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<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> The political and humanitarian situation in Somalia is desolate and unfortunately, there are no short-term improvements for this sober perspective. The reaction of the international community is to take direct action against the maritime part of the problem, the maritime piracy. Small navies can play a significant role in establishing the regional solutions as stated in the Djibouti code. The Royal Netherlands Navy is a small, but high technical Navy with modern ships, submarines and helicopters. The Dutch political interest in supporting the maritime mission in the Horn of Africa is the economical dependence that is garnered from freedom of the sea. Since 2005, the Royal Netherlands Navy has not only actively participated, but been at the forefront of both the NATO and EU counter-piracy missions. Moreover, piracy in the Horn of Africa has further developed the geopolitical relations between global operating navies such as China and the United States. That being said, these smaller navies are ideally suited to play the role of intermediary for larger navies and can also help develop communications and unity of effort at the operational levels. The international cooperation that occurs during counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa is also a positive. Not only does this cooperation contribute to the long term effects on counter-piracy operations, but it also helps improve geopolitical relations and reduce tension between countries. Furthermore, both small and large navies alike can reap the benefits of increased relations. This is especially true when developing future joint global maritime security missions for these navies around the world.		
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Maritime counter-piracy operations around the Horn of Africa have accelerated the development of geopolitical relations. The United States of America, China, Russian Federation, India, South Korea, and some European countries have sent their navies to the Horn of Africa. At the same time other multilateral organizations such as the European Union (EU) and		

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NATO developed the initiative known as the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). Although, the United States will keep the capability to conduct the full range of maritime operations independently, it cannot operate in an isolated or unilateral manner and expect to be successful in the current geopolitical environment. Coalition partners are necessary in order to gain international support and conduct long term operations in a cost effective manner. The counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa region are an example and will be conducted by a coalition of multiple small navies.

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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FOR SMALL NAVIES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
IN COUNTER-PIRACY OPERATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA?

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
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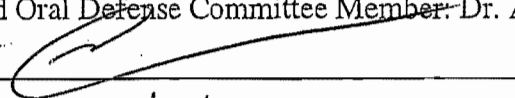
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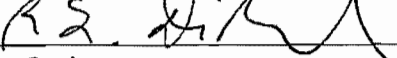
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## **Executive Summary**

**Title:** What are the challenges for small navies to make a difference in counter-piracy operation in the Horn of Africa?

**Author:** Major Theo Mestrini Royal Netherlands Marine Corps

**Thesis:** Maritime counter-piracy operations around the Horn of Africa have accelerated the development of geopolitical relations. The United States of America, China, Russian Federation, India, South Korea, and some European countries have sent their navies to the Horn of Africa. At the same time other multilateral organizations such as the European Union (EU) and NATO developed the initiative known as the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). Although, the United States will keep the capability to conduct the full range of maritime operations independently, it cannot operate in an isolated or unilateral manner and expect to be successful in the current geopolitical environment. Coalition partners are necessary in order to gain international support and conduct long term operations in a cost effective manner. The counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa region are an example and will be conducted by a coalition of multiple small navies.

**Discussion:** The political and humanitarian situation in Somalia is desolate and unfortunately, there are no short-term improvements for this sober perspective. The reaction of the international community is to take direct action against the maritime part of the problem, the maritime piracy. Small navies can play a significant role in establishing the regional solutions as stated in the Djibouti code. The Royal Netherlands Navy is a small, but high technical Navy with modern ships, submarines and helicopters. The Dutch political interest in supporting the maritime mission in the Horn of Africa is the economical dependence that is garnered from freedom of the sea. Since 2005, the Royal Netherlands Navy has not only actively participated, but been at the forefront of both the NATO and EU counter-piracy missions. Moreover, piracy in the Horn of Africa has further developed the geopolitical relations between global operating navies such as China and the United States. That being said, these smaller navies are ideally suited to play the role of intermediary for larger navies and can also help develop communications and unity of effort at the operational levels. The international cooperation that occurs during counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa is also a positive. Not only does this cooperation contribute to the long term effects on counter-piracy operations, but it also helps improve geopolitical relations and reduce tension between countries. Furthermore, both small and large navies alike can reap the benefits of increased relations. This is especially true when developing future joint global maritime security missions for these navies around the world.

**Conclusion:** The solution for the internal problems in Somalia must be interconnected with sustainable solutions in a comprehensive policy for the Horn of Africa as a whole. The reaction of the international community is to take direct action against the maritime part of the problem, the pirates, but it is very resistant in helping to solve the land part of the problem. Small navies can play a significant role in establishing the regional solutions as stated in the Djibouti code.

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## **What are the challenges for small navies to make a difference in counter- piracy operation in the Horn of Africa?**

The focus of geopolitical relations in the Indian Ocean is all about the rise of China and the reaction of the United States. The maritime relationship between these two countries in the Indian Ocean is different in the Pacific or Atlantic Ocean's. China has a great need for raw materials; the availability of these materials in Africa has increased China's interests in the Africa region. Shipping these raw materials back to the Chinese homeland gives the Chinese government an increasing economic and political power in Africa and in the Indian Ocean. This is not only a concern for the US, traditionally the world's number one maritime power, but it also concerns other countries such as India, Russian Federation, Japan, and the European countries. All these countries will increase their involvement in this region because of their economic maritime interest. Piracy in the Horn of Africa has spread into the east Indian Ocean<sup>1</sup>, and is disrupting this economically important region.

Maritime counter-piracy operations around the Horn of Africa have accelerated the development of geopolitical relations. The United States of America, China, Russian Federation, India, South Korea, and some European countries have sent their navies to the Horn of Africa. At the same time other multilateral organizations such as the European Union (EU) and NATO developed the initiative known as the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).<sup>2</sup> Even the Arab League has developed initiatives against piracy in the Horn of Africa region. In the end of 2008, the League condemned piracy and have the intention to developed a maritime task force for counter-piracy operations in the Red Sea.<sup>3</sup> During the UN Round table case study of Somalia in May 2010 the "The Arab League had itself provided financial support to Somalia and to AMISOM" but didn't deploy any troops to the Horn of Africa.<sup>4</sup>

Countries and multilateral organizations that are involved in the now uncoordinated counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa must use this opportunity to cooperate with each other at the operational level. This will not only have long term effect on counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa but this cooperation may improve geopolitical relations and reduce tension between countries.

Each country has suffered from the consequences of the global financial crisis, causing governments to cut their budgets. Only great powers like America, Russia Federation, and China, have chosen to maintain or increase their defense budgets. All the NATO countries have defense budget cuts on their political agendas.<sup>5</sup> In Great Britain there is a public discussion, about government priorities and the defense budget.<sup>6</sup> Only the current British operations in Afghanistan are exempt from budget cut considerations. The rest of the UK defense organization, including the nuclear strike force are targeted for 10 to 20 percent budget cuts.

Germany is planning for a significant 50 percent staff reduction and will reduce the armed forces by 30 percent.<sup>7</sup> Also, France is reducing its armed forces and installations with defense budget cut of 1.1 billion Euros in 2011. According to a Janes weekly publication in October 2010 the French budget will decrease “EUR32.2 billion (USD44.3 billion) this year to EUR31.2 billion in 2011.”<sup>8</sup> While the United States of America is not anticipated to have budget cuts to the extent of its NATO partners. The Pentagon has identified a total of \$178 billion budget cuts for the five next year’s “it plans to reinvest about \$100 billion of that into its own services, leaving the remainder for deficit reduction.”<sup>9</sup> Although, the United States will keep the capability to conduct the full range of maritime operations independently, it cannot operate in an isolated or unilateral manner and expect to be successful in the current geopolitical environment. Coalition partners are necessary in order to gain international support and conduct long term operations in a cost

effective manner. The counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa region are an example and will be conducted by a coalition of multiple small navies.

The question which is central to this paper is: *What are the challenges for small navies to make a difference in counter-piracy operation in the Horn of Africa?*

### **Failed state Somalia<sup>10</sup>**

For the first time in history, the five permanent members of the United Nations' security council were united in their stance against piracy at the Horn of Africa. In particular, the Chinese maritime contribution is remarkable. For the first time in over 400 years, China deployed a maritime mission abroad to the Horn of Africa to protect Chinese maritime commerce from piracy along the Somalia coast.<sup>11</sup>

The source of the piracy problem is on land. Although the piracy crime itself is committed at sea, the fundamental solution to solve this complex problem has to be conducted ashore. Essential for solving the Somalia piracy problem is the cooperative relationship between the transitional government in Mogadishu with the political leaders of Somaliland and Puntland. Local leaders must be supported with their local struggle against piracy. The UN security resolutions of 1897 and 1851 allow the international community to conduct counter-piracy operations on Somalia soil against piracy base camps. Concurrently the international community must start the fight against this piracy crime and those who are responsible for financial and logistic piracy support.<sup>12</sup>

The Minister of Defense of Somalia, Mohamed Abdi stated in 2009, "If anyone wants to fight piracy, it has to start from mainland Somalia, because the unstable situation on the mainland is largely responsible for the piracy on the water."<sup>13</sup> While there is no easy answer to the piracy

problem, some promising steps toward a solution include successful maritime counter-piracy operations at sea with relatively small navies, and containing the problem of a failed state ashore.

Somalia is on the top of the list of the failed states index.<sup>14</sup> This indicates that the Somalia government cannot provide the basic needs in security and law enforcement on their sovereign territory. Local clans in the north-east of Somalia use this lawlessness for extending their clan autonomy in Puntland and Somaliland.<sup>15</sup> In the southern and middle part of Somalia, organizations such as al-Shabaab and Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia are fighting a bloody conflict for local power.

Since President Siad was removed from office in 1991 there have been fifteen attempts to establish a form of government in Somalia, none of these were fruitful until 2004. In 2004, after the reconciliation conference in Kenya the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia was formed.<sup>16</sup> Their influence is limited and primarily exists around the capital of Mogadishu. Troops loyal to the transitional government are involved in intense fights with al-Shabaab, Hizb al Islam, and the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia on a daily basis. As a result of this unstable internal situation, in 2009 Somalia had more than 3.3 million inhabitants who had to rely on the World Food Program to prevent Somalia inhabitants from dying of starvation.<sup>17</sup> Since 2009, the humanitarian situation in Somalia has deteriorated further by violence, and severe economic crisis. According to the UN/OCHA, the number of aid dependents in 2009 is estimated at almost half the population.<sup>18</sup> Also, the recurring of violence in the Mogadishu region led to new flows of displaced persons. According to UNHCR, there are currently over 1.5 million displaced persons, mainly in the areas around Mogadishu, but also in neighboring countries. The new flow of displaced persons increases the pressure on existing aid. UNHCR expects that the humanitarian situation in 2011 will worsen and the number of refugees will rise, in Somalia and her neighbor countries.<sup>19</sup> Violence and insecurity limit the opportunities to perform "needs assessments" and

to monitor of aid activities by International (Non) Government organizations (NGO's). Despite these exceptional circumstances, UN agencies like the World Food Program (WFP) and international agencies provide humanitarian aid to Somalia, but often with the necessary safety restrictions.

### **Regional attention**

The neighboring countries of Somalia in the past have directly intervened in Somalia by providing financial, material, or political support to Somali factions. This has played a role in the duration of the Somalia conflict. For example, the poor relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea has repercussions for the situation in Somalia.<sup>20</sup>

Ethiopia withdrew its troops from Somalia in early 2009, but remains heavily involved in developments in Somalia. Ethiopia maintains close ties with a number of Somali groups, including in Somaliland. The Somali in Ethiopia constitute an important ethnic minority. They live mainly in the so called Somali region Ogaden, a large area at the border with Somalia. The Somali people on both sides of the border are closely linked in clan or sub clan relationships. Over this region in 1977 and 1978 a war was fought between Ethiopia and Somalia.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to Ethiopia's involvement, Eritrea has always been closely involved in the situation in Somalia. Like other countries in the region, Eritrea provides support to various Somali factions with material, financial and political support. Eritrea offered hospitality to different Somalia opposition parties; even armed parties were welcome in Eritrea. It seemed to support Eritrea factions such as Al Shabaab, which were in conflict with factions that received support from Ethiopia. In this sense, the long term Ethiopian-Eritrean border conflict continued in Somalia.<sup>22</sup>

Kenya is increasingly concerned about the repercussions of developments in Somalia and

the influences of this on Kenya national security. Al Shabaab has threatened attacks in Kenya and on the border between Somalia and Kenya. Recently there have been several incidents between al-Shabaab and the Kenyan army. These developments give cause for concern about the impact of the Somali conflict on Kenya security.

In the Horn of Africa region there are countries and actors who intervene in Somalia with their own agenda. These are regional power politics, security interests, including counterterrorism and anti-piracy, economic interests, involvement of former colonial powers, religious interests, and relationships.<sup>23</sup> The uncoordinated interventions of external actors have been counterproductive for the peace process in Somalia and these interventions are more part of the problem than part of the solution.

The solution for the internal problems in Somalia must be interconnected with sustainable solutions in a comprehensive policy for the Horn of Africa as a whole.<sup>24</sup>

### **International attention**

It is not the persistent civil war and it is also not the critical situation of the people of Somalia but piracy around the Horn of Africa and in the Indian ocean which brought Somalia back to the international political agenda after failure of United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) in 1993. Acts of piracy made it to the world news front papers, in 2008 included the hijack of the Saudi supertanker MV Sirius Star with more than 2 million barrels on board. It was hijacked 450 nautical miles from the Somalia coast.<sup>25</sup> Also in 2008, Somalian pirates conduct the seizure of Ukrainian cargo vessel MV Faina carrying heavy weapons such as 33

Russian T-72 tanks but also rocket propelled grenades, automatic rifles, and ammunition. Both ships were released after paying some 3 million dollar ransom each.<sup>26</sup>

In 2009 there was an enormous increase of pirate attacks in the Horn of Africa. The International Maritime Organization reported “111 attacks during 2008, resulting in 42 ships having been seized by pirates and more than 600 seafarers having been kidnapped and held for ransom.”<sup>27</sup> This number of 111 attacks increased to 217 reported attacks in 2009.<sup>28</sup> The total number of ships seized in 2009 is 47 according to the International Chamber of Commerce worldwide report on piracy “whilst the number of 2009 incidents has almost doubled, the number of successful hijackings is proportionately less.”<sup>29</sup> The hijacking US flagged ship MV Maersk Alabama in April 2009 and later the release by US military of the MV Maersk Alabama crew, kept the international focus on Somalia and the piracy problem.

President Obama stated in April 2009 “that this Administration is resolved to halt the growth of piracy in the Horn of Africa”.<sup>30</sup> The American efforts to find solutions to the problem of impunity of piracy is to react with an multinational response against piracy in the Horn of Africa through the support of the International Contact Group on Piracy. Also, the Obama Administration has developed relationships with Somali Transitional Federal Government as well as with regional leaders in Puntland to find a solution for piracy in this area.<sup>31</sup>

This increase in acts of piracy in 2009 off the coast of Somalia has led the United Nations Security Council to adopt several resolutions in 2008; 1814, 1816, and 1846 and resolutions 1851 and 1897 in 2009. In these resolutions the UN Security Council expresses its concern about piracy and it emphasizes the need for a broad participation of the international community to combat piracy “with all necessary measures”.<sup>32</sup> Also, in line with the UN Security Council resolution 1851 a Counter-piracy Contact group was established in January 2009 to coordinate

counter-piracy efforts in Somali waters. The Security Council authorized states to act against pirates, even in territorial waters and on the territory of Somalia.

In the beginning of 2009 through the efforts of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Counter-piracy Contact group made agreements between eight East African countries and Yemen, drafting national legislation against piracy and strengthening of enforcement capabilities and coastguards. These agreements are defined in the 'Djibouti Code'. Also in 2009 the IMO created a fund to achieve the counter-piracy goals of the Djibouti code, including the improvement of national legislation against piracy and the improvement of the capabilities of the Horn of Africa coast guard. This initiative has been supported by the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.<sup>33</sup>

The Djibouti code has a bottom-up approach to the piracy problem where the local authorities of the Horn of Africa region take the initiative to develop solutions on land.<sup>34</sup> African countries solve African problems. The proposal for a Regional Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Mombasa, Kenya and a regional information center in Sana (Yemen) are two examples for long term solutions. The African political intentions to conduct counter-piracy operations are sincere. However, it takes more than only political will to solve the piracy problem in the Horn of Africa. The East African maritime capabilities are not sufficient to conduct these type of maritime security operations in 2011. To be successful, the Djibouti code countries need partnerships with other maritime nations to conduct counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa and at the same time develop their own maritime security force.<sup>35</sup>

### **Piracy in the Horn of Africa**

Piracy is a crime which only can cultivate in a geographical protected area, a literal safe haven where pirates have their logistical support base and can negotiate about ransoms. This area

works in the pirates' favor because this is a protected, isolated area and not affected by efficient law enforcement authorities with political, cultural, and sociological influence.<sup>36</sup> Somalia has a few of those areas along its 2000 mile long coastline.

The United Nations Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council in 2008<sup>37</sup> and the update in 2010 pointed two major areas for piracy activity. The first area is situated in Puntland by the Majerteen clan around the town of Eyl. The second primary piracy area is located around the district of Harardhera, Somaliland. Both areas are on the Somalia East and North-East coast, directly collocated at the Gulf of Aden and the Somalia Basin in the Indian Ocean. The pirates are well organized and they share information and will even cooperate to increase profits.

Piracy is big business, with an estimated 33000 ships passing the Gulf of Aden annually<sup>38</sup>, targets of opportunity are almost always available. The area of piracy operations, the Gulf of Aden and the Somalia basin, are more than two million square miles; this is comparable to the size of Europe. This geographical factor is an advantage to the pirates who are attacking merchandise ships more than 1000 nautical miles from the Somalia coast. With small fishing boats, which the pirates use as mother craft they search deep in the Indian ocean with a "do or die" mentality to find a target of opportunity. Fast boats with 200 horse power engine, in tow of the mother craft, will be launched as soon a target is visible at the horizon.

Pirates are not afraid to use brutal force to conduct the hijacking of a random merchandise vessel and bring this vessel back to their logistic support base. In this pirate safe haven, the hijacked vessel will drop anchor and their crew will be held hostage on board. The vessel will be guarded by other clan members who will claim their part of the loot after the ransom of an average of 1.75 million dollars.<sup>39</sup>The semi-autonomous region of Puntland started to oppose piracy activity in the area that they see as their territory. The authorities of Puntland hold piracy

in contempt and deploy actions to detect and prosecute piracy actions groups who are operating in Puntland. Both NATO and The European Union (EU) are developing contacts with the authorities in Puntland.<sup>40</sup> Although human rights in Puntland are not of a standard that NATO and EU will deliver arrested pirates to the authorities of Puntland, recognition of the sub-state entities of Puntland will achieve political stability. Political stability in Puntland and transformation in Somaliland may be a start to solve the Somalia problem on land with support of maritime nations.

### **Political solutions against Piracy in the Horn of Africa.**

The political situation in Somalia continues and after almost two decades of conflict it is still extremely unstable. Under the auspices of the United Nations on 19 August 2008 a peace agreement was signed between the Transitional Federal Government and part of the opposition united in the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia, Djibouti (ARS-D) in Djibouti. As a result of the agreement on January 31, 2009 in Djibouti ARS and the moderate Islamist leader Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as President of Somalia were elected by the Somali transitional parliament. As a former leader of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) President Sheikh Sharif could boast of a relatively broad consensus in Somali society and the diasporas. His election was welcomed at that time in Somalia and neighboring countries including Ethiopia. The current Somali transitional government remains weak. The influence of the government is limited to parts of Mogadishu and the government is struggling with internal problems and divisions. The international community urges the transitional government to involve other groups in the Djibouti process in order to further broaden its support base. To date, this involvement of other Somalia powers such as Puntland, Somaliland, Southern Somalia and central Somalia is insufficient.

Southern and central Somalia are controlled by various groups, including the radical Islamic group Al Shabaab, in which the people impose strict Islamic rules. These groups are fierce opponents of the government and have not signed the Djibouti code. The balance of power in southern and central Somalia is subject to change. So it seems the radical al Shabaab have recently divided and fighting broke out in May 2010, between al Shabaab and Hizbul Islam, another huge fundamentalist group. The northern regions of Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland, in comparison with South and Central Somalia are relatively stable, but the Transitional Federal Government does not recognize these northern regions as a serious negotiation partner.

As a result of political instability, the security situation in Mogadishu in particular and in southern and central Somalia in general is poor. Regular fights between the various groups in the capital and large parts of the country have massive casualties, more than 1400, and 200.000 internally displaced person (IDP) as a result.<sup>41</sup> Humanitarian aid workers are very limited in their work. The African Union peacekeeping force, AMISOM, whose task is the protection of the Transitional Federal Government and its institutions, the UN peacekeepers themselves are regularly under fire. On September 17, 2009 AMISOM was hit by a double suicide attack which killed 17 Ugandan and Burundian troops, including the Burundi deputy commander.<sup>42</sup> AMISOM currently has 5100 troops, considerably less than to perform the mission required number of 8000 soldiers.<sup>43</sup>

Somalia lacks effective authority and resources to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea. The political sustainable solution for this problem is one that can be found on land, rather than at sea. However, the international community is extremely reluctant to commit large-scale combat forces ashore in order to address the problem. This is in large part due to the aftermath that occurred following failed operations during the United Nations execution of Operations in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) in 1993-1994, where eighteen U.S. service members were killed, some

of whom which were mutilated and dragged through the streets of Mogadishu.<sup>44</sup> That being said, many of the key players in the international community have decided to take more of an indirect, vice direct approach to solving the problem set. The European Union (EU) has taken the lead on much of this and has played a key role in not only developing, but successfully executing several key rule of law, economic and security initiatives within the region. For example, the EU is the largest donor to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)<sup>45</sup> for East Africa, which is the organization responsible for maintaining rule of law and bringing pirates to trial. Additionally, the EU is directly involved in reforming the security sector in Somalia by training Somalia soldiers in counter-piracy operations in adjacent countries such as Uganda.<sup>46</sup> Finally, the EU has been heavily vested in helping to try and improve economic conditions within Somalia by making large contributions to education, agriculture, state building, etc.<sup>47</sup>

Parallel to the continuing process on land, the international community can also make contributions at sea. The success of regional participation must be valued by the international community and in doing so the Djibouti-Code must remain the basis for the contribution and deployment of the UN, EU, and the AU to achieve greater stability in Somalia. A broadening of the multi-party agreement, supported by the Somali population, would be the basis for a stable Somalia.<sup>48</sup>

### **Maritime solutions against Piracy in the Horn of Africa.**

The piracy problem in the Horn of Africa has improved geopolitical maritime relations. In 2010 the international community sent more than 30 Naval ships to the Horn of Africa. As a result of that maritime presence there were less successful acts of piracy in 2010 and navies had to coordinate with each other; both had a positive spin-off against acts of piracy in the Horn of Africa.

Coordination by improvement of communication systems, doctrines, and rules of engagement has less impact on maritime units than on land base units. Maritime units are more capable to operate in isolation with less impact on environment and adjacent units than land base units can. Coordination of geopolitical maritime participants in the Horn of Africa will improve relations now and reduce tensions in the future.

The Navy ships conducting counter-piracy operations were operating in multilateral coalition such as the NATO mission ALLIED PROTECTOR and later OCEAN SHIELD. The EU mission ATALANTA and the US Combined Task Force 151 (CFT 151), but also, navy ships from Russian Federation, China, India, and Japan participated in the Combined of Maritime Force (CMF). These CMF participated in counter-piracy missions, but these Navy ships stayed under full national command during the whole operation. Some form of coordination is essential for all participants, NATO, EU, and CMF to be successful and to exploit opportunities. The challenge nowadays is to improve the coordination above the level of maritime safety to the next higher level of operational coordination.

The coordination for all maritime activities conducting counter-piracy operation in the Horn of Africa is done by the Shared Awareness and De-confliction meetings (SHADE) in Bahrain, more than 1100 miles from the Gulf of Aden. As a result of the Djibouti-Code, Yemen is developing a regional maritime information centre, which will be established in the capitol Sana'a, with support of EU members.<sup>49</sup> This center will in the near future take over the coordination tasking of SHADE with much more situational awareness. The initiative to conduct a regional maritime information centre in Yemen is ambitious and politically driven, but the focus of the piracy problem is a regional problem and the focus of the solution must be found in regional solutions.

The impact of success by improvement coordination of the geopolitical and other navies is also a good example of the difference one EU partner with a relatively small navy can make during counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa.

### **Small Navies**

The mission of all the western navies includes some form of statement where the freedom of the sea is expressed. Counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa unfortified many challenges involved with operations to conduct freedom of the sea. To conduct efficient and successful counter-piracy operations a navy needs to have a balanced amount of ships, coast patrol boats, helicopters, maritime patrol aircraft unmanned aerial vehicles, and submarines. A small navy can make a worthwhile contribution to be successful in maritime security operations.

According to Geoffery Till there is no fundamental difference between a small navy and a large major global force projection navy in ambition.<sup>50</sup> The focus of a small navy will be more focus on coalition operations, and less on global force projection and capacity. This will spread for small navies the maritime tasks and risk, but maintain experience for coalition maritime command tasking at senior level and sustain senior command level experience.

Small navies can also been an intermediary for their large global coalition partners. The time of open defense budgets are no longer feasible and defense acquisition is a multiple year process. Small coalition navies can temporarily help out by taking over tasking or focusing on niche capabilities. Also, small navies can play an effective diplomatic role due to the fact that they are more accessible or have different political relations in the international political scene than countries with big navies.

The Royal Netherlands Navy has sufficient means to meet the above stated requirements to be successful in counter-piracy operations. The Royal Netherlands navy is a small navy, with regional influence and is an active member of NATO and EU.

### **The Royal Netherlands Navy.**

Most of the western European naval forces have been reorganized the last decade. This is in particular a fact for the Royal Netherlands Navy. Their focus has switched from blue water operations to more brown water operations and the littorals. With this change the priorities have switched accordingly to be able to initiate, lead, and support land operations from the sea. To support these new priorities, the Royal Netherlands Navy has 6 frigates, 4 ocean patrol vessels, 2 landing platform dock ships, 2 supply ships, 10 mine counter measures vessels, 4 submarines, and 21 helicopters.<sup>51</sup> The Royal Netherlands Navy consists of seven thousand sailors and 3000 Royal Marines.

The government of the Netherlands is an active member of the world community, has a rich maritime history, and is heavily dependent on maritime commerce. The freedom of the sea is vital for the Netherlands' commerce. As a small and rich country the Dutch are firm believers that most of their (local and or economical) problems can only be solved by international consensus.<sup>52</sup> The Dutch government is an active member of NATO, the European Union, United Nations, and other international institutions and coalitions. Also, the Dutch government is willing and able to actively participate with military means when necessary to participate in international peace and stability operations.

The Royal Netherlands Navy primary tasking is to protect and promote the Netherlands' vital interest anywhere in the world. Piracy operations in the Horn of Africa are conflicting with the Netherlands' vital interest of freedom of the sea and that's the most important reason that the

Royal Netherlands Navy is conducting counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa since 2005 in combination with coalition partners under different command structure such as EU, NATO, and Combined Task Force 151.

The primary mission of the Dutch Navy in operation ATALANTA and OCEAN SHIELD is the security of vessels of the World Food Program (WFP). Dutch naval ships will escort these vessels through the waters around Somalia.<sup>53</sup> A secondary tasking is the protection of individual shipments by military security teams with and without naval ship presence. Of the 1031 ships in the Dutch merchandise fleet, 500 are sailing annually through the Gulf of Aden.<sup>54</sup> The security of the entire Dutch flag merchant fleet is not feasible and practical by the Dutch navy alone. Ship owners and captains have also a responsibility to take counter-piracy preventive measures such as convoy transits through the Gulf of Eden and use routes supported by EU, NATO, and CTF 151 but also use convoy escorts provided by the navies of Russia, India, and China.

The Dutch Government decided on 23 April 2010 to extend the two European counter-piracy missions in the Horn of Africa for another year.<sup>55</sup> The Navy had to participate in the EU mission ATALANTA and in the NATO mission OCEAN SHIELD at the same time.<sup>56</sup> However, the one of the challenges associated with this political commitment is the sustainment of a continuous Dutch naval vessel presence in the Horn of Africa region for another year. The Netherlands, similar to that of most countries in the EU (France, Great Britain, Germany, etc.), is facing a series of large-scale defense budget cuts back home in 2011. That being said, there is a strong possibility that the long-term commitment of maintaining such a presence in the region could be directly affected as a result of these budgetary cuts. This is unfortunate because during the last five years of counter-piracy operations the Royal Netherlands Navy has been (temporarily) in command of both the NATO mission and the EU mission ATALANTA in the

region. As a result, any reductions that may occur in these forces will most certainly impact any short and long-term gains that have been made.

In the spring of 2010, the Landing Platform Dock HNLMS Johan de Witt was ordered to participate in the EU mission ATALANTA. The commanding officer Captain Ben Bekkering sees regional capacity operations from the sea together with piracy interception and interdiction operations as the nucleus of counter-piracy operations.<sup>57</sup>

I had the privilege to be a staff member on board of HNLMS Johan de Witt during the EU mission ATALANTA. During this mission, I had also the opportunity to command an Afloat Forward operation Base (AFOB). An AFOB consists of 3 small landing crafts conducting interception and blockade of piracy operations in the near shore area of the Somalia coast, independently and for multiple days. During this mission we worked with mutational partners who all had different political agendas for Somalia and also had different doctrines in line with national rules of engagement.

Multinational maritime counter-piracy missions must improve on three points to be more successful. First, all participants must improve their technical capabilities to communicate with each other, synchronize their systems in order to send data information and share intelligence, this will improve the situational awareness of all participants in the operation.<sup>58</sup> Second, to achieve unity of effort with international partners it is essential to work with the same set of the rules of engagement and doctrine. The development and improvement of doctrine can be done during training before and during the mission. The alignment of the rule of engagement must be part of the third improvement, the combined political will for cooperation. This is the most important and the most difficult point to improve as stated by Vice Admiral Xavier Magne, French deputy chief of staff “There is a difficulty for one member state [European Union] and it is an even greater difficulty for a multinational force.”<sup>59</sup> Those difficulties must be overcome by

more intergovernmental coordination with the international participants to be able to formulate a long term successful strategic policy to solve piracy in the Horn of Africa.

### **The Dutch political view point**

Dutch development policy gives priority to security and legal issues in fragile states because of its direct relationship to our own security.<sup>60</sup> Somalia needs a consistent approach to security, governance and reconstruction by UN leadership and a strong role for the European Union.<sup>61</sup> Free and secure global shipping routes are of great economic, strategic and security interest for the Netherlands. Piracy off the coast of Somalia is a threat to merchant sea transport. The solution for this maritime problem must be found on land and it is not a short term solution. This means that there is more time needed for developments of political stability in Somalia itself. The Netherlands Navy will be in the coming years participating in the counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa.<sup>62</sup> Also the Netherlands Navy should contribute to the support and development of a maritime coalition in and near the Horn of Africa by strengthening their enforcement capacity and coastguards. The Dutch government will participate together with the UN and EU to take initiatives to invest in development within Somaliland and Puntland in training and equipping of the future Horn of Africa maritime capacity and coast guard.<sup>63</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The political and humanitarian situation in Somalia is desolate and unfortunately, there are no short-term improvements for this sober perspective. The solution for the internal problems in Somalia must be interconnected with sustainable solutions in a comprehensive policy for the Horn of Africa as a whole. The reaction of the international community is to take direct action

against the maritime part of the problem, the pirates, but it is very resistant in helping to solve the land part of the problem.

Small navies can play a significant role in establishing the regional solutions as stated in the Djibouti code. The Royal Netherlands Navy is a small, but high technical Navy with modern ships, submarines and helicopters. The Dutch political interest in supporting the maritime mission in the Horn of Africa is the economical dependence that is garnered from freedom of the sea. Since 2005, the Royal Netherlands Navy has not only actively participated, but been at the forefront of both the NATO and EU counter-piracy missions. As a result, the Dutch have gained valuable experience in planning and executing counter-piracy operations. These experiences, coupled with the fact that a smaller country's Navy (e.g. the Netherlands) is more accessible and has a differing range of political relations in the international scene make them an ideal candidate for these types of operations. Moreover, piracy in the Horn of Africa has further developed the geopolitical relations between global operating navies such as China and the United States. That being said, these smaller navies are ideally suited to play the role of intermediary for larger navies and can also help develop communications and unity of effort at the operational levels.

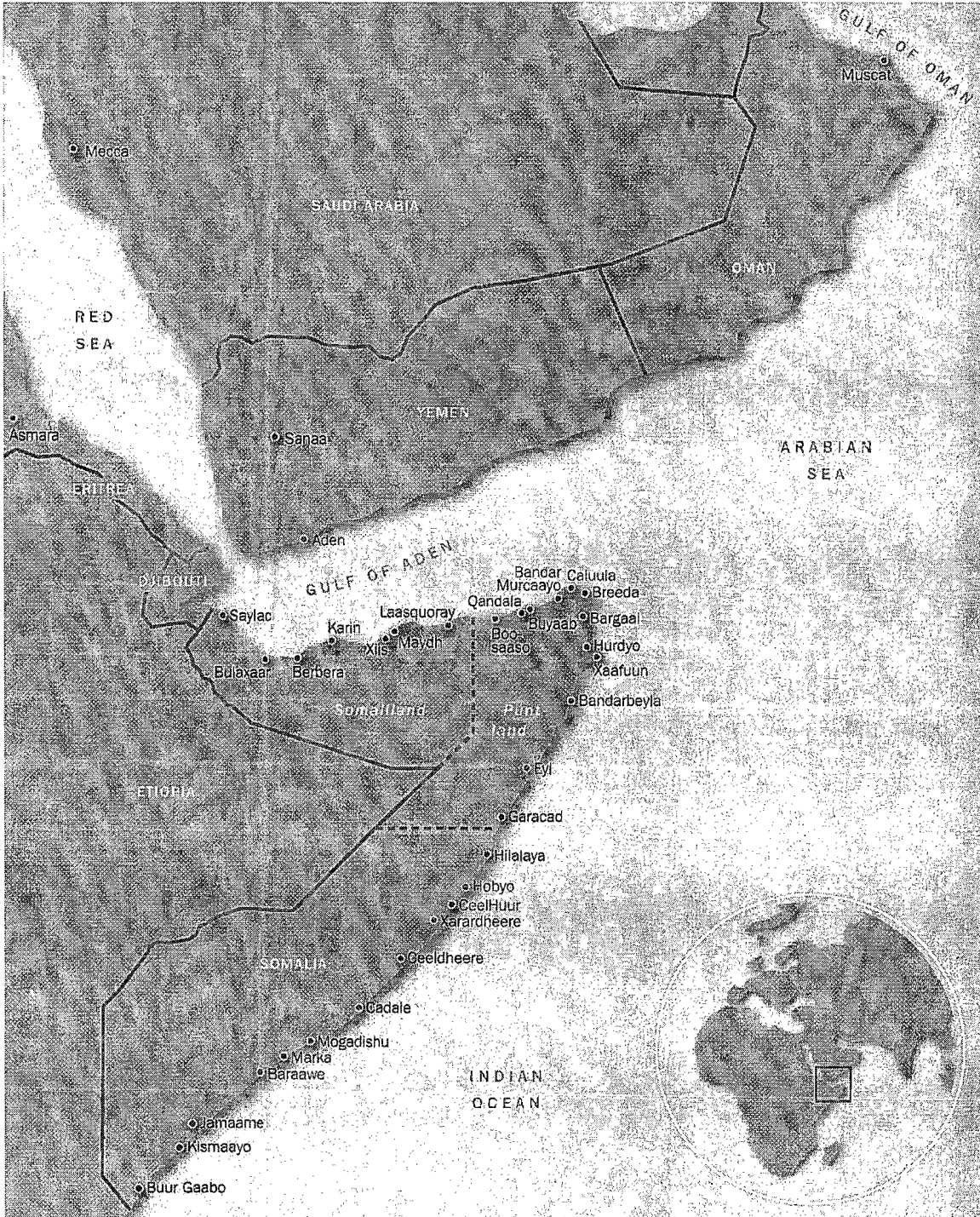
The international cooperation that occurs during counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa is also a positive. Not only does this cooperation contribute to the long term effects on counter-piracy operations, but it also helps improve geopolitical relations and reduce tension between countries. Furthermore, both small and large navies alike can reap the benefits of increased relations. This is especially true when developing future joint global maritime security missions for these navies around the world.

However, there are also some challenges associated with the way forward. All European navies are facing budget cuts in the near future. Although the full implications for the Dutch Navy are still unclear at the present time, it is rumored that the Dutch submarine fleet may in fact

be eliminated, but the total number of Dutch surface naval vessels would remain the same. If this occurs, the Royal Dutch Navy will still be capable of executing counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa in the near future.

Furthermore, smaller navies require political support to carry out regional initiatives, such as the one that is stated in the Djibouti code; therefore, it is critical that the government of the Netherlands continue to allow the Royal Netherlands Navy to play this role during counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa.

Appendix 1: Somalia and Gulf of Aden<sup>64</sup>



Country	2010	GDP	2011	Implications
	USD	% GDP	USD	
France	\$ 53.36B	2.0%	\$ 53.1B	Downscaling 54,000 military personnel. Budget will be frozen in 2011. However, increase 500M€ 2012 and 2013. Consequences 2011 delay upgrade aircraft and C2 systems. It will remain in France interest to have a funded military. <sup>65</sup>
Germany	\$ 42.7B	1.27%	\$ 43.3B	"The Bundeswehr is facing one of the most far-reaching reforms in its history" <sup>66</sup> Troop reduces with different options from 252000 to 165,000 "Cut defense budget by 8.3B – 9.3B € (\$10.6B ) by 2015-2016" <sup>67</sup> Defense budget after 2011 will be 1.0 % of GDP.
Netherlands	\$ 11.69B	1.5%	\$ 11.4	200M budget cut. Joint strike fighter (85 total) acquisition is open for discussion. Budget intent to decrease 8.1B € (\$11B) in 2015. Annual 11M € extra savings need to be found to efficiency. <sup>68</sup>
UK	\$ 57B	2.7%	\$ 54.6B	Reduce 17,000 military and 20,000 civilians. Decommission HMS Ark Royal immediately, decommission LPH, 4 frigates and a Bay-class amphibious support ship. Remove Harrier from service "cancel Nimrod MRA4 Reconnaissance Aircraft Delay modernization of Trident Subs." <sup>69</sup> Withdraw the C-130 Hercules transport fleet 10 years earlier. Reduce of Challenger 2 tanks by 40% and heavy artillery by 35% Withdraw its 20,0000 troops in Germany by 2035. <sup>70</sup>
US	\$855B	4.7 %	\$895B	\$159 billion for operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan. "Administration seeks 2.2% growth over 2010 budget and 1% of growth. Secretary of Defense seeks to reduce 2-3% in savings" <sup>71</sup> through cuts in bureaucracy to reinvest in military equipment. <sup>72</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Round table case study Somalia 14 May 2010. Available via <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/ga10940.doc.htm> (Accessed 11 February 2011)

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