



Singapore Shipping Association

Ref: SSA/066/10/EML

16 April 2010

To: All SSA Members

CMF/EUNAVFOR/NATO JOINT LETTER TO INDUSTRY

Please be informed that the Singapore Shipping Association has just received a joint letter from the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), EUNAVFOR and NATO.

The letter is intended for distribution to all mariners, companies and agencies involved in ship transits through the pirate-infested waters of the Horn of Africa.

As such, please find attached a copy of the CMF/EUNAVFOR/NATO Joint Letter for your information.

Best regards,

Tsui Chiang, Quek
Executive Officer

UNCLASSIFIED



1 April 2010

Dear Sir,

As you may already be aware Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), the EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) and NATO are currently conducting counter piracy operations in the waters off Somalia, coordinating their efforts closely between each other, with other navies operating in the region, and with maritime industry organisations. The purpose of these operations is to make the area as safe as possible for the ships sailing across them, through deterrence by naval presence as well as protection of transiting ships, and the disruption of piracy activity and arrest of pirates when possible.

After many months of working closely together and with increasing success, CMF, EU and NATO thought it timely to write to cover some of our current thoughts regarding the piracy threat to merchant vessels in the waters off the Horn of Africa.

First of all, we would like to ease all mariners' concerns about naval presence in the Gulf of Aden (GOA) and Somali basin (SB). They should bear in mind that regardless of whether or not they come across navy ships or aircraft whilst transiting this very large expanse of water, CMF, EUNAVFOR and NATO ships are present, and will take every possible action in response to distress calls made by ships under pirate attack. Ships from other independent nations conducting national counter piracy operations in the region may, and do, also assist. It should be noted that the pirates are very adaptable, and will always try to operate in areas where there is no military presence. The ongoing success of operations in the GOA and our recent successes off the East Somali Coast appear to have forced them to look for new target areas, and may explain why we have seen recent attacks much further south in the SB.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

The pirates task is also being made evermore difficult by industry efforts, and we are delighted that the majority of merchant ships in the region are taking ownership of their own protection and safety by registering with the Maritime Security Centre – Horn Of Africa (MSC-HOA) and the UK Maritime Trade Organisation (UKMTO), following the IRTC and staying well east in the SB. That said, military forces are building a picture of vessels which show no *observable* outward signs of following industry Best Management Practices (BMP) - rigged hoses, visible lookouts, barbed wire or other protective measures - since these have a significant deterrent effect on pirates, who, evidence suggests will avoid a difficult target and wait for an easy one. Despite our collective efforts to communicate the need for ships to comply with BMP there are still substantial numbers of commercial ships at sea being observed by Naval Task Force Assets with no visible evidence of self protection measures.

The BMP, industry-led and endorsed, have consistently proved their value, and while it cannot be guaranteed that they will make a ship totally immune from successful pirate attacks, if adequately implemented they significantly reduce that risk and increase the likelihood of military assets having sufficient time to respond. For those not familiar with the BMP, they include both physical measures to be carried out prior to sailing and approved by the shipping company, such as installation of certain equipment or gear as part of the self protection measures, and others which are responsibility of the ship's Master, mainly those related to organization and training of the crew, as well as communication with naval forces in the region. The BMP should be implemented throughout the areas where a risk of piracy exists, including the relatively empty waters of the wider SB. The BMP can be downloaded from the Maritime Liaison Office (MARLO) website at www.cusnc.navy.mil/marlo, the MSC-HOA website www.mschoa.eu, the NATO website at www.shipping.nato.int. Masters are also reminded that UKMTO is the primary point of contact for vessels at sea within the GOA, SB and wider area bounded by 10S and 78E and are requested to report to UKMTO upon entering this area and at least daily thereafter, or if they encounter any suspicious craft (by phone to +971 50 552 3215). UKMTO will also give up to date advice on the piracy situation.

Another point which we feel compelled to raise is that of the actions to be taken prior to vessel and crew release following the unfortunate case of a successful piracy attack. The preparation of a released vessel, including the provision of fuel and other necessary supplies to enable the ship to go to its intended next port, is not a task for the military ships. Please include consideration of these issues in the unfortunate event of any of your vessels being pirated. You should be aware that, on rare occasions in the past when a nation, for whatever reasons, has provided national warship support to a released vessel, it has taken that warship away from its primary task of trying to prevent further seizures and the protection of the many instead of a single vessel. This will obviously not preclude our ships from providing assistance to any vessel in distress or in need of aid, consistent with the SOLAS convention, or humanitarian support if positioned to do so.

Last of all, we would briefly like to refer to the much publicized, "Safe Muster Point" or "Citadel" with which some companies are furnishing their ships. While the recent

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

incident involving the recapture of MV Ariella and its use of the citadel was, rightly, much applauded, its boarding by the military was only possible due to the right, military capabilities being on scene. This will not usually be the case, and we certainly cannot guarantee being able to conduct similar operations in the future. A recapture operation of a seized vessel is certainly very difficult without a "citadel" or "Safe Muster Point", but its availability is not a sufficient condition for such an operation, as many other factors are involved.

Thank you for your cooperation, and good luck on the future voyages of your ships through the region.

Regards,



Tim Lowe
Commodore, Royal Navy
CMF



Bartolomé Bauzá
RADM (LH), Spanish Navy
EU NAVFOR



Hans Christian Helseth
Commodore, Royal
Norwegian Navy
NATO

UNCLASSIFIED