The Pirate Returns: Historical Models, East Asia and the War against Somali Piracy

Adam Clulow

On April 8, 2009, pirates attacked a US-flagged cargo vessel, the Maersk Alabama, about five hundred kilometers off the Somali coast. The ship, which carried a crew of twenty US nationals, including their now famous captain Richard Phillips, was on its way to Mombassa in Kenya with a cargo of soya, maize and cooking oil destined for the UN World Food Program. In the early hours of the morning, a group of four teenage gunmen armed with AK-47 assault rifles, the ubiquitous tools of African conflict, boarded the 17,000 tonne ship using grappling hooks. When the unarmed but well-trained crew put up stiff resistance, the pirates were forced to retreat to one of the Maersk Alabama's lifeboats, taking with them Captain Phillips as a hostage. He was subsequently rescued five days later when US navy snipers aboard the USS Bainbridge shot dead three of the pirates and captured the fourth alive.

The Maersk Alabama, which is home-ported in Norfolk, Virginia, was the first American ship to be seized in the current wave of Somali piracy. Its capture is also widely reported to represent the first time that a US merchant vessel has been taken by pirates since the war against the Barbary corsairs of North Africa ended almost two centuries earlier. Although the only losses of property and lives were sustained by the pirates, the attack on the Maersk Alabama focused world attention on the long-standing problem of Somali piracy. Inhabiting a failed state that cannot govern its own cities let alone its 3300-kilometer long coastline, these pirate gangs are able to operate with almost complete freedom in coastal waters and beyond.

Since 2005 when the first attack in the current wave was recorded, Somali pirates have gone from strength to strength. 2008 was a record year, during which they attacked 111 separate vessels, nineteen off the east coast of Somalia and a further ninety-two in the Gulf of Aden. According to the International Maritime Bureau, these attacks resulted in the hijacking of forty-two ships, a figure that translates into an impressive success rate of just under forty percent, and the capture of 815 crewmembers.[1]

One of the hijacked vessels was the Sirius Star, a Saudi-owned supertanker captured in open waters seven hundred kilometers southeast of Mombassa. Without question, this vessel represents the largest prize ever taken in the history of organized piracy, which stretches back to the beginning of recorded history. Measuring 330 meters, it displaces over 300,000 tonnes and was captured with two million barrels of oil onboard—a cargo so large that some journalists have claimed that its loss caused the global price of oil to jump by a dollar.[2] A ransom of $25 million was initially demanded for its release, but the pirates later settled for three million dollars, which was airdropped from a low flying plane. As the cargo alone was worth $100 million this represented a relative bargain for the ship's Saudi owners, who like most other ship-owners

in their position were perfectly willing to pay to ensure the safety of their investment. While the capture of the Sirius Star was piracy on a spectacular scale, other less impressive prizes have regularly produced sizable returns with an average payoff of around one million dollars per vessel. One conservative estimate suggests that Somali pirates earned between eighteen and thirty million dollars in the first nine months of 2008 alone.[3]

The Sirius Star

There is now widespread international recognition that something will have to be done about this problem. Piracy has the potential to strangle commerce flowing through the Gulf of Aden, one of the world's most important sea routes that is used by 20,000 ships every year. There is also a risk that terrorist organizations will enter the piracy business to generate revenue, to gain bargaining chips in negotiations or, in a more frightening scenario, to use a captured vessel as a weapon.

Because the pirate appears as an unwelcome apparition from an anarchic and savage past, there has been a tendency to look towards history to find ways to suppress piracy. The attack on the Maersk Alabama prompted a number of commentators to turn their attention to the last American encounter with large-scale piracy, the wars with the Barbary corsairs that took place at the beginning of the nineteenth century, to see what lessons can be drawn from these conflicts. In fact, it has been difficult to avoid the comparison. Not only do the Barbary corsairs seem similar to Somali pirates in that both are Muslim and African, but the naval vessel that rescued Captain Phillips is named after William Bainbridge who was captured in Tripoli during the First Barbary War when his ship ran aground. In an article published two days after the attack on the Maersk Alabama and now circulating widely through the internet, Tom Wilkinson, chief executive officer of the United States Naval Institute, argues that the campaign against the Barbary pirates should be held as a model and that the tactics it involved should be duplicated by the US navy today:

> The issue is simple but difficult -- how do we eliminate the pirate threat? Strangely, we seem unable to learn from our own history. In 1804 President Thomas Jefferson

said "Enough" to paying 20 percent of the U.S. national budget as tribute to Barbary pirates. His response was clear and successful -- build a strong naval task force, equip it with a sizeable contingent of Marines, and send it to attack and defeat the pirates in their lair. The sailors and Marines sent on that mission did just that -- and in the process wrote a stirring page in our nation's early history. The problem today is that we have refused to take the Jefferson model. We've confined our anti-piracy efforts to the open seas and left the pirates' home bases on land as a sanctuary. Thus, the pirates continue to operate with relative freedom and stealth. We and our allies only respond, never seizing the initiative. The Jefferson model is a better answer: Take on the pirates where they are, rather than guessing where they will be. In short, attack them at their home bases.[4]

While Barbary and Somali pirates do resemble each other in some ways, it is far from obvious that the Jefferson model, to use Wilkinson's term, provides the best template to take from history. Barbary pirates were state-sponsored and hence under the control of an individual ruler who could be compelled by force to shift policy. In contrast, Somali piracy is anarchic and, although certainly tied to power structures on land, cannot be traced back to one figure. Setting this fact aside, the idea that a short military campaign involving attacks on pirate land bases will be enough to halt large-scale piracy and to prevent these groups from reappearing as soon as the Marines leave is problematic at best.

Other commentators with an eye on history

have held up the British's navy campaign to eradicate Atlantic and Caribbean piracy in the first decades of the eighteenth century as a model. This operation ended the career of some of the most notorious pirates in history, including Blackbeard and Bartholomew Roberts, and brought the so-called golden age of piracy to a final, bloody end around 1730. In 2009, however, no single state is capable of duplicating this campaign, which was conducted by an emerging imperial power with a powerful navy able to police global shipping lanes. Even a coalition of states, such as the group of nations that have contributed vessels to Combined Task Force 151, cannot deploy enough ships to adequately guard the shipping lanes threatened by pirate attacks.

Blackbeard (1826 engraving)

If we are to look towards history for the answer, then we would do well to turn our attention to East Asia, specifically to a number of largely neglected but highly sophisticated anti-piracy campaigns that ended the careers of tens of thousands of pirates in the premodern and early modern periods. There are two

reasons to focus on East Asia. First, the region is very much at the center of the emerging crisis. While the attack on the Maersk Alabama focused attention on the United States and its rude encounter with piracy, countries across East Asia have been grappling with this problem long before Captain Phillips' vessel was boarded. The economic consequences of Somali piracy are obvious with Chinese and Japanese shipping companies already losing over half a dozen ships to attacks. At the same time, the situation in Somalia appears to present one of those opportune crises that allow national leaders to advance long-held agendas without encountering significant resistance. One prescient newspaper editorial has already noted that Somalia pirates are quietly and unexpectedly "transforming geopolitical relationships in East Asia" and it is no exaggeration to say that the decisions taken in response to this problem have the potential to reshape the region.[5] In particular, the policies pursued by China, Japan, and South Korea, all of which have already sent naval vessels to Africa, will almost certainly have long term consequences that extend far beyond the immediate crisis.

Second, an examination of past East Asian encounters with piracy offers a more viable template for action than either the American or British models outlined above. The campaigns required to suppress the multiple peaks of pirate activity that East Asia experienced featured a raft of innovative measures, including the active incorporation of pirate elites into political structures and the mass disarmament of coastal populations. On the most general level, it is possible to say that East Asian campaigns were far less reliant on the roving squadrons of pirate-hunting vessels so central to American and European efforts and tended to focus more on circumstances on land, working to eliminate the root causes of piracy and to deprive potential pirates of motivation and means. As a result, these campaigns were seldom simply punitive and

were heavily reliant on measures to entice pirates away from the business of maritime violence and into new roles. As such, the strategies employed in these campaigns are broadly relevant to the Somali case, which requires a multi-pronged approach that deals first with conditions on land. This is not to say that any historical model will be duplicated exactly in Somalia. All East Asian models, as indeed any of the other templates that can be supplied from history, are tied to a unique set of historical circumstances that can never be replicated, but they nonetheless offer valuable lessons for current policymakers. In addition, the sheer number of references made in newspapers and other media to past encounters with piracy and what can be learnt from these show that historical models do have the potential to fruitfully shape the debate about how to deal with the current crisis in Somalia.

East Asia and Somali pirates

As an emerging economic power serviced by a rapidly expanding merchant fleet and heavily dependent on Middle East oil to fuel its economy, China is particularly vulnerable to piracy. In early 2005, at the very start of the current wave of attacks, an LPG tanker owned by a Hong-Kong based company was captured by Somali pirates and ransomed for $300,000, a comparatively low figure when compared to the sums now regularly paid out but also a harbinger of things to come. In 2008, at least seven of the 1,265 Chinese vessels that passed through the Gulf of Aden were attacked. These included the Tianyu No. 8, a fishing trawler with sixteen Chinese crew-members, that was captured by Somali pirates on November 14 and set free in early February 2009 after paying an undisclosed sum in ransom.

In January 2009, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) dispatched vessels, two destroyers and a supply ship, to join anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden. Over the next four

months, they proceeded to escort 210 vessels and to escort three ships from the clutches of pirates. The China Daily, which is conventionally regarded as a government mouthpiece, described the operations of this small fleet in grand terms as a "historic mission" and even normally reticent Chinese government officials seem eager to emphasize the momentous nature of the deployment.[6] One Foreign Ministry spokesman stated simply that "China's military participation sends a strong political message to the international community, that a China with its improved economic and military strength is willing to play a larger role in maintaining world peace and security."[7] Speaking as the first squadron prepared to head for African waters, the commander of the Chinese navy was explicit about the fact that this represented something new when he observed that it is "the first time we go abroad to protect our strategic interests armed with military force - and the first time for our navy to protect important shipping lanes far from our shores."[8] Few commentators outside of China seem inclined to disagree with this assessment. Indeed, some have argued that the deployment represents the first time that Chinese naval forces have embarked on an active combat mission outside their own waters since Zheng He's famous voyages to Southeast Asia and East Africa in the early fifteenth century, a period when China ruled the waves.[9] Although the country is still a long away from regaining the position of maritime dominance it once held, the operation in the Gulf of Aden does show that the Chinese military, and hence the Chinese state, is intent on playing a more active role on the world stage. Equally, there is no sign that this new confidence will fade anytime soon. PLAN officers have already commented that they do not see this as a "short mission" and there is every reason to believe that it marks the beginning of a far more prominent role for China's navy.

The crisis in Somalia also presents unexpected

opportunities to push towards wider goals. The Chinese government has already announced publicly that it has instructed PLAN ships to focus on guarding Chinese vessels and crews, including those from Hong Kong, Macao and—more controversially—Taiwan. In January 2009, PLAN vessels escorted a Taiwan-owned tanker, the Formosa Product Cosmos, through the Gulf of Aden, prompting a Taiwanese government official to note defensively that the ship, which is registered in Liberia and was under hire to a South Korean company, was not really Taiwanese in any substantial way. So far officials from Taiwan have rejected any notion of special protection from China, but the situation has been complicated further by the capture of a Taiwanese fishing vessel, Win Far 161, by Somali pirates in April of this year and the subsequent offer by PLAN warships to rescue the crew.[10] If China is able to assume responsibility for protecting all vessels from Taiwan passing through these waters, then it represents a subtle but effective challenge to the sovereignty of the island.

Like their counterparts in China, Japanese shipping companies have already lost a number of vessels to Somali pirates.[11] Since October 2007, when the chemical tanker Golden Nori was seized, a steady stream of ships with a direct connection to Japan have been attacked, captured, ransomed and then released. The last half of 2008 was particularly difficult with almost monthly incidents. The bulk carrier Stella Maris was captured in July 2008 on its way to Europe and taken to the pirate headquarters of Eyl with twenty-one sailors as hostages. One month later, the chemical tanker Irene was attacked and hijacked by armed pirates. Both vessels were subsequently freed in October after ransoms were paid. The MT Stolt Valor, a Hong Kong-flagged, Japanese-owned chemical tanker carrying 23,818 tonnes of oil products, was boarded by fifteen pirates armed with automatic weapons in September and ransomed for $2.5 million. In October, the Panamanian-flagged bulk carrier, MV African

Sanderling, which is operated by Nagashiki Shipping, was attacked and boarded by a group of pirates in speedboats. Finally, the Chemstar Venus, a Japanese oil tanker, was seized in November 2008 and released in February 2009 after a ransom estimated at around one million dollars. In total therefore, five vessels connected with Japan were taken and ransomed in just six months—a fact that is not surprising if we consider that Japanese companies send around two thousand ships through the Gulf of Aden each year. So far, only one Japanese crewmember has been captured but this figure is likely to increase.

Somali pirates

In response, the Japanese government has dispatched its own vessels to the Indian Ocean. Prime Minister Aso has framed the problem in stark terms, arguing that piracy "is a life-or-death matter that threatens Japan's national interests of securing the safety of transport by sea… The pirates off the coast of Somalia are especially a threat to the international community, including Japan, and emergency measures need to be taken."[12] At the end of March 2009, two Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (MSDF) destroyers, the Sazanami and the Samidare, commenced patrols in the waters around the Horn of Africa. Although Japanese government officials

have been less than explicit about the historic nature of their decision, it is nonetheless highly significant. On the most basic level, it represents the export of a traditional East Asian rivalry to a new part of the world. The timing of the deployment, which came soon after Chinese vessels started patrols, has prompted some to speculate that it was made in direct response to China's decision to send ships to the region.

The involvement of MSDF forces in a campaign to suppress violent piracy can be expected to have long-lasting effects on the constitution and particularly on article nine, which is already under threat. The obvious danger to Japanese shipping and the fact that a number of vessels have already fallen prey to pirates means that the deployment of the Sazanami and the Samidare has been less controversial in Japan than the mission to Iraq or the refueling operation in the Indian Ocean, but in contrast to these earlier missions, it will almost certainly involve frequent and violent confrontations. As such, it presents opportunities to further bend article nine to the point that this crucial part of the constitution becomes essentially meaningless. Currently the MSDF is limited to protecting ships registered in Japan, operated by Japanese companies or carrying Japanese nationals or goods, but an anti-piracy measures bill that is being debated in the upper house of the Diet would significantly expand the MSDF's role to allow for the protection of all ships passing through the region.[13] If passed, the bill would permit the MSDF to use force to stop pirate vessels from approaching merchant shipping even if no direct attack has been made.[14] If the MSDF is allowed to engage in preemptive attack, and if as a result the use of force becomes a regular occurrence, then it opens the door to looser and looser interpretations of article nine and the end of any remnant of constitutional restraint.

Models from East Asia

Given the repeated references that have been made to past American and European anti-piracy campaigns coupled with the fact that East Asia is tightly bound to the current crisis, it is surprising that few politicians, scholars or journalists have examined historical models from the region. This stems in part from a general lack of awareness of the history of piracy in East Asia, a situation that has been compounded by the sparse nature of scholarly, or for that matter popular, works on the topic. In comparison to Atlantic and Caribbean pirates, who continue to generate a steady flow of books, articles, novels and films, piracy in East Asia remains the realm of a few highly specialized historians and never captured the popular imagination in the same way as European buccaneers. This is unfortunate as there is a great deal that can be learnt from past East Asian experiences with piracy.

Given its place in the premodern global economy, it is not surprising that East Asia has long been among the most active centers of world piracy. A number of crescendos of maritime violence in the region involved the Japanese archipelago, which became so well known for its pirate connection that early European mapmakers labeled it as Ilhas dos Ladrones or the Isle of Pirates.

One peak of East Asian piracy took place in the fourteenth century and was directed against the Korean peninsula. Starting around 1350, Korean sources record a tremendous surge in pirate raids culminating in an eight-year stretch from 1376 to 1384 when around forty attacks were documented each year. These raids were conducted by Japan-based pirates referred to in Korean sources as waegu, a derogatory term for the Japanese that translates literally as dwarf robbers. They are now known more commonly as wakō, the Japanese reading of the same characters, and unlike pirates in Europe preferred to attack coastal settlements rather than merchant ships. In the middle of the sixteenth century,

East Asia witnessed a second surge of wakō activity, driven this time by multi-ethnic groups of pirates organized around Chinese entrepreneurs based in Japan.[15] The collapse of central authority within Japan that enabled the wakō to prosper also permitted the rise of domestic piracy concentrated in the Seto Inland Sea and directed by such figures as Murakami Takeyoshi who was described as "the greatest corsair of all Japan."[16] While Japan was always prominent, it was by no means the only centre of pirate activity in East Asia. Zheng Chenggong or Koxinga mixed piracy, trade and empire-building into a potent combination that brought him control of Taiwan and allowed the Zheng family to establish an effective centre of resistance to the emerging Qing regime. Finally, mention should be made of a remarkable rise in piracy that started around 1780 in Guangdong and involved an estimated fifty thousand active pirates at its peak.[17] As the available space does not permit a full examination of how government authorities across East Asia dealt with each surge in pirate activity, the last section will focus on two innovative and highly successful campaigns implemented by the rulers of Korea and Japan in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The campaign conducted at the beginning of the fifteenth century by the newly founded Choson state, which ruled Korea from 1392 to 1910, illustrates the effective use of both carrot and stick in dealing with pirates. Conducted over a series of decades and in both Korea and Japan, this operation was highly successful in ending the wakō threat against the Korean peninsula. The punitive aspect of the campaign is visible in the large-scale military attacks directed against pirate lairs such as the island of Tsushima, which was invaded by 16,000 troops under the command of the fourth Choson king in 1419. However, the rulers of Korea were also prepared to offer significant rewards by incorporating pirate chieftains and their sponsors into diplomatic and commercial

networks. One Korean official who visited Japan in 1444 wrote the following assessment of the situation and the steps needed to suppress piracy:

> In these regions, the people's dwellings are miserable; land is tight and, moreover, utterly barren, so that they do not pursue agriculture and can scarcely escape starvation; thus they engage in banditry, being of a weak and violent cast ... But if we attend to them with courtesy and nourish them with generosity, even more so than in previous days, then the pirates will all submit[18]

Putting these words into action, Choson agents offered stipends, titles and commercial monopolies to wakō leaders in a sophisticated deployment of bribery that brought potential offenders into the system and gave them a stake in its preservation. The 1443 Kakitsu treaty that allocated commercial rights to the ruling family of Tsushima represents the culmination of this process and the final transformation of former pirate lords into consistent allies and an enthusiastic police force. Not only did Tsushima cease its involvement in piracy, but it emerged as a crucial bridge between Korea and Japan, playing a vital role in keeping commercial and diplomatic relations open, often through extremely difficult times, over the next four centuries.

Although these measures ended the threat against Korea, piracy continued to flourish within Japan until the late sixteenth century when Toyotomi Hideyoshi finally curbed it. By any standard, Hideyoshi's achievement was substantial. By the time he seized power, Japan and especially Kyushu had been an active center of piracy for centuries. Piracy underpinned the local economy, providing a

reliable source of income to local warlords and employment to coastal communities. Since the collapse of the Ashikaga shogunate in 1467 and the onset of Japan's warring states (Sengoku) period, no central authority had been able to exert real power over the archipelago's maritime fringes. Indeed, it is worth noting that the chaotic world of Sengoku Japan, characterized as it was by a failed state and endemic conflict fuelled by a proliferation of weapons and competing groups, bears some resemblance to the current situation in Somalia. However, within about a decade Hideyoshi was able to end Japan's long tenure as the Isle of Pirates

Campaigns against piracy typically involve a powerful naval force that is used to hunt down and destroy pirate vessels. This was the case when the American government launched its attack on Barbary pirates, an operation that hinged on the use of the US navy's newly constructed frigates, and when the British government moved to suppress Atlantic and Caribbean piracy. Although Hideyoshi did assemble a substantial maritime force to invade Korea, he made no use of a naval contingent when suppressing piracy. Instead, the anti-piracy campaign that he implemented rested on a series of far-reaching measures designed to exert influence over land. In essence, the campaign consisted of three steps: identification, disarmament and enforcement. The key moment in the campaign can be dated precisely to August 29, 1588 when Hideyoshi issued two decrees, the famous 'sword-hunt' edict and an anti-piracy regulation, that combined to strip away the basis for organized piracy.

The first step was to identify and investigate the communities involved in piracy. The anti-piracy edict, the lesser known of the two decrees, specifically targeted coastal communities by ordering that "the sea captains and the fishermen of the provinces and the seashores, all those who go in ships to the sea,

shall immediately be investigated."[19] Once they were identified, these sea peoples were compelled to sign oaths declaring that they would no longer engage in piracy. The edict thus extended control over the maritime fringes of the archipelago, effectively moving the "marginal men" who were so central to piracy out of the margins and into legal structures.[20] Second, Hideyoshi attempted to disarm large sections of the population. The warlords that emerged during the Sengoku period raised large armies, engaged in prolonged conflict with local rivals and effectively militarized the countryside. During a century of near-continuous conflict, violence came to permeate every level of Japanese society. The proliferation of arms meant that weapons "penetrated the villages, cities, and monasteries of the warring states period as the ubiquitous instruments of sectarian warfare, agrarian rebellion, and endemic violent struggles."[21] By implementing the 'sword-hunt' edict, Hideyoshi was able to disarm the countryside and to reduce or eliminate the means for violence. Finally, Hideyoshi placed the responsibility for suppressing piracy firmly in the hands of local warlords who controlled the areas in which pirates were based. The 1588 edict made these individuals directly accountable for any pirate attacks that were launched from their domains and warned that the new regime would not hesitate to confiscate land and to strip offenders of office. Through this measure, in much the same way as the Choson state in the fifteenth century, Hideyoshi sought to bring pirates into the system and to turn them from offenders into an effective police force.

Hideyoshi's campaign did not end piracy overnight. Isolated pirate attacks continued to be recorded well into the seventeenth century, but his efforts transformed piracy from an organized industry that could be conducted with virtual impunity into a far more sporadic business that entailed great risks.

The war against piracy in Somalia

The reality is that policing operations at sea, the dominant strategy currently employed, will not eliminate the threat of Somali piracy if not accompanied by other measures that deal with the problem on land. Here past models from East Asia are most relevant. The campaigns against the wakō in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries succeeded because they were able to co-opt local elites and use them to suppress piracy. Within Somalia, there is a clear need to work more closely with local actors, to find ways to transform them from pirate sponsors into a policing force and to incorporate them into wider structures. Along these lines, a recent United Nations working group has identified the need to "enlist all influential Somali actors" as a top priority in fighting piracy.[22] While implementation of this recommendation would certainly represent a step forward, it may be necessary to go further by recognizing that the old nation state of Somalia is dead and that power has migrated to new, smaller political units such as the Republic of Somaliland, a breakaway state that has been able to effectively police its coastline and to control organized piracy. Instead of trying to revive the corpse of a failed state, the international community must be prepared to acknowledge the republic's de-facto existence and to work towards strengthening its institutions.

Second, it is necessary to offer genuine incentives in order to encourage both pirates and their sponsors to turn away from the lucrative business of attacking ships. Piracy is one of the few boom industries in Somalia, offering incomes more than ten times average earnings, and its attraction can only be countered by effective application of both carrot and stick. One way to move forward would be to resuscitate the local fishing industry through a combination of economic aid and by finally doing something to stop the plundering of Somali waters by foreign

trawlers. In the sixteenth century, Hideyoshi started off his campaign by recognizing the link between piracy and fishermen, a particularly important connection in the Somali case where piracy started as a protest against foreign trawlers operating illegally in coastal waters and where even now protection of fishing grounds remains a significant justification for pirates. When interviewed, one pirate spokesman expressed it in simple terms: "We don't consider ourselves sea bandits... We consider sea bandits those who illegally fish in our seas and dump waste in our seas and carry weapons in our seas. We are simply patrolling our seas. Think of us like a coast guard."[23] Providing concrete rewards and alternative employment to former pirates would start to move Somalia's own 'marginal men' out of the shadows and away from maritime violence.

Armed Somali pirate

Finally, some kind of disarmament campaign must be implemented if piracy is to be curtailed or ended. Despite the presence of an arms embargo, Somalia remains one the most highly militarized countries in the world, one study estimating that 64% or roughly two thirds of all Somalis possess one or more weapons. The United Nations has recently concluded that the ready availability of arms has propelled the steady escalation in piracy since 2005 and that something must be done about the problem of weapons proliferation.[24]

In the end, Somali piracy will take a number of years to completely eradicate, but measures need to be taken now to reduce its impact. Although they are tied to a specific period, historical models do have a role to play in solving the problem of Somali piracy. Since East Asia is so firmly at the center of this crisis and because there is something to be learnt from past Chinese, Japanese and Korean campaigns against pirates, commentators would do well to avoid focusing exclusively on one-dimensional models derived from past American or European encounters with pirates and embrace a wider range of examples.

Adam Clulow teaches at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. His research focuses on the history of piracy and maritime violence in East Asia. He is currently working on a book manuscript that examines the interaction between the Tokugawa state and the Dutch East India Company in early modern Japan. He wrote this article for The Asia-Pacific Journal.

On related issues see:
Michael Penn, Somali Pirates and Political Winds Drive Japan to the Gate of Tears

Notes

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