

Speech notes for Mr Simpson - seminar on impact of piracy and armed robbery on the human element, 3 March 2010.

Introduction

- Armed robbery against ships is as old as maritime navigation itself and – like commerce, transport, and political conditions – has evolved and developed over the centuries. Even today, the risk of pirate attack remains ever-present for shipping companies, crews, cargo owners, and marine insurers.
- There is a clear connection between mounting prosperity and increasing international trade in one part of the world and political instability, failure of states, wars, insurgencies and growing poverty in others.
- Every year, hundreds of ships are attacked and hostages taken, hundreds of sailors are injured, traumatised, or killed, and there are losses totalling billions of dollars and the danger of environmental disasters when oil tankers, for example, are captured.

Seafarers

- Underline the importance of the seafarers' profession: there are about 1.5 mio seafarers in the world who move about 90% of global trade.
- Therefore, it is vital to protect their right to exercise their trade in a safe and secure way, which is jeopardised by the criminal acts of piracy: significant number of seafarers, incl. yachtsmen and fishermen, are held captives by pirates, in particular in waters off Somalia and the Horn of Africa.
- It could be mentioned that if such a number of airplane passengers was to be held hostage, it would have provoked much higher coverage and stronger reactions among the public while the ordeal of the seafarers and their families seems to be sidelined;
- Tribute to be paid to all officers and crew who bravely fought against pirates attacks, who violently lived through the horror of captivity and resumed their lives after the release; to their families; to the ship-owners and ship managers, to the underwriters, flag states etc. - to all those who do their best to ensure the seafarers' welfare and preparedness to face the piracy attacks and to secure their release in case of captivity.
- The European Parliament in its resolution of 23 October 2008 recognizes that this criminal activity poses a risk to the lives of the crew and that it is an immediate threat to mariners, whose livelihood depends on the safe and lawful exercise of their trade and profession at sea
- The IMO has declared 2010 Year of the Seafarer. The risk for a seafarer to be held captive may reduce the attractiveness of the seafarers' profession.

- Protecting the seafarers have many aspects: preparation for the voyage (physical and psychological incl. relevant training), preparation of necessary procedures in case of piracy attacks and in case of captivity; in case of captivity, preparedness to act quickly to secure the safe release of the captives, curing the traumas and none should be neglected.

EU military contribution to the maritime safety

EUNAVFOR Somalia - Operation ATALANTA

- Since 8 December 2008 the European Union has been conducting its first ever naval military operation to help deter, prevent and repress acts of piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia.
- Its mission is to provide protection for vessels chartered by the World Food Program (WFP) and for merchant vessels. Its initial one year mandate was prolonged to December 2010.
- Each merchant vessel wishing to transit through the Gulf of Aden or off the coast of Somalia is advised to register in advance on the website of the Maritime Security Center-Horn of Africa (www.mschoa.eu), which was set up at the beginning of the operation to facilitate the coordination of maritime traffic. About 25 % of vessels, especially non-EU flag ones, sailing in the area are not registered.
- More than twenty military vessels and aircraft, i.e. more than **1 800 military personnel** are involved.
- The military personnel can arrest, detain and transfer persons who are suspected of having committed or who have committed acts of piracy or armed robbery.
- The suspects can be prosecuted by an EU Member State, by Kenya or by the Republic of Seychelles under relevant agreements that, among others, ensure that human rights of suspects are observed.
- The joint funding of the running costs amounted to **EUR 8, 3 millions** for the first year. This budget is shared between the EU Member States on the basis of their GDP. Costs for supplying the force are borne by the contributing countries, with each country continuing to bear the cost of the resources it provides (notably deployment costs, logistical support and pay).
- Several other naval forces also operate in the area. The EUNAVFOR operation is in permanent liaison with these forces (US-led coalition CTF-151, NATO, Russian, Indian, Japanese, Malaysian and Chinese vessels).

but

- Piracy can only be eliminated by addressing its root causes, such as poverty and state failure, on land. This issue was addressed for example in the **European Parliament resolution of 26 November 2009 on a political solution to the problem of piracy off the Somali coast.**

In this resolution EP especially **expresses** continued support to the Transitional Federal Government and to the African Union's military mission to Somalia (AMISOM) and **calls**:

- the international community, and the EU in particular, to increase its provision of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons and people in need;
 - the Council to set up a new operation to train Somali security forces;
 - for a strict application and monitoring of the arms embargo against Somalia imposed by the UN in 1992
 - the UN and the Commission to carry out a full investigation of toxic waste dumping and illegal fishing along the Somali coast;
 - Member States to ensure that all their boats are registered.
- The EU supports the Djibouti process for peace and reconciliation in Somalia, facilitated by the UN.
 - WFP vessels escorted by EUNAVFOR have delivered more than 300 500 tons of food thereby ensuring that more than **1 600 000 Somalis are fed each day.**
 - The Joint Strategy Paper for Somalia for 2008-2013 provides an allocation of **EUR 215, 8 million** under the EC's 10th European Development Fund (EDF). It covers three main sectors of cooperation: governance, education and rural development.
 - The EU supports the AMISOM financially in order to increase, in particular, the efficiency of the **Somali police force** and to combat any abuse and serious violation of human rights.
 - The EU Foreign Affairs Council agreed on 25 January 2010 to set up a military mission to contribute to **training of Somali security forces**. This mission would take place in Uganda where Somali forces are already being trained.