"This could escalate violence in this part of the world, no question about it," said Vice Adm. William Gortney, the 5th Fleet commander in the region.

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page 121

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