

Document 3: Extracts of Internal FCO Email from African Directorate to Security Policy 2009: only relevant extracts of email included:

(Names Omitted)

2009

From Somalia Supps (Jan/Feb 09):

- Our long-standing policy is not to make substantive concessions to hostage takers. We consider that paying ransoms increases the risk of further hostage taking.

From Lord Avebury Oral PQ briefing (Jan 09):

- Government policy on ransoms is clear: we do not pay ransoms. We counsel other Governments and companies against paying ransoms or making other substantive concessions.

From Lord Mayor piracy brief for Cyprus (Jan 09):

In recent months, there has been an increase in pirate attacks on commercial shipping around the Horn of Africa with around two hundred seafarers being held hostage on board about a dozen seized ships at any one time. Although the problem generally is relatively minor when considering the volume of seafaring traffic in the region (Reports from the UK's Maritime Trade Operation based in Dubai indicate that less than 0.1% of the estimated 16000 ships passing through the region annually are captured), the whole of the shipping industry is taking the situation very seriously. In addition to increased premiums paid to insurers, ship-owners are facing higher wage demands from seafarer associations for working in war like areas. The total sum of the ransoms paid has reached tens of millions of dollars.

**From European Parliament - COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SECURITY AND DEFENCE - *Policy Department and Secretariat* -
Visit of the Delegation to the EU's Operational Headquarters at Northwood, United
Kingdom, 09 January 2009, REPORT**

2. Operation EU NAVFOR "Atalanta"

2.1 EU NAVFOR Atalanta has been launched to tackle the growing challenge posed by Piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. Approximately 20 per cent of global trade (incl. over 25,000 merchant vessels) pass through the area annually. Ransoms from hijacked ships have been estimated at between 25,000 and 25 million US dollars.

From a draft PQ (April)

Question:

what reports he has received on payments of ransom money following pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden contributing to the activities of (a) Islamic militants in Somalia and (b) terrorist groups in the region; and if he will make a statement.

Answer:

We are aware that the majority of pirates operating off the coast of Somalia organise their activities in the Puntland region. However, we do not have the capabilities within Somalia to monitor the movement of ransom monies around Somalia.