European Union Anti-Piracy Initiatives in the Horn of Africa: Linking Land Based Counter-Piracy with Maritime Security and Regional Development

Neil Winn and Alexandra Lewis

Abstract

Piracy off the coast of Somalia has resulted in a steady decline in trade through the Arabian Sea and higher costs of doing business for multiple world regions. The EU has responded to the threat with a large scale anti-piracy operation in the Horn of Africa, which constitutes the first free-standing Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) military operation that is not entirely dependent on NATO planning and assets. The operation is designed to interdict Somali piracy operations across the Gulf of Aden and to keep some of the world's busiest sea lanes open for reasons of world trade. This article argues that the EU preoccupation with military solutions to the piracy problem, based on interventions through the Somali Federal Government with an emphasis on security, is insufficient because it fails to address the underlying causes of piracy and misunderstands the Somali socio-cultural-security nexus and the need for practical longer-term land-based approaches to development. The reduction of Somali piracy activities can be linked to this increased military response capacity as well as to increased security precautions undertaken by shipping companies: but none of these strategies have succeeded in dismantling piracy networks. They therefore offer only a temporary and costly stopgap measure.

Key Words

Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland; State Failure; socio-cultural-security nexus; Piracy, Maritime Terrorism and Crime; European Union Common Security and Defence Policy

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Introduction

Located between the Arabian Sea and the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden is a dangerous waterway, periodically regaining the international spotlight as a hotspot for maritime terrorism, organised crime, irregular migration and, for the focus of this article, piracy. The Gulf attracts these illicit activities because it holds great strategic and economic interest, not only to the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula that are connected by it, but also to multiple other regions across the world, including Asia and Europe (with the latter accounting for 80 percent of international maritime trade through the area in 2008[1]. 2009

estimates saw 33,000 trade ships transiting 'the Gulf of Aden annually—including some 6,500 tankers—carrying seven percent of the world's daily oil supply'[2], and these figures are likely to have increased. From 2005-2013, approximately 149 of these ships had been captured and ransomed by Somali pirates for 'an estimated total of US$315–US$385 million'[3]. Such piracy represents 'a legitimate threat to international trade'[4] due to its physical impact on affected ships and crews, but also as a deterrent for trade in the region. It results in an estimated 7.4 percent drop in trade through the Arabian Sea, and the resulting increased cost of trade for ships that decide to bypass the Gulf of Aden 'translates into an estimated US$18 billion yearly loss to the world economy'[5]. Costs of increased security for those ships taking the risk of passing through the Gulf are also crippling. Therefore, although the level of Somali piracy has decreased significantly since 2011[6], the phenomenon has generated much international attention, while countering piracy is high on the agenda for the African Union (AU), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), and others. However, this article argues that many of these organisations deal with the manifestations, rather than the causes, of the piracy problem, and that a stronger commitment is needed to address push factors in the Horn of Africa that lead young people to turn to piracy, including the Somali socio-cultural-security nexus.

The piracy debate is not a new one: yet this article supports the argument put forward by Rothe and Collins that too much emphasis in the debate continues to be placed upon the 'framing of these pirates … as extremely dangerous individuals who are threatening maritime security', while greater space is needed for 'a broader discussion of the extant conditions … for the Somali peoples that [are] facilitating [piracy]'[7]. We believe that this has translated in EU policy to a focus on risk containment, which, while impressive in scale, is a costly strategy that is not maximising the full potential of available resources. Put simply, the presence of international navies and increased security in the Gulf of Aden acts as an important deterrent for pirates[8], but if this deterrent were to be removed, piracy incidents would gradually increase again, meaning that the current strategy requires no less than a permanent external presence. The EU also work in other humanitarian areas in Somalia, but their response to piracy is securitised.

In this context, the Somali socio-cultural-security nexus is best understood as a spectrum of activity related to the security, development and broader needs of specific host populations in Somalia that relate to clan, territorial and societal factors, which go beyond the definitional issues identified by Rothe and Collins. The Western rhetoric of promoting trajectories towards democracy and sustainable development in the Horn of Africa is counter-productive. Instead, a Western focus on the practical longer-term development-centric approaches in the Horn of Africa is called for, where local communities have ownership of the process[9]. To ignore particularistic clan, territorial and other local needs, is a mistake as is a focus on security alone rather than local development needs. Indeed, Western-centric, security-driven, approaches to Somalia only generate greater insecurities in the Horn of Africa.

The EU Strategy

The EU has responded to the threat with a large scale anti-piracy operation in the Horn of Africa, which constitutes the first free-standing Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) military operation that is not entirely dependent on NATO planning and assets. The operation is designed to: (a) interdict Somali piracy operations across the Gulf of Aden, (b) keep some of the world's busiest sea lanes open for reasons of world trade, (c) assist stabilisation processes in the Horn of Africa, (d) allow the convoying of United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) aid to Somalia, and (e) prevent terrorism being exported from the Horn of Africa to Europe and other parts of Africa. Western governments and organisations have emphasised maritime solutions to the problem in conjunction with land based initiatives against piracy. These are implemented in collaboration with the Somali Federal Government (SFG) in Mogadishu, and are based predominantly on a risk containment and eradication approach[10]. Simultaneously, a UNODC regional model for prosecuting piracy has facilitated the transfer of arrested

pirates to Kenya and the Seychelles since 2009, while the organisation has also worked to raise onshore awareness about the dangers of piracy[11]. Western interventions in these areas have been predominantly based on military solutions; this translates into a commitment to work with Somali security forces, and has led to a focus on legal reforms and physical capacity building in the Somali security sector to facilitate identification and detention of pirates.

The EU's commitment to work with traditional state structures here is problematic, because the state has collapsed and the SFG's authority is territorially and politically limited. This has led to contradictions in policies that recognise only the SFG as the legitimate government of Somalia, yet work with other Somali state structures to shore up prisons in Somaliland, for instance. There is a distinct danger that the EU and wider community counter-piracy strategy does not in its current form take into account the unique aspects of the broader Somali society, despite its comprehensive approach to security and development in the Horn of Africa. In particular, we find that it bypasses the pluralistic structures of Somali society, its complex tapestry of clanism, warlordism and state failure, while also overlooking the underlying causes of piracy, which are connected to extreme poverty, youth disenfranchisement and severe inequality[12]. While the decrease in piracy activities since 2011 indicates the success of AU, EU and NATO interventions off the coast of Somalia, in which the reduction of piracy activities can be linked to increased military response capacity as well as to increased security precautions by shipping companies: none of these strategies have succeeded in dismantling piracy networks and so offer only a temporary and costly stopgap measure.

It is therefore necessary to focus on the structure and context of the criminal networks behind Somali piracy. Indeed: `The structure of a criminal network is usually its main strength; this is true not only for transnational organised crime but most of all for terrorism. Pirate groups often have a simpler structure...[A]n analysis of their structure is the best starting point not only for understanding their *modus operandi* and code of conduct but also for planning a serious strategy to fight their activities'[13]. Therefore, this article addresses the EU counter-piracy strategy in context. We begin with an overview of civil war and state failure in Somalia, before looking at how issues of security and stability are impacted within the tapestry of non-state hierarchies in Somali communities. We next analyse the emergence of the piracy problem as a product of these conditions, before looking at EU counter-measures. We find over all that while the EU strategy is based upon both land and maritime solutions, land-based measures aimed at stabilisation have been the weaker side of the equation and require further thought and investment.

Context

Somalia is infamous for state collapse. Large parts of Somalia have experienced varying levels of instability, and protracted, multi-level armed conflict in one form or another since the early 1990s, resulting in very limited service delivery and the absence of a consolidated state. However, while Somalia lacks a strong administration: to call its society entirely disordered would be inaccurate, omitting existing quasi-state, non-state and clan-based systems of justice, moral conduct and self-governance that prevail in the region, while also overlooking positive transformation achieved in recent years. Nevertheless, Somali security forces do face overwhelming difficulties in the current security climate in trying to expand and maintain the control of SFG-based administration beyond the capital of Mogadishu. This has left the Government with very minimal capacity to look beyond Somalia's internal security to its coastline, and has led to the rise of illicit activities regionally. The current EU strategy for policing the Gulf emerges from a direct need to fill the resulting security deficit.

While different territories of Somalia are held by competing institutions, officially, the international community conceives of Somalia as one country comprised of three zones: Somaliland, Puntland and South Central (the last of which is home to the SFG). Misbalances in development and security among the territories of Somalia have led to differing experiences with the piracy phenomenon, as will be argued: owing to comparatively high poverty and lack of opportunities in Puntland, this has led to the

rise of coastal communities that produce and support piracy activities there; meanwhile, higher levels of stability in Somaliland have enabled the construction of new prisons and holding facilities to assist in international counter-piracy in Somaliland's jurisdiction. Other hotpoints for piracy activities include emerging territories in South Central, such as Jubaland. These misbalances have also led to significant migration between the territories, particularly by young people either seeking to join or extract themselves from piracy networks.

State and Non-State Hierarchies

State structures are weak in the Horn of Africa, but Somalia has alternative systems for maintaining law and order at either the community or zonal level. Clanism in Somalia offers a complex tapestry of social hierarchies and relations, based on patrilineal descent, and commonly founded upon semi-mythological lineages linking individual clan members to important archetypal religious figures[14]. There are 'six main clan divisions in Somalia' (the Digil, the Rahanweyn/Mirifle, the Hawiye, the Dir, the Isaaq, and the Darod)[15]. Clanism offers the basis for social interaction across much of the country, rules of conduct, and a sense of religious and cultural belonging. As such, it is central to much of Somalia's political system, though it remains poorly understood by outsiders.

Clan-based identity is important to determining allegiances and shaping peace and conflict, but is also in near-constant flux. Overlaps are acknowledged between the six dominant clan structures[16]. However, these do not negate competition for power, influence and resources between the clans, and Somali clans often define themselves in contrast to the Other or outsider: 'for Somalis, clan identity is the main characteristic that they use to recognise each other'[17].

Advocates of the 'constructivist perspective' on clan formation in Somalia read clan 'identity formation … as a process that is fluid and ongoing rather than static'[18]. This is interesting, as it allows for manipulation of clan-based allegiances in a system that is made malleable by oral history: 'While clan identity is based on the idea of common ancestral kinship, there are numerous cases where the perceived kinship is not based on blood'[19]. Yet the myth of kinship determines social relations: 'Given that Somalia is considered to be relatively homogeneous in ethnic terms (which is uncommon in comparison to other African states), it follows that the most pertinent identity grouping during a crisis and subsequent extended period of insecurity is that of clan identity'[20]. This impacts on piracy in complex ways: firstly, piracy networks are sometimes negotiated using clan-based patronage; secondly, the attraction of piracy to young people from across the Horn of Africa means that migrants coming into piracy hotspots in search of work are frequently dislocated from their clans and therefore more susceptible to exploitation by criminal actors. These young people are also frequently disconnected from their families, with older generations tending to frown upon piracy and migratory-based activities that are likely to put their sons, brothers or nephews at risk. Young aspiring pirates may therefore be facing double-layered vulnerability through their isolation from clans and familial support.

The clannism that dominates now is also markedly different from that of pre-colonialism, and has become more hierarchical due to the imposition of Western-style state infrastructures. Historically, 'in the absence of institutionalised state structures' and the spread of 'livestock production' as 'the primary economic enterprise', 'no household or lineage group could muster enough resources (material or organisational) to dominate and exploit others'[21]. These dimensions changed radically with the introduction of authoritarian and highly coercive colonial values, state structures and capitalist relational models on what was essentially an entirely decentralised system, so that: 'The imposition of colonial rule on stateless societies, the new dynamics of social relations, and the transformation [or commercialisation] of the pastoral economy' generated 'fundamental modifications of pre-colonial tradition'[22]. This has benefited criminal stakeholders, including pirate leaders, who have been able to transform political hierarchies into socially exploitative ones, and communal patronage into corruption and bondage, which facilitate cooperation from local officials on the one hand, and ensures compliance from young workers on the other.

American, United Nations-driven, Ethiopian, Djiboutian and Kenyan peace-building interventions in the Horn of Africa have attempted to build representative governance by granting 'equal' representation to rival clans. This has pushed policy-makers in Somalia to recommend federalism as a solution to the country's problems. However, federal models of state consolidation accentuate antagonisms between districts, either undermining, through their creation, the integrity of zones controlled by named groups, or equipping clans with a formal structure through which to consolidate their power and oppose the state. This has meant that the EU, for example, simultaneously does not recognise the independence of clan-based territories, but also looks to the clans to legitimise the SFG and EU interventions by extension. It is an ambiguity in policy that local criminal networks, who are more comfortable with identity politics, have been able to exploit.

Piracy in the Gulf of Aden

The current piracy crisis in the Gulf of Aden is the product of both internal and external stress factors. High levels of poverty across Somalia, combined with an over-fishing of Somali waters by external actors and toxic waste dumping in the Gulf of Aden[23], has pushed some Somalis to operate piracy networks since the collapse of the state in 1990, mainly out of Eyl and Garaad in Puntland. Here, 'a potential reason for the explosion of piracy in Somali waters recently is that ecosystem justice as it relates to equity and fairness to local fishers in Somalia has been lacking'[24]. Pirates 'justified themselves as protesters against illegal fishing', though, in actuality, the danger of piracy lies in that 'pirates are rarely former fishermen, and … their aggression is directed at cargo ships, not intruding fishing vessels'[25]. These challenges result from and have produced a situation of chronic insecurity in Gulf of Aden waters alongside maritime terrorism, confusing matters by linking piracy to terrorism in much research, either through funding chains or through similar attack patterns. The issue stems from; overlapping claims to jurisdictional authority between the zonal administrations, which compete rather than cooperate in maritime security; overfishing by external actors, including immediate neighbours like Yemen, as well as those coming further afield from East Asia (where companies have taken advantage of Somalia's negligent monitoring capacity); lack of opportunities for young Somalis; clan-based patronage systems that allow for piracy-facilitation through corruption; and the breaking of ties between young migrants and the clans and families who care about them.

However, narratives of piracy are highly contested and have become heavily mythologised, impacting responses to piracy. The counter-piracy community is currently divided between two conflicting paradigms of piracy: one sees piracy as a purely 'economic venture', the other as 'the product of wider socio-political phenomena specific to the cultural context'[26]. The 'latter has been at the forefront of pushing the 'holistic' approach to counter piracy that includes at-sea military intervention, onshore development assistance, and the creation of a regional criminal justice framework for prosecuting pirates'[27]. Yet the former is encouraged by the high cost of piracy to international shipping, which prompts understandings of the piracy challenge that are based on financial terms.

Since the 1990s, 'Clan militia made the transition to maritime crime by claiming to protect Somalia's territorial waters from poachers and polluters, operating under 'a number of names (including: the Central Somalia Coast Guard, the National Volunteer Coast Guard, and the Somali Marines)'.[28] As of 2008, pirates off the Somali coast had hijacked 47 ships, attacking a further 111[29]. This despite growing commitment of military resources by the international community to stem the risk of pirate and terrorist attacks regionally, particularly after the Al Qaeda attacks on the USS Cole in 2000[30] and the French Limberg oil tanker in 2002.

Pirates themselves frequently represent the poorest members of society, including; former nomads who have been pushed out of land or have lost their livestock; internally displaced people; human trafficking victims; and former agriculturalists unable to compete in local markets; among others. Young people in Somalia are highly disadvantaged by resource scarcity and population growth. Yet piracy does not offer a way out. It is a high risk and low profit activity, often trapping pirates into cycles of poverty and debt,

in which young men take out loans from organised crime networks and warlords to pay for the cost of their lodgings, food and boats while waiting for an opportunity to work on a vessel. Even in Somalia's 'war ravaged economy', which has 'an estimated per capita GDP of US \$298', 'piracy, with an estimated ransom income of US \$20-40 million in 2008 and \$70 million in 2009 … is of limited significance'[31]. As half of the proceeds go to the criminal investors who finance pirating expeditions, pirates themselves are left earning only \$10,000–15,000 each per year, in a dangerous profession where, of the 5,000 pirates operating on average in the Gulf of Aden, a minimum of 7 per cent will die every year in confrontations or out on the open sea, while others will be arrested[32]. The risk of detention increases depending on the capacity of international security forces to chase pirates onto land, meaning that the risks to pirates increase the closer they are to Kenyan or Yemeni waters (where the majority of international vessels now sail).

The success of piracy is also impacted by the loyalties of host port towns and clans, which change over time towards pirates depending on economic incentives. Somali pirates buy protection from clans in Puntland and South Central Somalia in exchange for their freedom of movement. If piracy brings in more money than local trade (such as fishing and mining) then host communities will be more likely to support pirates. The converse scenario would be the opposite of this. Protection of piracy can ensure income flows. In 2012 an average ransom from a pirating activity was typically US \$5 million, of which nearly 90% went to local warlords and clans[33]. However, pirates are often in conflict between each other and this dissipates the welfare gains for local communities from their booty. The EU raids of 2012 to locate and destroy pirate anchorages also presented opportunity costs for local communities associating themselves with pirates. These connections between piracy and clannism are important to note, because, while the EU may be successful in temporarily dismantling a pirate network or pirate stronghold, clan ties mean that those networks are relatively easy to reconstruct. Resources are better spent addressing the root causes and attractiveness of piracy.

Host communities may hedge their bets by supporting a variety of maritime activities at once. Given rising migratory demand in war affected areas and the difficulty of travelling out of Somalia, piracy is becoming increasingly intertwined with a growing network of organised crime for facilitating irregular migration in coastal towns. Clans protect both licit and illicit trade flows and activities through their ports as well as piracy, fishing and mining (as do warlords and religious groups). Competing groups levy "taxes", issue fishing and mining "licenses", issue trade "licenses" and control income flows. Control over these deeds complicates clan conflict, or open war between rival warlords, rendering circumstances difficult, insecure and uncertain for Somali pirates who must negotiate these relationships to maintain their activities. It is unlikely that all local clans support pirates as they bring disorder and violence into host communities, yet at the same time there is evidence that piracy has brought welfare benefits for local seaboard communities[34]. Pirates need to have the "sunk cost" infrastructures to achieve their objectives and the support of local populations. They have to pay local clans fees for anchorage, lavish hospitality for local warlords and dignitaries, bribes for local officials, and provide qat for local police as well as for their own sailors. Therefore piracy necessitates weak law enforcement capacity to operate and yet, conversely, does not thrive in contexts of complete lawlessness when there are too many actors vying for power. This means that, in the context of Somali state failure, pirates depend on the existing non-state hierarchies like clans for their operations, relying on xeer (a system of customary law) and other locally accepted systems to maintain set rules of interaction with formal and informal host authorities.

The EU Anti-Piracy Operation in the Horn of Africa

In 2008, the EU agreed to set up its operation to combat piracy, named EUNAVFOR4 Somalia, also known as Operation Atalanta. The operation was designed with a mandate of one year and an initial cost of 8.3 million euros[35]. It has been implemented in an area covering the south of the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Somali basin and part of the Indian Ocean, including the Seychelles. Bueger credits

the EU operation in the Gulf of Aden as being successful in creating itself as a core actor in the field of counter-piracy[36]. The EUNAVFOR4 mission was also couched as a humanitarian mission, but it was a response to needing to keep some of the world's busiest shipping lanes clear and also to protect international trade, fisheries and the European insurance underwriting industry. The EU's approach was also multi-headed combining sea- and land-based approaches to the problem of piracy, working closely with other international organisations such as NATO and the UN[37], and the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (of which it is a leading member)[38].

Naval commanders used the EU Atalanta operation to make a case for enhanced maritime security to combat terrorism, organised crime and piracy. This gave EU actions in CSDP a military lead that prioritised seaborne approaches to dealing with piracy[39].

EU development policies since 9/11 have become securitised, typically emphasising security over development, justified by reference to terrorism and organised crime in the Neighbourhood, in the Horn of Africa and Yemen. Operation Atalanta exists alongside an additional CSDP civilian crisis management mission titled the EU Training Mission for Somalia (EUTM), which is based in Uganda and focuses on the training of recruits for the Somali army[40]. However, the EUTM was more focused on Western security interests and was used as a proxy for counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations in Somalia instead of actively encouraging sustained security sector reform. This was a lost opportunity which also caused resentment in Somalia[41]. The key EU institution engaged in CSDP operations is the Political and Security Committee (PSC)[42], which is dominated by EU member state interests. CSDP civilian missions encompass activities such as election monitoring, stabilisation, educational projects, and peacekeeping. Their military operations involve the stabilisation of a territory via the use of military force. CSDP military operations take place under the concept of permanent structured (PESCO) that was enshrined in the 2009 Lisbon Treaty[43]. PESCO itself extends beyond the confines of CSDP but does offer a convenient framework for developing national cooperation in the EU to mount CSDP military crisis management operations.

Operation Atalanta has to be understood in the wider context of the EU's relations with the African Union (AU) mission in Somali (AMISOM). Operation Atalanta saw the EU take the military lead in counter-piracy through CSDP that was guided by the national security concerns of EU member states rather than land-based development priorities[44]. However, the EU did work closely with other partners engaged on the ground such as the AU and acted in the role of sponsor to AMISON. The AU mission deployed around 8,000 peacekeeping troops at any given time in the context of AMISOM[45]. CSDP missions towards Africa have received some criticism for being more about words than actions, with the Somalia operation Atalanta being somewhat of an exception, being a relative success overall[46]. Nevertheless, this is not to say that Operation Atalanta was not without issues in itself:

> In Somalia, the anti-piracy efforts of the EU have been constrained by a lack of consensus between EU member states about the use of force and rules of engagement...[L]eadership and coordination issues would be better addressed through the designation of a EUSSR [EU Special Representative] for the Horn of Africa.[47]

Operation Atalanta is a test case for the practical functioning of EU foreign policy from a military perspective and concerns European strategic interests in the EU's near abroad. The operation also concerns the stabilisation and securitisation of the Horn of Africa for security reasons both regionally in Europe, in Africa itself and globally. Even though security takes precedence in EU policy, a humanitarian dimension of this includes the convoying of much needed aid under the WFP. Nevertheless, this particular UN-sponsored programme brings in food from the outside and does not lead to the building up of indigenous capacity as the food is treated as a short-term security and not a long-term development issue.

The EU Operation Atalanta is an important evolutionary step in the practical development of the EU's CSDP military instruments, but EU policies suffer from policy incoherence between and within policies and institutions, which is a result of the Union's legal and institutional architecture in external security[48].

This hampers the operational aspects of any joined up development-security strategy in the Horn of Africa.

To work alongside its maritime operations, the EU launched its Counter-Terrorism Action Plan in 2012 to combat terrorism and organised crime in the Horn of Africa. This again prioritised security over development[49]. The European Council subsequently adopted the Horn of Africa Regional Action Plan 2015-2020 in October 2015. The Action Plan outlines the EU's comprehensive approach to addressing key issues throughout the region[50]. The Regional Action Plan[51] has several ambitious objectives: regional security and stability, migration and forced displacement, counter-radicalisation and violent extremism, youth and employment, human rights, rule of law and democratic governance.

The key driver for EU policy is security. The EU underlines the importance of ensuring close international and regional co-ordination, including through the work of the EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa, to create synergies in the implementation of all relevant initiatives[52]. The UNODC in Vienna point to four security-development issues that require resolution in the Horn of Africa: migrant smuggling from Ethiopia/Somalia to Saudi Arabia and Yemen; heroin trafficking from South-West Asia to Eastern Africa; ivory trafficking through Eastern Africa to Asia; and Somali piracy[53]. De Waal and Ilbreck state:

> ...the EU should adjust its vision to look beyond states and individuals and the relationships between them, and towards the reality of governance in the region which requires attention to public authority in its multiple forms. [Meaning the EU should] promote human security not only through partnerships with governments and the African Union but also through wider engagement with this broad array of governance mechanisms.[54]

The legitimacy of the whole EU approach of post-liberal state-building in Somalia is questionable, because it is predicated on a security-first logic. The EU approach leads to ad-hoc policies that do not properly engage with local communities. Indeed, the EU's Comprehensive Approach to development in Somalia is imbued with a technocratic understanding of state-building as capacity-building, is half-heartedly applied, and does not take into account local characteristics in a meaningful way, This is in contrast to Operation Atalanta which has been a relative success in comparison, but the point is all EU actions have preferred military and counter-insurgency approaches to the issue of Somali security over dealing with land-based development problems that exist[55]. It is clear that only a comprehensive EU land-based approach to piracy driven by development will have any lasting positive impact on the region.

Land-Based Development Approaches to Regional Stability: The socio-cultural-security nexus

The contested debates on what constitutes a security-development nexus have been played out elsewhere and take a predominantly critical approach to security[56]. Land-based approaches to development can be said to be linked to sociological approaches which see Somali as a failed state narrative. The argument is that piracy is nothing new and that it is more likely to occur when there is a "failed state" in the mix such as Somalia. This is linked to the idea that commerce/shipping requires protection and that it is the role of the international community to do this. Duffield argues that instead of providing security and development in Africa, Western states are more concerned with policing developing states and territories to maintain the pre-eminence of their own consumer economies in the global political economy[57]. This links back to the work of Rothe and Collins, who have argued that the framing of pirates as dangerous individuals is problematic. This liberal economic environment provides multiple opportunities for Western private security companies to make money from the international community. Shortland has termed this the sociological/anthropological approach to the study of piracy[58]. An alternative approach emphasises the political economy of the subject. Poverty and the absence of law enforcement combined with degrees of (in)stability in government explain the rise of piracy according to this view[59]. The combination of development and security feeds into the cause of and

response to piracy which is linked to land-based approaches to solving the problem. Shortland and Varese highlight the protection model of counter-piracy related to land-based approaches. Essentially, pirates pay money to local clans for protection and also pay high prices goods and services to the clans to sustain them. Indeed:

> ...clan elders and Islamist militias facilitated piracy by protecting hijacked ships in their anchorages and resolving conflicts within and between pirate groups. Protection arrangements operated *across* clans, as illustrated by the free movement of hijacked ships along the coastline and the absence of re-hijacking after ransoms were paid. Piracy protection can be thought of as part of a continuum of protection arrangements[60].

However, coastal communities with land trade routes such as roads are less likely to support pirates as the communities presumably have alternative sources of revenue[61]. Private sector security providers have filled the market place with solutions to the Somali security problem and this has sprouted an industry to deal with the effects of piracy. There are concerns over the professionalism and conduct of some private contractors in the execution of their duties in the Gulf of Aden, but also historically in Iraq and Afghanistan[62], but this does not vitiate the dominant narrative that private sector providers of security provide a service for a price that governments are sometimes willing to pay, if reluctantly. This argument was extended from dealing with piracy at sea to dealing with it on land because of need, Uneasy alliances of NGOs and private sector providers of security emerged when piracy was judged a problem requiring a solution. The total cost of piracy in Somalia is between US$630 million and US$18 billion[63], depending on who one reads, but the fear of economic loss in the West to private interests has generated a whole counter-piracy industry. There are those theorists of piracy that foresee global economic interests – as represented by the insurance trade and private sector military companies[64] – as having a vested interests in conflating pirates and piracy with organised crime, terrorism and threats to world trade. Indeed, Western private sector actors have largely shied away from developing land-based approaches to piracy in a *systematic* and *sustained* way precisely because this is not in their interests. Indeed, Western governments working with private sector interests often privilege the economic opportunities that are offered up by maritime-based piracy therefore encouraging military and sea-based approaches to the problem. Land-based development solutions in Somalia are inherently longer-term in scope, require considerable investment and have no guarantee of success[65]. In the contemporary era, the pirate and the terrorist exist in a grey zone between war and peace. They are threatened with a "permanent state of exception" that is perhaps beyond the jurisdiction and protection of international law[66]. The upshot is that this necessitates the creation of economic solutions to piracy that are guided by Western public and private sector interests and international organisations such as the EU. Invariably Western discourses and policies conflate the pirate with the terrorist[67], the pirate with the organised criminal, and also privilege sea-based approaches to piracy over more complex land-based development approaches.

Western approaches to security discourses highlight land-based solutions relating to piracy and organised crime in Somalia but the practice is rather different. However, in terms of regional organised crime, piracy represents only the tip of a very large iceberg, in which attacks on pirate vessels will not necessarily address the underlying criminal structures responsible for enabling pirate operations. Western responses have correspondingly been patchy towards land-based approaches. Since 2011 the EU has recognised that its Comprehensive Approach to anti-piracy had to encompass land-based approaches to addressing the problem alongside its well-defined maritime strategy. Relying on CSDP alone will not solve these intractable problems in the host societies in the Horn of Africa. This chimes with the under-developed US approach towards regional stability in the Horn of Africa.

Other critical factors such as gender also feature in any strategy to combat radicalisation of young people in the Horn of Africa.[68] There is a need to understand the social pressures that push young Somali men into a life of piracy, as well as a need to understand and better credit the role that women can play in countering these. Underemployed and unemployed graduates alike are also particularly susceptible to radicalisation and becoming involved in illicit activities such as piracy[69]. The EU and US seek to find jobs for graduates through programmes such as the USAID Generation Kenya initiative[70],

however, further investment needs also to be made into the reintegration of former pirates and pirate prisoners into a lawful Somali society.

Nevertheless, the prospects for sustainable forms of development are bleak in the Horn of Africa. De Waal speaks about politics in the Horn of Africa as being run by gangsters instead of civic political leaders. The politics of the accumulation and loss of power holds sway in the region. The use of violence for political ends is the rule not the exception to the rule. In the final analysis, politics represents a marketplace that is defined by political entrepreneurs seeking to maximise their individual economic and political utilities by whatever (brutal) means are necessary in the circumstances[71]. The relative lack of Western engagement with land-based approaches to piracy and the status of piracy as an industry both in Somalia and in terms of the Western response to it militate against the EU and US solving issues on the ground related to piracy in the Horn of Africa.

Conclusion

The EU preoccupation with security and post-liberal state-building rather than land-based development approaches undermines European policies in Somalia. The wider Western preoccupation with the central government in Mogadishu is misguided as Somalia is made up of diverse territories, clans and localities. Future initiatives by the UN, EU, US, AU/AMISON need to be more culturally specific and locally targeted and not Liberal/Westphalian-centric in a Western sense. Furthermore, targeting pirates alone is not sufficient and what matters, is broader societal opportunities in terms of meaningful employment opportunities for young men to take them away from piracy and terrorist organisations. What matters in the end is building economies and job prospects to take away economic incentives for piracy as well as improved national and international security in the region. To date, EU approaches have overly focused on security over development and maritime approaches to piracy over land-based development approaches. Whilst the war against piracy at sea is being won the land based struggle is far more complex and is essentially one driven by complex approaches towards development (Bueger, 2015a). Private sector interests in the West might well be an obstacle to treating the symptoms of piracy in that it is not in their economic interest to solve the problem. Indeed, Western private security companies and the insurance industry have a vested interest in providing services and perhaps charging high prices for them to Western governments. The Somali socio-cultural-security nexus is a broad guide for where to target Western strategy in general and sectorally according to the issue. At present the EU's Comprehensive Approach to Somalia and the Horn of Africa is framed in a technocratic security-driven way and has not even been properly followed through on those narrow terms. Piracy is one small part of this strategy that has come to the fore in recent years, but there are many underlying issues in Somali society that underpin such criminality which still need to be resolved and the EU needs to rise to the challenge with a meaningful land-based development programme for the Horn of Africa beyond targeting security alone.

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