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Over the past ten years, reports of piracy and other forms of maritime violence have been dramatically on the rise. As these reports increase, so too does international attention toward how to solve this. This thesis examines the development of cooperative maritime security efforts in both Southeast Asia and the Middle East, paying particular attention to the Horn of Africa and Gulf of Aden region, as they pertain to turning the tide of violence in their respective maritime domains. Recent regional efforts to combat maritime security threats in the Gulf of Aden, and maritime piracy in particular, have drawn comparisons to similar efforts undertaken in the Straits of Malacca in the early parts of the past decade. However, such comparisons fail to address the unique nature of the politics and history of security cooperation in the Horn of Africa, particularly the way states in the region tend to rely upon external security support from more powerful nations, such as the United States and Japan. Additionally, often times these experts fail to discuss the cultural idiosyncrasies of the various nations. Despite some similarities shared between the two

regions, the states of the Horn of Africa must deal with issues of prioritization, regional animosities, and external dependence before they can attempt to develop cooperative maritime security arrangements akin to those existing in Southeast Asia. Success will require a concerted effort by states in the region and realization by the United States of its role in supporting effective security cooperation in the region.

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Modern Piracy: Regional Cooperative Security: Southeast Asia and the Middle East

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Adam K Christensen

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Adam K Christensen, Author

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations

ASEAN+3 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Extended membership)

BAKORKAMLA Indonesian Maritime Security Coordination Board

CGPCS United Nation Contact Group on Piracy off Somalia

CJTF HOA Combined Joint Task Force (Horn of Africa)

CMPT Combined Maritime Patrol Teams

CTF 151 Combined Task Force 151

CTF 152 Combined Task Force 152

EiS Eye in the Sky Initiative

EU European Union

GCC Gulf Cooperation Council

GOA Gulf of Aden

HOA Horn of Africa

ICC International Chamber of Commerce

IEG Intelligence Exchange Group

IMO International Maritime Organization

IMB International Maritime Bureau

IRGCN Islamic Republic Guard Corps Naval Forces

IRIN Islamic Republic of Iran Navy

IRTC Internationally Recognized Transit Corridor

ISC Information Sharing Center

JCC Joint Coordinating Council

MALSINDO Malacca Straits Coordinated Patrols

MMEA Maritime Enforcement Agency

MOU Memorandum of Understanding

MSCHOA Maritime Security Centre (Horn of Africa)

MSP Malacca Straits Patrols Malaysian

MSP-IS Malacca Straits Patrol Information System

MSSP Malacca Straits Sea Patrol

MSTF Maritime Security Task Force

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NAVCENT U.S. Naval Forces Central Command

NM nautical miles

OPK Ocean Peace-Keeping

PRC Piracy Reporting Center

PSF Peninsula Shield Force

ReCAAP Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed

Robbery against ships in Asia

RMSI Regional Maritime Security Initiative

RNO Royal Navy of Oman

SOM Straits of Malacca

TFG Transitional Federal Government of Somalia

UIC Union of Islamic Courts

UN United Nations

USD dollars (U.S.)

WFP World Food Programme

## I. Introduction

Imagine yourself on a United States Navy warship steaming through the Red Sea, a few short weeks into what you know will be a long deployment. It's the dead of night and most of the ship's crew is fast asleep, and only you and 30 other people are on watch on a ship of 400. The only sound is the sound of the computers and people chattering quietly in the background. Through the din of white noise comes the beeping of a secure radio and then a voice, a call from the chain of command to increase speed and head south. No other direction is given, but with the call comes action, and with all engines turning, it's time to get going, eager to see what lies ahead.

This is the precise situation that I found myself in back in late September of 2008, onboard the USS VELLA GULF (CG 72), a United States Navy guided missile cruiser, when the merchant vessel, Motor Vessel (M/V) Faina was captured by Somali pirates and was being held for ransom with its cargo of 33 T-72 Russian tanks. The Faina itself had been reportedly heading to Mombasa, Kenya when it was boarded by pirates. One Navy vessel (USS HOWARD DDG 83) was already on the scene, but we were to get there as quickly as possible to relieve them. This was a situation so foreign to me and the rest of the ship's crew, that despite all the experience of the crew, and the immense amount of training that we go through together, none of us onboard truly knew what we were getting ourselves into. For the next three and a half months we would be there, onboard a ship operating extremely close within three nautical miles, of the Somali coastline, ensuring that this dangerous cargo didn't make it ashore, into the hands of the Somali warlords. With us was a Military Sealift Command fleet ocean going tug boat, the USNS

CATAWBA (T-ATF 168), whose primary role was to stand by to render aid the moment the situation allowed it. This was a mission never before carried out by the Military Sealift Command. Additionally we would talk twice a day to the senior of the hostages held onboard, to make sure that they were well and to help keep their morale up, ensuring they were kept safe no matter what the status of the ongoing negotiations were. Daily one could hear the stress that this situation was putting on the members of the crew, and we couldn't help but feel for them and their families as well. So too did my shipmates and I begin to wonder precisely why the pirates were doing this, why anyone would choose a life of crime, of danger, rather than something, anything else.

Due to circumstances completely beyond our control, we were relieved by another vessel (USS ROOSEVELT DDG 80) in January 2009, and left the area, bound for new missions and new experiences. Shortly thereafter we received word that the long ordeal was finally over, the ship and crew were released, the ransom paid and the pirates were off, likely to do this exact thing time and time again, putting other ships and other crews at risk. From there we went on to conduct other anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden with a newly formed international task force.<sup>1</sup> The VELLA GULF then became the flagship for the newly formed Combined Task Force 151, under Rear Admiral Terence McKnight, United States Navy, whose primary mission was to inhibit pirate operations and potentially capture suspected pirates operating throughout the Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa regions.<sup>2</sup> These pirates would then be sent to Kenya for trial in an effort to

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<sup>1</sup> UN Security Council. Resolution 1846. "The Situation in Somalia". January 2009.

<sup>2</sup> American Forces Press Service. Multinational Task Force Targets Pirates. January 2009.

send the message ashore that piracy was no longer going to be profitable or safe, and to encourage any potential pirates ashore to consider other options for financial gain.<sup>3</sup>

We spent the next month and a half patrolling the internationally recognized transit corridor (IRTC), looking for vessels suspected of piracy as well as simply talking to merchants about what to do in case of a pirate attack. In this mission we as a ship helped to make history, capturing 16 suspected pirates in a single 24 hour period, the most ever captured by a naval warship in the modern era. These pirates were eventually transported to Kenya and underwent trial and are currently serving time after being convicted of piracy. The ship itself even received national news coverage, to the point where I was able to see myself on television.

Watching all these news stories and seeing not only myself, but my shipmates and close friends getting involved in this situation made me wonder, why is the United States, getting involved in this problem now, considering it is a problem that is as old as time immemorial and has largely been ignored for decades. So too did I begin to question if what the US was doing was going to be effective. It was quite clear that piracy was a major problem, one with diverse consequences, and was thus something that most definitely had to be addressed, but precisely how was difficult to say. I clearly remember countless discussions were held about this around the wardroom table, and indeed around the entire ship as we attempted to come to terms with what we were doing, but it seemed like out there at sea, far from home, no long-term answers were going to be found, much more research was going to have to be done.

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<sup>3</sup> Eugene Kontorovich. "International Legal Responses to Piracy." American Society of International Law. Vol 13 Issue 2. February 2009.

**Problem:**

Piracy is a growing problem in the Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa region. Reports of attacks have increased from roughly 119 reported in 2008 to 152 in 2010<sup>4</sup>. As the numbers of attacks increase so too does the value of the ships being taken and the ransoms being collected. In 2008 for example, the pirates captured many tug boats and fishing vessels and as a result the ransoms collected tended to be fairly small, less than 1 million US dollars<sup>5</sup>. By 2010 and into 2011 however, things have changed, the focus now seems to be on larger ships, with more valuable cargo such as crude oil tankers, and receiving ransoms upwards of two million dollars.<sup>6</sup> As a result the shipping industry, governmental agencies, insurance agencies and even the general public have all begun to take notice of this increase.

Maritime piracy is defined by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea as “any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed; on the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft and, against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State...”<sup>7</sup> In 1993, this definition was expanded further by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) which conducted a study that created a definition of piracy that was applicable to all locations. This definition includes: 1) low-

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<sup>4</sup> ICC International Maritime Bureau. *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships: Report for the Period 1 January 2010-30 September 2010*. October 2010.

<sup>5</sup> International Maritime Organization. *“Reports on Acts of Piracy and Robbery Against Ships”* October 27 2008.

<sup>6</sup> International Maritime Organization. *“Reports on Acts of Piracy and Robbery Against Ships”* March 29 2010.

<sup>7</sup> UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. 1982

level armed robbery: opportunistic attacks mounted close to land, 2) medium-level armed assault and robbery: piracy carried out further from shore, often in narrow sea-lanes, with a high probability that violence is used, and 3) major criminal attack: well-resourced and smoothly run operations in which violence is commonly employed, not only to steal money or cargo from a ship, but to take over the ship itself.<sup>8</sup> Rupert Burns, a maritime security expert for Lloyd's of London (a well known and highly regarded maritime insurance company) Intelligence Unit, expanded on this further by providing a more in-depth description of where attacks occur in relation to the vessel's location. He expands the analysis to include even more detailed definitions: 1) simple robbery of ships stores and valuables from vessels at anchor/moored at a buoy/berthed alongside, 2) armed/violent robbery against vessels at anchor/moored at a buoy/berthed alongside, 3) armed/violent robbery against vessels underway or making way, 4) armed attacks against ships underway or making for purposes of hostage taking and ransom demand, and 5) deliberate vessel hijacking and devolution "Phantom ship" operations.<sup>9</sup> This typology is an essential step to understand in order to truly come to terms with the problem and with luck come up with an effective solution.

Piracy and most particularly, the rapid, almost exponential growth in piracy around the world is gaining attention just as rapidly from much of the general population. It is by no means a new problem. In fact it has plagued mankind since first taking to the seas. Piracy is in fact one of the primary reasons that the United States Navy was

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<sup>8</sup> Martin Murphy. *Contemporary Piracy and Maritime Terrorism: The Threat to International Security* (New York, New York: Routledge, 2007)

<sup>9</sup> Rupert Burns. "Compound Piracy at Sea in the Early Twenty-First Century: A Tactical to Operational-Level Perspective on Contemporary, Multiphase Piratical Methodology," in *Violence at Sea: Piracy in the Age of Global Terrorism*, Peter Lehr ed (Routledge: New York, 2007)

founded, and indeed it was against the pirates that much of the Navy and Marine Corps heritage begins. The infamous “shores of Tripoli” referred to in the Marine Corps Hymn refers to the Barbary Coast pirates and the actions that the US Navy and Marine Corps team took against the them.<sup>10</sup> Now, however, it seems that the stakes are increasing as more people are taking to this life of crime and villainy on the high seas. Naturally the increase in attention on the problems of piracy is leading to increased discussion on precisely how to deal with the problem. This is not a bad thing, discussion can lead to further insight and help policy makers come to a solution.

In the case of the Gulf of Aden (GOA) and Horn of Africa (HOA), however, it seems that many experts suggest that all one must do to solve the problem is emulate the solutions that have been used elsewhere in the world, particularly in Southeast Asia. They suggest that all one must do is craft security policy that allows the nations in the region to take action against the pirates just as has been done in Southeast Asia. This sounds plausible and completely reasonable. After all, in the past experts have been able to craft these arrangements to deal with the problem of piracy and make them quite effective, at least in the short term. The problem that occurs, however, is that culture, or how a given population views the world, passed down from generation to generation, is not universal. As a result, the plan that works for some places will not necessarily be acceptable for others. In the Gulf of Aden there is no clear tradition of regional cooperation, and often the various regimes seem far more focused on remaining in power and on their own internal situation than the situation at sea. This creates challenges for strategists who try to solve the problems of piracy without regard to regional culture or

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<sup>10</sup> Christopher Hitchens. “Thomas Jefferson: The Pirate War: To The Shores Of Tripoli” *Time Magazine*. July 05, 2004

politics. Regional culture will also play substantially into the politics in the region and either serves as a hindrance or as an aid to support these goals. The political structures in place in the Middle East compared to Southeast Asia are vastly different, and without addressing these differences no solution will be found.

**What can be done:**

To solve the problem of piracy, all of the nations in the impacted region of the Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa are going to need to become much more involved in the entire process, providing regional security that is currently all but nonexistent. These regional efforts are the only ones that will be accepted by the general populace of the region. In general, people are much more receptive to ideas that come from those with a similar political and cultural upbringing, rather than simply an outsider injecting themselves into a given situation. Getting the governments of the countries in the Middle East involved in these cooperative efforts will likely appeal much more to the population which is most directly impacted by the pirates. No other nation will have the cultural understanding or the broad appeal to the populations of these countries. Without this regional buy in, one cannot hope to address the problem, nor provide any stability. The challenge will be establishing a method through which regional security efforts will be able to exist. Currently, the focus of many of these regimes is entirely internal, and many lack the assets to adequately deal with the pirates themselves. Additionally, countries in the region seem much more apt to ask for outside assistance, from places like the United States, which further slows down their efforts. Clearly, what has worked in the past in South East Asia will not directly transfer to other places around the world. Cookie cutter approaches like this will only cause further problems that the United States and others

will be ill prepared to deal with. One must deal with these pirates first at sea, and then over time be able to transition toward solving the problem ashore, with the continued support of the regional governments, controlling their own destiny.

The challenge becomes to take the elements of what has worked in the past, from the regional security agreements, which are so commonplace in Southeast Asia, and find a way for them to work in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. The governments of Southeast Asia have been able to come together to form regional security agreements that would allow their militaries to deal with the pirates at sea, which buys them time to stabilize the situation ashore, which will in turn have a longer term impact on the situation. For this to work in the Middle East one needs to get buy in from many of the nations in the region, and convince them that this is truly the right answer, for their own safety and economic well-being. Their very safety is at stake as these pirates put more and more ships at risk, and perhaps use their ransom money to fund terrorist organizations. Additionally, if piracy continues to be a problem, more governments will become involved which may put the base of their power in a bind, endangering their power. Convincing the governments in the region of this threat is by no means an easy task, nor is it one that the United States as a nation can take on entirely on its own. Nevertheless, it is essential to ensure that the sea lanes of commerce remain open, and something must be done. People must be able to transport goods and material via the sea if peace and prosperity are going to rule the day.

**Importance:**

Despite a vast increase in counter-piracy operations as well as massive naval deployments from the United States, European Union (EU) and, the North Atlantic

Treaty Organization (NATO), piracy in the Horn of Africa and Gulf of Aden region is still a significant problem. Countless task forces patrolling these waters and legal agreements to try and detain the pirates have proven unsuccessful in truly being able to slow the problem. In fact, from looking at the statistics from the last three years by major regions around the world, one can see a slight decrease in piracy throughout the HOA/GOA (see figure 1), but this decrease does not seem consistent with the effort and money being poured into these anti-piracy campaigns.

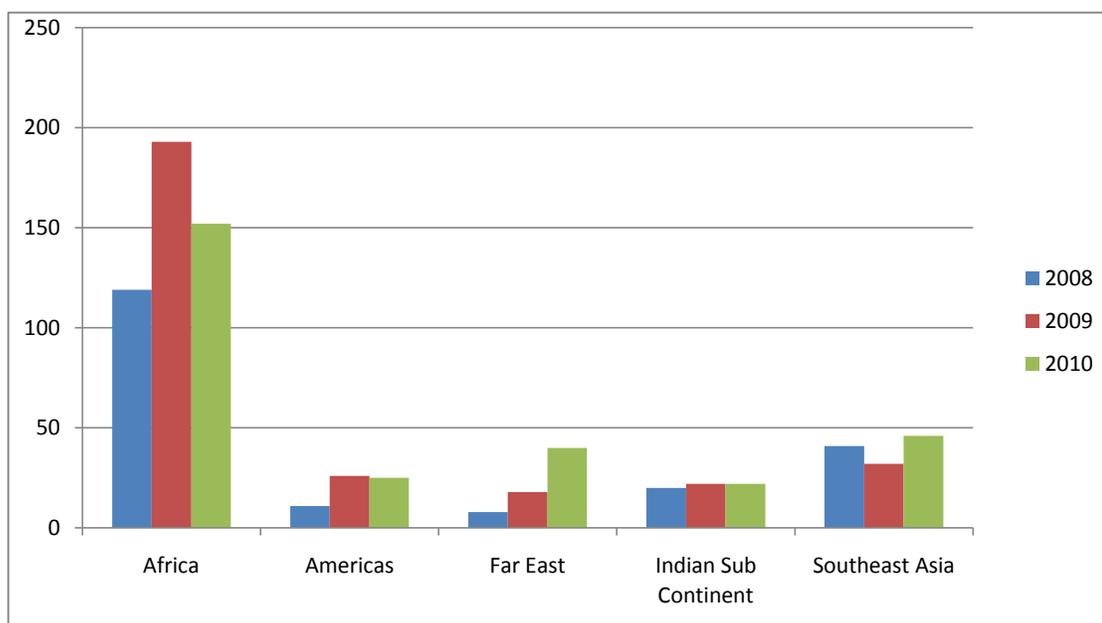


Figure 1: Incidents of Piracy Worldwide by Region 2008-2010<sup>11</sup>

While one can see slight decreases in attacks in the waters around Africa from 2009-2010, these decreases are incredibly slight, especially when one considers the massive expenditure that governments around the world are putting forth in that region to try to improve the situation. The numbers are still significantly higher than in any point in history. The pirates as well are getting more and more brazen in their attacks, which is only going to further exacerbate the problem. This can be shown by an attack in 2009 off the coast of Seychelles, when pirates took a tourist yacht and brought it to waters off of their stronghold in Harardhere, a place which has become notorious recently for being a den of piracy in recent years.<sup>12</sup> As the pirates continue to get bolder and take larger ships, further from their traditional operating waters it is only going to become more and more important for the world as a whole to take action.

<sup>11</sup> ICC International Maritime Bureau. Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships: Report for the Period 1 January 2010-30 September 2010. October 2010.

<sup>12</sup>Anita Powell. "Pirates Hijack Yacht Near Seychelles Islands". April 2, 2009.

This is especially the case now, as piracy has a major impact on the global economic picture. As the world continues to globalize, countries are participating more and more in global trade. This trade is beneficial to the global economy, as it opens up new markets and provides goods for much of the world's population. Many of these goods are still transported via the sea lanes. In fact, in 2009 it was estimated that as much as 8.17 billion tons of goods were shipped across the maritime shipping lanes worldwide.<sup>13</sup> That is a near staggering amount of material that is shipped across the seas, far more than the average person tends to think. Shipping companies may begin to think twice about their shipping strategy if these piracy attacks continue, which means that the costs of shipping goods will likely increase dramatically. This increase in shipping costs could easily then be turned around and result in increased costs to the average consumer. An increased cost to the consumer could prove especially troubling. This is one of the many reasons cited as to why the problem of piracy must be addressed. If piracy has such significant economic impacts this becomes especially crucial during a global economic downturn, such as we are seeing today.

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<sup>13</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. "Review Of Maritime Transport 2009" Geneva Switzerland. 2009

## II. Literature Review

### Chapter Introduction:

The problem of maritime piracy has been plaguing the world's waterways since people first took to the sea in ships. As human populations began to spread out and the concept of maritime trade began to become even more prominent feature of daily life, so too did the pirate and the concept of maritime crime begin to thrive.<sup>14</sup> There is a great deal of textual evidence of the havoc that these pirates wrought on the seas of the ancient world. In fact, the earliest recorded instance of piracy was as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC, with the Sea Peoples in the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>15</sup> Throughout history piracy has been dealt with in different ways, depending on the situation at hand, and indeed the region most predominantly being impacted by the pirates.

Recently piracy has sprouted again, in several different ways around the world, in several different places around the world. Most notably in places like the Straits of Malacca (SOM), in Southeast Asia, as well as in the Horn of Africa/Gulf of Aden region. This dramatic increase in the number of attacks has led to a similar increase in the amount of media coverage and published material talking about not only the problem, but also potential solutions. For the first few years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it was a definite problem in these regions, but was relatively ignored by the general populace. Certainly there was attention from organizations such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the United States Navy, which clearly has an interest in the problem, but the general populace was very much unaware.<sup>16</sup> Now, the amount of literature on this topic

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<sup>14</sup> Phillip De Souza. *Piracy in the Graeco-Roman World*. Cambridge, 1999

<sup>15</sup> Eberhard Zanger. "Who Were the Sea People?" *Saudi Aramco World*. May/June 1995. pp 20-31

<sup>16</sup> Piracy – The East Africa/Somalia Situation: Practical Measures to Avoid, Deter or Delay Piracy Attacks, Oil Companies International Marine Forum (Edinburgh: Witherby Seamanship International Ltd, 2009): pp 1–42.

is almost staggering, and increasing on an almost daily basis. This rise in literature seems to have come about largely due to higher profile attacks in places like the Horn of Africa, particularly the Somali pirates capturing vessels such as the M/V Faina, with its cargo of Russian T-72 tanks, and the Sirius Star, a massive Saudi oil tanker.<sup>17</sup> These attacks and many like them also increased public attention which in turn led to increasing levels of political attention from around the world.

As a result, security experts and scholars around the world began to see that piracy was a growing problem, and one that was a unique to the region that stemmed from wide variety of reasons and causes. First and foremost Somali piracy persisted because of the general lawlessness that prevailed ashore and the economic and political instability that resulted from such lawlessness.<sup>18</sup> One major problem arose from this however, the instability and chaos problem ashore would be incredibly expensive and difficult to change in the current environment. Nevertheless, something had to be done so the question became: what?

### **The Quest for Answers Begins:**

James Kraska and Brian Wilson, two United States naval officers, both of whom have written quite extensively on Somali piracy, stressed in early 2009 that “until the world can effectively craft and execute a long-term solution... the problem of piracy must be addressed from the sea to the shore rather than the other way around.”<sup>19</sup> To Kraska and other security policy experts like him, counter-piracy efforts should be focused primarily on bolstering military and law enforcement actions (particularly at sea)

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<sup>17</sup> Pirates capture Saudi oil tanker,” BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7733482.stm>.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Chalk. “The Maritime Dimension of International Security: Terrorism, Piracy, and Challenges for the United States,” RAND Corporation Report (2008), [www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org);

<sup>19</sup> James Kraska et al., “Maritime Piracy in East Africa,” in *Journal of International Affairs*, 62:2 (Spring 2009)

designed to disrupt and disincentivize the act of piracy itself, making life increasingly difficult for those that choose to pursue a life of crime on the high seas. A first response came in 2008 when the United States National Security Council (NSC) wrote a policy statement, one which called for a plan that would reduce the vulnerability of maritime shipping to piracy, interrupt and deter attacks within the auspices of international law, and ensure development of an internationally recognized framework for arrest and prosecution of pirates.<sup>20</sup> The goal of this plan was to streamline as much as possible the United States' counter-piracy efforts, as well as to create a national Counter-piracy Coordination Center (CPCC) whose primary mission was to collect data and disseminate this information to forces operating in the HOA/GOA, making sure that all forces were operating off of the same information, a so called "common tactical picture." This would be an essential step as counter-piracy operations stepped up and more forces become involved.<sup>21</sup> Without this common tactical picture there could be no coordination and the pirates would be able to take advantage of the situation.

Shortly after this NSC proclamation dealing with the problems of piracy, the international community began to increase its attention toward the problem as well. For example, the United Nations itself began to examine the problem. In January 2009, the United Nations formed the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), whose primary mission was to help "facilitate discussion and coordination of actions among states and organizations to suppress piracy off the coast of Somalia."<sup>22</sup> The

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<sup>20</sup> US National Security Council, "Countering Piracy Off The Horn Of Africa: Partnership & Action Plan," (December 2008), [www.marad.dot.gov/documents/Countering\\_Piracy\\_Off\\_The\\_Horn\\_of\\_Africa\\_-\\_Partnership\\_Action\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.marad.dot.gov/documents/Countering_Piracy_Off_The_Horn_of_Africa_-_Partnership_Action_Plan.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> US National Security Council, "Countering Piracy Off The Horn Of Africa: Partnership & Action Plan"

<sup>22</sup> Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia," U.S. Department of State Factsheet, January 14, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/othr/misc/121054.htm>

primary purpose of the CGPCS was to serve as an international forum for discussion and international cooperation. Early on it was determined that only through international cooperation fostering change within the maritime shipping industry as well as coordinated naval power, would lasting change realistically be able to occur. Additionally, one would need legal power to be able to prosecute persons suspected of piracy, in order to act as an overall deterrent. This legal power would come first and foremost from a Memorandum of Understanding initially with Kenya and eventually other countries, in which they would agree to prosecute persons suspected of piracy in the Gulf of Aden.<sup>23</sup> In fact, one analyst, after the first meeting of the CGPCS, called for four distinct mechanisms through which one could hope to combat piracy: adoption of onboard deterrents or defensive countermeasures for shipping transiting the region, deployment of international and regional naval forces to deter and prevent attacks, creation of a Somali coast guard funded and trained by the international community, and establishment of regional counter-piracy patrols based on those in place in the Malacca Straits since 2006.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Theory of Cooperative Security:**

This is the idea behind cooperative security, countries working together to provide for their own defense and ensure their own regional goals. Security experts and cooperative security theorists have long surmised what factors are essential to fostering these relationships and establishing cooperation between the states. A great deal of literature covers precisely this. The first major factor appears to be the development of a

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<sup>23</sup> Eugene Kontorovich. "International Legal Responses to Piracy off the Coast of Somalia" *Journal of the American Society of International Law*. February 6, 2009.

<sup>24</sup> Stephanie Hanson. "Combating Maritime Piracy." *CFR Backgrounder*, Council on Foreign Relations (January 27, 2009).  
[http://www.cfr.org/publication/18376/combating\\_maritime\\_piracy.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/18376/combating_maritime_piracy.html)

normative base. In this case a normative base simply means a standard way in which the various societies interact with one another. John Gerard Ruggie argued in 1993 that cooperative agreements depend on “certain principles of ordering relations” that “specify appropriate conduct for a class of factors.”<sup>25</sup> Put simply, this means that nations that are engaging in cooperation with one another, must have a tradition of cooperation, and rules, whether they are verbal or non verbal, that govern the way that they interact with one another. In another work, from the same period of time, Antonia and Abram Chayes affirm this need for a “strong normative base” within such arrangements. They stress that the success of a cooperative system “depends on the ability to generate, adapt, and enforce a system of governing norms.” So not only are these norms important to establish, they must also be flexible and enforceable, otherwise they may be prone to fail.<sup>26</sup>

This problem raises a great deal of questions that must be examined in order to adequately deal with them. First off, what are these norms and what characteristics does this so called “normative base” possess. One can look at Ruggie again for some suggestions as to how these societies interact. Ruggie stressed that successful cooperation requires “diffused reciprocity,” with “diffuse” meaning that an understanding exists between participants that the benefits of the arrangement will be evenly distributed over a period of time.<sup>27</sup> This stands in stark contrast to many of the international

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<sup>25</sup> John Gerard Ruggie. “Multilateralism: The Theory of an Institution,” in *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Norm*, ed. John Gerard Ruggie (Columbia, NY, Columbia University Press, 1993)

<sup>26</sup> Antonia Chayes et. al. “Regime Architecture: Elements and Principles,” in *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century*, ed. Janne E. Nolan (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1994)

<sup>27</sup> John Gerard Ruggie. “Multilateralism: The Theory of an Institution,” in *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Norm*, ed. John Gerard Ruggie (Columbia, NY, Columbia University Press, 1993)

agreements that suggest exactly what benefits countries will receive and when they will receive those benefits.<sup>28</sup> In order to make these cooperative agreements work properly, societies must be willing to forgo the norm of seeking any and all advantage in favor of something that can be seen as a more advantageous situation for all involved, creating a sort of win-win situation for all the participants. In the long run this sort of approach will be more beneficial to all involved and thus more likely to succeed. This is by no means an easy task, it seems almost human nature for governments to seek any and all advantage, but this will only continue to cause problems well into the future.

Accomplishing this however can be extraordinarily difficult, as it seems especially challenging for states to trust one another. Emily Landau, an Israeli, senior research associate at the Institute of National Security Studies in Tel Aviv, suggested in a book in 2006 on the topic of cooperative security throughout the Middle East, that theorists tend to agree that even in the modern era cooperative security is hinged upon the concerns of a “self interested state.” This very fact means that nations must look for ways to incentivize other nations into participating. This of course is not without its own set of challenges that have to be overcome. As stated previously, states are reluctant to join into an agreement in which they sense that the other side is going to have more immediate benefits and seek something that is more self serving. According to Landau, this makes many cooperative agreements prone to fail, unless they find a method through which to discuss these challenges adequately and make sure that all sides feel equally satisfied with the benefits of such an arrangement.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Emily B. Landau. *Arms Control in the Middle East: Cooperative Security Dialogue and Regional Constraints*. Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies (Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press, 2006).

In order to make cooperative agreements work, one must look at the enforcement mechanism behind them. These agreements can be nothing more than words on a page. If there is little to no cost or punishment for not following them; there is little incentive to do so. States must have confidence that they are all abiding by the same rules and that no one nation is going to arbitrarily start acting on its own accord. This is exactly what Antonia and Abram Chayes, two prominent international legal scholars at Tufts University, suggested in their 1994 book discussing regional cooperation in the regimes of the Middle East.<sup>30</sup> Of course such expectations are very difficult to manage, especially because to make cooperative security theory work one must exercise persuasion, not just aggression or threats of aggression to make things happen. Similarly, John Steinbruner, the director of the Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (University of Maryland), suggests that while previous security agreements that are focused on active confrontation by military forces, cooperative security would rely on collaborative enforcement of a previously agreed upon set of rules, relying on reassurance rather than mere deterrence.<sup>31</sup> By using means of dialogue, persuasion and diplomacy one can hope to minimize the impacts of conflict. This does not mean that conflict is completely out of date, conflict will always occur when groups of countries exist together, but it provides a much more stable venue through which to deal with that conflict. Dealing with the problems of conflict in the most efficient manner possible will lead to much more efficient ways of fostering change.

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<sup>30</sup> Antonia Chayes, and Abram Chayes. "Regime Architecture: Elements and Principles." *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century*. Edited by Janne E. Nolan. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1994)

<sup>31</sup> John D. Steinbruner. *Principles of Global Security*. (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 2000).

The literature on this topic is quite clear when discussing the characteristics necessary in order to make these agreements work. All participants in such an agreement will need to establish for themselves a tradition of cooperation amongst each other. This implies that they have favorable relationships amongst themselves and are able to find at least some common ground through which they can mitigate any potential conflict as it arises. This common ground can sometimes be as simple as the problem itself, providing a significant enough threat that it brings the nations together. In accomplishing this they are then able to gain trust with one another, trust that each nation will follow the agreement and cease acting necessarily in only their own best interest, choosing instead to work for the betterment of all involved, and working toward a common goal. This in turn will also provide greater cohesion and better ability to examine the situations at hand and work together to find the best solution possible. Only then will nations truly be able to work together to rid the seas of the scourge of piracy.

### **The “Model” of Southeast Asia:**

A common thread that appears in much of the literature surrounding the topic of piracy is that to deal with piracy in the HOA/GOA region all one must do is simply emulate what has been done in the Straits of Malacca, particularly with regard to cooperative security.<sup>32</sup> The most commonly referred to arrangement to emulate is the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Robbery against ships in Asia, commonly referred to as ReCAAP. This agreement, established in 2006, is an agreement between 16 member nations on precisely how to handle the problem of piracy

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<sup>32</sup> Joshua Ho. “Anti-Piracy in Somalia: Models for Maritime Security Institutions.” *RSIS Commentaries*. S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. July 8, 2009.

in the SOM and how to create multilateral approaches to the problem itself.<sup>33</sup> The 16 nations have come together, first and foremost acknowledging the problem and then working to find the most efficient way of dealing with it.

ReCAAP has been heralded as a resounding success as a program to establish regional security measures. It is not uncommon to read a great deal of literature lauding the efforts that these 16 countries have made to provide regional security. Scholars such as Joshua Ho, who has written extensively on ReCAAP and other maritime issues in Southeast Asia, considers it a success, despite the fact the program itself has some worrisome flaws that will need to be addressed.<sup>34</sup> James Kraska and Brian Wilson have also suggested that a ReCAAP type setup in the HOA/GOA, would be the most efficient way to ensure maritime security.<sup>35</sup> The international community as a whole has also been fairly supportive of these efforts, as can be seen by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) meeting in Djibouti in January 2009, during which the goal was to discuss creating an agreement much like ReCAAP for the Middle East and East Africa, and work to find solutions for piracy in the HOA/GOA.<sup>36</sup>

Strategists and politicians that support the idea of the regional approach to dealing with the problem tend to feel that ReCAAP had several features that were the most informative and important to the overall process. First and foremost was the very idea of regional security, of the countries involved coming together to create a process based on

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<sup>33</sup> Joshua Ho. "Combating piracy and armed robbery in Asia: The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC)," in *Marine Policy* 33 (2009)

<sup>34</sup> Joshua Ho. "Combating piracy and armed robbery in Asia: The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC)," in *Marine Policy* 33 (2009)

<sup>35</sup> James Kraska, et al., "Combating pirates of the Gulf of Aden: The Djibouti Code and the Somali Coast Guard," in *Ocean and Coastal Management* XXX (2009), 4–5; Kraska et al., "Fighting Piracy,"

<sup>36</sup> UN News Centre, "Regional States sign pact to fight piracy off Somali coast – UN," UN News Service, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=29725&Cr=&Cr1=>

shared norms, with which they can deal with the problem at hand. Secondly was simply opening the lines of communication and sharing data between all the countries that were involved, ensuring that everyone had the same information. This would greatly enhance coordination and would make it possible to help solve the problem.<sup>37</sup> Only through emulating what was done in Southeast Asia would true lasting change be able to persist in the Middle East and Eastern Africa.

Despite the claims that the Southeast Asian model of ReCAAP was the right answer for the HOA/GOA, some have suggested that this model will not directly apply to Africa. Even those who overall support the idea of ReCAAP suggest that in and of itself it might not be a perfectly suitable system. Joshua Ho himself has called out three specific problems with the idea of ReCAAP, namely its lack of operational constructs as well as its non obligatory nature, not to mention the fact that some of the stronger nations in Southeast Asia are not participants in ReCAAP, namely Malaysia and Indonesia.<sup>38</sup> If nations are not obligated to act in accordance with the signed agreement there is little recourse when things go poorly, such as the ongoing conflicts in the region over sovereignty of territory.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the two countries most affected by the piracy in the SOM, Malaysia and Indonesia, are not participants in ReCAAP. How can you have an effective anti-piracy campaign if the two principal countries whose coastline borders the region in question are not involved? Their very absence calls into question the overall legitimacy and effectiveness of such a program, as suggested by Cara Raymond in

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<sup>37</sup> James Carafano et al., "Maritime Security: Fighting Piracy in the Gulf of Aden and Beyond,"

<sup>38</sup> Joshua Ho, "Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery in Asia: Boosting ReCAAP's Role."

<sup>39</sup> Noel M. Morada. "Regional Maritime Security Initiatives in the Asia Pacific: Problems and Prospects for Maritime Security Cooperation". Berlin September 2006.

a 2009 article on piracy in the Malacca Straits, the absence of Indonesia and Malaysia “cannot help but cast doubt on its [ReCAAP’s] effectiveness.”<sup>40</sup>

Research also shows that these agreements have other issues simply due to the evolutionary nature of the agreements themselves. ReCAAP is not the first agreement of its kind, even if its scope is larger than anything previously attempted within Southeast Asia. There have been numerous agreements, throughout Southeast Asia, especially among countries like Malaysia, Singapore and, Indonesia. The first of these is commonly referred to as MALSINDO (an acronym for the first three states involved in the agreement, Malaysia, Singapore and, Indonesia).<sup>41</sup> Established in 1999, this multilateral agreement was designed to help coordinate maritime patrols in the region. This agreement was soon followed by Malacca Straits Patrol (MSP) and the Malacca Straits Sea Patrols (MSSP), efforts that built upon the successes of the initial agreement. Each successive agreement expanded on the coordination that the previous one lay out, as well as expands the information sharing between all the countries involved.<sup>42</sup> Each successive agreement also brought with it additional countries that were willing to participate in the anti-piracy mission. This increased cooperation has a high likelihood of being able to make a huge difference in this region that is critical to the world’s maritime trade.

One issue, however, with these agreements as they are currently written is that they only provide for the nations to patrol in their own territorial waters, that is waters

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<sup>40</sup> Cara Raymond. , “Piracy and Armed Robbery in the Malacca Straits,” *Naval War College Review* 62:3 (Summer 2009)

<sup>41</sup> Ellen Laipson et al. *The Indian Ocean: Resource and Governance Challenges*. Henry L. Stimson Center. 2009.

<sup>42</sup> Tamara Renee Shie “Maritime Piracy in Southeast Asia: The Evolution and Progress of Intra-ASEAN Cooperation,” in *Piracy, Maritime Terrorism and Securing the Malacca Straits*, ed. Graham Gerard Ong-Webb (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006)

within 12 nautical miles from their coastline. This provides for a great deal of national sovereignty and independence, while still allowing coordination and information sharing between nations.<sup>43</sup> It also severely limits the overall utility of these forces. Participating countries are merely scheduling a “show” in these waters that serves no deterrent purpose for the criminals.<sup>44</sup> The critique, suggested by Valencia, is that if it were truly cooperative then nations would not mind another nation infringing on their territorial waters. Perhaps participation is nothing much more than mere political posturing, giving the suggestion that the government is working to solve the problem, without actually committing to it. Or perhaps it’s as J.N. Mak, a maritime security expert and Southeast Asian regional scholar suggests, that by having these agreements in place, even if they are not accomplishing as much as they can, they are at the very least forestalling international involvement for a period of time, which is something that most governments would seem to be interested in.<sup>45</sup>

Regardless of how one views the regional security agreements in the Southeast Asian theater of operations, it seems it is fair to compare these arrangements to some of those that are occurring in the Middle East. In order to do this correctly, one must look at both the factors that have allowed success in Southeast Asia as well as those that have limited cooperation and been a hindrance to overall success. Much of the recent literature seems to agree that there are indeed several factors that have drastically hindered successes in the past and will continue to do so unless properly addressed. First

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<sup>43</sup> Mark J. Valencia, “Piracy and Politics in Southeast Asia,” *Piracy in Southeast Asia. Status, Issues, and Responses*. eds. Derek Johnson and Mark J. Valencia (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005)

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>45</sup> J.N. Mak., “Unilateralism and Regionalism: Working Together and Alone in the Malacca Straits,” *Piracy, Maritime Terrorism and Securing the Malacca Straits*, ed. Graham Gerard Ong-Webb (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006)

of all many of these countries in Southeast Asia appear to lack the personnel and vessels for mounting sufficient patrols. This is especially true of places like Malaysia and Indonesia, who have admitted publicly that they lack the resources to adequately patrol their own waters.<sup>46</sup> Economists seem to suggest that this is partly due to the economic situation in these countries, still ravaged by the economic crisis that plagued Southeast Asia throughout the latter part of the 1990's.<sup>47</sup> Maintaining a naval fleet and a sufficient number of personnel to operate it is extraordinarily expensive and requires a good deal of capital investment.

Because these nations generally lack the necessary resources on their own to mount such a massive program, they require international assistance. The second obstacle to regional security cooperation in Southeast Asia deals with the much broader issue of political willingness. Political willingness, in this context, correlates to the internal and external political concerns that prevent or hinder a state's decision to participate in a cooperative arrangement such as any of these. Three specific political issues remain constant throughout all current literature and explain the hesitance of states in the region to cooperate, including: distractions, poor relations with neighbors, and the fear of control by external nations.

*Internal Distractions:* States in this region for the past decade have been almost entirely focused on regaining internal stability after the financial crisis of the 1990's. The widespread economic depression and massive unemployment that resulted were largely

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<sup>46</sup> Cara Raymond, "Piracy and Armed Robbery in the Malacca Straits,"

<sup>47</sup> Carolin Liss. "The Challenges of Piracy in Southeast Asia and the Role of Australia," Austral Policy Forum 07 19A, Nautilus Institute, October 25, 2007.

beyond the control of many of the states that it impacted.<sup>48</sup> The crisis, which began in 1997, drained vital resources and caused a drastic shift in focus for the national governments. The controversy surrounding the economic crisis also generated political opposition, which would lead to further distractions and infighting. As a result issues that were seen as less urgent, such as maritime crime and even border patrols, began to take a back seat to the more pressing issues at hand.<sup>49</sup> This allowed a large amount of organized crime syndicates to form and gain a wide degree of prosperity. All of this coupled together to keep the forces in this region spread quite thinly across a wide amount of water space, and allowed even more leniency in illegal fishing, smuggling and of course piracy in the SOM itself.<sup>50</sup>

*Poor Relations with Neighbors:* Many of the countries of Southeast Asia have had a history of mistrust between them for the last several decades. There is a history of border conflicts and just plain cold relationships that have a tendency to cause problems in the region. Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and, Malaysia are notorious for the conflicts that they have experienced among themselves.<sup>51</sup> The biggest issues these countries tend to face are issues of national sovereignty, territorial waters and maritime boundaries. The inability to clearly define maritime boundaries and territorial waters between these national governments makes it increasingly difficult in light of agreements such as ReCAAP. The inability to solve these issues has definitely impacted the ability

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<sup>48</sup>R Cheetham. 1998. Asia Crisis. Paper presented at conference, U.S.-ASEAN-Japan policy Dialogue. School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University, June 7–9, Washington, D.C.

<sup>49</sup> International Monetary Fund Fact Sheet-South East Asia.

<sup>50</sup> Caroline Vavro., Piracy, Terrorism and the Balance of Power in the Malacca Strait

<sup>51</sup> Lee Onn. The Water Issue Between Singapore and Malaysia. Institute of South East Asian Studies. ECONOMICS AND FINANCE NO. 1(2003) January 2003.

for these nations to work together as necessary to combat piracy.<sup>52</sup> It seems like some of these national governments are merely acting out their part, scheduling the joint patrols and establishing new initiatives to solve the problem without fully committing to it simply because they do not see eye to eye with the other countries involved. One can see this looking at some of the recent coordinated efforts, or joint patrols, where it seems like it was an exercise in schedule sharing and there was no visible coordination between forces.<sup>53</sup>

*Fear of Control by External Nations:* Relations with external nations in the region have also impacted the ability to work together to solve the problem of piracy in the SOM. Any effort of assistance or aid in coordination is regularly viewed as an attempt at “meddling” within Southeast Asian affairs. Culturally, national sovereignty is a very sensitive issue for most countries, who naturally want to maintain their own independence. This is especially true in Southeast Asia, where countries tend to view any outside assistance, particularly from countries such as the United States, Japan and China as an infringement on their own liberties. Nowhere is this truer than in places such as Indonesia and Malaysia.<sup>54</sup> Their recent history has made them inherently distrusting of foreign powers interfering in national affairs. This has most definitely been an issue in the past, but luckily it seems like this is becoming much less of an issue as time goes on.

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<sup>52</sup> Caroline Vavro. Piracy, Terrorism and the Balance of Power in the Malacca Strait

<sup>53</sup> Carolin Liss. “The roots of piracy in Southeast Asia,” Austral Policy Forum 07–18A, Nautilus Institute, October 22, 2007,

<sup>54</sup> Victor Huang.. “Building Maritime Security in Southeast Asia: Outsiders Not Welcome?” *Naval War College Review* 61:1 (Winter 2008).

In fact it seems that currently, as long as offers of assistance are couched in the right terms, so perhaps there is a reason to have hope for the future.<sup>55</sup>

Despite all of these obstacles, there are many factors of that encourage or facilitate communication and cooperation in the region. This is a vital step toward working toward a region free of pirates. Most importantly, the countries have recognized the significant threat in the area that has forced these countries to come together in cooperation. It has by no means by a quick process, indeed it has taken quite some time, but slowly these countries have been coming together to enact change and improve their interoperability, finally dealing with the rise in maritime crime and the increased threat of terrorism.<sup>56</sup> Vivian Louis Forbes attributes the reduction of piracy in the region partly to national efforts, but largely to recognition by the affected states that maritime violence was a sufficient issue requiring cooperation.<sup>57</sup> This seems logical, but there is no clear consensus on this either, as some critics suggest that there are still many countries that have not determined that such an approach is feasible politically.<sup>58</sup> Perhaps there are elements of both that must be considered in order to fully understand the situation.

Another factor that has contributed to the overall success of the cooperation in Southeast Asia is simply the tradition of such an activity in the region itself. This tradition is best illustrated by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), formed in 1967.<sup>59</sup> The goal of ASEAN, as noted by Alan Collins, a scholar on

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<sup>55</sup> John F. Bradford. Japanese Anti-Piracy Initiatives in Southeast Asia: Policy Formation and the Coastal State Responses." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 26:3 (December 2004):

<sup>56</sup> John F. Bradford. The Growing Prospects for Maritime Security Cooperation in Southeast Asia." *Naval War College Review* 58:3 (Summer 2005)

<sup>57</sup> Vivian Loius Forbes. *Conflict and Cooperation in Managing Maritime Space in Semi-Enclosed Seas* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2001).

<sup>58</sup> Victor Huang.. "Building Maritime Security in Southeast Asia: Outsiders Not Welcome?" *Naval War College Review* 61:1 (Winter 2008).

<sup>59</sup> The ASEAN Declaration. Bangkok. 1967. <http://www.aseansec.org/1212.htm>

Southeast Asian security, was to create a strong region based on strong national governments, not built solely upon strong regional institutions.<sup>60</sup> This approach would create a sort of holistic approach that would attempt to strengthen the region through not only political means, but economically, socially and, even culturally. Many scholars have termed this type of approach “progressive nation building.”<sup>61</sup> This approach may be at least partially responsible for the relative stability that this region currently enjoys.

Amitav Acharya, professor of International Relations at American University in Washington DC, in two of his books on security in Southeast Asia, postulates that ASEAN can be regarded as “one of the most successful experiments in regionalism in the developing world” but downplays its role in maintaining regional security.<sup>62</sup> Acharya attributes the struggles in the security cooperation attempts to two chief problems: first, poor relations with member states, and secondly, fear of external manipulation. These relations made arranging these security agreements difficult, especially with the general fear that they would become dominated by a few nations. If a few nations were able to gain control they would be able to exercise influence over the smaller less powerful nations.<sup>63</sup>

Nevertheless, while ASEAN is not perfect, one must certainly acknowledge that it has had a definite impact in the region. First and foremost it seems that it was ASEAN that helped to normalize the relationships in the region and allowing the focus to shift

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<sup>60</sup> Alan Collins. *Security and Southeast Asia: Domestic, Regional, and Global Issues*. (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003).

<sup>61</sup> Harry Harding. “Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific Region,” in *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Janne E. Nolan (Washington D.C: Brookings Institute, 1994)

<sup>62</sup> Amitav Acharya, *A New Regional Order in Southeast Asia: ASEAN in the Post-Cold War Era*, Adelphi Paper, International Institute for Strategic Studies (London: Brassey’s, 1993)

<sup>63</sup> Harry Harding. “Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific Region,” in *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Janne E. Nolan (Washington D.C: Brookings Institute, 1994)

toward regional cooperative security. If nations begin to interact peacefully they will then be able to work together toward a common goal. Acharya himself describes this process as nations building a security community amongst themselves as well as working to “develop a reliable pattern of peaceful interaction, pursue shared interests, and strive for a common regional identity.”<sup>64</sup> Collins also echoes this sentiment, suggesting that the member nations of ASEAN seem to appreciate the fact that their security is tied to one another. He continues to argue that the holistic approach that is exercised by ASEAN is more than just about nation building, but about nation strengthening that exercises increased cooperation across the entire gamut of political and social structure. He further suggests that this approach over time will have much more of an impact than people tend to suggest.<sup>65</sup>

### **Security Cooperation in the Middle East:**

Despite all the praise of regional security agreements in Southeast Asia and what appears to be the general consensus that this is the best way forward, many security experts seem to doubt the ability of the Middle East to cooperate with such an arrangement. Michael Hulbert, a security expert for the Center for Strategic Studies, argued in June 2009 that “greater coordination of counter-piracy measures...will become all the more critical in [the] future” but he stressed that the actors involved “lack the political cohesion...to shift the strategic landscape.”<sup>66</sup> Another security expert, James Russell, who is well known for his expertise on Middle Eastern security, argues that

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<sup>64</sup> Amitav Acharya, *A New Regional Order in Southeast Asia: ASEAN in the Post-Cold War Era*, Adelphi Paper, International Institute for Strategic Studies (London: Brassey’s, 1993)

<sup>65</sup> Harry Harding. “Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific Region,” in *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Janne E. Nolan (Washington D.C: Brookings Institute, 1994)

<sup>66</sup> Matthew Hulbert. “Making Waves: Piracy Floods the Horn of Africa,” Center for Strategic Studies, ETH Zurich, *CSS Analyses in Security Policy*, no. 55 (June 2009), p 1.

states in the region have consistently “failed to see the value in cooperation as a tool to manage their security dilemmas,” with leaders often too distracted by their own issues, both internal and external, to realistically pursue cooperation.<sup>67</sup> According to Emirati scholar, Jamal Al-Suwadi, the Middle East has learned significant lessons from the Iran-Iraq and Gulf Wars, but the situation is still volatile and the “the search for a more stable arrangement unsettled.”<sup>68</sup> Until this situation is resolved it will be increasingly difficult for the countries involved to stimulate enough cooperation to actually make a significant difference in the region.

Over the past few decades, especially since the end of the Cold War, a great deal of literature has been written discussing the inability of the countries in the Middle East to fully embrace the cooperative spirit. Much of this literature focuses on a few key themes that seem to remain constant, regardless of everything else that is occurring: first off is the near constant conflict and turmoil that has persisted throughout much of the region, secondly, is the limited nature of national cooperation due to varying national self interests, thirdly is the general perception on the use of force as a implement of diplomacy in regional relationships.<sup>69</sup> The last major theme is simply, the over reliance on the United States and other external nations to provide security in the region.<sup>70</sup>

*A Culture of Conflict and Turmoil:* The region of the Middle East has been in a state of near perpetual conflict for much of its recent history, and indeed much of its

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<sup>67</sup> Russell James., *Regional Threats and Security Strategy: The Troubling Case of Today's Middle East* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, November 2007),

<sup>68</sup> Jamal Al-Suwaidi. “Regional Security Challenges: A GCC Perspective,” in *Oil and Water: Cooperative Security in the Persian Gulf*, ed. Bjorn Møller (New York: St. Martins Press, 2001)

<sup>69</sup> Geoffrey Kemp. “Cooperative Security in the Middle East,” in *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Janne E. Nolan (Washington D.C: Brookings Institute, 1994)

<sup>70</sup> Saideh Lotfian. “A Regional Security System in the Persian Gulf,” in *Practical Peacemaking in the Middle East, Volume I: Arms Control and Regional Security*, eds. Steven L. Spiegel et al. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995)

ancient history as well. Conflicts between countries, particularly those with shared borders, have a great deal of mistrust for one another, which will severely limit any attempts at cooperation. This mistrust causes suspicion over motives for offering assistance. Additionally this instability seems to propagate itself with Middle Eastern regimes, which often focus on exercising a great deal of military control internal to their country to provide security and to ensure that those in power stay in power. This makes military forces unavailable for any sort of regional operation, with the leadership instead focusing on the internal security situation.<sup>71</sup> Naturally, maintaining internal stability becomes a focus of regimes that rely extensively on internal and external security forces to maintain power. Regimes concerned with their own political survival, or with the perceived political maneuverings of their neighbors, are naturally averse to arrangements that limit or dilute their power, politically or security-wise and thus cooperation becomes extraordinarily difficult.

*Self-interests over regional security:* Similarly problematic to the success of regional security agreements is that the amount of resources that must be invested in order to foster cooperation is often seen as a major issue for state governments. If one nation invests significant resources toward regional goals, they are unavailable for the local regime. Geoffrey Kemp, suggests that this may be due to an attempt to maintain a “zero sum” perception.<sup>72</sup> This simply means that a given country’s gains or losses are exactly balanced by the gains or losses of with another country.<sup>73</sup> If this is the goal, then

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<sup>71</sup> Risa Brooks. “Civil Military Relations in the Middle East,” in *The Future Security Environment in the Middle East: Conflict, Stability, and Political Change*, eds. Nora Bensahel et al. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2004)

<sup>72</sup> Geoffrey Kemp. “Cooperative Security in the Middle East,” in *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Janne E. Nolan (Washington D.C: Brookings Institute, 1994)

<sup>73</sup> Myerson, Roger B. , *Game theory: analysis of conflict*, Harvard University Press,(1991)

getting involved in a situation that may not result in this zero sum goal is likely the last thing a country would be involved in. According to Anthony Cordesman and Khalid Al-Rodhan, security in the Middle East over the past several decades has been largely characterized as a result of individual national efforts, despite the presence of cooperative arrangements such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). According to Cordesman and Al-Rodhan, the GCC is essentially a hollow organization, with minimal power, and effectiveness as can be seen by the inability of the organization to prevent conflict between member nations.<sup>74</sup> This has a tendency to cause these member nations to pursue their own path toward security rather than rely on cooperation for their security.<sup>75</sup> Another example of this struggle toward regional security cooperation is the League of Arab States, initially designed to foster relationships and security for the region, which has in the eyes of many not accomplished much of what it was laid out to do.<sup>76</sup>

*Use of Force as a Tool:* According to Geoffrey Kemp, in the eyes of many of the nations in the Middle East, the threat or use of force is an acceptable means of statecraft and diplomacy.<sup>77</sup> Military strength is a way of showing one's superiority over your neighbors as well as helping to prevent neighbors from doing anything negative toward you. This type of attitude will ensure that military power and force become the preferred form of getting one's way rather than focusing on diplomacy and overall

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<sup>74</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007).

<sup>75</sup> Zeev Maoz. "Regional Security in the Middle East: Past Trends, Present Realities, and Future Challenges." In *Regional Security in the Middle East: Past Present, and Future*. ed. Zeev Maoz. (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997)

<sup>76</sup> Pact of the Arab League of States. 22 March 1945.

<sup>77</sup> Geoffrey Kemp. "Cooperative Security in the Middle East," in *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Janne E. Nolan (Washington D.C: Brookings Institute, 1994)

regional cooperation.<sup>78</sup> It also can tend to create an almost never ending circle of military build-up, as one country expands its military so too will the other countries in the region in order to remain competitive with their neighbors.<sup>79</sup> This security dilemma could cause even further problems down the line, generating another arms race and a further propensity towards violence.

*Overreliance on External Assistance:* The Middle East continues to be a region of immense concern for many of the world's foremost powers. This is largely due to the region's chief export, petroleum, which is vitally important to the world's economy, making regional security an international issue and not simply a regional one. As described previously, relations in this region are quite tense, leading many of the smaller, generally weaker nations to seek assistance from an outside source, often times the United States, but other external nations as well.<sup>80</sup> The United States has seemingly willingly taken on the role of "protector" for many of these nations in order to gain favor with them, and sometimes even foreign military bases. This has a tendency to skew regional security as countries have little incentive to participate in these regional arrangements. For nations such as Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait, who have strong US military presence inside their countries, they have little incentive to participate in regional security agreements.<sup>81</sup> This creates a major disparity between countries in the region and seeks to further isolate them from one another. This in turn can cause further distrust and help to further the problems in the region.

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<sup>78</sup> Geoffrey Kemp. "Cooperative Security in the Middle East," in *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Janne E. Nolan (Washington D.C: Brookings Institute, 1994)

<sup>79</sup> Zvi Shtauber, et.al "The Middle East Strategic Balance: 2005-2006" Sussex Academic Press. January 2007

<sup>80</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid

All of these factors combine to present an incredibly daunting obstacle to cooperation in the region. Geoffrey Kemp argues, however, that “strategic, political and economic changes in the global environment have caused major realignments” that are pressuring states in the region to seek normalized relations with their neighboring countries.<sup>82</sup> The Gulf War in 1991, as well as Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom throughout the past decade, help to show the possible inadequacies and obstacles that the Middle East has in dealing with an increasingly globalized world.<sup>83</sup>

### **Response to the Obstacles:**

In response to many of these obstacles, scholars and security experts alike are calling for a broader approach toward fostering security cooperation throughout the Middle East. Kemp, for example, in 1994 provided some key elements that countries in the region must exercise in order for regional security to be successful. First, states in the region must develop a shared desire to promote and improve relations between them. Secondly, they must work to reduce or eliminate security threats through compromise and diplomacy. Finally, states must wholly abandon the idea of a “zero sum game” in favor of “asymmetric reciprocity,” defined essentially as uneven dependence on one another.<sup>84</sup> Bjorn Møller, a senior security research expert at the Danish Institute for International Studies agrees (DIIS), concluding that states in the region must develop a sense of mutual inter-dependence that provides them a “stake in maintaining peace.” He further advocates a more comprehensive approach, along the lines of ASEAN, which might meet with greater success, including dialogue concerning “threat misperceptions”

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<sup>82</sup> Geoffrey Kemp. “Cooperative Security in the Middle East,” in *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Janne E. Nolan (Washington D.C: Brookings Institute, 1994)

<sup>83</sup> Ibid

<sup>84</sup> Geoffrey Kemp. “Cooperative Security in the Middle East,” in *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Janne E. Nolan (Washington D.C: Brookings Institute, 1994)

those regional countries, might have, in an effort to diminish such misperceptions.<sup>85</sup>

Only by dealing with these misperceptions will the countries truly be able to thrive and cooperate effectively.

### **Chapter Summary:**

Although far from a perfect example of cooperative security, there seems to be a general consensus amongst many security experts that use of the Southeast Asia “model” does provide a practical example of cooperative security working in the maritime realm throughout a particular geographic region. Despite its shortcomings, the experience of Southeast Asia, chiefly the evolution of a cooperative tradition between nations in the region, meshes well with established theories of cooperative security. Establishing political willingness—most specifically recognizing precisely what the shared threat is, identifying their own inability to deal with the perceived threat, establishment of trust between neighbors through confidence building and shared experiences, and the gradual formation of ever more increasingly complex, cooperative agreements—was necessary for states in the region to reach the present level of cooperation. This makes it extraordinarily useful to utilize this “model” to attempt to find a way to make this process work in the Middle East. This however will not be an easy process, as there are numerous obstacles that stand in the way in the Middle East that must first be addressed.

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<sup>85</sup>Bjorn Moller. “Introduction: Regional Security: From Conflict Formation to Security Community.” In *Oil and Water: Cooperative Security in the Persian Gulf*. Ed. Bjorn Møller. (New York: St. Martins Press, 2001)

### III. Piracy in Southeast Asia

#### Chapter Introduction:

The Straits of Malacca (SOM), regarded as one of the busiest maritime traffic shipping lane in the world, is also one of the most notorious because of the prolific nature of piracy there. Piracy there has a long and distinguished history and has also long been considered primarily a domestic nuisance, one that should primarily be dealt with by the regional governments. During the late 1990's however, piracy and other criminal activity in the region began to increase exponentially, and as a result so too did international pressure to deal with it.<sup>86</sup> Many regional governments began to see much more pressure to deal with piracy as quickly and succinctly as possible. These governments began to take some action, but for a variety of reasons they were wildly unsuccessful. That is until 2004, after it became obvious just how looming the problem was and that all the efforts exercised to date had been insufficient, then and only then did states begin to cooperate, working together to come to a common conclusion.

These efforts seemed to generally take the form of coordinated agreements, generally operational in nature, and primarily focused on the sharing of information amongst member nations. This information would then be used to provide a coordinated strike against the problems of piracy.<sup>87</sup> It is the effort that is oft lauded as helping curb the tide of piracy in the SOM. It is this effort as well, and its successes, real or perceived, that many theorists suggest be used as template by the Middle East to deal with piracy in the Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa.

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<sup>86</sup> Martin N. Murphy. *Small Boats, Weak States, Dirty Money: Piracy and Maritime Terrorism in the Modern World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009)

<sup>87</sup> Catherine Raymond. "Piracy and Armed Robbery in the Malacca Straits," *Naval War College Review* 62:3 (Summer 2009);

This chapter will outline the context for further comparison of the situation in the SOM and the HOA/GOA. By better understanding the peculiarities of the region, politically, culturally and, economically, one can begin to apply this type of solution to other places. It will initially look at the steps that these regional governments have taken to curb piracy as well looking at the effects that these steps have had on the problem itself. Furthermore, it will argue that repeated attempts at cooperation have developed along an evolutionary track, continuing to build on one another, working to establish a tradition of cooperation in the region. This tradition was largely facilitated by a mutual understanding of the threat piracy and maritime crime itself posed on the region (including the threat of terrorism), as well as the realization that unilateral action was insufficient to address it, and the rejection of the dependence on external assistance from nations such as the United States.

### **History of Piracy in Southeast Asia:**

Piracy has quite a long history in Southeast Asia, documented as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when Chinese writer Lung-Ya Min first described the Strait of Malacca as the “Dragon-teeth strait.”

“The inhabitants [of this area] are addicted to piracy. When [Chinese Junks] sail to the Western [Indian] Ocean the local barbarians allow them to pass unmolested but when on their return the junks reach Chi-li-men [the Karimun Islands, at the junction of the Malacca and Singapore Straits] the sailors prepare their armor and padded screens as a protection against arrows for, of a certainty, some two or three hundred pirate praus will put out to attack them for several days. Sometimes [the junks] are fortunate enough to escape with a favorable wind; otherwise the crews are butchered and the merchandise made off with in quick time.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Wheatley, “The Golden Khersonese,” in *The Straits of Malacca: Gateway or Gauntlet*, ed. Donald B. Freeman (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003)

For centuries, the severely confined waterways, coves and inlets of the straits region have provided sanctuary to those ready and willing to attack vessels passing through Asian waters. According to Donald Freeman, the ascendancy of piracy in the Strait of Malacca and surrounding regions began in the 19th century for several reasons. These include the lucrative spice trade in the East Indies between Europe and China, the opening of Japan to Western society, the industrial demand for rubber and tin during the Industrial Revolution, and the increased number of vessels transiting through the Strait of Malacca<sup>89</sup>. During this period, maritime trade has been a dangerous business, and ships passing through this region often faced a gauntlet of pirates, such as the “Malays of Johore and Riau-Lingaa; the Bugis, the Brunei Malays and the Dayak; the Iranuns and the Balangingi.”<sup>90</sup>

In the latter half of the 20th century, piracy seems to sprout again and again. It seemed to attract a great deal of international attention in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, when thousands of refugees fleeing the communists ashore began to take to the sea in boats of all sizes. These groups, commonly referred to as “boat people,” with ships that were often overloaded, were easy prey for pirates operating in the Gulf of Thailand and South China Sea.<sup>91</sup> Statistics show that as late as 1981, approximately 77% of the boats that fled Vietnam were attacked and brutalized by these Thai pirates.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Wheatley, “The Golden Khersonese,” in *The Straits of Malacca: Gateway or Gauntlet*, ed. Donald B. Freeman (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003)

<sup>90</sup> Xu Ke. “Piracy, Seaborne Trade and the Rivalries of Foreign Sea Powers in East and Southeast Asia, 1511 to 1839: A Chinese Perspective,” *Piracy, Maritime Terrorism and Securing the Malacca Straits*, ed. Graham Gerard Ong Webb (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006),

<sup>91</sup> Tamara Shie. “Maritime Piracy in Southeast Asia: The Evolution and Progress of Intra-ASEAN Cooperation,” in *Piracy, Maritime Terrorism and Securing the Malacca Straits*, ed. Graham Gerard Ong-Webb (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006),

<sup>92</sup> UN High Commissioner on Refugees

It seems quite clear that the current pirates in the Straits of Malacca, have a long heritage of crime, but this piracy has shifted its focus as well as its scope. Piracy in Southeast Asia has morphed into a sort of “hit and run” type of piracy, where the pirates get on board, grab the high value cargo and then depart to sell that cargo on the black market.<sup>93</sup> This means that the pirates typically require extraordinarily high tech equipment; things like rocket propelled grenades, global positioning satellites and high speed small boats.<sup>94</sup> This type of piracy requires a unique approach to deal with it.

These pirates are also targeting far larger vessels and vessels with much more valuable cargo, largely due to the benefits of modern technology, allowing the pirates to have a better idea of a ship’s cargo before planning an attack. Additionally, the number of attacks in these waters seem to be on the rise. In 2009 for example, there were 32 attacks reported, and then spiked to 46 in 2010<sup>95</sup>. The increase in attacks coupled with the higher value of the targets themselves is leading to increased financial opportunity for the people perpetrating the crimes.

It is quite clear that throughout history piracy has been a problem in Southeast Asia. That problem has morphed as the culture and society has morphed, but the problem itself remains. This tradition of piracy however is part of what has influenced the regional approach to dealing with the pirates themselves today. Without a tradition of piracy and the subsequent tradition of dealing with the pirates it is incredibly difficult for a country to determine the appropriate course of action. Thus it seems it is this tradition

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<sup>93</sup> Joshua Ho, “Maritime Counter-Terrorism—A Singapore Perspective,” working paper, *Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies Singapore* (2004)

<sup>94</sup> Carolin Liss, “Maritime Piracy in Southeast Asia,” *Southeast Asian Affairs* (2003):

<sup>95</sup> ICC International Maritime Bureau. Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships: Report for the Period 1 January 2010-30 September 2010. October 2010.

of piracy that may yet provide hope for the future, a solution that may provide lasting change.

**Unilateral Efforts at Counter-piracy:**

Despite the increased recent attention toward the problem of piracy in the SOM, initially very little was done in an attempt to turn the tide of the pirates. International pressure helped to a degree, but was primarily focused on the major countries, places like Indonesia, Malaysia and, Singapore. These countries, however, seemed reluctant to take concrete action against the pirates and actually work to solve the problem. One can see this looking at the number of attacks in the SOM, as reported attacks seemed to dip substantially from 2000-2002, only to spike in 2004 (See Figure 2). This time period coincides to when these countries were attempting unilateral efforts to slow down piracy. Clearly these efforts are helping gain ground, but it is difficult to say how much, or if it's even enough.

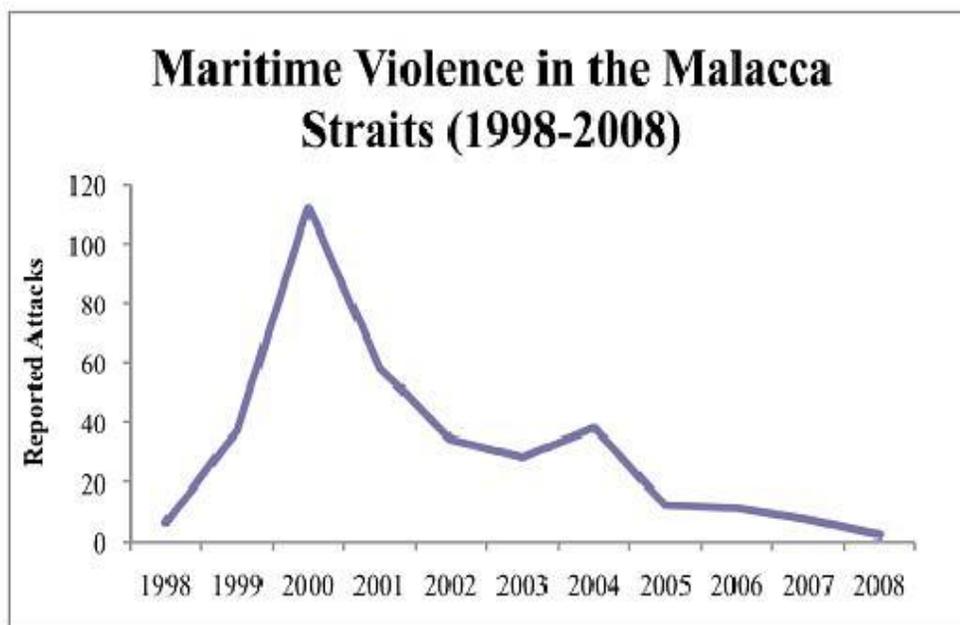


Figure 2: Maritime Violence in the Straits of Malacca (1998-2008)<sup>96</sup>

Toward the end of 2004, one can begin to see another dip in the number of reported attacks, a dip that seems somewhat sustainable. This is likely due to several major factors; first off, regional governments were discovering that their efforts to date had been ineffective, and that something new would have to be done. Secondly, this time period is when regional cooperation, which will be discussed in depth at a later point, really began to take off. One of the principal problems faced with many of these early anti-piracy operations in the SOM was simply the maritime capacity of the nations involved. No country had a naval fleet that was fully able to patrol enough water space to make a difference against the pirates. Beginning in 2003 and continuing into 2004, the three major countries, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia worked incessantly on their

<sup>96</sup> Figure 2 shows the number of actual or attempted piracy attacks in or around the Malacca Strait, an area that includes the Malacca Strait, Singapore Strait, waters of Indonesia and Malaysia. SOURCE: Figures were compiled from the ICC International Maritime Bureau. Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships Annual Report. UK: IMB, 1998 to 2009. Reports can be found at [www.icc-ccs.org](http://www.icc-ccs.org).

national shipbuilding programs, working to increase their maritime capacity, as well as altering the overall focus of their maritime forces, making it a much more efficient fighting force. This force was not only going to be significantly larger, it was going to have to be far more technologically advanced. As their goal was to bring the number of attacks ever closer to zero, it was going to take much more drastic steps. To better understand what was going on, one must look at each country in depth and the steps that they had taken themselves in an effort to reduce the risk of piracy.

### **Singapore:**

The waters surrounding the island of Singapore are generally regarded as some of the safest waters of all Southeast Asia. This has happened largely for two reasons. First, Singapore has invested heavily in increasing its own maritime capacity, and professionalism of its navy, and second, Singapore has far less water to control than many other nations in the region.<sup>97</sup> Singapore itself has also worked to establish the Maritime Security Task Force (MSTF) to help streamline the decision making process and coordinate forces. The MSTF's role is to coordinate the activities of the Singapore port authority, coast guard and navy. This is by no means an easy job, despite the fact that Singapore's navy is smaller than many surrounding countries, but it remains essential in dealing with piracy. The fact that the navy is small, however, is in actuality of little consequence, since Singapore has approximately 200 square nautical miles of water to patrol.<sup>98</sup> As of June 2009, the Singapore Navy consisted of approximately 4,500 personnel, 5 maritime patrol aircraft, 13 surface combatants, and 35 patrol vessels.

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<sup>97</sup> Carolin Liss.. "The Challenges of Piracy in Southeast Asia and the Role of Australia." Austral Policy Forum 07-19A. Nautilus Institute. October 25, 2007.

<sup>98</sup> Michael van Ommeren. "The Police Coast Guard," *ADB Magazine* (Association of Dutch Businessmen Singapore), 14:5 (May 2004)

The Police Coast Guard consists of approximately 1,000 personnel and over 100 patrol vessels.<sup>99</sup> This is a significant increase from years previous and is a direct response to piracy. These forces also tend to be quite highly trained, and indeed participate in exercises all over the world, particularly with the Indian Navy, Thai Navy and, even the United States Navy. In 2010, the Singaporean frigate, RSS Supreme, participated in the Rim of the Pacific Exercise in Hawaii.<sup>100</sup> This massive exercise involves many nations around the world, exercising every major shipboard evolution and designed to train and test individual maritime forces.

Now, the question becomes, how is Singapore, which is a relatively small island nation, able to afford such a potent naval force. First off the economy of Singapore is largely based on trade with outside nations. Being an island nation, much of this trade is based on the maritime realm, and as a result Singapore itself has one of the largest ports in the world and indeed is rated as one of the busiest port facilities in the world. In fact the Port of Singapore handled approximately 295 million tons of cargo in 2009 alone.<sup>101</sup> This brings in immense amounts of capital to the Singaporean government and enables it to do a great deal for the country's security. Singapore itself is also one of the biggest trading partners with the United States, ranked 15<sup>th</sup> overall of all the countries in the world, particularly in dealing with high tech and biotechnology trade<sup>102</sup>. This too brings in a great deal of capital for Singapore and indeed helps to increase their prestige with nations around the world.

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<sup>99</sup> Stephen Saunders, CDRE RN. Janes Fighting Ships. 2008-2009.

<sup>100</sup> Mark Logico. Freedom Sailors, Singapore Navy cross train. June 28<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>101</sup> Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore.

[http://www.mpa.gov.sg/sites/global\\_navigation/publications/port\\_statistics/port\\_statistics.page](http://www.mpa.gov.sg/sites/global_navigation/publications/port_statistics/port_statistics.page)

<sup>102</sup> US Census Bureau. Foreign Trade Division Statistics. <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/index.html>

Their strong economy as well as their military power tends to make Singapore a leader, both politically and militarily, throughout much of Southeast Asia. Many other countries seek to follow its example and that gives Singapore a great deal of authority. As a result, Singapore has been quite vocal in advocating increased cooperation from surrounding countries to deal with piracy and maritime crime. This has led to several attempts to increase communication and data sharing that will lead to vastly improved situational awareness for the forces involved. In fact, the International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Center as well as ReCAAP's Information Sharing Center (ISC) are both located in Singapore, helping to show the government's dedication to dealing with the problem of piracy and lead the cooperative efforts throughout the region. In 2007, the Singapore Ministry of Defence announced the establishment of a new joint command center, the Singapore Maritime Security Centre (SMSC), which would also house an Information Fusion Centre (IFC) and a Multinational Operations and Exercise Centre (MOEC). The goal of the SMSC, according to the Defence Minister, was to provide a "useful platform for nations to cooperate and respond more flexibly and effectively to a dynamic maritime security environment."<sup>103</sup>

**Malaysia:**

Malaysia is another powerful country in this region and faces even more difficult challenges in dealing with the problem of piracy in the SOM. Malaysia itself has over 2500 nautical miles of coastline, which gives it a much more significant amount of territorial water space to manage and patrol. This is exceedingly difficult, especially when one considers Malaysia's maritime capacity is extremely limited as well. Prior to 2004, Malaysia did not possess the necessary ships and aircraft to unilaterally patrol the

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<sup>103</sup> *Associated Press*, "Singapore to build new command center for maritime security,"

SOM or deter attacks against shipping, though it has been engaged in a sustained effort to build its capacity since 2000. The establishment of a dedicated anti-piracy task force within the Royal Malaysian Marine Police in 2000, which included the acquisition of 24 new patrol craft, was inadequate in addressing the shortfall. Soon after, Malaysian officials lamented that the Navy did not have adequate vessels to patrol their extensive territorial waters, regardless of promised aid by the Indonesian government.<sup>104</sup>

Professionalism was also regarded as a major problem for Malaysian authorities, with accusations of corruption, extortion and even piracy being quite common.<sup>105</sup>

By 2004, Malaysia had begun to focus its attentions far more on its numerous maritime shortcomings, both operationally as well as logistically. Their first step was establishing the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA). The MMEA brought together Malaysia's five maritime agencies into one organization with the goal of streamlining maritime operations in its waters. Then in 2005, the MMEA began to shift its focus toward improving its maritime capacity. This process would use not only the purchasing of new vessels and aircraft, but the refurbishing of vessels already in place.<sup>106</sup> As of 2009, the MMEA consisted of approximately 5,000 personnel and 60 patrol vessels dedicated to counter-maritime violence operations. The Malaysian Navy was significantly larger, reportedly consisting of 20,000 personnel and 50 surface combatants and patrol craft.<sup>107</sup> These forces are also consistently well trained, much like Singapore, participating in exercises with places such as the Philippines as well as

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<sup>104</sup> Thanam Visvanathan. "Marine police send clear message to pirates in Straits of Malacca," *New Straits Times-Management Times*, January 14, 2000.

<sup>105</sup> Carolin Liss., *The Privatisation of Maritime Security-Maritime Security in Southeast Asia: Between a rock and a hard place?* Working Paper No. 141. Asia Research Center. Murdoch University, Perth, Australia (February 2007).

<sup>106</sup> "Malaysia's MMEA to Acquire Air Assets," *DefenseNews*, February 5, 2007

<sup>107</sup> Stephen Saunders, CDRE RN. *Janes Fighting Ships*. 2008-2009.

the United States itself.<sup>108</sup> This greatly enhances the professionalism of the maritime force as a whole, as well as gives them a much greater ability to deal with the pirates.

Malaysia is able to do this for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, the economy of Malaysia is relatively strong and is actually continuing to grow. In fact, Malaysia's gross domestic product is the 29<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world and the third largest in all of Southeast Asia<sup>109</sup>. This means that it has the money with which to invest in programs to enhance their own security and the security of the region. This puts Malaysia in a position of power in dealing with the problem of capacity. Culturally, the people of Malaysia also tend to put a wide degree of faith in technology, which can be seen in that a large portion of their industrial capacity is in high tech fields such as semiconductors.<sup>110</sup> This means that the country has a tendency to be very receptive toward increasing the technological capacity of their naval fleet as well.

Malaysia, however, is not acting entirely on its own and is open to the idea of foreign assistance, particularly from places such as the United States. Beginning in 2007, Malaysia initiated much needed upgrades to its coastal monitoring systems and command centers, which was done largely with support from the United States.<sup>111</sup> These upgrades would greatly enhance Malaysian forces ability to respond to the threat of piracy.

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<sup>108</sup> RIMPAC 2010 to Unite 14 Countries in Multi-National Exercise.

[http://www.c3f.navy.mil/RIMPAC\\_2010/Press\\_Releases/01-10%20RIMPAC%20Exercise%20Announcement.pdf](http://www.c3f.navy.mil/RIMPAC_2010/Press_Releases/01-10%20RIMPAC%20Exercise%20Announcement.pdf)

<sup>109</sup> World Bank Country Statistics. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD>

<sup>110</sup> John Pike. "Malaysian Defence Industry"

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/malaysia/industry.htm>

<sup>111</sup> Defense Industry Daily, "Monitoring in Malaysia, and the 1,000 Ship Navy," Defense Industry Daily (October 01, 2007).

**Indonesia:**

Indonesia has an even longer coastline along the SOM than Malaysia, roughly 29,000 nautical miles, which makes it even more difficult to respond to the threat of piracy in their territorial waters. That by no means suggests that they have not at least attempted to deal with the problem. In 2003, Indonesia began to modernize its force, both in equipment and professionalism, as a means of dealing with the problem of piracy. In doing so they also worked to increasingly emphasize the role of these vessels in conducting anti-piracy missions and combating maritime violence. The measures taken by Indonesia tended to revolve around the formation of command and control structures, i.e. regional command centers, as well as the actual maritime force itself.<sup>112</sup> Similarly to Malaysia, Indonesia also established a combined maritime agency whose principal responsibility was to stimulate coordination among the various agencies that would have some play in the counter-piracy mission. This Indonesian Maritime Security Board (BAKORKAMLA), first established in 2005 and is responsible for the coordination of maritime security activities and operations in Indonesian waters.<sup>113</sup>

Despite all of these efforts toward streamlining and coordinated efforts, Indonesia has remained fairly ineffective in the counter-piracy mission. This is largely because it has not been able to address its internal material deficiencies, that is the ships and equipment with which they operate. Efforts have been made to bolster maritime capacity both from internal and external sources, but they have been largely

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<sup>112</sup> Robert Karniol. "Indonesian Navy to Focus on Coastal Interdiction," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, November 12, 2003

<sup>113</sup> Joshua Ho. "Anti-Piracy in Somalia: Models for Maritime Security Institutions," *RSIS Commentaries*, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, July 8, 2009.

ineffective.<sup>114</sup> In fact in 2009, high ranking Indonesian officials suggested that without an additional 262 patrol ships they would be completely unable to deal with the rising tide of violence. The Malaysian Navy stands at approximately 57,000 personnel (of which 16,000 are Marine forces), as well as 30 surface combatants and 50 patrol craft.<sup>115</sup> Compounding the overall problem further is the fact that only about 25% of the fleet is actually considered serviceable.<sup>116</sup> With much of the fleet unusable or nearly so, Malaysia's ability to patrol its territorial waters is significantly hampered.

The Indonesian government is currently working to increase its maritime capacity, and is accepting limited outside assistance from foreign governments. The United States, for example, has helped to provide the material for five coastal radar surveillance sites, continuously surveying the SOM with its radio waves.<sup>117</sup> This is making a difference for the Indonesian people. The problem is the economy is not nearly as strong as some of the other economies of the region. Indonesia is experiencing growth, but the gross domestic product per capita ranks them as the 150<sup>th</sup> strongest economy in the world.<sup>118</sup> This means it lacks some of the capital necessary for continued growth in maritime capacity. As the economy continues to grow they can continue to grow their maritime capacity and become more suited for dealing with piracy. This would greatly benefit the entire concept of regional security while also providing greater independent operation as well.

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<sup>114</sup> "Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment – Indonesia," *Jane's Information Group*, last updated September 2009.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>116</sup> "Navy Needs 262 More Warships to Safeguard Indonesian Waters," *Antara News*, September 18, 2007

<sup>117</sup> Ian Storey. "Calming the Water in Maritime Southeast Asia," *Asia Pacific Bulletin* 29 (February 18, 2009).

<sup>118</sup> CIA World Fact Book <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/id.html>

Clearly, these countries are gaining significant ground in increasing their maritime capacity, and that is going to help the situation improve (see Figure 3). If all of these countries to continue to expand their own internal capabilities, they will continue to gain ground and find ways to stem the tide of the rising violence. Still, cooperation, not independent unilateral operations must be the name of the game. No one country has been powerful enough entirely on their own, to turn the tide of maritime crime and terrorism.

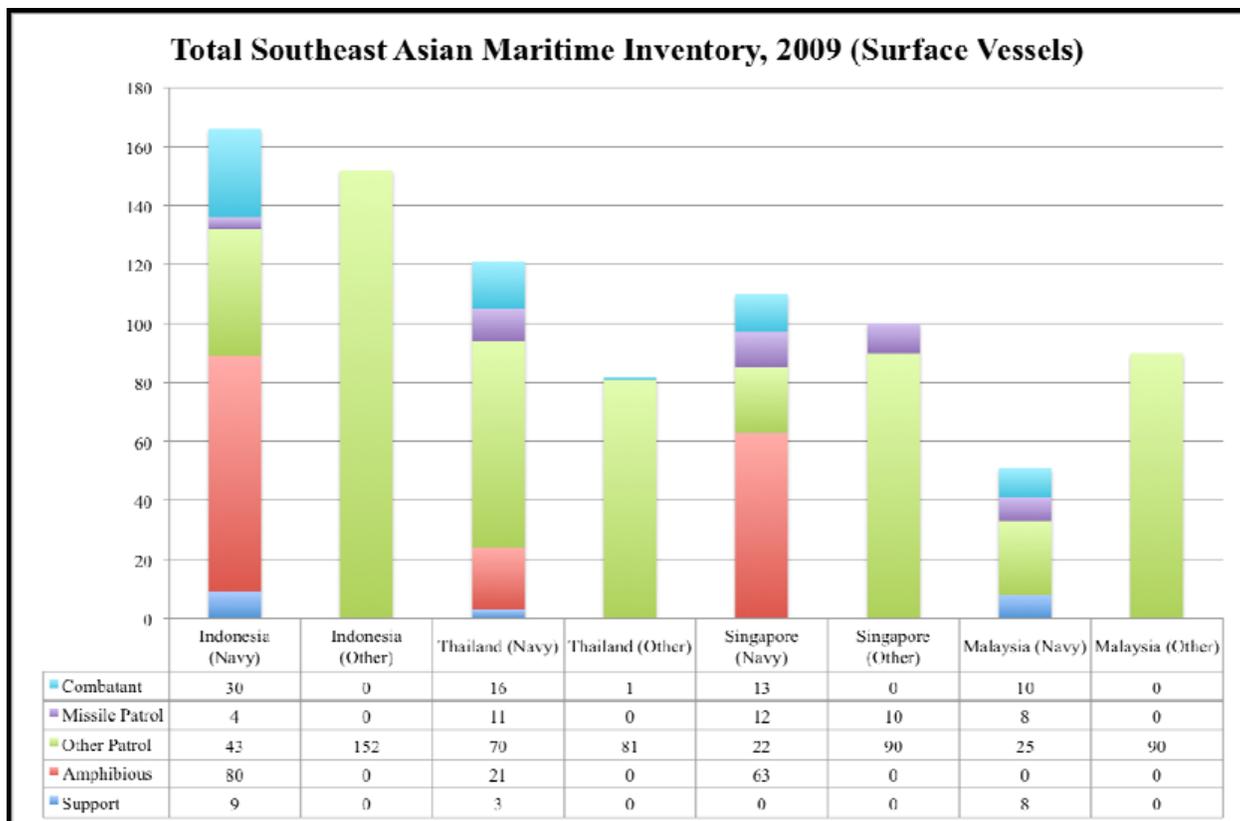


Figure 3: Total Maritime Inventory in Southeast Asia (2009)<sup>119</sup>

### **Bilateral Cooperation and National Sovereignty:**

The most significant limitation to early counter-piracy endeavors in the region was the fact that national governments seemed unwilling to participate in any kind of regional cooperation, nor accept any form of outside assistance. Such ideas seemed to be predicated on two main concepts: mistrust of their neighbors, and fear of foreign meddling interfering with their own national power. Many of the primary nation states, particularly Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia, were exceedingly fearful of the

<sup>119</sup> Figure 3 shows the approximate number of maritime surface vessels including navy, coast guard, or other maritime service branch inventories of the states being compared. SOURCE: Figures were compiled from *Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessments* for each of the states.

consequences that such cooperation could bring. This is especially true with concerns over infringement on territorial waters by another country.

These early attempts at cooperation highlight the difficulty that forming these cooperative security agreements can entail. Following the colonial period of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, these nations were struggling to identify themselves in the world around them. They needed to prove that no longer were they merely colonies of some foreign nation, but that they were independent and powerful nations, nations that were capable of acting on the world stage. They also struggled identifying their own borders, both at sea and ashore. At any given moment these countries could go nearly to blows over the delineation of one border or another. Often, this was precipitated by aspirations to control strategic islands or natural resources, disputes that became national priorities and sources of continued tension.<sup>120</sup>

This environment of nearly mutual mistrust has created serious complications toward cooperation in the region. When thinking of the problem of piracy, early on Malaysia and Indonesia viewed piracy as a strictly domestic problem, one that didn't need any outside assistance or regional cooperation. As a result these countries focused on strengthening their own positions within their territories in the Strait, regardless of its nature as an international waterway. With this in mind it is not hard to imagine that even once the agreements toward regional security were put into place, the regional governments tended to place the primacy of their own national rights in the forefront. To that end these agreements prohibited any other vessels entry into a given nation's

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<sup>120</sup> MINDEF Indonesia, *Defending the Country Entering the 21st Century*, Indonesian Ministry of Defence, 2003

territorial waters, even if said vessel was in pursuit of criminals.<sup>121</sup> These mechanisms to prevent incursion into territorial waters have persisted throughout each of these major agreements for the past three decades.

Despite these tendencies to avoid cooperation, countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore were indeed able to eventually come together and make steps toward bilateral cooperative security efforts. Prior to the exponential rise of piracy in the late 1990's, there had been efforts among the individual states to increase cooperation in the maritime environment. Other bilateral agreements for coordinated patrols had existed among the three countries since 1992.<sup>122</sup> It was then these countries first started seeking direct communications with one another. These agreements were very much focused on maintaining national sovereignty, indeed setting up procedures in which vessels could call for assistance to one another if they were about to proceed into someone else's territorial waters. This would provide assistance when necessary, but would not leave a country feeling as if its own sovereignty were on the line. Similarly, Malaysia and Indonesia formed a joint Maritime Operation Planning team to coordinate patrols in the Straits of Malacca in 1992 and conducted joint maritime exercises on the border the following year.<sup>123</sup> Later in 2003, Malaysia renewed a standing bilateral agreement with Thailand for coordinated maritime patrols in the northern Malacca Straits.<sup>124</sup> These endeavors did have a little success, but not much, as piracy continued to rise throughout the decade. Nevertheless, these agreements helped to form the tradition of anti-piracy

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<sup>121</sup> Catherine Raymond.. "Piracy and Armed Robbery in the Malacca Straits." *Naval War College Review* 62:3 (Summer 2009)

<sup>122</sup> "The Security of Sea Lanes in Southeast Asia." *Asian Survey*, 46:4 (July/August 2006)

<sup>123</sup> Vivian Loius Forbes. *Conflict and Cooperation in Managing Maritime Space in Semi-Enclosed Seas* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2001)

<sup>124</sup> John F. Bradford. "The Growing Prospects for Maritime Security Cooperation in Southeast Asia," *Naval War College Review* 58:3 (Summer 2005)

agreements in the region. In fact, any steps toward cooperation, even those limited in nature, can be seen as precursors to further cooperation since an integral part of any such arrangement is sustained confidence in the motives of the other partners.<sup>125</sup> One has to be able to trust the people with whom they are working in order for this arrangement to work, otherwise it will fall apart.

### **The Role of Foreign Government Interaction:**

Just as suspicion between state governments in the region have characterized many of the struggles with the counter-piracy mission, so too has their interaction with the outside world. Governments from around the world have offered assistance in dealing with piracy, in making the Strait a safe place for merchants to transit, but little success has been had. There certainly were some decreases in attacks, but these decreases were unsustainable and in recent years attacks began to increase. This especially became the case after the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, when foreign governments became all too eager to get involved in dealing with the situation in the Straits of Malacca, as they were fearful of any potential pirate-to-terrorist organization connection. This was certainly true of the United States and Japan, both of whom worked to increase coordination and help with the problem before it grew any worse. These early attempts were quite galling to many of the countries, feeling that this was their problem to deal with and that intervention by a foreign government was merely an attempt to return to the colonial period and gain dominance over another country. As a result many of these early attempts were hardily rebuffed.

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<sup>125</sup> John F. Bradford. "Japanese Anti-Piracy Initiatives in Southeast Asia: Policy Formation and the Coastal State Responses," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 26:3 (December 2004)

## 1. Japan

Japan itself has experienced fairly modest success in its endeavors to deal with piracy and establish regional security cooperation in Southeast Asia. As an extended member of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN+3), Japan has regularly proposed coordinated patrols and other efforts to step up the anti-piracy mission. As early as 1997, Japan proposed a joint force that each country would contribute to, whose primary mission would be to ensure safety of the waterways. This formed the Ocean Peace-Keeping (OPK) force, and was envisioned as a framework for maritime cooperation. It was never embraced by the other member nations, especially China, who saw the proposal as an attempt to reestablish Japanese dominance over the region. Regional history and mistrust made this incredibly challenging, particularly in the post World War II world. Similar efforts to establish a regional joint coast guard in 1999 were largely unsuccessful, and in the end, produced agreements of little consequence.<sup>126</sup>

Japan began to enjoy far greater success when it shifted its focus toward bilateral cooperation. Since the Cold War, Japan has conducted bilateral training exercises with many of the states in Southeast Asia, and Japan's most successful attempts at fostering regional cooperation, ReCAAP, managed to promote discussion and limited information sharing, but have yet to convince critics of its complete effectiveness.<sup>127</sup>

## 2. The United States of America:

U.S. efforts to promote regional security and cooperation in the region have met similar degrees of suspicion and mistrust. Efforts by the United States Pacific Command

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<sup>126</sup> John F. Bradford. "Japanese Anti-Piracy Initiatives in Southeast Asia: Policy Formation and the Coastal State Responses," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 26:3 (December 2004)

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*

in 2004 to establish a Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI) in the Pacific were flatly rejected by Indonesia and Malaysia, with both refusing to participate in the cooperative endeavor. This agreement was designed to be a mechanism for maritime security cooperation and to streamline counter terrorism efforts in the region. It was intended to be completely neutral and voluntary, but seemed to be doomed from the start due to unfavorable press coverage that led to a great deal of misunderstanding of the initiative itself and its overall goals. The governments of Malaysia and Indonesia tended to think of the initiative as nothing more than the United States trying to exercise its influence and gain control over the vital sea lanes of the Straits of Malacca.<sup>128</sup> Since then the United States has proven to be somewhat reluctant to exercise multilateral influence on the region, instead focusing on improving bilateral relationships with the individual countries of the region. These relationships have primarily consisted of two interrelated efforts: aiding in capacity building and training. By focusing on these areas, the U.S. has managed to alleviate some of the regional fears while contributing to the effectiveness of counter-piracy and counter-terrorism efforts in the region.

### **Regional Response to Increased International Attention**

Foreign governments such as the United States and Japan have been focusing increased attention on the problems of piracy in Southeast Asia. After their initial flawed attempts at assistance, they learned quickly that changes were necessary. Thus, they began applying solutions that would tend to be far more palatable to the local governments and populations. By making these arrangements less heavy handed and less intrusive, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia seemed much more receptive to the ideas

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<sup>128</sup> Victor Huang. "Building Maritime Security in Southeast Asia: Outsiders Not Welcome?" *Naval War College Review* 61:1 (Winter 2008)

presented. Ultimately this would greatly aid in the ability to properly deal with the problem of piracy. Of the three countries, Singapore exhibited the greatest willingness to build these cooperative relationships with other nations in the region. Heavily dependent on uninterrupted trade through the Straits of Malacca, Singapore has the most to lose if shipping is disrupted or diverted in any fashion. Considering its near total reliance on maritime trade, Singapore was willing to cooperate quite extensively with numerous governments, including the U.S., Japan, and China, and accepted assistance in strengthening its maritime forces through training and technical assistance. Prior to 2000, Singapore was active in partnerships with several regional and extra-regional actors, including the United States, Japan, China, and as a member of ASEAN.

In the last decade, Malaysia and Indonesia have also shown an increased willingness to work with foreign governments in the anti-piracy mission.<sup>129</sup> Since the late 1990s, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia have all conducted bilateral naval exercises with the U.S., Australian, and Japanese navies. China has also recently increased its efforts at strengthening security cooperation in the region. Also of note is Indian involvement in the region. Coordinated patrols and bilateral naval exercises between India and most of the states in the region have become routine and highlight India's interest in expanding security cooperation to the peripheries of its historical area of operations.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Victor Huang.. "Building Maritime Security in Southeast Asia: Outsiders Not Welcome?" *Naval War College Review* 61:1 (Winter 2008)

<sup>130</sup> John F. Bradford. "The Growing Prospects for Maritime Security Cooperation in Southeast Asia." *Naval War College Review* 58:3 (Summer 2005)

Although the vast majority of the above mentioned efforts have been bilateral and limited in nature, their success is evidenced by the increased willingness of the states in the region to accept aid and cooperate more extensively with extra-regional governments. Initial attempts at assistance were perceived as heavy-handed and often rejected outright. The previous examples highlight the experience of these governments and the difficulties of attempting arrangements without considering the sensitivities of the region. After considering these examples, it can easily be seen that properly couched attempts to foster cooperative arrangements, such as those that build on previous agreements and offer guarantees of respect to national sovereignty, tend to be more successful. Ironically, it is such early, insensitive attempts that were likely the catalysts for future multilateral action by regional actors, primarily because they forced the states in the region to seek courses of action that were more sensitive to each other's suspicions, and that prevented "meddling" by those outside of the region.

### **Multilateral Maritime Security Cooperation:**

By 2003 it was rapidly becoming clear that all of the various unilateral and bilateral efforts in dealing with the problem of piracy were having very little impact on the grand scale. From 2002 to 2004 the number of attacks was not only on the rise, but more and more of these attacks were taking place inside territorial waters.<sup>131</sup> The realization of this trend and the threat it posed as well as sustained pressure from the international community at large, led to several attempts at increased security cooperation in the maritime domain.

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<sup>131</sup> IMB, "Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships: Annual Report 2008," International Maritime Bureau report (January 2009)

## 1. Malacca Straits Coordinated Patrols (MALSINDO)

The first of these multilateral attempts to control the situation is the Malacca Straits Coordinated Patrols, often referred to as MALSINDO. MALSINDO was designed quite simply to coordinate the patrols of the various nations operating in the Straits of Malacca. Prior to this point most countries were operating completely independently, with no interaction between them. Only through coordination and improved communication between the forces would they be able to help the situation. As a part of this agreement, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia agreed to establish coordinated maritime patrols in the Malacca Straits in 2004 in an effort to prevent and deter further attacks. Interestingly, MALSINDO was essentially an evolution of several existing bilateral agreements between the three partners that expanded the scope of these early relationships. Eventually, this agreement would expand, allowing Thailand to enter in 2005. Although viewed by some critics as merely a “sharing of schedules” MALSINDO nevertheless seemed to serve as a step toward greater cooperation in the region.<sup>132</sup>

## 2. ReCAAP and the Information Sharing Center

Shortly after MALSINDO, there was an additional multilateral attempt to deal with the rising violence in the maritime domain, which became known as the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against ships in Asia (ReCAAP). ReCAAP was a direct result of successive cooperative agreements including national, bilateral and multilateral efforts by and between the various states of Southeast Asia to curb rampant piracy and maritime terrorism in the Straits of Malacca.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Carolin Liss. “The Challenges of Piracy in Southeast Asia and the Role of Australia,” Austral Policy Forum 07-19A, Nautilus Institute, October 25, 2007

<sup>133</sup> Joshua Ho. “The Security of Sea Lanes in Southeast Asia,” in *Asian Survey*, 46:4 (July/August 2006):

Finalized by most members of ASEAN in late 2004, the Japanese-led agreement established a network of regional centers providing information on attacks and partner actions to an Information Sharing Centre (ISC) centrally located in Singapore.<sup>134</sup>

This was heralded as the first successful multilateral attempt in the region, encompassing many member nations, including Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, India, Japan, South Korea, Laos, Myanmar, Norway, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. By the end of 2006, nine more nations had joined ReCAAP. ReCAAP's goals were to facilitate the sharing of information among members, collate and analyze data on maritime violence in the region, and support regional capacity-building efforts.<sup>135</sup> Despite these initial successes at formalizing regional maritime cooperation and increasing support for capacity building, three inherent flaws limited its success<sup>136</sup>:

a. *Non-Operational*: The organization has no real operational role and primarily serves as a framework for information sharing between countries. This essentially limits the overall effectiveness of any effort since operational forces are required to physically deter and prevent attacks.

b. *Non-Binding and Non-Obligatory*: ReCAAP's non-obligatory nature, although vital to bringing the regional governments together, makes it merely a "paper tiger," with no authority to require sharing of information or coordination.

c. *Absence of Key States*: Indonesia and Malaysia are not part of ReCAAP, which severely limits the scope and legitimacy of the organization. Their absence can be directly attributed to concerns regarding the agreement's effect on national

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<sup>134</sup> Joshua Ho. "Combating piracy and armed robbery in Asia: The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC)," in *Marine Policy*, 33 (2009), p 432.

<sup>135</sup> ReCAAP, "Factsheet on the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP)," Singapore Ministry of Transportation, April 20, 2006, [http://app.mot.gov.sg/data/fs\\_06\\_04\\_20.htm](http://app.mot.gov.sg/data/fs_06_04_20.htm)

<sup>136</sup> Joshua Ho. Combating piracy and armed robbery in Asia: The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC)." *Marine Policy* 33 (2009)

sovereignty. However without their participation it becomes that much more difficult to deal with the problem.

Ironically, these weaknesses can be considered to have been intentional, a clear attempt to gain the most participation by making the terms of the agreement non-threatening and acceptable. Without operational commitments or other binding obligations, ReCAAP allowed members to participate in the arrangement at individual levels of comfort, in effect creating a framework for cooperation for cooperation's sake. This would seek to make the agreement that much more palatable for national governments, who would not have to fear involvement. Despite these shortcomings, it is worthwhile to point out that ReCAAP did establish procedures for coordination and information sharing between states in the region through the use of regional centers and the Information Sharing Centre (ISC).

### **3. Joint Coordinating Council – MALSINDO Revamped:**

Arguably, more recent multilateral efforts have been much more effective, continuing the early successes of MALSINDO. The first of these was the Malacca Straits Sea Patrol (MSSP). MSSP essentially revised the original MALSINDO agreement and was designed to facilitate coordinated patrols in the Straits of Malacca. Made up of the three original member countries, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore (with Thailand joining in 2008), MSSP was aimed at reducing maritime violence and smuggling in the Straits. The key to the success of this agreement was the limitation of naval patrols to their respective territorial water, thereby addressing fears of

infringement on national sovereignty while increasing coordination between patrolling forces.<sup>137</sup>

The second major effort that was undertaken was the idea of Eye in the Sky (EiS) program, first initiated in 2005. EiS consisted of coordinated air patrols of the Malacca Straits by maritime patrol aircraft from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand, in order to provide increased situational awareness of the maritime domain. EiS aircraft were allowed limited overflight of each other's territorial waters, an ability provided by embarked Combined Maritime Patrol Teams (CMPT) that were made up of representatives from each member state.<sup>138</sup> Adding aircraft into the equation would help to provide a much improved tactical picture as aircraft can cover a great deal of ground and from altitude can have a great view of what is happening on the water. These aircraft then relay information to the naval forces who can actually take action against the pirates. This teamwork greatly enhances the ability of the counter-piracy forces.

These two programs were brought together, along with the newly formed Intelligence Exchange Group (IEG), under the Joint Coordinating Council (JCC) in 2006. The role of the JCC was to coordinate maritime and air patrols of the three member countries (and later a fourth with the joining of Thailand in 2008).<sup>139</sup> The IEG consists of the intelligence agencies of the participating countries and is tasked to provide analytical support for MSSP and EIS missions. Sharing of this intelligence is accomplished through the use of the Malacca Straits Patrol Information System (MSP-

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<sup>137</sup> "Piracy in the Gulf of Aden: Lessons from the Malacca Strait." RSIS Commentaries. S, Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University. January 22, 2009.

<sup>138</sup> MINDEF Singapore, "Launch of Eyes in the Sky (EiS) Initiative," Singapore Ministry of Defence Press Release, September 13, 2005  
[http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/news\\_and\\_events/nr/2005/sep/13sep05\\_nr.html](http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/news_and_events/nr/2005/sep/13sep05_nr.html)

<sup>139</sup> Donald Urquhart. "Malacca Strait air and sea patrols brought under one umbrella," *The Business Times* (Singapore), April 22, 2006;

IS) and standardized by formal Information Sharing Procedures signed in 2009.<sup>140</sup> This system helps coordinate patrols by not only providing maritime information, but also relevant shipping data, tracking the various vessels cargo so one can determine the most at risk vessels and act accordingly.<sup>141</sup>

As a successor to MALSINDO, the JCC and its various parts were designed to build upon existing bilateral agreements and bolster its predecessor's initial multilateral success. By increasing operational coordination, primarily through ensuring interoperability and formalizing intelligence sharing, the JCC was arguably more successful than ReCAAP and constituted a significant step toward greater security cooperation in the region.

### **Chapter Summary:**

Efforts to counter the rising tide of piracy and maritime violence in Southeast Asia have constituted a very lengthy process. Early efforts to counter these crimes were hampered by two main factors: first a lack of maritime capacity, that is the sheer number of vessels capable of patrolling these waters and, secondly a lack of political will. Without properly trained personnel or adequate vessels and aircraft, the states that control the Straits were unable to effectively counter maritime violence in their own waters. Further hampered by the regional economic collapse of the late 1990s, these countries were unable to finance the necessary improvements and additions to their maritime forces. Often they seemed to lack the political will to do much, whether it was

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<sup>140</sup> Joshua Ho. "Piracy in the Gulf of Aden: Lessons from the Malacca Strait." RSIS Commentaries. S, Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University. January 22, 2009

<sup>141</sup> MINDEF Singapore. "Factsheet: Malacca Strait Patrols Information System" Singapore Ministry of Defence Press Release, 28 Mar 2008.

[http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/news\\_and\\_events/nr/2008/mar/28mar08\\_nr/28mar08\\_fs2.html](http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/news_and_events/nr/2008/mar/28mar08_nr/28mar08_fs2.html)

for fear of foreign intervention or merely other rivals for governmental power, little was truly accomplished.

Vastly more important to the success of the counter-piracy mission was the role of bilateral and multilateral security agreements that sought to enhance maritime cooperation in the region. Such cooperative efforts were hindered more by lack of political motivation than by capacity. Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore were initially reluctant to enter into cooperative agreements because of pre-existing mistrust and suspicion. The feared effect of such agreements on their national sovereignty caused concern and prevented early attempts at cooperation to counter maritime threats. Of particular concern was the continued sanctity of territorial waters. Indonesia and Malaysia were particularly sensitive to incursions by foreign forces into their waters, even in the case of “hot pursuit.” As a result, successful agreements over the past 30 years delineated the bounds of “hot pursuit” with regard to counter-piracy. This did not mean that cooperation was impossible; simply that it was difficult and often very strained. Several bilateral relationships existed between individual states and between these states and extra regional governments during this period. These relationships were useful for building trust between the states and provided useful opportunities to increase maritime capacity.

By 2003, the states in the region realized that much greater action would be required, prompting attempts at increasing multilateral coordination across the region. Because of these efforts, maritime violence in the Straits was on the decline by 2005. Reported attacks in that year dropped by over 60 percent from the year before, from 154 reported attacks to 101 and, by half again in both 2007 and 2008, from 70 reported attacks to

54.<sup>142</sup> This decline cannot be solely attributed to recent multilateral efforts, but more appropriately to an accumulation of effort at all levels: national, regional, and international.

a. *National*: At the national level, state governments began taking increased steps to streamline coordination within their own services. As seen previously, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia drastically restructured their maritime agencies to improve cross communication and increase counter-piracy efforts. In addition they all dedicated resources to increase their capacity through training and the acquisition of new equipment.

b. *Regional*: At the regional level, both bilaterally and multilaterally, countries worked to improve existing relationships with their neighbors, and established new relationships meant to strengthen the coordinated maritime effort. They increased coordination at the regional level and instituted cooperative frameworks that were acceptable to each partner.

c. *International*: States in the region slowly increased cooperation with extra-regional actors, focusing on limited assistance rather than integration. To do so, they accepted assistance in the form of financial aid, and increased training opportunities and equipment procurement programs.

By considering all of these factors, the success of maritime security cooperation in Southeast Asia can be seen as an evolutionary process progressing from one level to another, from its infancy of unilateral action and eventually leading to its present, multilateral form. By simultaneously addressing issues of capacity and political will at varying levels, states in the region were able to increase their maritime capabilities and build confidence in each other. Through trial and error, regional actors gradually gained confidence in the intentions of their neighbors and developed boundaries regarding their relationships with extra-regional governments. Likewise, regional political sensitivities and reduced capacity required regional and extra-regional governments to reconsider their efforts and decide upon new courses of action. Although some critics question the

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<sup>142</sup> International Maritime Bureau, "Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships: Annual Report 2008,"

effectiveness of recent agreements due to their limited nature, some attributing it to the economic and social effects of the December 2004 tsunami or the resolution of political conflict within the states themselves, there has been an obvious downward trend in attacks in the Straits of Malacca in the last few years. The relative successes of these efforts, no matter how limited, does provide one an opportunity to compare such measures to those being taken in the Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa, and try to determine the applicability of the Southeast Asian model to the situation off the Horn of Africa.

## IV. Counter-piracy in the Horn of Africa and Gulf of Aden

### Chapter Introduction:

On the most basic of levels, piracy in the Horn of Africa and Gulf of Aden seems to share many of characteristics seen in piracy in Southeast Asia. It is, however, extraordinarily different when examined more closely, especially in its scope as well as its possible motivating factors. Its scope tends to be much smaller and instead of being focused on quick “hit and run” tactics the focus becomes holding onto the ship until the shipping company itself (or its insurance company) pays out a massive ransom.<sup>143</sup> This type of piracy has also led to a significant increase in the international attention. As more and more attention becomes focused on piracy, the international community at large begins to respond. This response has come largely in the form of sizable naval forces deploying to the region. This chapter will highlight the steps taken by the international community, regional states, and the various factions controlling Somalia to combat piracy’s dramatic rise. It will begin by focusing on the various efforts to combat Somali piracy by national, regional, and international interests. This analysis will examine the measures undertaken by the different factions presently controlling Somalia and the effectiveness of their efforts. It will include a description of the actions taken by Yemen,

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<sup>143</sup> Commander, Combined Maritime Forces Public Affairs (2008-09-29). "[Combined Task Force 150 Thwarts Criminal Activities](#)". US Africa Command

a country that has a crucial role to play in preventing maritime violence throughout the GOA.

A description of the international measures, multilateral, bilateral and unilateral in nature, will then be provided to illustrate the complete breadth of the counter-piracy effort throughout the region. Following this, the chapter will analyze the trans-regional and regional cooperative agreements that developed in response to piracy. In conclusion, it will provide analysis of the effectiveness of all these measures by examining the results of each and their effects on maritime security cooperation in the region. It will argue that besides the near total absence of maritime security capacity in the region, specifically in the GOA, states in the region lack the internal and external mechanisms to address the issue of piracy. Distracted by more pressing internal issues, many of the states that border the GOA have insufficient “political will” to fully consider addressing the problem. This lack of a sustained, regional response makes it extraordinarily difficult for a long term solution to be found. This, coupled with the distinct lack of economic opportunities for citizens in Somalia helps to explain why piracy is on the rise, and why despite all the operations being conducted by the international community reported attacks in the region have gone from 119 in 2008, to 193 in 2009, and finally to 152 in 2010.

### **Unilateral Efforts at Counter-Piracy:**

Despite increasing international attention given to piracy in the region, national measures to counter the problem have been minimal. This is due primarily to the inability of key states in the region to exert control over the areas they claim. These states also happen to be the poorest in the region, lacking a formal economy, as in the case of

Somalia, or possessing relatively weak economies, as in Somaliland and Yemen. Without adequate financial resources or political legitimacy, these states have been unable to take effective action against piracy. The primary result of their financial and political woes has been the inability of these states, most obviously in Somalia but still evident in Yemen, to maintain sufficient security capacity on land, let alone at sea. As a result of these political and security weaknesses, pirates have been able to consolidate power and even expand their operations with little fear of retribution. It has been only recently that concrete action has begun to emerge in the region, as political developments within Somalia have started to rearrange the security outlook. This section will examine the capacity of these states to take action and provide a background on the actions they have taken, whether successful or unsuccessful.

### **1. Somaliland**

Somaliland first declared its autonomy from greater Somalia in 1991, shortly after the fall of the Siad Barre socialist regime. It currently functions as a separate state but lacks any form of recognition by much of the international community, and thus is still considered, politically, to be part of the recognized Somali republic. Despite this, Somaliland has fared relatively well and is considered by many observers to possess a relatively stable government and security situation, the latter evidenced by the lack of piracy in its own waters. However, further contribution to regional maritime security by Somaliland would be extremely difficult since the country receives little to no international assistance and has been forced to tackle the piracy problem using its existing, extraordinarily limited maritime capability.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Seth Kaplan. "The Remarkable Story of Somaliland." *Journal of Democracy* 19:3 (July 2008)

The Somaliland Coast Guard reportedly has three small patrol craft left from the former regime and roughly 150 total personnel.<sup>145</sup> As late as May 2009, the Somaliland Coast Guard was actively pursuing pirates operating near their waters and despite the absence of specific piracy laws in its legal code, had convicted groups of pirates, sentencing them to prison time.<sup>146</sup> Following these arrests, a Somaliland spokesman publicly stated that Somaliland was “committed to fight against pirates and terrorists,” but admitted that the state lacked the capacity to do so effectively.<sup>147</sup> Somaliland forces have a tendency to be quite old and in poor repair which could hamper their ability to continue their recent successes.

## 2. Puntland

Puntland has functioned as a semi-autonomous state since 1998, separate from the Somali Republic and the internationally recognized Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Although not as politically and socially stable as its Somaliland neighbor, the Puntland government has provided relative peace and stability to the area it controls. Unfortunately, its government is notoriously corrupt with high-ranking tribal and government leaders rumored to have benefited from piracy, indirectly or in some cases even directly.<sup>148</sup> Although not backed by substantive evidence, these rumors seem to hold some truth, especially considering the relative cost of conducting these piracy operations. Throughout the dramatic rise in attacks from 2008 to 2009, pirate groups

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<sup>145</sup> “Chapter Six: Sub-Saharan Africa,” *The Military Balance*, 109:1 (London: Routledge, 2009), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/04597220802709910>

<sup>146</sup> Tristan McConnell. Somali Pirates' Condition Put Into Perspective: Interview. Huffington Post. June 12, 2009.

<sup>147</sup> Scott Baldauf. “Pirates, Inc.: Inside the booming Somali business,” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 31, 2009, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0531/p06s03-woaf.html>

<sup>148</sup> Roger Middleton. “Piracy in Somalia: Threatening global trade, feeding local wars,” *Chatham House*, Briefing Paper, AFP BP08/02 (October 2008), [www.chathamhouse.org.uk](http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk),

were operating extensively from Puntland, calling into question the effectiveness and honesty of Puntland's governmental authorities.

Puntland's political system is heavily influenced by clan dynamics. With three major clans and multiple sub-clans that are continuously vying for dominance in the region, Puntland's government tends to find itself far more concerned with maintaining the balance of power through financial support of the various factions than countering piracy with an established maritime force.<sup>149</sup>

Considering this conflict of interests, it is not surprising that Puntland's indigenous maritime capability is all but nonexistent. Realizing this limitation, the government of Puntland made efforts in the late 1990s to outsource much of its maritime security. Although not widely publicized, these efforts to privatize maritime security off the Puntland coast were significant as they illustrated the willingness of Puntland officials to invest money in countering maritime violence and illegal fishing. From 1999 to 2008, the Puntland government made repeated attempts to contract its maritime security out to private security firms. Whether due to legal concerns regarding Puntland's authority to enter into such agreements, or reported corruption by the contractors themselves, these efforts were completely unsuccessful. The failure of these attempts further highlight the problem of legitimacy the Puntland government faced and could be partly attributed to corruption within the governmental structure itself.

Due to its general lack of maritime capacity, most of Puntland's counter-piracy efforts have been based largely ashore, dealing with the pirate camps themselves. In early 2000, the Puntland government dedicated some of its meager security forces to track

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<sup>149</sup> Stig Jarl Hansen. "Private Security and Local Politics in Somalia," *Review of African Political Economy* 118:35 (2008)

down and arrest any pirates operating within Puntland itself. Raids on known pirate havens were widely reported in the local press and provided local leaders opportunities to highlight the increased effort of Puntland forces.<sup>150</sup> Publicly, Puntland officials condemned piracy and pledge to combat it within their borders. However, Puntland authorities also realize that they lack the capacity to do so effectively and insist that international assistance through training and capacity building is necessary.<sup>151</sup>

More recently, Puntland initiated cooperative relationships with international forces operating in the region. NATO officials interviewed in September 2009 announced that cooperative patrols with Puntland security forces had been established along the Puntland coast. These patrols consisted of NATO vessels and aircraft with Puntland security representatives onboard, who were shown suspected pirate camps. Subsequent patrols reportedly showed that many of these camps had disappeared.<sup>152</sup> These initial efforts also included official meetings between NATO operational commanders and Puntland security officials designed to help foster continued cooperation between forces.<sup>153</sup> This was seen as a pivotal step toward increasing capability in this region. In

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<sup>150</sup> Somalia: Puntland leader strikes at pirates, human smugglers," *Garowe Online*, February 11, 2009, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Somalia\\_Puntland\\_leader\\_strikes\\_at\\_pirates\\_h](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Puntland_leader_strikes_at_pirates_human_smugglers_printer.shtml)

[uman\\_smugglers\\_printer.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Puntland_leader_strikes_at_pirates_human_smugglers_printer.shtml)

<sup>151</sup> Somalia: 'American Warships Should Leave Somali Coast or Fight Pirates' – Puntland Govt," *Garowe Online*, March 16, 2008,

[http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/American\\_warships\\_should\\_leave\\_Somalia\\_coast\\_or\\_fight\\_pirates\\_Puntland\\_govt\\_printer.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/American_warships_should_leave_Somalia_coast_or_fight_pirates_Puntland_govt_printer.shtml)

<sup>152</sup> NATO officials heralded these initial cooperative steps with the local government as critical to effectively countering Somali piracy at its source, on land. These statements were made by Deputy Chief of Staff Operations, NATO Maritime Component Command Northwood, Commodore Hans Helseth (Norwegian Navy), at the Maritime Piracy Summit held in Vienna, Virginia, on 22–23 September 2009

<sup>153</sup> "NATO meeting with Puntland Regional Administration," NATO Operation Ocean Shield Web site, September 11, 2009; "NATO works with Somali authorities," NATO Operation Ocean Shield Web site, September 24, 2009,

[http://www.manw.nato.int/page\\_operation\\_ocean\\_shield.aspx#NATO\\_works\\_with\\_Somali\\_authorities](http://www.manw.nato.int/page_operation_ocean_shield.aspx#NATO_works_with_Somali_authorities).

fact, as recently as 2010, Puntland began construction on a naval base in the town of Bosasso, the commercial capital of the country, as well as a known pirate haven.<sup>154</sup>

The president of Puntland also met with several European Union representatives in September 2009, to discuss increasing cooperation against piracy and human smuggling between the two entities. The two parties also discussed international assistance projects to address the economic and social issues in Puntland.<sup>155</sup> It was these assistance projects that security experts would cite as the real key to solving the problem, creating the means with which the local population can deal with the problem at hand.

#### **4. Transitional Federal Government of Somalia**

The Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) acts as the internationally recognized government of Somalia as a whole, and is based out of Mogadishu.

Although it is considered by the United Nations, and thus most of the international community, to be the legitimate government of Somalia, and as such the government that receives the international assistance, in reality it holds minimal control over the country writ large, particularly when it comes to internal security. The TFG has been in constant conflict with other factions within Somali political society since its inception in 2002. Direct military intervention by the Ethiopians in 2007 and the African Union later in 2008, prevented complete collapse of the TFG by pushing back more dominant groups, primarily radical Islamist groups such as the Union of Islamic Courts and Al Shabaab, who sought to institute a system of Islamic law into Somalia itself. Without support from these regional organizations, the TFG would likely have been completely

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<sup>154</sup> SOMALIA: Puntland to start construction of new Navy base.

<http://horseedmedia.net/2010/05/31/somalia-puntland-to-start-construction-of-new-navy-base/>

<sup>155</sup> Somalia: Puntland Leader Receives EU Delegation in Galkayo," Garoowe Online, September 1, 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200909020108.html>

pushed out of the region, and Somalia left in even more chaos in the hands of the competing warlords.

Much like in Puntland, TFG security forces consist primarily of militia-like organizations with little formal training or coherent structure. Initially, little action was taken by the TFG to combat piracy, mostly due to the inability of the government to adequately police the few areas it did control. As with Puntland, these shortcomings were initially addressed by seeking assistance from private security firms.<sup>156</sup> Also, as in Puntland, these efforts were quite unsuccessful and highlight the difficulties inherent in bilateral relations between the government and private companies.

In response to international pressure, TFG officials announced the formation and training of a new Somali Navy in 2008, with assistance from the international community.<sup>157</sup> The new maritime force reportedly consists of 500 personnel but no patrol craft, implying that the focus of the force will be to combat piracy on land rather than at sea. This could be a beneficial first step in helping Somalia to deal with the threat posed by the pirates. The legitimacy of this initiative, as well as the early efforts of Puntland, was strengthened tremendously in September 2009 with the announcement by the TFG that Puntland would be the home of the new Somali Navy. This base would also include significant training and maintenance facilities to increase the overall capability of the Somali fleet.<sup>158</sup> Additionally, Puntland was given the authority to enter into agreements with international governments and organizations on behalf of the

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<sup>156</sup> Roger Middleton. "Piracy in Somalia: Threatening Global Trade, Feeding Local Wars." Chatham House Briefing Paper. *Chatham House* (October 2008). <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/publications/papers/view/-/id/665/>

<sup>157</sup> William Ross. "Somali navy chief: World's worst job?," *BBC News*, June 16, 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8096137.stm>

<sup>158</sup> "Puntland to become home to Somalia navy," *Garowe Online*, August 20, 2009, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Puntland\\_to\\_become\\_home\\_to\\_Somalia\\_navy.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Puntland_to_become_home_to_Somalia_navy.shtml)

Somali governments and peoples. Overall, the agreement was a significant step toward national reconciliation and provided a framework for successive attempts at cooperation.<sup>159</sup>

## **5. Yemen**

Although not directly involved in the fight against piracy itself, Yemen plays a vital role in the region, and has played a vital role in the way piracy has developed in Somali waters. The two countries share many thousands of years of history, often depending on each other both economically and socially. Trade between Yemen and Somalia has a tremendous effect on the economic and social situation of the populations on both sides. Traditional trading partners since their earliest formation, both countries have benefited significantly from the flow of goods and people across the GOA for thousands of years. Somalis depend on the export of livestock, such as goats and even fish, through Yemen to the rest of the Middle East. Throughout the challenges of the Cold War, when both Somalia and Yemen were used as pawns of both the Soviet Union and the United States, this trade kept flowing. This trade would continue to be important, especially as this was the only trade that weathered the collapse of the formal Somali government in 1991. Besides the flow of legitimate trade, the nature of illicit trade better illustrates the social and economic relationship between the two countries. Yemen serves as the transit route for laborers seeking to find work in the Middle East, illustrated by reports of human smuggling between the two countries every day. Thousands of illegal immigrants are estimated to attempt the GOA crossing every year

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid

with the help of human smugglers and the tacit approval of corrupt Yemeni officials.<sup>160</sup> Trade in *khat*, a mildly narcotic but extremely addictive plant, popular throughout the region but primarily grown in East Africa, also serves to connect the two countries.<sup>161</sup>

Yemen itself is considered by many of its neighbors and the international community at large to be a major haven for extremists and rife with corruption. Even the United States has been impacted by extremists within Yemen, as seen by the USS COLE (DDG 67) bombing in October 2000, carried out by extremists operating in and around Yemen.<sup>162</sup> Saudi Arabia, a country with a long and often difficult history with Yemen, began building a concrete barrier along its border with Yemen in order to prevent smuggling and border incursions by potentially violent extremists. Over the past several years, Saudi Arabia has blamed the government of Yemen for allowing these extremists to use Yemen as a base for operations against the Saudi kingdom. In late 2009 in particular, Saudi military forces even conducted cross-border operations into northern Yemen to prevent incursions into the kingdom, and initiated a naval blockade of the eastern Yemeni coast to prevent the flow of weapons to the extremist's.<sup>163</sup>

Relations with its neighbor across the GOA, Eritrea, are also strained. Yemen strongly opposed Eritrean independence from Ethiopia and each country backed

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<sup>160</sup> Sharon Otterman. "Human Smuggling Soars in the Gulf of Aden" *The New York Times*. October 28, 2008

<sup>161</sup> Andrew Butters. "Is Yemen Chewing Itself to Death" *Time Magazine*. August 25, 2009

<sup>162</sup> Craig Whitlock. "Probe of USS Cole Bombing Unravels Plotters Freed in Yemen; U.S. Efforts Frustrated" *Washington Post*. May 4, 2008. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/03/AR2008050302047.html>

<sup>163</sup> Al Jazeera, "Saudis 'to keep up Houthi campaign'," *Al Jazeera.net*, November 10, 2009, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2009/11/20091110141322184400.html>

opposing factions in Somalia in the mid 2000s, with Eritrea backing the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) and Yemen backing the TFG.<sup>164</sup>

Although fairly active along the Yemeni coast, especially around the port city of Aden, Yemeni maritime forces have proven to be ineffectual in controlling their own waters. The overall material readiness, training, and capacity of these forces is considered to be minimal, and there has been no observed growth in personnel or platforms in recent years, despite continued international support. Yemeni maritime forces consist of approximately 3,000 personnel, split between navy, marines, and coast guard. The Yemeni Coast Guard consists of approximately 1,000 men and 40 patrol boats (four of which are coastal patrol craft).<sup>165</sup> The Yemeni Navy consists of approximately 1,700 sailors and 500 marines. Its fleet consists of a corvette, three aging, fast attack missile boats, and over 30 patrol craft, most of which are considered to be non-operational or in poor repair. The newest of these are 10 patrol boats acquired in 2003 from Australia. The rest of these vessels, however, tend to be old, outdated technology, bought from other nations, and is typically badly in need of repair, severely hampering their aid in the fight against the pirates. There have however been reports of the Yemeni government agreeing to purchase several Russian fast attack patrol boats in 2009, but these vessels have not yet been delivered.<sup>166</sup>

Yemen has also benefited from international support. The United States,

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<sup>164</sup> "Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment – Yemen," *Jane's Information Group*, last updated October 2008.

<sup>165</sup> Anthony Cordesman et al., *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007)

<sup>166</sup> "Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment – Yemen," *Jane's Information Group*, last updated October 2008.

France, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Italy have all initiated bilateral programs aimed at building capacity, both maritime and ashore, and increasing the forces' capability through training and coordination. (The following section will outline some of these initiatives in greater detail.)

Despite the assistance of the international community, Yemeni forces have been unable to stem the flow of illicit trade and maritime violence in the Gulf of Aden. Human smuggling and the *khat* trade continue to be a major problem. Piracy only serves to further highlight their inadequacies, as the number of pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden rose from 119 in 2008 to 152 in 2010. Not only did the number of attacks rise, but also most took place on the Yemeni side of the GOA, prompting further criticism from much of the international community. Whether as a response to the drastic rise or to increasing international pressure, the Yemeni government announced the formation of a 1,600-man, 16-vessel, counter-piracy task force in 2008, charged to "enhance the protection of ships and stop Somali pirates in the Gulf of Aden and Bab Al Mandab Strait" (separating the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden).<sup>167</sup> The effectiveness of this measure and the resulting forces it constitutes has yet to be fully determined. Only further analysis will tell if this will be a beneficial long term step.

### **Bilateral Cooperation in the Gulf of Aden:**

Bilateral security agreements to help deal with the problem of piracy in the region have been nonexistent to this point. Whether this is due to the general lack of governmental control over the states in the region, or simply due to people not fully understanding the threat of piracy is difficult to say, perhaps it is a little of both. As

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<sup>167</sup> Zaid al-Alaya et al., "Yemen forms anti-piracy force," *Yemen Observer*, September 25, 2008, <http://www.yobserver.com/front-page/printer-10014967.htm>

discussed previously, Somalia, and to a lesser extent, Yemen, lack strong governments and security forces to provide political and social order. The failed state of Somalia, unable to control its own territory, is equally unable to operate outside its boundaries in an effective manner, lacking the political and diplomatic power to cooperate with external actors, even its own neighbors. Only recently have some of the leadership within Somalia itself begun to move toward measures that allow for bilateral relationships outside the country's borders. The development of cooperative arrangements between NATO and the governments of Somalia, both Puntland and the TFG, began in 2009, after political compromises between the two groups provided political and diplomatic space for such action. This allowed for coordinated patrols between international naval forces and Puntland security forces, and helped lead to the establishment of a Somali Navy based in Puntland.

Yemen has exhibited some capacity to work bilaterally, but generally lacks the resources and political will to fully capitalize on these opportunities. Bilaterally, Yemen has been the most active state in the region. Yemen retains a close, if reluctant, relationship with the United States, a country that has made the small Arab state a priority in its counter-terrorism effort. Since the attack on the USS COLE (DDG 67) in 2000, and the terrorist attacks in 2001, the U.S. has dedicated millions of dollars to improve the capability of Yemen security forces both on land and at sea. The U.S. Navy and Coast Guard maintain close relations with their Yemeni counterparts, conducting joint training exercises and maritime patrols with Yemeni maritime forces in the Gulf of Aden. Joint operations as well as coalition building have become key aspects of US foreign policy in the region. An example of this can be seen in the number of US Navy

vessels that have aided Yemeni fishermen in the area, trying to help build a stronger relationship with the people.<sup>168</sup> Additionally, Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), the U.S. task forces concerned primarily with security in the Horn of Africa, assisted Yemen in establishing a dedicated counter-terrorism unit and helped to strengthen overall security along the coast.<sup>169</sup> Even up through late 2009, when the overall ineffectiveness of Yemeni counter-piracy efforts was most apparent, U.S. officials maintained that Yemen continued to be a key player in preventing pirate attacks in the GOA, and that without its assistance the efforts to stop piracy would fail.<sup>170</sup>

Other governments have attempted to bolster Yemeni maritime capacity. Australia sold ten fast patrol boats to Yemen in 2003, vessels reportedly delivered to the navy in 2005. In 2005, Yemen and France signed a formal agreement to train and equip Yemeni forces dedicated to patrolling the Bab Al Mandeb, the strategic waterway connecting the Red Sea and GOA. This agreement included installation of a surface search radar system along the Yemeni coast, a radar that would help to seek out and detect potential pirates, as well as help to direct forces to the attacks.<sup>171</sup> Similarly, in 2007, Yemen signed a major contract with an Italian firm to install a series of “radar and electro-optical sensor surveillance” sites and the associated operations centers along the coast in an effort to enhance its ability to monitor maritime activity in its waters.<sup>172</sup> This

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<sup>168</sup> Jason Zalasky. “USS Vella Gulf Assists Distressed Dhow.” US Navy Press Release. February 10, 2009. [http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story\\_id=42499](http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=42499)

<sup>169</sup> Jackie Northam. “U.S. Has Long Kept Watchful Eye On Yemen,” *NPR*, December 29, 2009, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=122017601>

<sup>170</sup> Wendell Roelf. “Work with Yemen govt on Somali piracy: US admiral,” *Reuters*, March 9, 2009, <http://af.reuters.com/articlePrint?articleId=AFJ0E5280JG20090309>

<sup>171</sup> JAC Lewis. “Yemen, France sign security pact to monitor Bab el Mandeb strait,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, March 9, 2005.

<sup>172</sup> Luca Peruzzi. “Yemen aims to enhance coastal security with VTMS order,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, March 1, 2007.

equipment will seek to provide not only better command and control of Yemeni maritime forces, but will help to ensure that all forces operating in the region, whether Yemeni or coalition, have access to a common tactical picture.

Other states in the region are better positioned to cooperate with regional and extra-regional governments, but often fail to do so because of a lack of resources and capacity, or political willingness to confront an issue that does not directly threaten their own self interests. Bilateral measures in these cases have been limited to agreements based on legal issues or limited maritime capacity building and coordination. Despite the limited nature of these agreements, their contribution to the counter-piracy mission in the region is evidenced by greater coordination and increased training support in the past few years. As previously mentioned, Kenya has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with foreign governments conducting counter-piracy operations in the region. These MOUs have served to legitimize these operations by providing a venue for legal proceedings against captured pirates. Other East African nations have begun to join in the effort as well. In 2009 for example, the Seychelles signed separate cooperative agreements with the United States, France, and the European Union allowing for coordinated naval operations among the various governments.<sup>173</sup>

### **International Attempts at Regional Maritime Security:**

Although far more robust and ambitious than the actions of the individual states and interest groups in the region, the international response to Somali piracy has produced little quantifiable success in recent years. Despite the dedication of dozens of warships from countries such as the United States, Great Britain, Denmark, etcetera, to

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<sup>173</sup> George Thande. "EU and Seychelles sign anti-piracy agreement," *Reuters*, November 10, 2009, <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJJOE5A90M320091110>

the region in 2008 and 2009, reported attacks in the GOA and West Indian Ocean actually increased throughout much of 2009 (See Figure 1). These forces were declared successful very early on, when the number of reported attacks went from sixteen in January 2009 to eight in February that same year.<sup>174</sup> These successes were immediately attributed to the increased naval presence.<sup>175</sup> Future study, however, suggested that in fact many of these decreases could be directly attributed to weather. The weather off the coast of Somalia during this period was unusually strong, with high seas and winds, which could have severely hampered the pirates' ability to attack. This could also explain why during this period many of the attacks shifted toward the GOA, as it is a much more protected and thus the seas are far calmer, and much more pirate friendly.

These initial failures were fairly understandable considering the vast extent of the problem these forces were facing. With over 1,700 nautical miles of Somali coastline and 25 million square miles of ocean to patrol, both in the HOA and GOA, even hundreds of vessels, with all of their sophisticated technology, would have extreme difficulty preventing pirate attacks.<sup>176</sup> In contrast, by early 2009, there were only a few dozen warships in the region, all facing the daunting task of being everywhere at once. Having experienced this first hand I can definitely say that this was the feeling, at least on my ship.

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<sup>174</sup>International Maritime Organization. *"Reports on Acts of Piracy and Robbery Against Ships"* October 27 2009.

<sup>175</sup> International Maritime Bureau. "Unprecedented Increase in Piracy" Press Release. October 29, 2009.

<sup>176</sup> Department Of Defense Bloggers Roundtable With Rear Admiral Terry Mcknight, United States Navy, Expeditionary Strike Group 2, Commander, Task Force 151, Via Teleconference Subject: Counterpiracy Operations. January 29, 2009.

[http://www.defense.gov/dodcmsshare/BloggerAssets/200901/01290911491320090129\\_RearAdmMcKnight\\_transcript.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/dodcmsshare/BloggerAssets/200901/01290911491320090129_RearAdmMcKnight_transcript.pdf)

There have been some successes in this arena, however. Some attempts at bilateral cooperation between states in the region and the international task forces patrolling the seas were successful. MOUs among various international groups and the regional states regarding prosecution and imprisonment of captured pirates, such as the MOU between Kenya and the United Nations that allows the prosecution of suspected pirates, illustrate these successes.<sup>177</sup> As discussed earlier, such MOUs help to provide legitimacy to the counter-piracy efforts of the EU, NATO, and U.S.-led forces by allowing for captured pirates to be tried and punished for piracy according to international law. More recently, attempts at bilateral cooperation between NATO and the Puntland government facilitate information sharing and allow for greater coordination among all of the counter-piracy forces at sea and ashore.

The following section will discuss the international response to Somali piracy, identifying the successes and failure of these measures and describing the effect of each on the overall process of creating maritime security cooperation in the region.

### **1. European Union Naval Forces (EU NAVFOR)**

The European Union first authorized the use of a dedicated naval force to combat the problem of piracy in the HOA/GOA in November 2008. This occurred several months prior to the the UN formation of CTF 151 discussed earlier (and discussed in greater detail later), and indeed may have helped spur the international attention in the region. The political agreement called for voluntary allocation of naval forces from EU member states to conduct military operations against “acts of piracy and armed robbery

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<sup>177</sup> Garamone, Jim. “Vella Gulf Crew Captures More Pirates in Gulf of Aden.” American Forces Press Service. February 12, 2009.

off the Somali coast.”<sup>178</sup> Designated “Operation Atalanta,” this task force deployed to the region by December 2008 and initially consisted of approximately six naval warships and support vessels. Besides its overall counter-piracy mission, the EU task force was specifically mandated to escort UN World Food Program ships carrying much needed food aid into Somalia and to monitor fishing off Somalia’s coast, which has commonly been referred to as one of the pirates principal motives for resorting to piracy. This operation was initially written to last for one year, but in June 2009 was extended to December 2010, and has since been extended until December 2012.<sup>179</sup>

EU NAVFOR Somalia primarily operates in the GOA and maintains the Internationally Recognized Transit Corridor (IRTC); a designated transit route patrolled by EU vessels and coordinated by the Maritime Security Centre (Horn of Africa), MSCHOA. MSCHOA coordinates maritime traffic through the region and facilitates operations with the multitude of other task forces in the region using the MSC HOA Web portal.<sup>180</sup>

## **2. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO):**

NATO commenced its counter-piracy mission off Somalia, Operation Ocean Shield, in August 2009. NATO commanders consider Operation Ocean Shield to be a continuation of previous NATO counter-piracy efforts in the region. The official goals of the task force are to:

- Deter, disrupt and protect against attacks
- Actively seek and prevent further pirate activity

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<sup>178</sup> “Council launches operation against piracy off the coast of Somalia (EU NAVFOR Somalia),” Council of the European Union, Press Release 16968/08, December 8, 2008

<sup>179</sup> European Union Naval Force Somalia - Operation Atalanta. <http://www.eunavfor.eu/about-us/>

<sup>180</sup> See the Maritime Security Center, [www.mschoa.org](http://www.mschoa.org), for more information

- Support development of regional maritime capacity
- Coordinate NATO operations with other maritime forces conducting counter-piracy operations in the region<sup>181</sup>

Operation Ocean Shield is typically comprised of approximately five to six NATO warships operating in the GOA. Like its counterpart, EU NAVFOR Somalia, NATO disseminates information and facilitates coordination with the shipping industry and other task forces through a dedicated web portal, the NATO Shipping Center (NSC). As mentioned previously, in 2009 NATO commenced bilateral negotiations with the government of Puntland to coordinate counter-piracy operations.

### **3. U.S. Responses and Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151):**

The U.S. Navy has been active off Somalia since 2005, whether monitoring the location of hijacked vessels anchored off the Somali coast, or actively tracking and interdicting pirate skiffs or mother ships operating in the Western Indian Ocean. Initially, particularly from 2005 to 2007, U.S. Fifth Fleet only dedicated a few warships at a time to conduct counter-piracy operations in the region. An example of this includes the landing ship dock, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41) providing assistance to numerous vessels in late 2007 after they were released by their captors.<sup>182</sup> This limited response can be attributed to the low-profile nature of piracy at the time as well as the limited availability of coalition warships available for dedicated counter-piracy operations.

The dramatic rise of attacks in 2008, combined with the high-profile nature of some of these attacks, prompted a shift in U.S. policy. As attacks in the GOA and Indian

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<sup>181</sup> See Operation Ocean Shield at the NATO Shipping Centre Web site, <http://www.shipping.nato.int/CounterPir>, for more information

<sup>182</sup> U.S. Fifth Fleet Public Affairs US Naval Forces Central Command. "Golden Nori Released" <http://www.centcom.mil/press-releases/golden-nori-released>

Ocean become more high profile, the international media, and in turn, the general public, became more aware of the issue and international pressure for intervention began to grow. Of special importance were several events that illustrated the expansion of the pirate's range and target selection: the hijacking of *Le Ponant*, a French luxury yacht; the *Faina*, a vessel loaded with Russian tanks; the *Sirius Star*, a Saudi supertanker carrying oil to the U.S. (both of which I was involved with on the *USS VELLA GULF*); and the hijacking of the *Maersk Alabama*, a Danish cargo vessel with an American crew.<sup>183</sup> Unlike previous events, these attacks received extensive media coverage worldwide and subsequently helped to initiate greater public dialogue on the severity of the issue.

The U.S. began to target more of its forces in the region to the counter-piracy mission, largely as a result of the public outcry. Initially, these forces were drawn from its counter-narcotics task force, CTF-150. This multinational task force consisted of warships from the U.S. along with, international and regional partners such as Pakistan, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Australia. In August 2008, Fifth Fleet also established the Maritime Security Patrol Area (MSPA) in the GOA in an effort to coordinate counter-piracy efforts. Unfortunately, piracy continued to rise through the end of 2008 and even into 2009, despite Fifth Fleet's increased efforts and the simultaneous arrival of the EU and NATO task forces. In response to this failure, in January 2009, U.S. Fifth Fleet established a dedicated counter-piracy task force, CTF-

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<sup>183</sup> Associated Press, "France: Pirates Captured, Hostages Freed," CBS News, April 11, 2008, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/04/11/world/main4009248.shtml>; BBC, "Pirates capture Saudi oil tanker," BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7733482.stm>;

151, to allow for simultaneous counter-piracy and counter-narcotic (notable due to the massive hashish runs from Africa to the Middle East) efforts in the region.<sup>184</sup>

CTF-151 is essentially identical in both structure and composition to CTF 150, consisting of several coalition warships and support vessels. The initial task force deployed in early 2009 was comprised of six warships, U.S. (including the VELLA GULF for a time as its flagship), British, Dutch, and Turkish in nationality. Over 20 other nations promised to provide warships for the task force.<sup>185</sup> In fact many nations have even served as the commander of this task force, including Turkey, Korea and Pakistan.<sup>186</sup> Since its earliest days, CTF-151 has operated primarily off the eastern Somali coast. Despite the formation of this dedicated task force and its subsequent success at capturing some pirates, piracy off the coast still continues primarily because of the previously mentioned problem of having too few ships to patrol such a large amount of water space. Without a vastly increased fleet available the ships will be unable to keep up with the increase in pirate activity.

#### **4. United Nation Contact Group on Piracy off Somalia (CGPCS):**

The CGPCS was established in early January 2009 as a result of UN Security Council Resolution 1851, in an effort to “facilitate discussion and coordination of actions among states and organizations to suppress piracy off the coast of Somalia.”<sup>187</sup> Since inception, the CGPCS has primarily served as a forum for international cooperation; to provide an opportunity for the international community to discuss increased naval

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<sup>184</sup> New Counter-Piracy Task Force Established,” Combined Maritime Forces Public Affairs Press Release, January 8, 2009, [http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story\\_id=41687](http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=41687)

<sup>185</sup> “US to lead new anti-pirate force,” BBC News, January 8, 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7817611.stm>

<sup>186</sup> Jung Sung Ki (2009-03-03). "New S. Korean Naval Unit To Deploy to Somalia". [Defense News](#).

<sup>187</sup> Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia,” U.S. Department of State Factsheet, January 14, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/othr/misc/121054.htm>

coordination, promote preventative efforts within the maritime industry, facilitate legal solutions pertaining to captured pirates and increase the maritime capacity in the region. As of September 2009, 45 nations had participated in the CGPCS.<sup>188</sup>

The CGPCS is essentially a diplomatic mechanism to increase awareness on the issues surrounding piracy off Somalia and provides opportunities for the international community to address these issues at a state-to-state level. However, due to its status as merely a forum for discussion, it lacks the political authority and legitimacy to bring about tangible measures toward regional coordination. Nevertheless, it is a useful tool, bringing these experts together to discuss the best ways of dealing with the problems of piracy. Without this discussion, it is quite likely that it would be that much more difficult to form any kind of consensus.

### **5. Additional International Actions:**

Other international governments began to take action in 2008. Individual states began to deploy naval forces to the region in answer to UN calls for action. The first of these was the deployment of a Russian warship (the Neustrashimy FF 712) in September 2008.<sup>189</sup> The Neustashimy was in turn relieved by the Admiral Vinogradov, who while I was onboard the VELLA GULF we hosted a luncheon for, marking one of the first time a Russian flag officer had been on a United States warship underway.<sup>190</sup> This vessel was soon followed by ones from China, India, and Iran, all countries that had rarely made

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<sup>188</sup> "Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia: List of Participating States and Organizations at the 4th Plenary," U.S. Department of State Press Release, September 10, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/othr/misc/129273.htm>

<sup>189</sup> RIA Novosti. "Russia sends warship to fight piracy near Somalia" September 26, 2008. <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20080926/117144421.html>

<sup>190</sup> David Pearl. Office of Naval Intelligence Civil Maritime Analysis Department Worldwide Threat To Shipping Mariner Warning Information. February 12, 2009. [http://dnc.nga.mil/MSISiteContent/StaticFiles/MISC/wwtts/wwtts\\_20090212100000.txt](http://dnc.nga.mil/MSISiteContent/StaticFiles/MISC/wwtts/wwtts_20090212100000.txt)

such gestures before.<sup>191</sup> These deployments continued and grew in size throughout much of 2009. Deployment of these forces serves to highlight the international response to what was previously considered strictly a regional issue, one best handled by those directly affected by the phenomenon and not the international community as a whole.

### **Trans-Regional Maritime Security Cooperation:**

By 2003, it was becoming evident that the various unilateral and bilateral efforts to counter rising maritime violence in the region were insufficient for the task. From 2002 to 2004, reported attacks actually increased, with many attacks taking place inside Somali territorial waters. Realization of this trend and sustained pressure from the international community led to attempts at increased security cooperation in the maritime domain. For example, regional actors from across the Middle East and Northeast Africa met in Djibouti to discuss piracy off Somalia, including how best to counter the phenomenon through coordination and cooperation.

In January 2009, eight East African states, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, the Maldives, the Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania, and one Middle Eastern state, Yemen, signed the Djibouti Code of Conduct, an agreement designed to improve coordination of counter-piracy efforts in the GOA and East Indian Ocean. Led by the UN with the guidance of the IMO, the Code of Conduct affirmed the signatory nation's commitment toward increasing regional cooperation against piracy, actively interdicting suspected pirate vessels, ensuring legitimate legal action is taken against captured pirates, and that captured pirates and victims are treated fairly and with due diligence.<sup>192</sup> In order to facilitate effective information sharing, creating that common tactical picture, the Code

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<sup>191</sup> Mark MacDonald "China Confirms Naval Role in Gulf of Aden," *New York Times*, December 19, 2008

<sup>192</sup> International Maritime Organization "Djibouti Code of Conduct" April 3, 2009

called for the establishment of three regional information centers in Yemen, Tanzania, and Kenya.

In response to the signing of the agreement, the IMO Secretary General applauded the efforts of the signatories, highlighting the agreement's similarities to the ReCAAP agreement in Southeast Asia, considering it a "starting point for successful cooperation and coordination in the region."<sup>193</sup> In fact, the Djibouti Code was based primarily on the ReCAAP agreement, another IMO-led endeavor. Like ReCAAP, the Djibouti Code serves as a basis for cooperation amongst the various nations, but provides neither authority nor any obligation to comply with its tenets. Nonetheless it does serve as a key stepping stone toward success in future endeavors in the counter-piracy arena.

### **Multi-Lateral Maritime Security Cooperation in the Middle East:**

Regional attempts at multi-lateral cooperation have tended to be slow-moving and half-hearted. As will be further discussed later, regional security cooperation does not have an impressive track record, consistently lacking the force that other attempts at cooperation elicit, such as the economy and identity protection. In June 2009, several Middle Eastern Arab states met to discuss a proposed Arab counter-piracy task force. Representatives from Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen attended the meeting. Participants stressed their concerns regarding piracy in the region and its effects on maritime

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<sup>193</sup>"High-level meeting in Djibouti adopts a Code of Conduct to repress acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships," IMO Press Briefing, January 30, 2009, [http://www.imo.org/newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic\\_id=1773&doc\\_id=10933](http://www.imo.org/newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1773&doc_id=10933)

shipping. Saudi Arabia agreed to lead coordination efforts between the Arab participants and other international naval forces operating in the region.<sup>194</sup>

Later, in October 2009, naval representatives from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) along with other Arab countries along the Red Sea decided to form a joint naval task force “aimed at combating piracy and guaranteeing...safety...” in the Red Sea.<sup>195</sup> A Saudi representative affirmed that the principal mission of the task force was to prevent the spread of piracy outside of the Gulf of Aden and to coordinate more effectively with the various international naval forces operating in the region.

These announcements were followed by little actual action. As of November 2009 there had been no measurable movement toward a cooperative security framework between the Arab states in the region. It is possible, however, to compare these initial steps, those promised during the Djibouti Code of Conduct and Arab Task Force meetings, to those of the burgeoning ReCAAP and MALSINDO members in the early 2000s, where public statements and formal agreements were ultimately succeeded by concrete efforts toward maritime cooperation and coordination. However, it may be too soon to tell if the Arab task force will enjoy the level of success its Southeast Asian counterpart has attained, especially considering how new this sort of arrangement is in this region.

### **Chapter Summary:**

As one can see, piracy garnered a great deal of attention from the media and the international community at large in the past three years. The dramatic rise in pirate

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<sup>194</sup> Paul Handley. “All-Arab Red Sea anti-piracy force proposed in Riyadh,” *AFP*, June 29, 2009.

<sup>195</sup> Muhammad Humaidan, “GCC decides to form joint naval force,” *Arab News*, October 27, 2009, <http://www.arabnews.com/?page=1&section=0&article=127786&d=27&m=10&y=2009>

attacks as well as the pirates' focus on larger, more valuable targets brought an old problem to the attention of the international community. As in other regions plagued by maritime violence and piracy, the waters surrounding Somalia provide ample opportunities for such attacks and lack strong national governments able to fully control the seas. These similarities provide many observers and subject matter experts with obvious corollaries when it comes to solutions for piracy, as well. The most obvious of these was discussed in the previous chapter: counter-piracy efforts in Southeast Asia.

The ineffectiveness of recent counter-piracy efforts in the GOA further enhanced the scrutiny of experts searching for an effective solution. International steps, including the deployment of dozens of naval warships from much of the international community, have proved largely ineffective, especially considering the continued rise in attacks following their arrival. EU, NATO, and U.S.-led task forces failed to reduce the total number of attacks. National unilateral efforts have also proved ineffectual, hampered even more by a lack of political cohesion and unity, as well as overall maritime capacity than the countries in the Malacca Straits. Somalia is also often considered a failed state with existing ruling groups unable to prevent piracy ashore. Puntland and the TFG both lack the political legitimacy and maritime security capacity to effectively prevent maritime violence originating from the areas they control. Yemen rivals its neighbor's lack of control, proving repeatedly that it is unable to prevent illicit drug trafficking, let alone heavily armed pirates, off its shores.

Therefore, similarly to Southeast Asia, counter-piracy in the region is hampered by two key limitations: lack of political will and maritime security capacity. As has been illustrated by the cases of the various regions of Somalia and its neighbor,

Yemen, lack of political will in their cases can better be understood as a lack of political effectiveness and highlighted by an inability to effectively control its territory ashore. Their maritime capacities are equally ineffective, both due to lack of capacity as well as functionality of what they have. This seeks to further exacerbate their lack of control, and making them unable to prevent pirates from using their waters to launch attacks. Considering their ineffectiveness, it is understandable that the international community would seek solutions that bypass entirely or at the very least mitigate the weaknesses of these states.

While the general metrics described above make Somalia and its neighbors' case similar to Southeast Asia, it is the development of regional cooperative frameworks that sets them apart. Regional cooperation in the Middle East, unlike in Southeast Asia, has been almost nonexistent, with most efforts seen as token gestures rather than sincere attempts at cooperation. The most publicized of these is the Djibouti Code of Conduct agreement, signed by several states in the region, and considered to be the first step toward a regional cooperative framework like ReCAAP. Recently, some of the Arab states agreed to form an Arab counter-piracy task force to protect their interests in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Both of these measures are commendable attempts at improving regional confidence and building consensus. However, these agreements merely highlight their ineffectiveness by providing an opportunity to make half-hearted commitments that are not intended or even able to be fulfilled due to an overall lack of political will and maritime capacity.

International efforts aimed at preventing attacks at sea have been equally ineffective, as can be seen by the continued rise in attacks through 2009. International

forces are simply not large enough to patrol such a large area. Absent a more robust, coordinated regional effort, success will be limited. Granted their presence is a deterrent, but as they have shown before, Somali pirates can quickly adapt to new situations. One can certainly see this in the ways the pirates themselves are branching further and further out, as well as their tactical shifts to support their continued success.

The most effective security measures have been those undertaken by international forces to support and cooperate with the various interest groups within Somalia itself, particularly the semiautonomous governments of Puntland and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), as well as with Yemen. These measures, consisting of support for increasing maritime capacity and greater cooperation between counter-piracy forces, address the concerns of many that the existing international patrols alone cannot prevent piracy and, that states in the region must take action to counter the violence. Somalia and Yemen, however, have an excuse for depending on external assistance. They both lack the internal and external stability necessary to facilitate both unilateral and cooperative maritime security efforts. This is an excuse that their Gulf neighbors do not have, and thus they must act in order to gain control of the volatile situation in the HOA/GOA.

## **V. The Middle East and Maritime Security Cooperation**

**Chapter Introduction:**

This chapter will provide a brief overview of the cooperative security situation internal to the Middle East region. Cooperative security that is bringing the nations in the region together to work to improve their security situation is the only way that the problem of piracy will truly be solved. The international community, even working together, is not going to be completely capable of solving the problem of piracy. This chapter will also address the issues of maritime capacity and discuss the numerous factors that are impacting security cooperation throughout the region. It will begin by discussing the maritime capacities of the various countries in the region focusing primarily on the states of the Persian Gulf, most specifically Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar. It will illustrate not only the relative capabilities, but also the general condition of their maritime forces. It will also discuss their primary roles, as well as their various platforms and capabilities that they bring to the table. To do this, it will also closely examine the training of these forces and the relative proficiency with which they execute the counter-piracy mission. The second section of this chapter will discuss the factors that affect cooperation in the region, such as internal stability, external friction, and the phenomenon of foreign dependence. The final section will examine how these factors have affected security cooperation in the region using the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as an example.

**Maritime Capacity in the Gulf:**

Maritime capacity in the region can be best described by dividing the Gulf states into two distinct groups: regional powers and small regional governments. Those in the first group, namely Iran and Saudi Arabia, possess large populations and enjoy steady streams of income from petroleum and natural gas exports, allowing them to maintain much

larger standing militaries than their smaller neighbors. Those in the second group are significantly smaller, enjoy varying levels of income from oil and gas, and depend more heavily on external protection. As can be expected, the regional powers are able to allocate more resources, financially and in terms of manpower, to building and maintaining their maritime forces (See Figure 4). Equally predictable is the inability of many of the smaller states to adequately man, equip and, train their own forces due to financial constraints or relatively low populations. Some of the smaller states, such as UAE and Oman, have built modern maritime forces but lack sufficient manpower resources from which to draw personnel, largely due to the size of their populations.

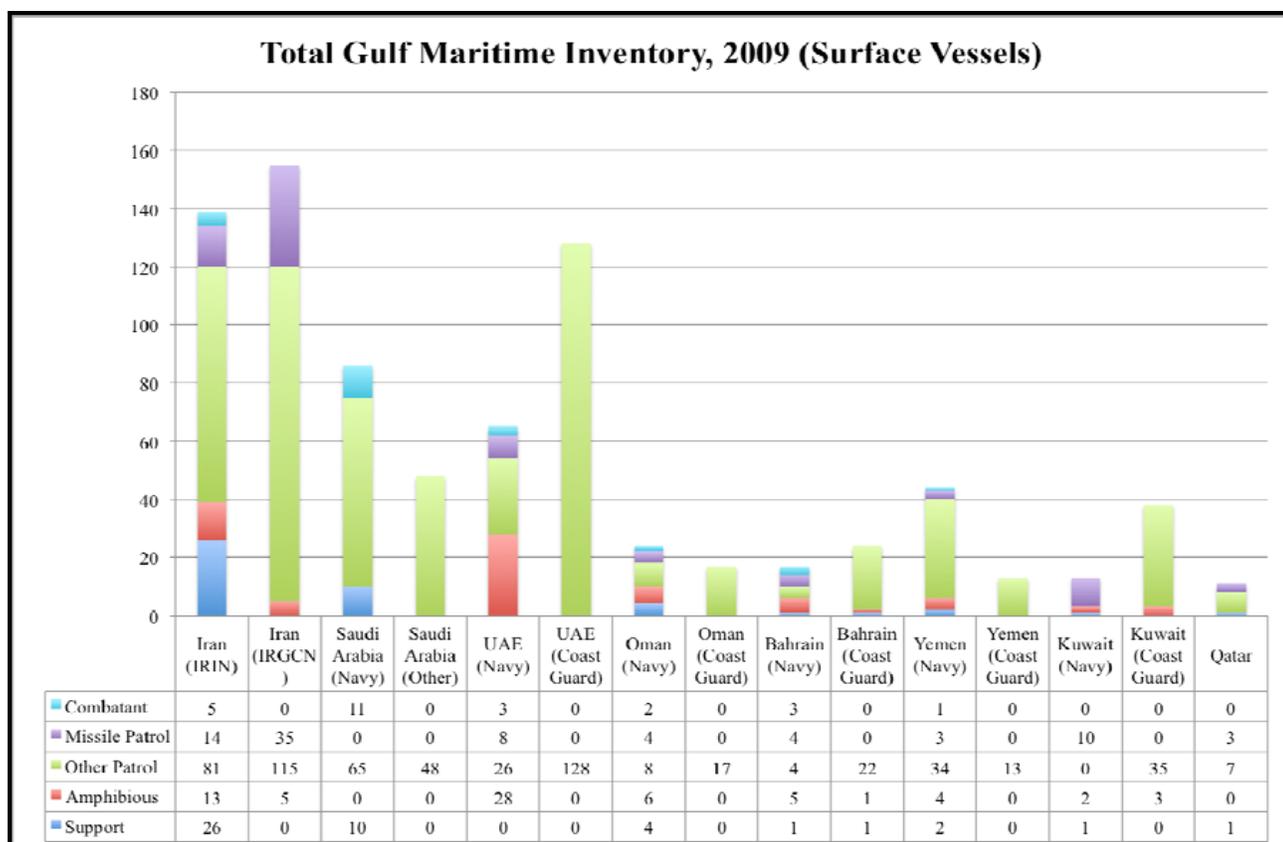


Figure 4: Gulf States Maritime Capacity (2009)<sup>196</sup>

Issues of priority also have a direct and significant impact on maritime capacity in the region. As will be discussed in more depth in the subsequent section, external security has often been superseded by the quest for internal stability when regimes consider allocation of finite resources. This has been further exacerbated by the tendency of states in the region to rely on external security assistance and assurances of such assistance for their external security needs. By allowing outside interests, primarily the United States and its allies in this case, to bear the burden of regional security, states in the region have been free to focus their attention and resources on building their internal security forces and bolstering internal mechanisms of control. The nature of maritime

<sup>196</sup> Figures were compiled from *Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessments* for each of the states as well as Anthony H Cordesman and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan's book, *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars*.

capacity in the Gulf, especially, is significantly affected by the choice to rely on protection from outside sources and instead focus their efforts on maintaining their internal power base. The following sections will provide further background on the capabilities and limitations of each state.

## 1. Regional Powers

### *a. Iran*

Iran depends on its maritime forces to protect the numerous vital interests of the state. For this reason, modernization of the Iranian Navy and its irregular “partner,” the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Naval Forces, has been a priority for the regime over the past few decades. This attention has allowed the service to enjoy a significant advantage over its counterparts in the region (See Figure 4). In fact, its maritime capacity has increased significantly over the past few decades, both in its capabilities and its platforms<sup>197</sup>. The Iranian Navy (IRIN) has roughly 18,000 personnel (including approximately 2,600 marines and 2,600 naval aviators), six large surface vessels (four frigates and two corvettes), and 150 coastal patrol craft of varying sizes. They also have 13 amphibious ships, and 26 logistic/supply ships. Many of these ships tend to be older and in are typically in poor repair, but they also have some incredibly high tech vessels that have been developed in recent years, such as the *Mowj* class frigate.<sup>198</sup> The IRIN also has a passable maritime patrol capability with approximately 11 fixed wing patrol aircraft, including three aging P-3 Orion's, and over 27 rotary wing aircraft of various

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<sup>197</sup> “Jane’s Sentinel Country Risk Assessment – Iran,” *Jane’s Information Group*, last updated June 2009.

<sup>198</sup> Mowj Class Corvette. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iran/mowj.htm>

models which are regularly assigned to monitoring the Straits of Hormuz.<sup>199</sup> In fact they also have recently developed unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technology that they are using to monitor their territorial waters as well as carry potential offensive power to sea.<sup>200</sup> Unlike the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Naval Forces (IRGCN), which will be further described later, the IRIN serves as Iran's "regular" naval force, under the direct control of the civilian government, with the primary mission of protecting the Iranian coast, especially its ports and the petroleum infrastructure, which is vital to the national economy.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Naval Forces (IRGCN) is an entirely separate maritime force from the regular navy. The primary mission of IRGCN is defense of the Iranian coast and its waters. It controls coastal defense batteries all along the coast, especially in the Strait of Hormuz (SOH), the only sea-lane into the Arabian Gulf. It also has an important irregular warfare function and trains to conduct guerrilla-type missions, such as covertly laying mines and attacking maritime traffic off the coast.<sup>201</sup> As its name indicates, the IRGCN is closely associated with the theocratic leadership of the Iranian government, serving as protector of the "revolution" within Iran. The IRGCN consists of 20,000 personnel, including approximately 5,000 marines. It has an extensive surface fleet, fielding over 140 coastal patrol craft of varying sizes and capabilities.<sup>202</sup> Other

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<sup>199</sup> IISS, "Chapter Five: The Middle East and North Africa," *The Military Balance 2010*, International Institute for Strategic Studies (London: Routledge, 2010), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/04597220903545841>

<sup>200</sup> Ian Black. "Iran unveils bomber drone that aims to deliver peace and friendship" August 22, 2010. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/aug/22/mahmoud-ahmadinejad-iran-bomber-drone>

<sup>201</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007)

<sup>202</sup> IISS, "Chapter Five: The Middle East and North Africa," *The Military Balance 2010*, International Institute for Strategic Studies (London: Routledge, 2010), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/04597220903545841>

maritime forces can be drawn from Iranian border and security forces numbering between 40,000 and 60,000 personnel, with approximately 130 small patrol craft.<sup>203</sup>

Operationally, Iranian maritime forces tend to remain within or at the very least near Iranian waters due to their limited expeditionary capabilities and the very nature of their defensive mission. The degree of training also factors in to this as it requires a great deal more training to be efficient and safe in operating outside of one's coastal waters. With the exception of submarine exercises conducted regularly in the deeper waters of the Gulf of Oman, Iranian maritime forces conduct regular deployments within the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman, staying relatively close to land for limited periods of time.<sup>204</sup> Recent exceptions to this tendency can be seen in Iranian efforts to contribute to counter-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden (GOA). In May 2009, two Iranian naval vessels were dispatched to conduct anti-piracy patrols and escort Iranian merchant vessels in the GOA. These patrols have continued through early 2010 and beyond. They have however, remained completely independent from any other forces operating in the GOA.<sup>205</sup> Additionally, Iranian forces have recently begun transiting the Suez Canal and operating in the Mediterranean Sea, despite numerous protests from countries such as Israel.<sup>206</sup> This marked the first time that Iranian vessels had transited this key waterway since the Iranian revolution in 1979. This event could mark a significant shift in the overall operational patterns of the Iranian navy.

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<sup>203</sup> <sup>203</sup> IISS, "Chapter Five: The Middle East and North Africa," *The Military Balance 2010*, International Institute for Strategic Studies (London: Routledge, 2010), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/04597220903545841>

<sup>204</sup> Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment – Iran

<sup>205</sup> *Press TV*, "Iran deploys warships to the Somali waters," *Press TV*, May 14, 2009, <http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=94718&sectionid=351020101>

<sup>206</sup> "Iran warships sail via Suez Canal amid Israeli concern" *BBC News*. February 22, 2011.

**b. Saudi Arabia:**

Saudi Arabia occupies a strategic position between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, which allows it unique control of the approaches to each of the region's three vital waterways: the Suez Canal, the Straits of Bab-al-Mandeb, and the Strait of Hormuz. Also, as the predominant military force on the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi Arabia provides a strong counterpoint to the Islamic Republic of Iran, in effect shielding the smaller Gulf nations from Iran's influence and any potential aggression.<sup>207</sup> Its navy is the second largest in the region, behind Iran, with approximately 15,500 personnel and 44 surface vessels.<sup>208</sup> Its surface fleet consists of 11 large surface combatants, approximately 65 coastal patrol craft, and five support vessels.<sup>209</sup> The Saudi Navy has a substantial naval rotary wing force of approximately 44 attack and support helicopters but lacks a fixed wing maritime patrol force, one which they are working to establish. In fact recent publications indicate that the Saudi Navy may be interested in the newly designed Boeing P-8 maritime patrol aircraft.<sup>210</sup> The Saudi Navy's primary roles are protection of the Saudi coast and maintenance of free navigation through the SOH, the latter role putting it into direct opposition with Iran.<sup>211</sup>

The Saudi Navy has a relatively modernized force, having made great strides over the last decade in procuring new platforms and equipment. Its three newest surface combatants, *Al-Riyadh* class frigates, are highly modified French *Lafayette* warships, a

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<sup>207</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007)

<sup>208</sup> Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment – Saudi Arabia," *Jane's Information Group*, last updated December 2008.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid

<sup>210</sup> Ulf Laessing. "Analysis: Saudi deal could be first of more Gulf U.S. arms pacts" Reuters. September 15, 2010

<sup>211</sup> Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment – Saudi Arabia," *Jane's Information Group*, last updated December 2008.

very sophisticated and effective design. However, these efforts at increasing its effectiveness have been hampered by poor training and readiness, something that the Saudis are working hard to overcome.<sup>212</sup> Although considered to be “blue-water capable” by some, the Saudi navy has not shown a desire to utilize its forces in a “power projection” role. It does operate as a “two-sea force” with forces operating independently in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.<sup>213</sup> Part of this might be attributed to development of the Saudis themselves, being more concerned with what is going on in their own waters and less concerned about playing on the international stage. It also might be simply a pragmatic way of helping to ensure their own national survival by providing for their own defense rather than focusing on projecting that power elsewhere. This is particularly a possibility due to increased security concerns in the region. Clearly, the Saudi navy, specifically the Gulf “fleet,” has made significant progress in the past decade, according to some experts, although many of these experts point to the Red Sea “fleet” as a “work in progress.”<sup>214</sup>

Also of note is the maritime contingent of the Saudi Border Guard, which functions under the Ministry of the Interior. The Border Guard is comprised of approximately 30,000 men, although it is difficult to determine how many function in a maritime role. Its fleet includes over 60 patrol craft of various sizes and capabilities. The Border Guard principal mission is to protect key infrastructure along the coast, including

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<sup>212</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007)

<sup>213</sup> Jane’s Sentinel Country Risk Assessment – Saudi Arabia,” *Jane’s Information Group*, last updated December 2008.

<sup>214</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007)

plants, ports, and oil facilities.<sup>215</sup> It is through this protection that Saudi Arabia keeps its infrastructure safe and ensure their economic stability.

## 2. Small Regional Actors

### *a. United Arab Emirates*

Situated on the southeastern side of the Persian Gulf, the United Arab Emirates are naturally juxtaposed to Iran, both physically and politically. In fact, the UAE has longstanding disputes with Iran over key islands in the Strait of Hormuz (Abu Mousa, Lesser Tunb and Greater Tunb), which influence its relations with the country.<sup>216</sup> It also has close military ties with the United States and Great Britain and even offered assistance during the buildup to the Iraq war, despite the personal misgivings of some of the national leadership.<sup>217</sup>

The UAE Navy is a fairly small force but it is fairly modernized and quite well trained. Presently designed primarily for coastal defense, it consists of approximately 2,400 personnel, two frigates, two corvettes, eight fast patrol craft, 26 small patrol craft, 28 amphibious landing craft, and no dedicated logistic support vessels. Its aviation force consists of 14 maritime attack and four maritime surveillance helicopters.<sup>218</sup> These aviation assets provide the UAE with a much greater over the horizon capability than many of its peers, which gives it distinct advantages in the anti-piracy mission.

Additionally, the UAE has its Border and Coast Guard directorate as part of their armed forces and consists of approximately 10,000 personnel, although not all of these are

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid

<sup>216</sup> Dan Caldwell, "Flashpoints in the Gulf: Abu Musa and the Tunb Islands." *Middle East Policy*, March 1, 1996, v4

<sup>217</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007)

<sup>218</sup> "Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment – United Arab Emirates," *Jane's Information Group*, last updated June 2009

maritime related, as well as over 128 patrol craft of various sizes and capabilities. The primary role of the coast guard is to prevent smuggling, particularly drugs, as well as the massive amounts of human trafficking that plague these coasts.<sup>219</sup>

Despite historically being a largely coastal force, the UAE navy has recently begun to expand its role to include blue-water capability, envisioning its forces to be able to “conduct and sustain operations throughout the Gulf region, the Arabian Gulf, and as far as the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.”<sup>220</sup> The navy has begun to modernize and expand its fleet accordingly by increasing acquisition through foreign procurement and domestic shipbuilding.<sup>221</sup> This expansion has been hindered, however, by manpower shortages, a problem within the military as a whole. This resulting reliance on foreign expertise and manning reduces the overall effectiveness of an otherwise capable force.<sup>222</sup> Nevertheless, when considered as a whole, the UAE Navy is significantly more formidable than those of the smaller Gulf countries, but still smaller than those of Iran and Saudi Arabia.

#### **b. Bahrain**

Bahrain is a small, yet strategically located island country. It is situated on the western side of the Persian Gulf between some of the regions key offshore oilfields. As a result, Bahrain lacks the natural resources of its neighbors, such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and instead depends largely on regional trade and finance to drive its economy. Because of this, the primary function of the Bahraini maritime forces, both its navy and

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid

<sup>220</sup> Ibid

<sup>221</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007)

<sup>222</sup> Blanche Ed, “United Arab Emirates builds armed forces against a volatile backdrop,” *International Defence Review*, Jane’s Information Group (February 1, 2005)

coast guard, is defense of the sea-lines of communication and protection of the country's maritime boundaries against piracy, illegal smuggling, and illegal fishing<sup>223</sup>.

The Royal Bahraini Navy is small compared to those of Saudi Arabia and Iran, but closely matches the forces of its regional peers (see Figure 4). As of June 2009, it consisted of approximately 1,000 sailors, three surface combatants (one frigate and two corvettes), eight fast patrol craft, five amphibious ships and one support vessel.<sup>224</sup> Most of these vessels have been purchased from other nations, such as the RBNS Sabha, the former USS JACK WILLIAMS (FFG 24), that was transferred to the Kingdom of Bahrain in 1996. Unlike many of its neighbors, the Bahraini naval fleet is in good material condition and considered "fully combat capable."<sup>225</sup> Although quite small, the Bahraini fleet is efficient, relatively well trained and equipped, though it remains dependent on foreign expertise to maintain its more modern systems. This is easily accomplished however since the Bahraini port facility is the same as the United States Navy uses in Manama, Bahrain. According to Jane's Sentinel, the Bahraini Navy has made recent efforts to address this shortcoming by increasing the technical expertise of its personnel.<sup>226</sup>

Operationally, the Bahraini Navy is no match for larger naval forces in the region; however, according to many experts, it should be able to defend Bahrain's port until the arrival of foreign assistance.<sup>227</sup> This is made far easier since as many countries

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<sup>223</sup> Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment – Bahrain," *Jane's Information Group*, last updated June 2009

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>225</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International,2007)

<sup>226</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International,2007)

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid*

use the same port facility, in Manama itself, such as the United States, Britain and Denmark. Understandably, Bahrain has not contributed to international maritime operations, such as recent counter-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden, but has increasingly been a part of cooperative patrols within the region. In 2008, for example, a Bahraini admiral commanded Combined Task Force 152 (CTF-152); a U.S. Navy Central Command-initiated task force that coordinates cooperative exercises and patrols in the Persian Gulf.<sup>228</sup> Due to its limited reach and capability however, Bahrain continues to depend heavily on foreign assistance for its own security.<sup>229</sup>

### ***c. Kuwait***

Surrounded by much its larger neighbors, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, Kuwait occupies a strategic location in the northern Gulf. It has a troubled history with its neighbors, most recently illustrated by the Gulf War invasion in 1991. Kuwait depends on its vast oil reserves, most of which are located on land, but also has a significant proportion located within Kuwaiti waters. The main role of the Kuwaiti Navy, therefore, is the protection of Kuwaiti interests at sea, to include protection of Kuwait's major ports and offshore oil facilities. It operates extensively with the U.S. and British forces, and in fact both states have used Kuwaiti ports quite regularly to supply their forces operating in Iraq.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> NAVCENT, "Bahrain Hands Command of CTF 152 to the UK," Navy.mil, June 5, 2008, [http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story\\_id=37642](http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=37642)

<sup>229</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007)

<sup>230</sup> "Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment – Kuwait," *Jane's Information Group*, last updated June 2009.

Like its Bahraini counterpart, the Kuwaiti Navy is very small, comprising only 2700 personnel, 500 of which are technically part of the Kuwaiti Coast Guard.<sup>231</sup> Its fleet is small and has significantly less advanced technology, consisting of eight large patrol craft, three amphibious craft, and two support vessels.<sup>232</sup> A force this size drastically hampers any ability to work in a counter-piracy arrangement. Additionally, the material condition of these vessels is questionable as well. The Kuwaiti navy suffered greatly during the Gulf War and has received very little support since.<sup>233</sup> The Kuwaiti Navy primarily serves as a coastal defense force that augments the Kuwaiti Coast Guard with border and customs support. Kuwaiti maritime forces patrol extensively in their own waters and have even participated in coordinated patrols protecting Iraq's oil transfer facilities, but they seldom operate outside of these areas.<sup>234</sup> As a result, Kuwait has not contributed significantly to any international maritime operation, such as those being conducted in the Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa. To do so would render the country unable to resist aggression from any of their larger neighbors and potential adversaries. Thus, Kuwaiti forces would require extensive assistance from international partners, such as the United States and Great Britain.<sup>235</sup>

**c. Oman:**

Oman's location on the eastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula provides it with the opportunity to strategically control the southern approaches to the Persian Gulf. Its coastline extends over 1,000 nautical miles from the Strait of Hormuz, through the Gulf

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid

<sup>232</sup> Ibid

<sup>233</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007)

<sup>234</sup> Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment – Kuwait," *Jane's Information Group*, last updated June 2009

<sup>235</sup> Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment – Kuwait," *Jane's Information Group*, last updated June 2009

of Oman, and into the Gulf of Aden. Oman shares control of the Strait of Hormuz with Iran, a position that naturally places it at odds with the Islamic Republic in many cases. In fact it is not uncommon for vessels transiting the Straits of Hormuz to be questioned by both the IRGCN and the Royal Navy of Oman several times during the transit. Its long coast and strategic location have ensured that the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) maintains a high priority for the Omani government.<sup>236</sup>

The RNO has approximately 4,200 personnel, two surface combatants, four large patrol craft, eight small patrol craft, six amphibious vessels, and four support vessels, many of which are quite technologically advanced. Relatively well trained and equipped, the Omani navy's role is protection of the Strait of Hormuz as well as to provide coastal defense capabilities. Their main adversary in this respect is Iran, who they have clashed with several times in recent history. However, due to the lack of mine warfare and anti-submarine platforms, it is not expected to fare very well in a direct conflict with Iran, as Iran's order of battle calls for a great deal of submarine and mine warfare. As a result, the RNO depends heavily on U.S. and British assistance.<sup>237</sup>

**d. Qatar:**

Qatar is strategically located in the center of the Persian Gulf, Qatar shares a border with Saudi Arabia and natural gas resources with Iran. The Qatari Navy is small and, like most of its counterparts, designed strictly for coastal defense. It is comprised of 1,800 personnel, four patrol ships, three missile patrol boats and more than 20 small

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<sup>236</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007)

<sup>237</sup> Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment – Kuwait," *Jane's Information Group*, last updated June 2009

patrol craft.<sup>238</sup> It depends heavily on security assistance from the United States and hosts a large U.S. headquarters on its soil, Al Udeid Air Base in Doha.<sup>239</sup> This airbase operates a number of fighters conducting missions around the Middle East, as well as P-3C maritime patrol aircraft that's principal mission is to patrol the Arabian Gulf.<sup>240</sup> These forces, while not having a direct role in the anti-piracy mission, play a pivotal in the security situation in the Arabian Gulf.

### **Key Factors Impacting Gulf Security Cooperation:**

As discussed in Chapter I, efforts at cooperative security are heavily influenced by internal and external factors. Such efforts in the Middle East in general, and the Gulf region in particular, are characterized by four factors: preoccupation with internal stability, unresolved animosity between the various Arab states, Arab fears regarding Iran, and reliance on foreign security assistance, particularly from nations such as the United States and Great Britain. The following sections will provide background on each to more fully explain the environment in which recent cooperative efforts have begun.

#### **1. Internal Stability versus External Security**

States in this region have a tendency to be extremely focused on their internal stability and security rather than the outward security situation, and their policies tend to support this dynamic.<sup>241</sup> The Gulf state governments tend to depend on varying levels of political and social control to ensure their positions of power. Such control is especially important to states in the region because their power is based on their ability to keep the

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<sup>238</sup> "Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment – Qatar," *Jane's Information Group*, last updated January 2009.

<sup>239</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007) p153.

<sup>240</sup> Al Udeid Airbase Global Security. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/udeid.htm>

<sup>241</sup> Anthony Cordesman. "Security Assistance and Internal Stability: The Emerging Challenge to USCENTCOM." Center for Strategic and International Studies. Washington DC. June 1997.

population satisfied. Although most of the states in question are nominally “democratic,” they depend on fundamentally autocratic methods of control. Legitimacy with their populations depends on their ability to balance public sentiment. Maintaining this balance has become increasingly difficult in the past few decades, primarily because of increasingly disruptive socio-economic and political trends. Dramatic population growth, stagnant economic markets in the region as well as increased exposure to the rest of the world, have helped create instability within the region and made such control difficult.<sup>242</sup>

The situation is complicated even more by political and cultural sentiments that are unique to the region. Economic and social globalization have led many in the region to question the legitimacy of governments unable to provide a higher standard of living for its people, other factors seem to hinder efforts to address these grievances. To many of the religious leaders in the region, and thereby large segments of the population, this liberalization is a corruptive force, seeking to deny people their cultural identity. Globalization, and the inherent liberalizing effects it entails, threatens the cultural and religious norms, producing a source of opposition to any associated measures. Thus, religious and societal leaders, alike, perceive globalization as a corruption of traditional life, while political leaders understand that economic success requires modernization. Therefore, political leaders in the region must consider the political effects of liberalization and balance accordingly. Too much freedom may threaten their position of power, allowing opposition to grow in strength and influence. Too little freedom could increase dissent and cause further stagnation in their economies. This too creates a

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<sup>242</sup> Maoz Zeev, “Regional Security in the Middle East: Past Trends, Present Realities, and Future Challenges,” in *Regional Security in the Middle East: Past Present, and Future*, ed. Zeev Maoz (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997), 26–31.

dichotomy for these leaders between providing for their people and ensuring that they themselves stay in power.<sup>243</sup>

Economics in the region are a drastic concern as well. For governments in the region to continue to provide this balance between liberalizing globalization and cultural identity takes a great deal of capital. There is a wide amount of variance in the capital generated amongst the countries in this region. Several countries have a significantly higher gross domestic product than their neighbors (see Figure 5). In the richer countries, the economy is largely based largely on the petroleum industry and its subsidiaries. Additionally, for many of these countries, particularly Yemen and Somalia, their industrial capacity is largely based on agriculture. Many of these states, however, are facing a degree of a crisis, in that the youth population is exploding and this is putting increased pressure on the governments to find ways to keep revenue high and deal with the ever rising populations.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Anthony Cordesman. "Security Assistance and Internal Stability: The Emerging Challenge to USCENTCOM." Center for Strategic and International Studies. Washington DC. June 1997.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid

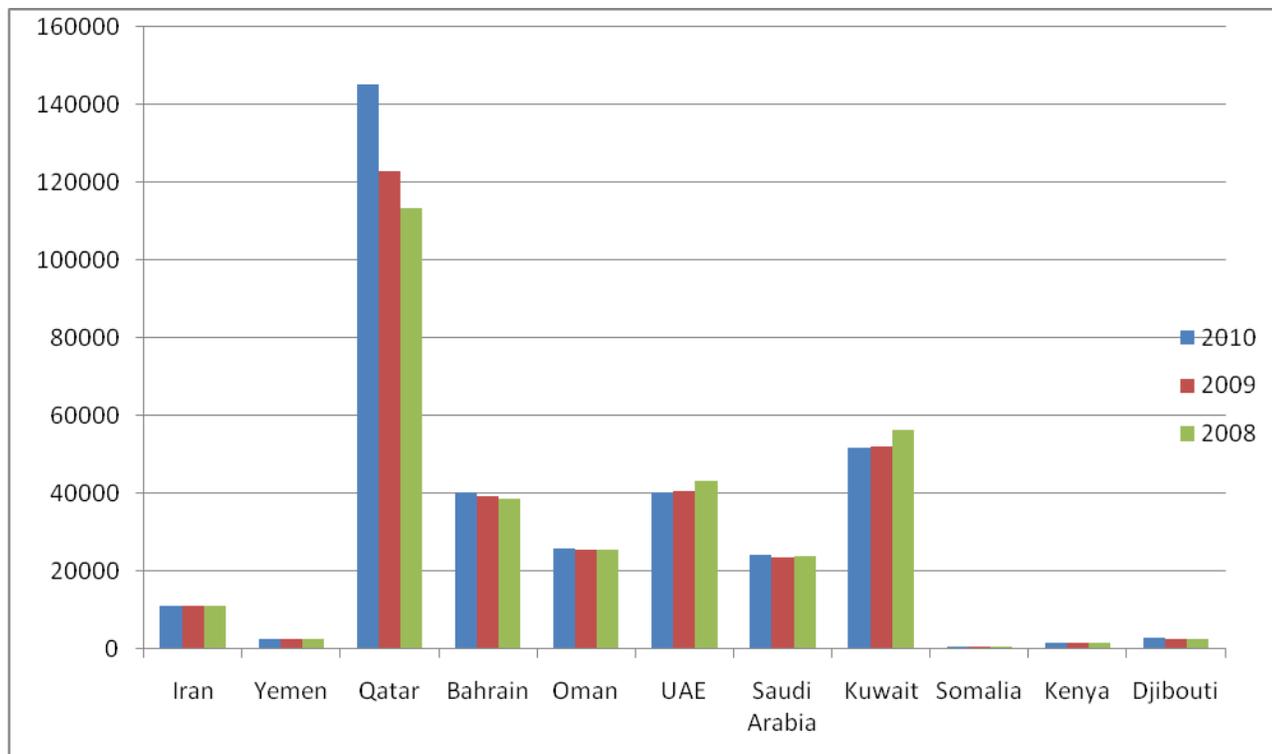


Figure 5: Gross Domestic Product by Year<sup>245</sup>

Regimes in the region seem to depend on two principal types of governmental control, which will be briefly discussed here as the “carrot” and the “stick.” The “carrot” refers to those measures designed to make the population loyal to the regime. In the Middle East, and the Gulf states especially, regimes depend on incentives to maintain power. The Gulf monarchies, namely Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman, depend mostly on familial or tribal connections for legitimacy, and work diligently to satisfy their supporters and population through patronage or rents. Patronage, in this case, consists of supplying supporters with employment in positions of power within the government or military to ensure their support. This system, commonly referred to as the rent or *rentier* system, implies using government revenue to provide its citizens with

<sup>245</sup> CIA World Fact Book. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>

income, social benefits, or both, typically through the sale of natural resources.<sup>246</sup> In the case of most of the Gulf states, this system helps to ensure that those who could most directly threaten their individual control are beholden to the regime and thus unable to resist.

When these methods fail to ensure support, as they sometimes fail to do, or even if they only partially do so, regimes must look to the “stick” to discourage or prevent all out dissent. The “stick” for most regimes is their internal security services. When dissent does occur, it is these forces that protect the various regimes. Accordingly, states in the region invest heavily in their internal security, reasoning, perhaps astutely, that external security is worthless if they are no longer in power. When the “carrot” fails to entice or maintain loyalty, then the “stick” enforces it by stifling or de-incentivizing any and all forms of dissent. Recent crackdowns in Bahrain and elsewhere in the region highlight this.

In their preoccupation with maintaining internal stability, attempting to balance both support and dissent naturally draws financial and manpower resources away from any external security effort. Additionally, it de-emphasizes the importance of regional cooperation. As these regimes look inward, they tend to discount any external assistance, perceiving it as a sign of weakness that could affect their internal stability and possibly impact their ability to stay in power. Reductions in oil prices will only exacerbate decisions for states in the region, as well. Similar drops in the price of oil affected

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<sup>246</sup> Marsha Pripstein Posusney and Michele Penner Angrist, eds. 2005. *Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Regimes and Resistance*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

spending in the previous century, and even though oil prices are rising again, they can fall due to economic slowdown or the increase in use of alternative fuels.<sup>247</sup>

## 2. The Issue of Neighbors:

Just like in many areas around the world, relations between neighboring states in the Gulf have been historically strained by near constant suspicion and animosity. Longstanding border disputes have been especially troubling in the Gulf, as most states have experienced conflict over the definition of mutually shared boundaries, ownership of strategic islands, and the rights to natural resources, upon which many of these regional economies are based.<sup>248</sup>

**Saudi Arabia** – The Saudi regime considers itself to be a significant regional power and has made major efforts to exert influence over the region. It views itself as the natural balancer to Iranian influence in the region and, therefore, often finds itself at odds with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Relations with its Arab neighbors in the Gulf have also been influenced by this tendency, as has been illustrated by its attempted dominance over most cooperative efforts in the region. Saudi Arabia has been especially dissatisfied with efforts by its smaller neighbors to seek external assistance, as such efforts tend to erode Riyadh's influence in the region.<sup>249</sup> It has also been critical of efforts between some of these same neighbors to cooperate on energy issues. Discussions between Qatar, UAE and Oman, on establishing a combined natural gas infrastructure, are perceived by Saudi

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<sup>247</sup> Karawan, "The Erosion of Consensus: Perceptions of GCC States of a Changing Region," in *Security in the Persian Gulf: Origins, Obstacles, and the Search for Consensus*, ed. Lawrence G Potter et al. (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp 91–92.

<sup>248</sup> Saideh Lotfian. "A Regional Security System in the Persian Gulf," in *Practical Peacemaking in the Middle East, Volume I: Arms Control and Regional Security*, eds. Steven L. Spiegel et al. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), p 111

<sup>249</sup> Anthony Cordesman. "Security Assistance and Internal Stability: The Emerging Challenge to USCENTCOM." Center for Strategic and International Studies. Washington DC. June 1997. p 312

Arabia as a threat to its influence in the region. Plans for the sub-regional grid include a proposed pipeline that would allow the smaller states to bypass the Strait of Hormuz, thus lessening the influence of Iran and Saudi Arabia on energy trade throughout the region.<sup>250</sup> This is naturally problematic for many of the governments of the region. These policies have further soured relations over border disputes with neighboring UAE.<sup>251</sup> Relations between Saudi Arabia and Yemen continue to be tense as well, as they are regularly facing off on the issue of terrorists, drugs and, weapons, all flowing nearly freely from Yemen to Saudi Arabia.<sup>252</sup>

**Bahrain** – Bahrain has relatively good relations with its neighboring Gulf countries. Its most recent dispute was with Qatar over the Hawar Islands, a small island chain off the coast of Qatar, but this was settled in international court in early 2001, granting the islands to the Kingdom of Bahrain.<sup>253</sup> Currently, most concerning to Bahrain, and indeed much of the region, are its relations with Iran.

**United Arab Emirates** – The UAE has few standing issues with most of its neighboring Arab countries. A border dispute with Oman was apparently resolved in a 2003 agreement between the two countries.<sup>254</sup> Along with the disputes with Saudi Arabia mentioned above, UAE has continuing disputes with Qatar and Iran over islands in the Gulf, particularly the Tunb islands mentioned previously.

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<sup>250</sup> Kate Dourian. "Qatar, Saudi Arabia relations pivotal to new gas pipeline plan," *Platts Oilgram News* 87:164 (August 21, 2009).

<sup>251</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007 p 273.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid* p 244

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid* pp 81-82

<sup>254</sup> Saideh Lotfian, "A Regional Security System in the Persian Gulf," 120; S. Manoj, "Oman, Emirates ratify border agreement," *Al Jazeera* (October 12, 2003), <http://www.aljazeera.info/News%20archives/2003%20News%20archives/October/12%20n/Oman,%20UAE%20Ratify%20Border%20Pact.htm>

**Kuwait** – Kuwait has recently begun to normalize relations with Iraq, but it is difficult to imagine significant trust forming between the two anytime soon. Kuwait has fairly normal relations with Saudi Arabia, but the two countries still share a neutral zone established after World War II as a result of Saudi aspirations to invade the Kuwaiti kingdom, eyeing their natural resources as a way of expanding the Saudi economy. Oil and gas fields shared with Saudi Arabia and Iran continue to provide additional sources of possible conflict well into the future.<sup>255</sup>

**Oman** – Oman has no major border disputes at the current time, but it does have a history with both Saudi Arabia and the UAE, as discussed in a previous section. Currently relations with Yemen as well are smooth and fairly normalized, but there is a significant history of issues. Namely, from the early 1960's to the 1970's, the former state of South Yemen served as a base of operations for insurgents operating in Oman against the Sultan.<sup>256</sup> This support would continue until late 1979 when the insurgency was finally put down. This has caused some degree of tension between the two countries, particularly amongst the older population who still hold some animosity against Yemen.

**Qatar** – Besides the disputes mentioned previously, relations between Qatar and Saudi Arabia have recently soured. The Saudi regime is often quite critical of the Qatari news channel, Al Jazeera, which they claim purposefully portrays the Saudi regime unfavorably and runs the risk of popularizing that opinion.<sup>257</sup> This has begun to

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<sup>255</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007 pp 87-88

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid* pp 513-515

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid* p 312

change however as the potential threat of Iran serves as a unifying force amongst Sunni nations and Al Jazeera can now ill afford to alienate the power of Saudi Arabia.<sup>258</sup>

**Yemen** – Throughout its history, Yemen has fought minor border wars with Oman and Saudi Arabia. As described earlier, the former South Yemen supported insurgents within Oman during the 1960s and 70s. Saudi Arabia still views Yemen as a significant security risk due to the flow of weapons, drugs, and violent extremists from Yemen into the southern regions of the Saudi kingdom.<sup>259</sup> Civil unrest within Yemen in 2009 renewed this animosity and prompted Saudi Arabia to deploy both land and naval forces to the border in an effort to maintain internal security and not allow the unrest to spread.<sup>260</sup>

### **3. Iran and the Arabs:**

Iran is convinced it should be a power in the region and is working diligently to reach this goal. It seems to particularly resent foreign intervention and the presence of foreign military forces in the Gulf, blaming them for helping to perpetuate complete dependence on the West rather than regional independence.<sup>261</sup> Many of the Gulf states, in turn, feel threatened by Iranian aspirations and depend on U.S. and British assistance to help offset this perceived threat. Iran's neighbors are especially worried about continued Iranian military development and its support of Islamic extremists in the

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<sup>258</sup> Robert Worth. "Al Jazeera No Longer Nips at Saudis." *New York Times*, January 4, 2008.

<sup>259</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007) pp 513-515

<sup>260</sup> *Al Jazeera*, "Saudis 'to keep up Houthi campaign,'" *Al Jazeera.net* (November 10, 2009), <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2009/11/20091110141322184400.html>

<sup>261</sup> Abdullah Alshayji. "Mutual Realities, Perceptions and Impediments between the GCC States and Iran," in *Security in the Persian Gulf: Origins, Obstacles, and the Search for Consensus*, eds. Lawrence G. Potter et al. (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp 224–225

region.<sup>262</sup> Furthermore, many of the Gulf countries seem to feel threatened by Iran's pursuit of nuclear power and the chance that Iran at some point in the future may transition that capability to nuclear weapons, which would forever alter the balance of power in the region.<sup>263</sup> Overall it seems that this is a major sticking point for much of the Gulf states, who are very concerned about maintaining the current balance of power and promoting stability in the region<sup>264</sup>.

***Iran and Saudi Arabia*** – Relations between the countries with the two largest militaries in the region are relatively good, especially when one considers the animosity that existed between them throughout the 1980s.<sup>265</sup> During the Iran-Iraq war that lasted throughout the '80s there was a great deal of tension between the two governments as the Saudis supported the Iraqis and even gave them significant financial assistance.<sup>266</sup> Clearly, much like its smaller neighbors, Saudi Arabia tends to be quite suspicious of Iranian motives in the region. Particularly disconcerting to the Saudi government is Iran's continued development of ballistic missiles and nuclear technology.<sup>267</sup> Consequently, Saudi Arabia's military was primarily developed as a direct counter to Iranian capabilities and its attempts at leadership tend to focus on Iran as the greatest threat to security in the region. Saudi Arabia's leadership within the Gulf Cooperative Council, an organization

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<sup>262</sup> , Jamal Al-Suwaidi. "Regional Security Challenges: A GCC Perspective," in *Oil and Water*, pp 96–99.

<sup>263</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007) p 12

<sup>264</sup> Abdullah Alshayji. "Mutual Realities, Perceptions and Impediments between the GCC States and Iran," in *Security in the Persian Gulf: Origins, Obstacles, and the Search for Consensus*, eds. Lawrence G. Potter et al. (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp 229–230

<sup>265</sup> Ibid p 230.

<sup>266</sup> Wayne H Bowen. "The History of Saudi Arabia", Greenwood Press, Westport, 2008, p.120.

<sup>267</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007) pp269-270

established largely as an indirect counter to Iranian economic and political aspirations in the Gulf, seems to best illustrate this.<sup>268</sup>

Most recently, the two states have traded accusations regarding political unrest in Yemen. Iran has repeatedly accused Saudi Arabia of sponsoring “state terrorism” for its numerous forays into Yemeni territory. While Saudi Arabia and even Yemen claims the Iranian regime supports Houthi rebels that have made the Saudi border with Yemen a hotly contested area, it is a claim that both the rebels and Iran vehemently deny.<sup>269</sup> These Houthi rebels are an insurgency seeking to implement Islamic law throughout Yemen, and are thus creating a great deal of instability throughout much of Yemen and southern Saudi Arabia.<sup>270</sup>

***Iran and the UAE*** – Disputes over three key islands in the southern Persian Gulf continue to sour relations between Iran and the UAE.<sup>271</sup> Abu Musa, and the Greater and Lesser Tunb islands are strategically located on the western entrance to the Strait of Hormuz, making them of strategic importance to anyone looking to control the vital waterway. Iran seized these islands in 1971, claiming them as part of Iran. Iran considers the matter closed entirely, pointing to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreed upon by the two states in 1971.<sup>272</sup> Conversely, the UAE still tacitly disputes ownership,

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<sup>268</sup> Karawan, “The Erosion of Consensus: Perceptions of GCC States of a Changing Region,” in *Security in the Persian Gulf: Origins, Obstacles, and the Search for Consensus*, ed. Lawrence G Potter et al. (New York: Palgrave, 2002) pp 102–103

<sup>269</sup> Ian Black “Middle East’s regional and sectarian rivalries escalate Yemen conflict,” *Guardian* (United Kingdom), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/nov/23/yemen-conflict-saudi-arabia-iran>

<sup>270</sup> “Pity those caught in the middle”. *The Economist*. 19 November 2009. [http://www.economist.com/node/14920092?story\\_id=14920092](http://www.economist.com/node/14920092?story_id=14920092)

<sup>271</sup> Saideh Lotfian. “A Regional Security System in the Persian Gulf.” In *Security in the Persian Gulf: Origins, Obstacles, and the Search for Consensus*. eds. Lawrence G Potter and Gary G. Sick. (New York: Palgrave, 2002) pp 117-119.

<sup>272</sup> Jalil Roshandel., “On the Persian Gulf Islands: An Iranian Perspective,” in *Security in the Persian*

arguing that the Iranian interpretations of the MOU and their claims to the islands are incorrect.<sup>273</sup> These islands will continue to play a major role in the region for years to come, as the geographic location of these islands seems to dictate that whoever controls these key islands will control the access to the Straits of Hormuz and thus the Arabian Gulf as a whole. Several times throughout recent decades, the UAE has attempted to bring this issue to international court, only to be denied by Iran.<sup>274</sup> It seems that even in the international arena the old adage is true: possession truly is 9/10 of the law.

***Iran and Bahrain*** – Throughout much of its recent history, Iran has laid claim to Bahrain, largely due to its status at one point in its history of being part of the Persian Empire.<sup>275</sup> Although these territorial claims on Bahrain made by the Islamic Republic appear to have faded with time, mistrust between the two nations still exists. The Bahraini regime claims that Iran has provided support to Shiite dissidents within Bahrain, a claim that Iran vehemently denies. This is an understandably sensitive issue for the Sunni regime, considering that native Shiite Muslims comprise approximately 75–80 percent of the total indigenous population.<sup>276</sup>

***Qatar and Oman*** – Iran's relations with Qatar and Oman are markedly better than what exists with the rest of the Gulf states. Both Qatar and Oman have made efforts to improve relations between the GCC and the Islamic Republic, calling for its inclusion

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*Gulf: Origins, Obstacles, and the Search for Consensus*, eds. Lawrence G. Potter et al. (New York: Palgrave, 2002), p 141.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid* pp 155-170

<sup>274</sup> Richard Schofield. *Borders and territoriality in the Gulf and the Arabian peninsula during the twentieth century*. In: Schofield (ed.) *Territorial foundations of the Gulf states*. London: UCL Press, 1994. pp 1-77.

<sup>275</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007. p 61

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid* p 82

in regional security discussions.<sup>277</sup> Additionally, Qatar and Iran share offshore natural gas fields and Qatar's relations with Iran are considered by many to be closer than with its GCC partners.<sup>278</sup>

#### **4. The Role of External Assistance:**

Foreign assistance is a significant factor in the Gulf region. The United Kingdom and United States consider security in the region to be a significant part of their own national security. As a result, both states have dedicated substantial resources to maintaining stability there. Most of these efforts were led by the British who had controlled key territory and exerted influence over most of the regimes in the region from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century until 1971. Everything from Bahrain to Yemen and Qatar were predominantly controlled by the British Empire.<sup>279</sup> When British power began to wane in the post World War II world, American power began to rise and supplant it, creating a shift in the hegemonic power of the Middle East. Since then, the United States has intervened in conflicts between Iran and Iraq during the war in the 1980s and 90s, between Iraq and Kuwait in 1991, and removed the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein in 2003. This does not include the countless aid that the US government has provided in helping various development projects throughout the Gulf states, and for military assistance

U.S. involvement in the region seems best defined by their relations with the more peaceful states in the region. The United States and Saudi Arabia, for example,

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<sup>277</sup> John Calabrese. "Iran-Oman relations: great leap forward?" *Jane's Islamic Affairs Analyst* (November 26, 2009)

<sup>278</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007. pp 155-156

<sup>279</sup> Peterson, "The Historical Pattern of Gulf Security," in *Security in the Persian Gulf: Origins, Obstacles, and the Search for Consensus*, eds. Lawrence G. Potter et al. (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp 12-23

have enjoyed close military relations, with U.S. military forces deployed regularly within the country, until as late as 2003, when those forces were transferred to Qatar's Al Udeid Air Base.<sup>280</sup> Other Gulf states host sizable amounts of American military forces, as well, including Bahrain (home of US Naval Forces Central Command), Kuwait, and Qatar (as mentioned previously with Al Udeid Air Base). Many of these Gulf Arab states depend very heavily on U.S. assurances of assistance for their security. This strict dependence arguably reduces the incentive for these states to pursue greater cooperation in the region.<sup>281</sup> It seems these countries have come to the conclusion that it is more beneficial to them to rely primarily on foreign assistance than to invest their own resources in security.

### **Cooperative Security in the Middle East:**

Each of these factors has had a significant effect on cooperative relations in the Middle East region in particular. Tenuous internal control by apprehensive regimes and existing animosity between neighbors, combined with a perceived overdependence on foreign assistance, has produced an environment that seems adverse to cooperation on almost every level. When cooperation has been attempted, it was largely how the arrangement addressed these factors that would determine the overall success of the endeavor.

The most significant and lasting of all such attempts has been the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Started in 1981, the GCC, although implicitly denying any

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<sup>280</sup> ,Oliver Burkerman. "America signals withdrawal of troops from Saudi Arabia" The Guardian 30 April 2003.

<sup>281</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007. pp 16-17.

alignment against the rising powers of the region, i.e. Iran and Iraq, was originally designed to counter the increasing influence and threat of the two states.<sup>282</sup> Heralded as a comprehensive effort at cooperation, the six GCC member states, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, UAE, and Qatar envisioned an organization able to:

- promote coordination, integration and inter-connection between Member States in all fields in order to achieve unity between them.
- deepen and strengthen relations, links and areas of cooperation now prevailing between their peoples in various fields.
- formulate similar regulations in various fields including the following:
  - economic and financial affairs
  - commerce, customs and communications; and
  - education and culture<sup>283</sup>

The GCC charter itself makes absolutely no mention of military nor security cooperation, and indeed any official discussion of security cooperation within the GCC did not begin until 1982. During this meeting, the GCC states advocated a collective approach to security whereupon “any attack on any Member State means an attack on all Member States.”<sup>284</sup> Despite these initial successes, the members were unable to agree on a framework for such cooperation, mostly due to the fears of some members that such measures would lead to interference in the internal affairs of the member states. This could easily be seen as a challenge to domestic power. A comprehensive security strategy was adopted by the GCC members in 1987, but it dealt primarily with trans-

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<sup>282</sup>Rouhollah Ramazani. *The Gulf Cooperation Council: Record and Analysis* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1988), p 6.

<sup>283</sup> GCC Web site, <http://www.gccsg.org/eng/index.php?action=Sec-Show&ID=1>

<sup>284</sup> GCC Web site, <http://www.gccsg.org/eng/index.php?action=Sec-Show&ID=1>

border issues, such as crime, smuggling, airport security, immigration, and border defense.<sup>285</sup>

Military cooperation within the GCC began shortly after the founding of the GCC itself. It was also during this time that formation of an autonomous Gulf security force was first considered.<sup>286</sup> This began with the formation of the GCC Rapid Deployment Force, which was first approved in 1982 and began joint exercises around the region shortly thereafter. A few years later, in 1984, it was decided that a standing force was becoming necessary and the Peninsula Shield Force (PSF) was established, which grew to 7000 personnel in 1985. The PSF itself proved to be notoriously ineffectual. PSF operations seemed to be inevitably plagued by issues of interoperability and maintaining force cohesion. Staffing had also been a significant issue. The PSF continuously maintained only a small standing force, depending on force contributions from GCC members during a crisis to fully field the force.<sup>287</sup> As of 2008 the PSF was further modified to be less of a standing force and more of a quick reaction force, one that would include strategic airlift along with naval power as well.<sup>288</sup>

Such operational issues seem almost minor compared to the overall ineffectiveness of GCC military and security cooperation. The relative inability of the GCC to act in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 most poignantly illustrates

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid

<sup>286</sup> Rouhollah Ramazani. *The Gulf Cooperation Council: Record and Analysis* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1988), pp 35-38

<sup>287</sup> Glenn P. Kuffel Jr., "The Gulf Cooperation Council's Peninsular Shield Force," unpublished research paper, Naval War College, Newport, RI (February 7, 2000), pp 3-16.

<sup>288</sup> Habib Toumi. "Bahrain MP calls for Peninsula Shield revival against Al Houthi" Gulf News. November 22 2009. <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/bahrain-mp-calls-for-peninsula-shield-revival-against-al-houthi-1.530876>

this.<sup>289</sup> Attempts at preventing the invasion proved ineffectual, as GCC representatives were largely excluded from negotiations between Iraq and Kuwait. The GCC states instead joined the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq, contributing forces to the overall effort but choosing to remain on the fringe politically.<sup>290</sup> Further attempts by the GCC, aimed at resolving conflict in the region, have been almost equally problematic. The International Court of Justice, for example, facilitated the resolution of a dispute between Bahrain and Qatar over Hawar Island in 2001 (as mentioned earlier), without the assistance of the GCC.<sup>291</sup> Similarly, a border dispute between Saudi Arabia and Qatar in 1992 was only resolved with the help of the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak.<sup>292</sup>

More recently, however, the GCC has been able to move forward on discussions concerning regional security cooperation. Along with the Arab counter-piracy task force proposed in mid 2009, the GCC began to discuss responses to other regional security threats. During a meeting held in December 2009, the GCC members agreed to establish a rapid reaction force to replace Peninsula Shield.<sup>293</sup> However, these recent measures appear to be similar to previous attempts at security cooperation and draw equal skepticism on their potential effectiveness.

Overall, the GCC has been hampered by most of the factors mentioned in the previous section. Regimes in the region are concerned with maintaining their tenuous hold on power and authority, thereby assuring internal stability takes precedence over

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<sup>289</sup> Glenn P. Kuffel Jr., "The Gulf Cooperation Council's Peninsular Shield Force," unpublished research paper, Naval War College, Newport, RI (February 7, 2000), p 16

<sup>290</sup> Frauke Heard-Bey. "Conflict resolution and regional co-operation: The role of the Gulf Cooperation Council 1970–2002," *Middle Eastern Studies* 42: 2 (July 2006), p 205.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid* pp 210 – 213

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid* pp 213- 214

<sup>293</sup> Lauren Gelfand. "Regional threats fuel Gulf plan for rapid-reaction force," *Jane's Defence Weekly* (December 17, 2009)

external security. Animosity and suspicion between GCC members has prevented extensive coordination within the organization. Such suspicion makes them unwilling to contribute forces to an organization that could easily be used against them. Finally, they seem to be unable or unwilling to justify allocating resources to any endeavor while they are receiving assurances and assistance from the United States and other foreign powers interested in the region.<sup>294</sup>

### **Chapter Summary:**

As one might expect, the two largest regional powers, Saudi Arabia and Iran, possess the largest and most capable maritime forces in the Gulf. However, the smaller states possess maritime forces that are smaller, less technologically advanced, and yet equally effective in accomplishing their stated missions. As in other regions, each nation must balance its resources with its desired capabilities and, thus, varying results can be seen. Beyond issues of interoperability and capabilities, however, maritime capacity in the region serves to better highlight the various political factors that seem to affect cooperation in this region.

Although the relative lack of maritime capacity in the Persian Gulf is concerning, when compared to Southeast Asia, it is the underlying political factors that more dramatically affect cooperation in the Gulf area. Regimes in the region are overly concerned with maintaining control over their population and depend on their internal security forces to do so. By focusing their attention and resources on maintaining internal stability, they are ignoring potential external threats. Cooperation is further hindered by

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<sup>294</sup> Rouhollah Ramazani. *The Gulf Cooperation Council: Record and Analysis* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1988), pp 35-38

the presence of conflict between states in the region. The Gulf Arab states that comprise the GCC are naturally suspicious of Iran. The smaller Gulf states are almost equally suspicious of the aspirations of Saudi Arabia and retain historical animosity between them.

Where the two regions seem to be the most different however, is in their reactions to foreign government intervention. The states of Southeast Asia, particularly those in the Straits of Malacca, have generally quite soundly rejected foreign assistance beyond financial aid and training support. The Gulf states, in contrast, have typically embraced any and all foreign support. Although often completely unofficial in nature, relationships between the states in the region and foreign governments, such as the United States and Great Britain, include basing foreign troops on their soil. Despite assuring regional security, their presence and the assurances that the United States and other foreign powers have given, provide further excuses for the Gulf states to neglect both their own capabilities as well as making a concerted efforts at security cooperation, and thus allow many of these problems to continue to exist, almost uninhibited.

## **VI. Conclusion**

This chapter will compare and contrast the nature of maritime security and security cooperation in the two regions in question, providing an answer to the initial

question posed in the introductory chapter. Specifically, is the Southeast Asian model of maritime security cooperation applicable to similar efforts being discussed in the Middle East and Horn of Africa by some of the Middle Eastern states? If so, what lessons can the strategic decision-makers and military leadership around the world that are concerned with the region derive from the cooperative security efforts in the Southeast Asian maritime domain?

In the introduction to this paper, it was postulated that maritime capacity and political willingness are perhaps the two most important factors impacting security cooperation between regional states. The presence of the former, as well as a conciliatory approach toward the latter, seems to naturally lead to more effective cooperative efforts. Therefore, recent cooperative efforts in Southeast Asia were presented as a “model” of regional maritime security cooperation that could be applied to similar efforts in the Persian Gulf and Horn of Africa. Of particular interest were cooperative counter-piracy efforts in the Straits of Malacca and their applicability to similar efforts in the Gulf of Aden (GOA).

This chapter will argue that the Southeast Asian “model” of maritime security cooperation, although informative and useful for similar cooperative efforts in the Middle East, merely highlights the inadequacies facing the Gulf states as they work to develop such relationships. Southeast Asia and the states of the Horn of Africa do not share similar characteristics related to maritime capacity and political willingness. Moreover, there are key differences in the politics and political cultures between the two regions that have already and may continue to hinder comparable success in the Horn of Africa. The main argument of this thesis is that political willingness is the primary hindrance to

cooperative security success in the region. The cumulative effect of prioritization of resources, regional animosity, and dependence on foreign security assistance has prevented and will continue to prevent efforts at security cooperation in the seas of the region. In this regard, the Southeast Asian model does not seem directly applicable to the Middle East and Horn of Africa, but serves to inform these observers of the absence of key factors present during the development of cooperative maritime security in the Straits of Malacca.

The first section of the chapter will discuss the overall importance of maritime capacity to overall operational success and security cooperation in the two regions. In this section, the overall state of maritime capacity in each region will be compared to explain how maritime capacity has affected each region and its attempts at cooperation. The second section will compare the level of political willingness for cooperation in each region. In this section, similarities and differences between factors related to the propensity of states, in each region, to seek the aid of its regional neighbors will be compared. The goal of this comparison is to attempt to identify key factors that have influenced cooperation in Southeast Asia that are applicable to similar efforts in the Middle East. The third section will summarize the comparison and provide an answer to the questions posed by this thesis. The chapter concludes with recommendations to encourage and facilitate more effective maritime security cooperation in the Middle East and between the states of the Persian Gulf in particular, as well as provide ideas for areas of further research regarding piracy and maritime security.

## **Does Maritime Capacity Influence Cooperation?**

In the introduction to this thesis, it was theorized that maritime capacity is a principal factor in a state's decision to cooperate in a regional setting. The decision to cooperate by states in Southeast Asia was given as an example of a group of states realizing they lacked the capacity required to successfully address these complex issues, particularly in the maritime domain. As the threat continued to grow many of the individual states in the region complain that they simply have too few ships to patrol their own waters and, in turn, are unable to prevent piracy and maritime crime even within their own waters. Similarly, in the opinion of several policy and maritime security experts, the Middle East has similar capacity issues that need to be addressed and, once resolved, should lead to greater cooperation between these states.

Maritime capacity has been a major issue for the governments of both regions since they became independent and established their own states. In Southeast Asia, maritime capacity has been most affected by financial issues. The dramatic rise of piracy coincided almost perfectly with the Southeast Asian economic crisis in the late 1990s and the resulting economic instability that plagued the region would significantly reduce financial resources available to apply to maritime forces. This adversely affected maritime capacity throughout the mid-2000s, when most states in the region began to dedicate resources to bolster their maritime capacity. This shift can be directly attributed to domestic and international pressure to address the rise of piracy in the Straits of Malacca, as discussed in Chapter III. Most responded by increasing acquisition of new vessels through domestic and foreign sources, as well as improving training for their naval forces, and expanding cooperation between neighboring states.

Conversely, maritime capacity in the Middle Eastern states has been seemingly most affected by issues of priority. Granted, a few of the states do indeed deal with financial constraints, but most possess ready sources of income from their oil and natural gas resources. With the exception of Bahrain and Yemen, states in the region are in a far better financial state than many of their Southeast Asian counterparts in terms of available financial resources. Therefore, the issue of maritime capacity in the region focuses more on the priority maritime forces receive rather than on their lack of funding. States in the region are overly concerned with maintaining internal stability. Thus, regimes in these states depend heavily upon internal security forces to maintain control and external security forces often serve to augment these forces.<sup>295</sup> An additional factor that aids in the decision of regimes to focus on internal stability versus external security is the protection of external governments, such as the United States. Many of the smaller states depend almost entirely on foreign security assistance and assurances. With the United States and others readily assuring regional security, these states are free to focus their resources on assuring their own internal stability.

Maritime forces in both regions are primarily designed for coastal defense. Governments have decided over a period of time that this is the best use of funds and best provide for their needs. As a result, few of the states have the traditional “blue water” navy, possessing vessels capable of operating far from land for extended periods of time, although recently some states have begun working toward developing that capability.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> Risa Brooks., “Civil Military Relations in the Middle East,” in *The Future Security Environment in the Middle East: Conflict, Stability, and Political Change*, eds. Nora Bensahel et al. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2004), pp 129–132

<sup>296</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International)

Even states that have large surface vessels rarely use them in that role. Iran, for example, has several classes of resupply ships, but rarely uses them in that regard, choosing instead to keep their closer to home and use supply ships as mine warfare platforms.<sup>297</sup> Many of the states have taken steps to address their individual inventory shortfalls. Procurement from foreign sources has increased dramatically, often combined with aid from external governments. Additionally, some states have worked to increase their inventory through domestic production.<sup>298</sup> This provides states with two much needed things: it provides them with the maritime capacity that they are in need of, but it also bolsters their internal industry, which will help to bolster their economy and provide more jobs, capital, and indeed improve the overall quality of life for citizens.

Training and the resulting proficiency remain a major issue in both regions. Although better trained than in the past, most Southeast Asian and Horn of Africa maritime forces still lack the requisite skill sets to effectively address maritime violence and piracy, particularly over long periods of time. Remaining at sea and conducting these complicated operations requires a great deal of proficiency and practice. In addition, few of the examined states possess the ability to operate outside of their own territorial waters.<sup>299</sup> Although lack of power projection capability is not pressing in the close waters of the Straits of Malacca, it should concern states in the Horn of Africa, considering recent discussions between several of the Gulf states concerning an Arab counter-piracy task force operating in the GOA. These countries have a much larger area with which to be concerned about in executing the anti-piracy mission. This lack of

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<sup>297</sup> "Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment – Iran," *Jane's Information Group*, last updated June 2009.

<sup>298</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International)

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid*

capability has been partially addressed in both regions through rapid increases in domestic training, external assistance, and increased participation in bilateral maritime exercises with neighbors and external actors. However, only Iran and Saudi Arabia can be considered “blue water” capable and the UAE and Oman the only other states to be actively pursuing the capability currently.<sup>300</sup>

Maritime force reorganization efforts have also had a significant impact on capacity in Southeast Asia particularly. Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia have all restructured their various maritime forces to improve cross-service capability and focus their efforts on deterring maritime violence and piracy in the region. These steps seem to have clearly improved the maritime capability of most states in the region quite dramatically. In the Horn of Africa, however, the Gulf states have yet to embark on these sorts of endeavors and are instead keeping their forces separate, with tenuous boundaries between operational capabilities. This too can be linked back to their reliance on external assistance. If one were to remove the assistance, then the countries of the Gulf region would be more likely to collaborate, even within their own borders.

Maritime security cooperation has also been a major contributor to force effectiveness in Southeast Asia. Unlike their counterparts in the Middle East, the Southeast Asian states have progressively looked to their neighbors to increase their overall effectiveness. The Malacca Straits Sea Patrol (MSSP) and ReCAAP have contributed significantly to overall maritime security in the region by streamlining information-sharing functions, deconflicting regional maritime operations, and

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<sup>300</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International)

combining maritime resources. The Malacca Straits Sea Patrols and its predecessors have allowed greater coordination between members, allowing for more effective utilization of their forces. Although not operationally significant, the ASEAN-led ReCAAP agreement has focused attention on maritime security in the region as a whole. It has provided a framework for communication and cooperation that has become a norm in the region, increasing coordination at the operational and tactical level. Overall, the combination of more vessels, improved capability, and increased coordination has allowed states in the Straits of Malacca to more effectively patrol their own waters, thus decreasing maritime crime in the region.

These types of relationships simply do not seem to exist in the Horn of Africa. The most significant cooperative organization in the region, the Gulf Cooperation Council, has been notoriously inept at military and security cooperation, owing largely to existing suspicion among member nations, as well as a the perceived lack of a unifying threat. Bilateral relationships do exist between states in the region, but they lack the extent of coordination and communication of Southeast Asian efforts. Recent discussions between the GCC states indicate that greater cooperation in the maritime domain is desired, however, most states in the region would be physically unable to contribute forces to a maritime force operating out of range of their own waters, at least for the time being.

Cooperation with external governments is one area where both regions differ quite dramatically. Although states in both regions actively cooperate and exercise with foreign navies, the precise natures of these relationships are decidedly different in each. In Southeast Asia, foreign intervention in security matters has long been viewed with

suspicion, and relations with external powers were noticeably distant. For example, most navies in the region conduct regular exercises with the United States and accept training and financial assistance from other nations. However, most attempts to closely cooperate or coordinate operations between them have been viewed with suspicion and often flatly refused. Culturally, this has become important as these countries have been conquered and colonized, and tend to be very afraid of intervention leading to domination. In the Persian Gulf, on the other hand, most of the states seem to rely heavily on foreign assistance and aid to ensure their external security. Most of the smaller states there have *de facto* security arrangements with the United States and Great Britain, even basing foreign forces on their own soil.<sup>301</sup> This near total dependence has had adverse affects on overall capacity, as states that do not have to worry about their external security are free to focus their national resources and attention on other issues.

Overall, the relative disparity of maritime capacity would indicate that the Gulf states should be eager to initiate cooperative maritime security arrangements. Only Iran and Saudi Arabia have forces that are comparable in size to many of the Southeast Asian states, as can be seen in Figure 6.

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<sup>301</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International) pp 14-18.

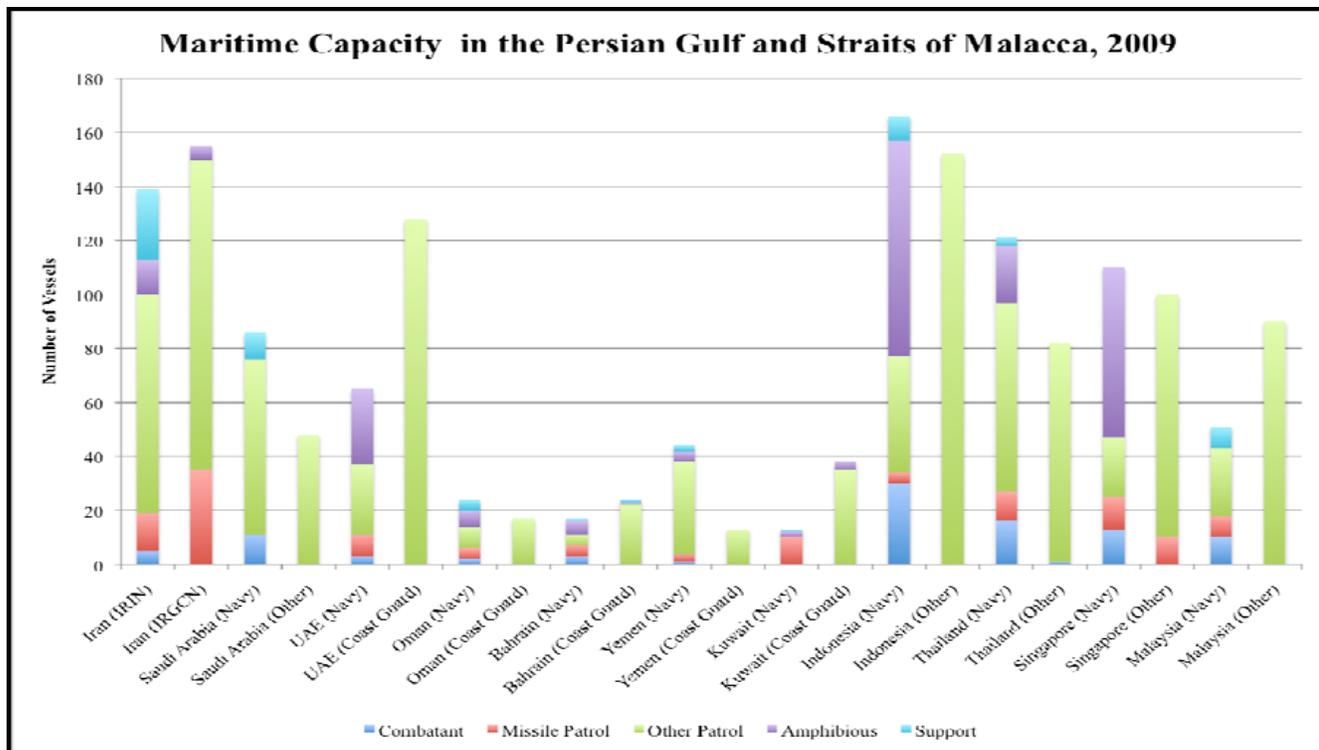


Figure 6 Comparison of the Persian Gulf and Straits of Malacca (2009)<sup>302</sup>

In fact, most of the states in the Gulf have maritime forces that are significantly smaller than those of even the least capable of the Southeast Asian states. Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand were more willing to cooperate on maritime security, yet they have larger and far more capable maritime forces than their Gulf counterparts. The Gulf states on the other hand have largely been unable or unwilling to organize a meaningful cooperative effort. Even the growing maritime force of Iran and the increasing potential instability of the Iranian regime have done little to encourage cooperation between them. This would seem to indicate that insufficient maritime capacity in the region may not provide sufficient motivation for cooperation, unlike

<sup>302</sup> NOTE: Figure 6 shows a comparison of the approximate number of maritime surface vessels including navy, coast guard, or other maritime service branch inventories of the states being compared  
SOURCE: Figures were compiled from *Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessments* for each of the states as well as Anthony H Cordesman and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan's book, *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars*.

Southeast Asia where maritime sufficient capacity is an accepted factor leading to cooperation. Therefore, there must be other factors that have prevented cooperation from becoming a priority for states in the region.

**Political Will and Regional Cooperative Security:**

Considering the seemingly relatively low importance of insufficient maritime capacity to states in the Horn of Africa, it is logical to conclude that some other factors must be hindering cooperation in the region. Therefore, willingness to seek greater cooperation on security matters in a region must depend more heavily on issues that are more political in nature. Development of regional security cooperation relies on the willingness of states to seek assistance from the whole region rather than on their own. These factors include internal stability, intra-regional relations, and the influence of foreign governments.

On the surface, Southeast Asia and the Horn of Africa region are strikingly similar with regard to most of these factors. Regimes in both regions rely heavily on their internal security forces, and in some instances their external security forces maintain internal stability and ensure that governments retain power. Likewise, most of the states in both regions face internal pressure from the social, economic and political effects of globalization and the destabilizing influence of violent and nonviolent religious extremism. These internal pressures draw attention away from external security, as a state that worries about losing power is naturally reluctant to expand its external commitments or shift financial and manpower resources.

Likewise, both regions have a significant history of conflict between neighboring countries. Although not typically extraordinarily violent in nature, states in both regions

often view their neighbors with immense suspicion and unease. Thus, standing border disputes become relatively commonplace and the agreed-upon borders are often guarded quite jealously, making any operation along them extremely sensitive. Therefore, it is easy to understand the hesitancy of states in both areas to coordinate across borders, even in instances of “hot pursuit” of any sort of criminal nature. Although relations between most of the states in both regions have cooled significantly in the past few decades, cooperation is still heavily influenced by this instinctual protectiveness. In Southeast Asia, the evolution of cooperation has transitioned through a logical sequence of bilateral then multilateral regional maritime cooperation agreement, as illustrated by the MSSP and ReCAAP. The Gulf states are similar in that most have existing bilateral and multilateral relationships between them, but differ in the level of observable cooperation on matters of maritime security. The closest example they have is the GCC military force, Peninsula Shield (PSF), but cooperation and clear coordination within the PSF appears tacit at best.

Perhaps most concerning to the potential development of cooperation in the Persian Gulf has been the role of external governmental assistance. External influence has ramifications on any regional effort at cooperation and the Gulf region provides a poignant example of this. Unlike the Southeast Asia states, the Gulf states are heavily dependent on foreign assistance and security assurances. U.S. protection is especially important to the smaller states, which fear the influence of Iran and Saudi Arabia, within the region, over cooperation. U.S. influence in the region is obvious, with U.S. forces still active in Iraq and occupying bases in Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar, U.S. naval forces patrolling the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Aden, and military advisors and trainers providing

less intrusive military assistance to Saudi, Yemeni, and Omani forces. Only Iran wholly rejects U.S. intervention in the region and refuses to discuss regional security cooperation with U.S. forces remaining in the region. Dependence on the United States and other external actors reduces the incentive for states in the region to cooperate between them. If they can depend on the United States to protect them externally, why should they be concerned with developing the capabilities of their own forces or fostering any real practical regional cooperation?

**Recommendations:**

The hypothesis discussed in the previous section suggests that continued foreign intervention is detrimental to long-term security in the region as it prevents the nations of the region from truly taking action. It leads one to consider that only the withdrawal of foreign forces would lead states in the region to fully understand the incentives of regional security cooperation by removing the primary point of contention and source of dependence. Logically, this would further suggest that if the United States wishes to encourage greater maritime security cooperation and coordination in the Gulf, it should significantly reduce its presence or completely withdraw from the region.

Obviously such steps would be particularly foolish in terms of their geopolitical impact, and will likely not happen, at least in the near term. Protection of vital U.S. strategic interests necessitates U.S. involvement in the region. The global economy depends significantly on Middle Eastern oil and gas. The threat of Islamic extremism continues to be a particular concern of the United States. A rise of unstable states in the region could provide havens for extremist groups to train and operate, a lesson learned from Afghanistan, providing significant risk to US interests around the globe. A stable

Middle East, therefore, is a cornerstone of U.S. policy, and stability in the region, however fleeting it may be, is presently the goal of the United States.

As a direct result of this, the United States expends a significant amount of effort to help ensure stability in the region. It has fought two recent wars, and continues to dedicate valuable military assets to protect the region, as well as provide substantial aid to states in the region. For example, in fiscal year 2009, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) requested approximately 1.9 billion US dollars for various development projects throughout the Middle East.<sup>303</sup> An abrupt cessation of all of these efforts could easily create a significant power vacuum that could be quickly filled by groups hostile to the United States and increase the potential for conflict in the region. This is something that has been seen throughout history and is something of pressing concern for policy makers. Therefore, continued U.S. assistance is required to maintain regional stability at the present time. However, the United States should work to reduce the impact that these current policies have on the phenomenon of dependence in the region. The following steps are strongly encouraged to aid in the overall reduction of dependence on the United States:

*Make capacity building a “joint” effort and enable it* — Tailor capacity building initiatives to encourage joint capability and encourage interoperability of forces. Such changes should stress the need for not only shared systems, but procedures, and allow for total multilateral coordination. Additionally, capacity building should focus on enabling regional forces to adequately address their own threats, both internal and external, versus

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<sup>303</sup> United States Agency for International Development. “Fiscal Year 2010 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations” <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2010/>

acquiring the newest, “shiniest” systems. It is highly unlikely for example that the naval forces of Yemen and Bahrain need a nuclear powered submarine force. To do this properly will require still require some degree of funding assistance, or perhaps even using American industrial capacity, but this will need to be tempered to ensure that political stability remains and mutual suspicions are reduced.

*Enable regional cooperation* — The United States must work to gradually foster increased regional cooperation by seeking to strengthen existing bilateral relationships between the various states in the region. This includes encouraging bilateral military exercises, assisting in the establishment of regional coordination centers designed to facilitate information sharing and coordination, as well as ensuring the existence of robust military liaison programs between the states. Due to sensitivities pertaining to U.S. intervention, such efforts must include as minimal of a U.S. presence as possible. Eventually, states in the region must be encouraged to strengthen military ties by improving the interoperability of their combined forces, streamlining information-sharing practices, and increasing coordination between all forces in the region.

*Gradually Reduce the U.S. “footprint” in the region* — Over time, the U.S. military presence in the region should be dramatically reduced. By enabling forces in the region to adequately address their own external threats and gradually strengthening bilateral and multilateral relationships, the United States can work to reduce its presence in the region while assuring relative stability in a critical region. Reduced U.S. presence also would effectively neutralize Iranian complaints of foreign meddling and could help normalize relations with the Islamic Republic, which could help further stabilize the region.

Ideally, by developing the maritime capacity of each state, not just in mere numbers, but in overall capability, both in technology and in training, it will also work toward increased interoperability. By enabling the development of vital cooperative traditions, the United States should be able to slowly distance itself from intervening in regional security affairs. Gradually deemphasizing the importance of U.S. intervention to those states that depend on such assistance should lessen the overall impact of such a withdrawal. Additionally, a reduction of foreign presence in the region should have a de-escalatory effect on Iranian rhetoric, that has been gaining intensity in recent years, as well as allow for greater dialogue between the Gulf states and their powerful northern neighbor. These countries will then in turn be able to deal with the security situation independently.

**Conclusion:**

Recent discussions between the GCC countries, regarding increased cooperation on regional maritime security issues, should elicit discussion within the academic and international policy circles. Literature on the subject of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Aden and West Indian Ocean has focused extensively on the application of what has become the Southeast Asian “model” of counter-piracy to the region. Beyond the operational and tactical aspects of this model, experts and policy makers should be concerned with the lessons inherent in the development of this model. To simply “cut and paste” the steps taken by the states in Southeast Asia, and attempt to apply them to similar efforts in the Middle East, is not sufficient. Culturally and politically, this sort of approach will not be feasible in the grand scheme of events. Nevertheless, such comparisons do provide an opportunity to compare the progression of events that led to

success in Southeast Asia. Discussion on how these events and the geo-political factors inherent in them led to the level of cooperation in the region is worthwhile and was the overall goal of this research.

Generally, it seems the geopolitical environment in both regions is similar. Both regions have histories of internal instability, particularly in response to the post colonial era, and regimes must work to seek balance between what maintains the loyalty of the population as well as assure continued control over the mechanisms of power in the state. Both regions possess histories of intra-regional conflict: violent and nonviolent conflict between neighboring countries, illustrated by border disputes, military invasions, or support of political oppositions within another state. The area where the two seem the most divergent is in relation to external influences from foreign governments. Although states in both regions inherently eschew foreign intervention as a whole, geopolitical realities have caused more vulnerable states to seek the aid of external powers. Unlike in Southeast Asia, where the states reject foreign assistance and meddling beyond traditional financial assistance, training, and bilateral exercises, the Gulf states have sought the protection of the United States and other world powers.

In some ways, this protection has taken on the characteristics of nearly complete dependence. Where the Southeast Asian states looked to each other for mutual protection, the Gulf states have continually sought assurances of regional security externally, creating an environment where regional cooperation is perceived as an unnecessary expenditure. This dependence has not only affected efforts at cooperation, it has affected the development of their armed forces, allowing states in the region to focus

on other issues at the cost of reducing their overall military capability and stalling efforts at increasing interoperability in their established “joint” forces, such as the PSF.<sup>304</sup>

Overall, the Southeast Asian “model” of maritime security cooperation is fairly informative for recent Gulf state discussions, but lacks the applicability that many experts seem to attribute to it. It mainly provides a counterpoint for comparison between the two in that the gradual development of a cooperative tradition as seen in Southeast Asia is unlikely in the Persian Gulf. The Southeast Asian states gradually developed a cooperative tradition free from external intervention. The success of maritime security cooperation in Southeast Asia can be seen as an evolutionary process progressing from one level to another, eventually leading to its present, multilateral form. By simultaneously addressing issues of capacity and political will at varying levels, states in the region were able to increase their maritime capabilities, as well as improve their technology. This led directly to increased levels of confidence building amongst the nations. Through trial and error, regional governments were able to gradually gain confidence in the intentions of their neighbors and developed boundaries regarding their relationships with extra-regional governments. Likewise, regional political sensitivities and reduced capacity required both regional and extra-regional governments to reconsider their efforts and decide upon new courses of action that worked for all involved.

In contrast, cooperative efforts in the Persian Gulf have been adversely affected by the choice of Gulf states to rely on external intervention and discount the need for cooperative regional security. After more than two decades, the GCC remains a “hollow

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<sup>304</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International)

shell” of what it could be with regards to security cooperation.<sup>305</sup> Its joint military and security endeavors have proven ineffectual despite several opportunities to exert influence. With the exception of Iran, who has initiated unilateral counter-piracy operations, Gulf state maritime forces are virtually absent from any of the counter-piracy efforts in the GOA. The European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the United States lead those efforts, highlighting the propensity of the Gulf states to depend on external protection. Regardless of the lack of urgency the piracy issue is to them, the Gulf states have once again allowed their external security to be “outsourced.” That is why recent announcements by the Gulf Arab states, that they were considering contributing to maritime security in the GOA, were viewed skeptically by this author and indeed provided some of the impetus for this thesis.

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<sup>305</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars: Volume One*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International) pp 11-14.

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