

From: charles.kelso
To: Newsdesk@lloydslist.com
Sent: Wednesday, August 22, 2012 5:00 PM
Subject: The Piracy fiasco.

The Editor, "Lloyd's List"

Sir,

The recently published report by the ICC International Maritime Bureau entitled "The Human Cost of Somali Piracy 2011" reveals, in horrific detail, the torture and deprivation being imposed on the hundreds of seafarers currently being held hostage by the Somali captors and, almost simultaneously, a Lords Piracy report questions whether Britain has made an adequate contribution to "the naval effort".

The latter report expressed surprise that only one Royal Navy ship was allocated to Operation Atalanta for three months in a two-year period and the Chamber of Shipping evinced that this was considerably less than UK shipping required in the area and compared poorly with the involvement of other European navies such as those of Spain, France and Germany -with the Lord's report praising the involvement of China, India and Russia - and let us not forget Iran. With Operation Atalanta's mandate coming up for review in 2014 doubts are already being cast on the willingness of "Western nations" to continue their involvement with this ineffectual charade and although the Lords and others, including the Council of Somali Organisations - a UK based Somali Diaspora organisation with strong representation in Luton - are asking that the mandate be extended beyond 2014 -there are indications that, with the introduction of EUCAP Nestor - a civilian mission designed to support regional maritime capacity building in the Horn of Africa and West Indian Ocean states with a modest budget of 28 million USD., this may not be the case.

Employing some 175 people under the command initially of a "civilian operation commander with military experience" this organisation will be based in Djibouti where a regional training centre will be established. The EU tells us that Nestor has two main objectives: Strengthening the seagoing maritime capacities in the countries of the region (*with the exception of Somalia*) and, in Somalia, the training of a coastal police force - as well as the training of judges! The Lords have also expressed understandable concern about the trial and imprisonment of the relatively few Somali hostage takers that have been brought to "justice". Apparently, the Seychelles has conducted more trials than any other country and is currently holding about 100 prisoners -despite having a prison capacity of 60. Fortunately the UN Office of Drugs and Crime had foreseen this crisis by building prisons in Puntland and Somaliland but the Lords expressed concern about the fact that the guards were "local and unarmed" and suggested that the EU should work with the UN to ensure that these prisons were staffed with personnel "properly trained and equipped to prevent breakouts" although there was a suggestion that in Puntland "breakouts" were probably unnecessary !

The Council of Somali Organisations drew attention to the repeated contravention of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child whereby many minors were detained and also raised concerns about the legality and fairness of piracy prosecutions, reminding us that the EU Convention on Human Rights should apply as soon as a pirate was detained - but, inexplicably, they did not seem to recognise the rights of the victims of the attack. Undoubtedly, much of this is music to the ears of the 400+ companies engaged in supplying guards to those merchant ships whose owners choose to employ them. Undoubtedly, a demand for their services will increase steadily as the Monsoon diminishes and with the increase of criminal activity off West Africa, and elsewhere, they are assured of a steady income for many years to come. Meantime, the hostages will continue to endure torture and deprivation, forgotten by their employers and the maritime world at large. We can but ask that God will help them -because certainly few others seem to have the desire or intention to do so.

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