

The Ripple Effects of Maritime Piracy and Armed Robbery in the Gulf of Guinea

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ABSTRACT

The acts of piracy had bedeviled mankind for many centuries though the modus operandi of this sinister act keeps changing over the years. The core concept still remains the same. It usually involves an armed attack at sea for a vessel, its cargo, crew or all of the three. The stage is set at sea, but the fall out effects are far reaching than we can imagine. There are political, economic social, security and environmental implications. All these aggregates or determinants are intertwined and have adverse consequences on all the stakeholders. Failed states political instability has become fertile grounds for pirates or sea armed robbers. Economically, the disruption of free movement of vessels, capture of crew for ransom has adversely affected the prices of goods at its final destination. This paper seeks to examine the relationships and effects these attacks have on the various facets of the marine logistic chain. The socio-economic model of Dr Kenneth McLeroy is used to explain the various linkages existing between these determinants viz economic perspective, social perspective, environmental perspective and political instability. Finally, the relevance of maritime security in the sphere of governance and the ability of institutions which would use the safety of our oceans is examined.

Keywords: Piracy, Economic Perspective, Social Perspective, Political Instability, Environmental Perspective, Shipping Perspective, Insecurity

INTRODUCTION

The incidence of maritime piracy and armed robbery is a crucial existential security challenge, not only to the maritime industry but to society at large. The challenge is by no means limited to security in any way. According to [1], the problem of piracy is ongoing and ever-changing problem. Each area has their own features and requires their own solution for their specific situation. Over the years, it has translated and transformed from ordinary attacks on cargo vessels to contemporarily assume dimensional complexities in operations against other vessels including tankers, container vessels and bulk carriers as well. Some scholars sustain that pirates are not choosing their prey according to the shipment transported by the vessel [2], but tend to avoid attacking ships flying the colors of countries having military presence in their close vicinity [3]

Whilst the intention for piracy and armed robbery remains pure and clear as acts of thefts and extortion, this modern face presents an increasing stress to stakeholders in the maritime industry. What is more, stakeholder's dependents are not spared the associated agony either when piracy strikes. What gets attacked is as important as how it is attacked. Motherships are

more effective attack platforms than smaller skiffs and enable the pirate operations even when it is monsoon season [4].

In the Gulf of Guinea, piracy and armed robbery remain horrific and terrifying phenomena couched in violence; their expression ranges from hostage-taking, kidnappings, threats, beatings to injuries and in the worst case possible, deaths of victims do occur.

Evidently, its undesirability has provoked and prompted thoughts and actions to inject innovations and improvement dynamism of structures and institutions into the maritime industry with the view to promoting security for the benefit of humanity. Come to think of various legal frameworks, innovative structure on vessels such as citadels, employment generations through the engagement of private armed guards to protect the vessel, naval patrolling which gives meaning to existence of national security apparatus etc. In the last years shipowners are trying to protect their ships from pirate attacks through security equipment and by employment of private armed security on their ships [5]. It will not be out of order to submit that maritime piracy and armed robbery have positive impacts as well. That the ripple effects of maritime piracy and armed robbery have good and bad days cannot be overemphasized.

Nevertheless, because of its undesirability, the ripple effects, albeit snowball effect, usually attracts the wildest condemnation and sometimes subtle acceptance. Simply put, the ripple effects of maritime piracy and armed robbery can either be positive or negative, depending on the perspective entailed.

This paper will highlight such outlook in the review of the available literature to drive home on what is meant by the topic under discussion, citing contemporary incidents in the Gulf of Guinea, particularly in the Niger Delta of Nigeria, Ghana, Togo and Benin so as to also define the scope of my research work. The concept of UNCLOS will be appealed to. Nonetheless, this paper will consider the ripple effects in terms of security, social political, economics and maritime transportation.

In view of the seemingly hidden positive components resulting from piracy, this research work will be concluded in an expression of the influential propagatory arms of maritime piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea to bring into focus recommendations that will project security and dignity of humanity.

Definition of Concept

Piracy

According to International Maritime Bureau (IMB), piracy can be defined as “the act of boarding or attempting to board any vessel with the apparent intent to commit theft or any other crime, and with an intent or capacity to use force in furtherance of that act.”

According to Article 101 of UNCLOS Definition of Piracy 1982, "maritime piracy" consists of: "(a) any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed: (i) on the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft; (ii) against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the

jurisdiction of any State; (b) any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft; (c) any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b).”

Armed Robbery

The term “modern piracy” is often used interchangeably to cover both “piracy” and “armed robbery” at sea. The IMO follows the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). IMO makes no distinction between attacks in international and territorial waters. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) defines armed robbery as: “Any unlawful act of violence or detention or any act of depredation, threat thereof, other than an act of piracy, committed for private ends and directed against a ship or against persons or property on board such a ship, within a state’s internal waters, archipelagic waters and territorial seas.”

Maritime piracy and armed robbery are the same maritime crime just that they are differentiated with respect to their location of perpetration. According to UNCLOS, piracy occurs on the high seas and armed robbery occurs within a nation’s territorial waters.

Problem Definition

The ripple effect of maritime piracy and armed robbery is often misconstrued to mean the negative influences of piracy and is it rightfully so because of the associated discomfort that humanity faces and invariably expresses himself to flee and avoid. Nevertheless, much as this is misconstrued, it translates into bias perspective, provocation of thoughts and actions against the discomfort also trigger innovation of structures and legal framework in a quest for sound and healthy living. The ripple effects of maritime piracy and armed robbery are thus considered a design which expresses the mathematical number line model consisting both negative and positive numbers. Simply put, ripple effects are not limited to negativities, positive entities are also entailed. IMB report so far in the year 2020 has the following key factors, there was a 40% increase in the number of kidnaping cases reported in the Gulf of Guinea.

As at 14th October, 2020, IMB reportedly submitted 132 attacks of global piracy incidents since 2020 began, indicating a rise in the number of attacks considering the number of incidents (119) the took place at the same time last year. Of the global incidents of 85 kidnappings 80 victims were taken in the Gulf of Guinea in 14 different attacks off Nigeria, Ghana, Benin among others in the Gulf of Guinea

Concept Explanation

The Ripple Effect

The concept of ripple effect, otherwise called domino effect is a representation of multiple levels of impact initiated by an action, in this case piracy. In an event where the influence is translated in an exponential growth from one level to the next, the term is best described as snowballing effect. By digression and comparison, the incidents of piracy and armed robbery are considered twin criminalities- sameness in nature and form-albeit different in location of perpetration. When the crime occurs in the territorial waters of a country, including its port facilities, it is called armed robbery and beyond the territorial waters the incident is called piracy.

Piracy basically creates negative ripple effects that hits the seafarer and by extension, his relations, communities and society at large.

There are also concerns for ship owners, charterers, vessels and shipping routes and time as well as stake holders in the maritime industry including port facilities operators. It is commonly said that “the individual is not an island”. In the words of Bill Clinton, former president of the United States of America, “we live in a completely interdependent world, which simply means we cannot escape each other... a problem is not someone else’s problem, it is everybody’s problem”.

By dint of interdependence, and interconnectivity, the individual is related to his family, community and society. These linkages cannot be downplayed when it comes to the players in the maritime industry so that when one is affected, everyone is affected.

Generally speaking, the ripple effect of piracy is multi-faceted, ranging from economic, social, political and shipping destitutions on one hand to improvement and innovations of structures and frameworks with the view to attaining sound living standard.

Table 1 ACTUAL ATTACKS

YEAR	BENIN	GHANA	NIGERIA	TOGO
2015	-	2	9	-
2016	1	3	18	1
2017	-	1	20	-
2018	5	9	30	-
2019	3	3	35	3

Source: An IMB’s annual report; second quarter 2019

Table 2 ATTEMPTED ATTACK

YEAR	BENIN	GHANA	NIGERIA	TOGO
2015	-	-	5	2
2016	-	-	9	-
2017	-	-	13	-
2018	-	1	18	1
2019	-	-	9	2

Source: An IMB’s annual report; second quarter 2019

**TABLE 3 LOCATION OF ACTUAL AND ATTEMPTED INCIDENTS FROM JANUARY- JUNE 2015-2019
(EXTRACT FOR INTERESTED WEST AFRICA)**

YEAR	BENIN	GHANA	NIGERIA	TOGO
2015	-	2	11	-
2016	-	-	24	1
2017	-	-	13	-
2018	5	5	31	1
2019	1	3	21	3

Source: An IMB’s annual report; second quarter 2019.

Gulf of Guinea – The World’s Piracy Hotspot

The Gulf of Guinea is touted as the hotspot of world piracy. Basically, piracy poses serious stress to its direct victims and the players in the maritime industry at large and covid-19 pandemic adds to the discomfort. About 95% of global kidnappings occurred in the Gulf of Guinea to affirm the IMB’s warning that the bandits in the Gulf of Guinea “are well organized and target all types of vessels”. On 17th July 2020, IMB reported an attack by pirates wielded by machine guns on a product tanker around 196nm southwest of Bayelsa, Nigeria. Crews were taken hostage and valuable items from the ship were stolen, at the end of the day, the pirates made away with 13 kidnapped crew members who really matter in the navigations of the vessel. The absence of these significant sailors came to light when the vessel was found drifting with a number of unskilled navigational and engine crew on board. Reportedly, a merchant ship in the vicinity came to the rescue of the vessel in distress and a month later the 13 kidnapped crews were also released [6].

In another development, precisely on 8th September 2020, a refrigerated cargo ship in the waters of about 23nm southwest of Lagos, Nigeria and two her crew were kidnapped while the rest took refuge in the vessel’s citadel.

An overview of IMB 2020 Global Report JAN-SEPT 2020.

Table 4 TYPES OF ATTACK

Boarded	Attempted attack	Fired upon	Hijacked
112	12	6	2

Table 5 TYPES OF VIOLENCE

Assaulted	Hostage-taking	Injured	Kidnapped	Threatened
5	31	7	85	6

The number of violence attacks for the year so far stands at 134 with the crew in focus. What it means is that, the crew suffers a lot of violence attacks which may result in fear and psychological derailment. This will also translate into hopelessness and wearisomeness, creating further insecurity in the camp of the victims’ dependents. With the almost 95% of the global kidnapping occurring in the Gulf of Guinea, it underscores the pirates’ intention to get money. It also means that they are not necessarily interested in the cargo and the vessel per se.

GLOBAL DYNAMICS

An overview of imb 2020 global report jan-sept 2020

There is enough evidence as per the IMB’s reported cases to conclude that piracy exacts heavy toll on security, shipping, political, economic and social arms of any enterprise and what pertains in the Gulf of Guinea is no exception. When piracy occurs, affected ports and countries experience drop in vessel traffic. What it means is that, the flow of vessels in and out of the affected ports and its anchorage is reduced. This has economic implication for the port as revenue generation dwindles. Business operations are also negatively affected and this also has a toll on the economy of the country. Again, direct victims like seafarers suffer, their dependents are always trapped invariably in the downward spiral of piracy; anxiety, hopelessness, economic destitution and insecurity define their life.

Tourism, which is also seen as a tool to promote investment and revenue generation of a country also suffer. In 2010, the Executive Secretary of Pan-African Association of Ports Corporation (PAPC) summed up the above deprivation and degradation when he described piracy as “a cankerworm that militates against the growth of ports operation”. Experiential accounts of piracy and armed robbery on countries like Ghana, Nigeria, Togo and Benin in the Gulf of Guinea will be highlighted.

BENIN

Benin's lifeblood is deeply embedded in her coastline, where half of the government revenue comes from taxes on trade in her waters. Specifically, about 80% of taxes comes from the port of Cotonou. The impact of piracy in Benin's waters directly dictates international insurance rates. International marine insurance operators under such “abnormal” circumstance inflict high premium to piracy prone or inflicted country of the region. This translates into high costs of shipping with subsequent decrease in maritime traffic. By implication, these high costs equate to loss in government revenue. Additionally, the insurance premium adjustment takes a toll on the cost of living of the country's citizenry with eventual increase in the costs of imports and decrease in export competitiveness. On 19th April 2020, the maritime executive reported that Dryad Global, a security company, received a report of attack by pirates on Tommy Ritscher at anchorage in the waters of Benin after just succeeding to board, further operations were foiled by the presence of a naval vessel which approached the scene. This year February also witnessed an attack south of Cotonou on a tanker, ALPINE PENELOPE resulting in kidnapping of 9 of her crew

TOGO

On the 14th of November 2019, four crew were kidnapped from Greek oil tanker off Togo. According to IMB 2019 report, global piracy is on the decrease but the Gulf of Guinea remains a high-risk region for crew kidnappings and armed robbery. On the 16th December 2019, another incident occurred, pirates kidnapped 20 crew from the oil tanker DUKE and this was counted as the highest kidnapping incident in an attack in the year 2019. Explanation by Dyad Global suggested that a mothership was engaged in the successful abduction of the crew members. On October 19, 2020, Dyad Global reported that product tanker PTI NILE was boarded by pirates off Togo, the crew were smart enough to take refuge in the citadel. A Togolese patrol vessel was spotted on the site while the attacked vessel remains in the position of the incident.

Barrack Obama once said “development is basic to national security”.

Lack of development creates drivers of insecurity; Nigeria derives about 95% of her foreign exchange earnings from oil but the oil industry has been a target of transnational organized criminality. Nigeria's oil revenue would have been quite higher but for this criminality. The oil resource wealth is depleted in a number of ways including:

- Bunkering: Nigeria's oil is subject to direct theft from pipelines which are refined by the robbers themselves and sold on both local and international markets.
- Kidnapping: The robbers also result to kidnapping employees of the oil companies for payment of ransom.

- **Extortion:** In view of the above developments, oil companies more often than not, pay fees as measure of protecting their pipelines and discourage kidnapping of their employees.

It is very worrying to learn from Dr. Bashire Jamoh, Director General of Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) that presently, Somali pirates are operational in Nigerian waters. It is believed that quite a significant number of the pirates reside in the oil-rich Niger Delta and their focus of attack is on refrigerated cargo, fishing vessels and oil facilities for ransom.

Between January to August 2020, Nigeria witnessed 11 pirate attacks as against 35 and 48 attacks respectively recorded in 2019 and 2018. The decline is attributed to the presence of Nigerian Navy. Latest report by Reuters indicates that on 2nd July 2020 oil production vessel, SENDJE BERGE was attacked off Nigeria and the pirates kidnapped 9 Nigerian nationals. IMB figures as of the fourth quarter 2020, shows the rise in piracy attack in relation to kidnapping. Reportedly, Gulf of Guinea reported 40% increase in the number of kidnapping cases in comparison with 2019 kidnapping cases over the same period. The actual global kidnapping was 85 out of which 80 occurred in the Gulf of Guinea of Nigeria, Benin, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Ghana [7].

Of the hijacked cases globally, the figure was two and both occurred in Nigeria, the victims were two fishing vessels.

GLOBAL DYNAMICS

Ripple Effects of Piracy

There is no quantitative research available on the total cost of piracy [8], nor any reliable figures documenting the economic consequences [1]. Estimates vary widely because of disagreement as to how to measure the costs of piracy. What variables should be included? Are insurance risk premiums, ransoms and the costs of negotiation including the time factors the key variables? What about the impact on world trade and value put on the human the trauma suffered by crew and family [9]? Piracy and armed robbery are awash with undesirable consequences that transcend victimized crews, vessels and its cargo to hit stakeholders and dependents alike in the maritime industry. In as much as the medium of piracy is violence, expressible only in hostage-taking, kidnappings, beatings to injury, threatening and in the worst-case scenario, death.

That notwithstanding, the immediate and remote effects of piracy in the shapes and forms of social, economic, political, transportation and security dimensions in the industry are well pronounced. It will also be considered a biased perception if these influences are viewed only as momentous waves hitting objects in a straight line. For much as society is plagued, the growing sense of fear and insecurity and the crew is not essentially a man on an island, so are the dimensional issues of the matter- economic, political, social, environmental and security. They cannot be necessarily treated in isolation.

In the words of [10], “maritime threats are interdependent, asymmetric, sticky and escalatory”. There is also a response awakening effort that mitigate or militate against the influences of

piracy. In this regard, [10] is credited with the submission that “security threats posed by piracy is bi-dimensional- insecurity and development.

Additionally, [11] tested the effect of modern maritime piracy on the maritime trade cost, proposing a simple model of transport cost determination and deriving a transport costs equation augmented with maritime piracy as an additional variable. Their results showed a significant impact of maritime piracy on maritime transport cost [12]. At the beginning ransoms have been between few thousands USD on average, while today are more than 3 million USD. Longer stays of ships on their trips have influence on the loss of earnings, increase of insurance premiums and on many other costs.

Economic Prospects

Maritime piracy has also been specifically linked to trade. In particular, [9] and [13] focus on the economic impact of maritime piracy on trade through the decision of ship operators to change their main trade routes between Europe and Asia in order to avoid Somali piracy. The direct economic impacts of piracy are spelt out in numerous losses: costs of ransom, re-routing, higher insurance premium, deterrent security equipment, piracy-deterrence organization and naval forces [14].

From a welfare perspective, there is a direct capital loss to violence. For instance, pirates may inflict serious damage to attacked ships, cargo may be stolen and crew may be kidnapped for which in some cases, insurers are forced to cough out huge sums of money to meet the conditionality for releasing the crew. This is not just an effect but one that is also wrapped up in further conditions such payment of negotiation fees and services of a helicopter to drop the ransom to the captors at a place of their choice.

An indirect economic loss is also encountered when piracy induces vessels to reroute. For the purpose of avoidance of areas of high pirate activity in the Gulf of Guinea and protection of the vessel under these circumstances, longer voyage is imminent. Accordingly, it takes more than 900km to the regular shipping route [15] and extra fuel cost is consumed.

There is also a high cost of labour aside more fuel consumption due to the longer voyage-contributing to the detriment of the environment through greenhouse gas emission. Maritime piracy therefore impacts shipping costs and provokes other costs such as air pollution to the environment.

Maritime insurance companies directly respond to piracy by inflating their insurance premiums and shipping rates in piracy-prone zones. The shipowners purchase insurance covers for the hull of the vessel and the cargo on board as well as kidnapping incidents that may occur out of piracy. This translates into higher freights and costs of doing business.

Vessels are also protected from piracy attacks, security apparatus prior to transiting piracy-prone zones. Robust structures like the citadel, barb wires, high pressured hose, spotlights etc. are also worth mounting. Another measure of protection involves engagement of anti-piracy organizations or units to provide security for the vessel, cargo and the crew on board. The costs of these protective equipment and units may reflect in higher freight charges.

These major costs notwithstanding, some subsequent costs arise out of the major ones. For example, countries in piracy-prone zones are affected economically. Benin which relies on her coastal waters account for revenue maximization may be affected when piracy strikes to reduce shipping traffic and trade volumes. This is rightfully so when trader and other cargo owners use other ports to do business.

Social Perspective

Maritime piracy has been a problem to seafarers on their routine jobs at sea. An adage has it that, “no man is an island”. This presupposes interconnectivity and interdependence which are contained in the socio ecological model on the concept of the ripple effect by Dr. Kenneth McLeroy in 1988. Dr. McLeroy modelled an individual connected to his family and friends living in a community which is viewed holistically as a society.

A 2016 analysis of the experience of Filipino former hostages [16] showed high rates of conditions found to predict lasting problems including subjective fear and distress and loss of control over their lives [17].

Much as it is evident that the victimized crew will suffer such derailment, his dependents will also be caught in a whirlpool of hopelessness, discomfort and financial destitution. If he is inclined to philanthropism, the circumstance will dictate a negative impact to his community and all inspired community development projects under his watch will be stalled.

Indeed, the problem may be worsened for the community, his relations’ efforts to support developmental projects are withdrawn as a result of cut in cashflow from the breadwinner. Finally, the society suffers from the wake of little or no developmental infrastructure.

Petro-piracy in the Niger Delta, Nigeria exemplifies this scenario. The indigenes suffer from marginalization. They are denied the oil revenue which is intended for their welfare just because only a few individuals in government circles, oil companies and few local selected elites enjoy the oil revenue. A paradox picture is painted: oil-rich region which is inhabited by poor indigenes. This situation brews social unrest in the community. Spillage of oil also impacts negatively on the lives of the indigenes.

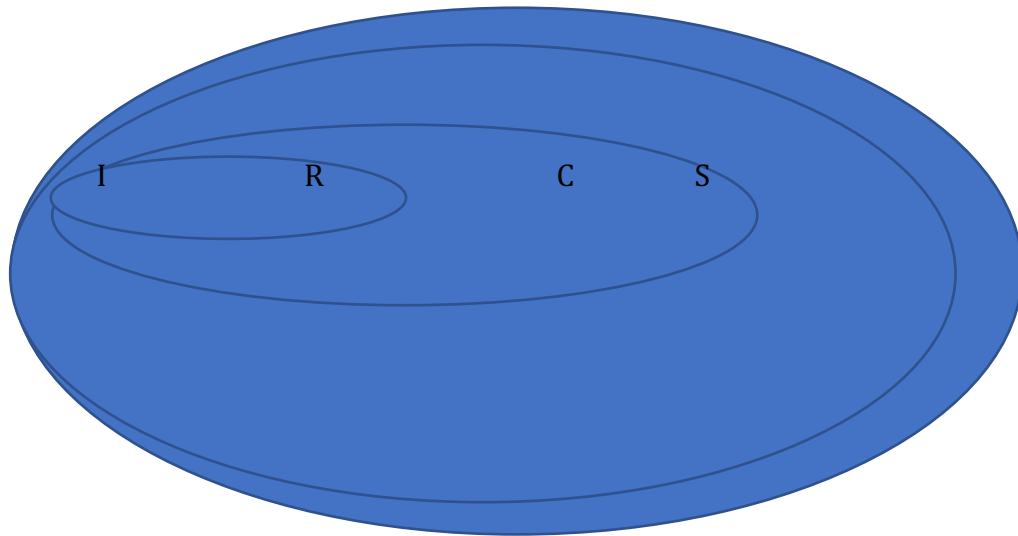


Fig 1.0: Based on socio- ecological model in 1988 by Dr Kenneth McLeroy
Source: Adopted from the Socio-Ecological Model by Dr. Kenneth McLeroy
Where I = Individual, R=Relations, C= Community, S= Society

Woes of the affected

I= {Injury, kidnapping, death, hostage-taking}

R= {Poverty, neglect, violence}

C= {Lack of health, infrastructure, post pipe borne water}

S= {Health problems, lost jobs, lost opportunities, loss of human labour}

"I" precipitates the woes R, and R the woes of C and C the woes of S.

The combined effects of I&R on the region R, I & RC in region C and I& R&C&S in region S will be increasingly felt in magnitude to explain the snowballing effect.

Political Instability

Piracy accounts for the proliferation of political instability in countries worldwide. In the Gulf of Guinea, an element of weak statehood promotes corrupt policies and practices, for instance, it allows the central government, few community elites, and oil companies to benefit from oil trade in the Delta region, Nigeria to the detriment of local communities. A lot of troubles are associated with political climate. The presence of pirates in the region accounts for low political index. What this means is that, the risk of doing business in the region is very high and this is likely to translate into losses for businessmen and women in the region and beyond as in the case of cargo theft. Invariably, this will afflict the economic performance of the country.

Environmental Perspective

Piracy also can potentially trigger a major environmental disaster if the violent acts occur in crowded sea lanes such as Bab-el Mandeb or the Strait of Malacca transited by heavy laden oil tankers [18]. Another serious environmental hazard results from littering under the close watch of the pirate groups in the Niger Delta. The garbage may be trapped in the propellers of vessels which in turn slows down their movements and this can lead to more emission of carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide and Sulphur oxide into the atmosphere. These air pollutants also become eminent in the face of vessel adjustment program. That is to say, when vessels are re-routed to avoid high risk areas, it takes longer voyages with subsequent increased fuel consumption that translates into emission of more air pollutants as indicated.

Insecurity

No matter where maritime crime is perpetrated in the Gulf of Guinea, its influences in other faces cannot be denied. Naval officer RTD Dr. Kamal-Deen Ali summed up this picture when submitted that “Although we stand out as a country and a safe port, we are still facing the consequences of the larger insecurity in the region when it comes to high insurance, high freight costs and everything else”. Dr Kamal-Deen’s submission brings to light different dimensions of insecurity, high insurance premium and high freight which all amount to high cost of doing business (economic insecurity). This is rightly so because “everything else” includes social insecurity (seafarer’s lives are subjected to the mercy of pirates), environmental insecurity (in the event of oil spillage which affects marine life and coastline communities), shipping insecurity (loss of real delivery time) etc.

All these dimensions are awakened as a result of piracy and they assume shape and form because they are all interlaced and together. In other words, the ripple effects of piracy engender social, economic, shipping, environmental and political misfortunes.

Shipping Perspective

Shipping in the Gulf of Guinea is seriously threatened by piracy with Nigeria considered the hub of all threats. When piracy occurs, the flows of shipping traffic is disturbed. Usually there is less traffic as vessels resort to circumventing the victimized zone.

Benin for example rely heavily on their waters for revenue generation. In such circumstance, this translates to loss of revenue for the state with subsequent derailment of government business.

Piracy also precipitate procrastination on trade routes. In the light of avoiding piracy-infested waters, vessels may chart new trade routes that will lead to longer voyages. The implications are not far-fetched. Economic loss in the form of more fuel consumption by the vessel and the consumption of ship’s stores may be hastened. Cargo may also be stolen to provide grounds of disincentives for traders and charters to engage in shipping services of a victimized vessel. But the costs of piracy extend far beyond the actual vessels that are attacked. The U.S. Merchant Marine estimates that global piracy costs shippers \$4.9 billion to \$8.3 billion a year [19].

In the face of piracy incident, shipping companies put up with higher insurance premium and operating costs to sustain their business. Maritime piracy also impedes real time delivery of cargoes and this impacts negatively on the trader and at the point of final destination, particularly when the cargo is intended for consumption, with a specific period.

[20] submits that piracy in Nigeria threatens “vital fishing industry and regional trade”.

As piracy increases, some shipowners may choose to trade their vessels for capital rather than investing to upgrade their vessels against piracy attacks such as the installation of barbed wires, the use of high pressurized hoses, installation of bulletproof glasses on the bridge and the employment of armed security guards onboard the vessel and this may account for fewer vessels in the maritime trade [13].

Piracy is also a disincentive for shipping countries to trade by sea. Smaller shipping vessels fizzle out, leading to the creation of a monopolistic environment for giant companies to operate. From IMB's standpoint, "the annual global piracy costs of \$13-15 billion is considered risky for international trade and traffic".

There is a widespread acceptance that these perspectives constitute major effects, even though they are not independent. They are interrelated and interact in complexity to produce minor effects. The occurrence of any one will have an effect on the likelihood of occurrence of each of the others. In other words, the occurrence of a particular dimension will increase the probability of the other dimensions [2].

Even though to some extent, the relationships of these dimensions can be quantified (ascertaining the magnitude of the problem on society and the maritime industry) these effects in themselves will provide grounds to predict the overall damages triggered by piracy to allow for wholistic approach to axing piracy and its ripple effects.

THE "WHAT IF'S" OF PIRACY INFLUENCES

Probing Further

A thought through the facts of piracy in terms of its influences on the maritime industry, one is tempted to ask the question, "what if" piracy had not struck? Will there have been legal frameworks designed to deter piracy and bring up security in the maritime industry?

What if piracy had not manifested? Will there have been invaluable contributions by shipbuilders to construct robust citadels, barb wires, high pressured hose, spotlights and a host of innovative structures to promote security for seafarers and deter insecurity in general?

What if piracy had not occurred? Will there have been engagement of private armed guards on board vessels to rguarantee security for the crew, cargo and the ship? Is it not evidential that piracy has promoted job creation?

What is piracy were non-existent? Will there have been sharing and international cooperation geared towards protection of vessel, cargo and crew members as well as solidifying the spirit of brotherliness among member states in the Gulf of Guinea?

What if piracy were a mirage? Will there have been intensive naval patrol on our waters to deter it? Indeed, the naval involvement underscores actualization of some arms and objects of the naval institution.

What is piracy had been absent? Academicians would not have had sleepless nights and days probing the causes and effects of piracy with the vow to drawing policy attention for its eradication.

What if piracy had not happened? A lot of counter piracy measures will not have been instituted and enforced to ensure security progress, particularly in information dissemination among authorities in the wake of the Yaounde Code of conduct. Six West Africans networked in information sharing resulting in the boost for Nigeria navy to locate and rescue kidnapped hostages of MT MARIMUS.

A host of answers may flow from the “what if” question. It goes without doubting that piracy has contributed in unearthing structural innovations among others in the maritime world.

CONCLUSION

The problem of piracy and armed robbery is not necessarily an evaluative negative scheme. Much as this viewpoint is expressible, the ramifications in social, political, economic, transportation and environmental circles cannot be overemphasized.

That notwithstanding, the problem of piracy and its ripple effects allow for assessment of maritime security. The threat of maritime security posed by piracy is bidimensional: security and development [10]. The ripple effects are not holistically derogatory and destructive. A face of positivity is obviously envisaged. The ripple effects of piracy encapsulate a basic assessment of importance in relation to maritime security which espouses unalloyed consensus with international flavour for actions and support by regional actors to solve maritime insecurities. The ripple effects provoke a window of opportunity for appraising the importance of maritime security in the realm of governance and institution building. The end result is that an unalloyed consensus with international flavour that favours regional actions and support for solving maritime insecurity. To portray positivity out of piracy, counter piracy measures must necessarily agree with any reform of politico-socio-economic considerations.

The maritime industry must support the victim’s family to break the ripple effect of piracy. It is further recommended that all counter piracy efforts must bark and bite. A well of power and authority to prosecute bandits found culpable of any maritime crime, must possess legal connotations. In the wake of the present abnormal rise in kidnapping cases for ransom, it is necessary particularly in the Niger Delta to identify the leaders of these organized crimes to grant amnesty and provide financial support for alternative businesses other than piracy. Regional maritime security communities are needed to ensure elimination of the ripple effects of maritime security.

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