

SECURITY COUNCIL

Study Guide

Global Maritime Security

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I. Letter from the Secretary General

Highly Esteemed Delegates,

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your interest and enthusiasm regarding our conference. My name is Yaren Keçili, and I have the honor of serving as your secretary-general for the 8th edition of the Troy Model United Nations Conference this year. I embrace this role with immense appreciation. Similar to previous years, we have dedicated our efforts to creating a range of engaging and diverse committees for your benefit. We take great pride in the work we have prepared for you and sincerely hope that you will find it beneficial as well. Both the academic and operations teams have been working very hard to serve you to the best of their abilities and give you an unforgettable experience.

I wish to show my gratitude to the chair board and Eslem Molla who is going to serve as your Under-Secretary-General. All my teammates made great efforts in the process leading up to the conference. Hence, they need all the praise for their hard work. I trust that all our delegates will engage in enlightening discussions throughout the three days they are with us, cultivate creative solutions to global challenges, be at the forefront of diplomacy and academia, and enjoy the experience in the process. Once again, I would like to welcome you all to both the conference and the committee. Buckle up and get ready because we have prepared an incredible ride for you.

Yours Sincerely,

Yaren Keçili

Secretary-General of Troy Model United Nations 2025

II. Letter from the Under Secretary General

Hi, I'm Eslem Molla, and it is truly an honor to welcome you as the Under-Secretary-General of TroyMUN 2025!

It is a great pleasure to have you in the Security Council. You will be guided by your Chair, Efe Kalay, who will play a key role in making your sessions productive and enjoyable. I would like to thank Efe Kalay for his support and effort in preparing this committee.

Preparing this study guide has been a meaningful journey for me, and I hope it serves as a useful and inspiring starting point for your own research. The Security Council is a unique committee where urgent matters of global peace and security are discussed. Debates can be intense, but the goal is always to find solutions that matter. Here, you will be challenged to defend your country's position while also working with those you may not always agree with. This balance of conviction and cooperation is the heart of diplomacy.

My advice is simple: come with an open mind, speak with confidence, and do not be afraid to take bold steps. The most impactful debates are not only about winning arguments, but also about listening carefully and learning from others.

I'm sure each of you will add something valuable. I'm excited to see the energy and ideas you will bring to the discussions. I wish you the very best of luck at the conference. Enjoy every moment and make this experience one to remember ;)

With best wishes,

Eslem Molla

Under-Secretary-General

III. Introduction to the Committee: United Nations Security Council

The UN Security Council (UNSC) is the main body responsible for managing international crises and keeping peace around the world. It has the power to make decisions that are binding for all 193 UN member states, meaning countries are legally obliged to follow its resolutions. The Council meets regularly to discuss and respond to a wide range of threats, including civil wars, terrorism, natural disasters, and the spread of weapons.

The Council has five permanent members, known as the P5: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Each of these countries has the power to veto any resolution, giving them a unique influence over decisions. Because of the Council's setup and rules, The Council usually solves problems by talking and working together, trying to respect powerful countries while keeping the world safe.

IV. Introduction to the Agenda Item

Maritime security refers to the measures and strategies implemented to protect vessels, ports, and maritime infrastructure from threats. It encompasses a range of activities aimed at safeguarding maritime assets, ensuring the safety and security of trade routes, and stopping illegal actions at sea ;

1. **Traditional security threats:** interstate disputes over sovereignty, freedom of navigation, naval militarization.
2. **Transnational threats:** piracy, armed robbery, terrorism, trafficking of arms, drugs, and humans.
3. **Economic threats:** disruption of maritime trade routes, chokepoints, and shipping security.

4. **Environmental threats:** oil spills, illegal fishing, marine degradation, climate-related disasters.
5. **Infrastructure threats:** sabotage or accidents targeting subsea cables, pipelines, offshore oil and gas facilities, and ports.

It requires collaboration between governments, international organizations, and maritime industry stakeholders to address challenges and vulnerabilities in the maritime domain. Maritime security promotes secure navigation, commerce, and environmental protection in waterways around the world.

A. Understanding the Maritime Security

The history of maritime security stretches back centuries, evolving alongside the expansion of sea trade, exploration, and the strategic importance of naval power. Its development has been shaped by the need to protect maritime interests, ensure safe navigation, and counter threats at sea.

Organizations such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) have developed a series of measures, such as the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, to enhance maritime security globally.

The use of technology, including AI, satellite surveillance, AIS, and unmanned vehicles, has become integral to modern maritime security strategies. Maritime security has continuously adapted to new challenges and technologies throughout its history. Today, it spans activities from combating smuggling and piracy to addressing deceptive shipping practices, environmental protection, and maritime cybersecurity. The evolution of maritime security reflects the ongoing importance of the seas to global trade, communication, and strategic interests.

Maritime security is of paramount importance for several reasons, reflecting its broad impact on global stability, economic health, and safety:

- **Global trade protection:** a significant portion of global trade occurs via sea routes. Ensuring the security of these routes is essential for maintaining the flow of goods worldwide, impacting economies and livelihoods globally.
- **Prevention of illegal activities:** maritime security is critical in preventing illegal activities such as piracy, smuggling of goods, human trafficking, and illegal fishing. These activities not only threaten the safety and security of those at sea, but also have broader implications for international law and order.
- **National security:** many nations rely on their maritime boundaries as a line of defense. Protecting these areas from unauthorized entry and potential threats is vital for national security. Maritime security operations help to detect, deter, and respond to potential threats before they reach national borders.
- **Safeguarding human life:** ensuring the safety of seafarers, fishermen, and passengers traveling by sea is a fundamental aspect of maritime security. This has become an important issue when it comes to illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, for instance. By mitigating risks and responding to emergencies, maritime security operations protect human life against piracy, sea accidents, and other dangers.



- **Economic stability:** by securing maritime trade routes and preventing illegal activities, maritime security contributes to global economic stability. It tries to ensure that shipping costs do not escalate due to piracy or terrorism, thereby keeping trade and accessible for nations around the world.

B. Historical Background

1. Revolution in 19th century

The 19th century Industrial Revolution transformed maritime trade through steamships, which enabled faster voyages, larger cargo, and laid foundations for modern naval warfare, shipping, and maritime law. Oceans became central to empire-building, migration, and global commerce.

Opening of the Suez Canal: The Suez Canal connected the Mediterranean and Red Seas, cutting travel distances between Europe and Asia, boosting trade, and increasing the strategic importance of Northeast Africa.

2. Two World Wars & Modernization

World War I introduced industrialized naval warfare, while World War II accelerated shipbuilding, radar, sonar, and navigation systems, many of which still shape modern shipping and maritime safety.

Opening of the Panama Canal: The Panama Canal, cutting across the Isthmus of Panama, links the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. By shortening travel time and costs, it reshaped global trade routes and boosted economic growth worldwide."

UNCLOS I: UNCLOS (1982) established the legal framework for seas, defining states' rights and duties, promoting peaceful use, resource management, and environmental protection. Its precursor, UNCLOS I (1958), produced four treaties but left territorial waters unresolved. Linked to this framework, UN SDG 14 calls for sustainable ocean use. After the Titanic, SOLAS (1914, updated 1974) set global safety standards, later supported by the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (1959) to strengthen maritime safety and security."

3. Late 20th Century & Globalization

The 20th century brought major maritime advances such as diesel engines, containerization,



and larger specialized vessels, greatly boosting efficiency. During the Iran-Iraq War (1980s), both sides targeted ships to disrupt each other's trade and war efforts.

C. Current Situation

1. Geopolitical Tensions

➤ Strait Hormuz and Persian Gulf

The Strait of Hormuz is vital for gas and oil exporters in the Gulf region, as this is the only route by sea to export large volumes of oil and gas produced among the oil-rich countries in the region. This narrow passage is located between Oman and Iran, connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. The passage is deep enough and wide enough to handle the world's largest crude oil tankers, and it is one of the world's most

important oil chokepoints. Oil tankers on average carry through the strait 20 million barrels per day , or the equivalent of about 20% of global petroleum liquids consumption.

During the Iran-Iraq conflict between 1980 and 1988, which killed hundreds of thousands on both sides, both countries targeted commercial vessels in the Gulf in what became known as the Tanker War, but Hormuz was never completely closed.

More recently, in 2019, four ships were attacked near the strait off the coast of Fujairah, UAE, amid heightened tensions between Iran and the United States. Attacking shipping lanes has long been used to apply pressure amid conflict. Since the outbreak of the war in Gaza, the Houthis in Yemen have been attacking ships around Bab al-Mandeb Strait, the entryway into the Red Sea on the other side of the Arabian Peninsula.

On 14 June, Iran reportedly issued a threat to block the Strait in response to Israeli attacks targeting its military and nuclear infrastructure. After the United States strikes on Iranian nuclear sites on 22 June, the Iranian Parliament voted to close the Strait.

The potential closure of the Strait, through which 20% of the world's oil supply transits, would significantly disrupt global energy markets. Such a move could cause oil prices to increase and risk destabilizing the global economy, given the Strait's critical role as a maritime chokepoint for crude oil, liquefied natural gas, and other petroleum products.

The Gulf countries have a great potential to be called upon and accepted as mediators as they are indispensable powers for regional stability. They are located at a geographically strategic position between the belligerents and engage at varying levels with both of them.

➤ South China Sea and Southeast Asia

China's sweeping claims of sovereignty over the sea-and the sea's estimated 11 billion barrels of untapped oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas-have antagonized competing claimants Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam. As early as the 1970s, countries began to claim islands and various zones in the South China Sea, such as the Spratly Islands, which possess rich natural resources and fishing areas.

In recent years, satellite imagery has shown China's increased efforts to reclaim land in the South China Sea by physically increasing the islands size or creating new ones altogether. In addition to piling sand onto existing reefs, China has constructed ports, military installations, and airstrips.

The United States, which maintains important interests in ensuring freedom of navigation and securing sea lines of communication (SLOCs), has expressed support for an agreement on a binding code of conduct and other confidence-building measures. China's claims threaten SLOCs, which are important maritime passages that facilitate trade and the movement of naval forces. To protect its political, security, and economic interests in the region, the United States has challenged China's assertive territorial claims and land reclamation efforts by conducting freedom of navigation operations and bolstering support for Southeast Asian partners.

Countries like the Philippines and Vietnam face both strategic and economic threats from China's actions. Access to fisheries and energy resources is critical for their economies, yet they are often disadvantaged due to China's overwhelming military and economic power. Although the Philippines secured a legal victory in the 2016 arbitration ruling, enforcing their

rights remains a challenge against China's continued assertiveness. Amid the rise in tensions with China, the Philippines has strengthened its partnerships with other Indo-Pacific neighbors. Meanwhile, Japan has also stepped up its presence in recent years by selling military equipment to the Philippines and Vietnam to improve maritime security capacity.

The South China Sea raises significant concerns about the future of international order and the effectiveness of multilateralism. UNCLOS provides a legal framework for resolving maritime disputes, China's refusal to comply with the 2016 ruling exemplifies the challenges of enforcing international law against major powers .

➤ **Taiwan Strait & Baltic Sea and Undersea Infrastructure**

Undersea infrastructure is the backbone of global communication and energy networks. Submarine cables carry over 95% of international data, facilitating everything from internet traffic to financial transactions. Similarly, undersea pipelines are crucial for transporting natural gas and oil, vital resources for energy security and economic stability. The Taiwan Strait and the Baltic Sea are home to extensive networks of these infrastructures, making them strategic targets for nations seeking to exert influence or disrupt regional stability.

In recent years, the Taiwan Strait and the Baltic Sea have emerged as focal points of geopolitical tension, with undersea infrastructure such as communication cables and gas pipelines increasingly under threat from intensified grey zone tactics employed by China and Russia.

In recent years, there have been several incidents involving Chinese vessels that have raised concerns about the security of undersea cables linking Taiwan and its outlying islands. These cables are crucial for maintaining communication and data transfer between Taiwan and its

territories, as well as with the broader international community. One notable incident occurred in February 2023, when two Chinese vessels damaged two critical submarine internet cables linked to Taiwan's outlying island of Matsu. This disruption led to significant communication outages for weeks affecting both civilian and military operations.

In November 2024, further challenges emerged as a vessel registered under the Cook Islands flag was implicated in a series of incidents that damaged both undersea cables and gas pipelines in the Baltic Sea. The resulting damage to the infrastructure between Estonia, Finland, and Sweden caused significant disruptions to energy supplies and communications. The incidents prompted a reevaluation of international maritime regulations, particularly concerning the oversight of vessels registered under flags of convenience.

The challenges posed by grey zone warfare in the Taiwan Strait and Baltic Sea highlight the need for regional cooperation to enhance the resilience of undersea infrastructure. Taiwan and countries in the Baltic region share common interests in safeguarding their critical infrastructure from external threats and ensuring the stability of their respective regions.

Addressing the challenges posed by grey zone warfare requires a multifaceted approach that combines technological innovation with strategic policy measures. Investing in advanced monitoring and surveillance technologies, such as autonomous underwater vehicles and sensor networks, can help detect and deter potential threats to undersea infrastructure.

➤ **Red Sea & Bab el-Mandeb**

The Bab el-Mandeb Strait is one of the world's most strategic maritime passages. Located between the Arabian Peninsula to the northeast and the Horn of Africa to the southwest it forms a narrow waterway linking the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and, by extension, to the Indian Ocean.

This strait plays a key role in global trade: it is the only direct maritime access to the Suez Canal, the main link between Europe and Asia. Each year, between 10% and 12% of international maritime trade passes through it, representing thousands of ships carrying essential goods. It is not just a maritime corridor, it is a zone where political instability, armed threats, criminal activity, and geostrategic tensions converge. This explosive mix makes it one of the most dangerous areas for global maritime transport.

Since 2014, Yemen's civil war between Iran-backed Houthis and a Saudi-led coalition has extended to the sea. Recently, Houthi attacks on Israel and Red Sea shipping, especially near Bab-el-Mandeb, have disrupted global trade.

2. Power Rivalry between USA-China-Russia

The Arctic is not just a picturesque region but a strategically important area shaped by environmental, political, economic, and military forces. Challenges have highlighted the need for alternative shipping routes, making the Arctic routes increasingly important.

However, the strategic competition among the US, Russia, and the People's Republic of China (PRC) has significantly elevated its geopolitical importance in the past decade. The military advancements of Russia and PRC, in contrast to slower efforts by the US and NATO, have turned the Arctic into a critical focus for security, resource access, and control over emerging shipping routes.

The North Sea Route (NSR) and the Northwest Passage (NWP) could become economically viable by 2023, potentially diverting traffic from the Suez Canal. As access to critical resources expands, states will shift strategies and intensify competition over the Arctic's growing economic and military significance. This competition has also been driven by its militarization.

Russia's restrictive NSR claims have further escalated tensions, especially following its invasion of Ukraine. Meanwhile, PRC signaled growing ambitions having ramped up its Arctic investments, researched military applications, and expanded its icebreaker fleet.

These developments highlight the Arctic's evolving role in economic opportunity and strategic rivalry, posing significant challenges to US grand strategy.

The Black Sea is not only a gateway to other regions, but it is also a crucial hub for East–West connectivity projects. The Middle Corridor, also known as the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR), serves as a prime example. Connectivity and major infrastructure projects are new arenas in great power competition. They are reshaping global trade and supply chains, thereby redefining geopolitics.

Outlined in the May 2025 Joint Communication, the EU's 2024-2025 Black Sea Strategy recognises the Black Sea as both a contested strategic space and a region of untapped potential.

Maritime security is central in the new strategy, which intends to enhance surveillance, cyber defences, and protection of undersea infrastructure. The strategy rests on three pillars:

- **Security, Stability, and Resilience:** Creating the Maritime Security Hub, upgrading military mobility, coordinating hybrid threat responses, supporting Ukraine's defence, and promoting regional peacebuilding, especially regarding Armenia-Azerbaijan and relations with Türkiye.
- **Sustainable Growth and Prosperity:** Developing connectivity linking Europe with the South Caucasus and Central Asia; accelerating the energy transition with renewables and smart infrastructure; deepening economic integration via DCFTAs and customs arrangements; and fostering innovation, digitalisation, and the green economy.

- **Environmental Protection and Civil Preparedness:** Enhancing climate resilience, disaster preparedness, environmental governance, and marine conservation through scientific cooperation and emergency systems.

The management of China-U.S. military competition encompasses both strategic and operational issues and therefore must be coordinated. The essential questions in terms of strategy are the extent to which China and the United States can accept each other's powerful presence and whether both countries can coexist peacefully.

3. Regional Conflicts

❖ East China Sea

China and Japan dispute sovereignty over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and overlapping EEZ claims in the East China Sea. While Japan administers the islands, China contests this. Under UNCLOS, the islands lack an EEZ, limiting their impact on maritime boundaries.

❖ Gulf of Aden & Somalia

The Gulf of Aden is a geographical zone that attracts piracy acts because of its strategic passage and because of the instability of the region. It is located between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. The Gulf of Aden leads to the Strait of Bab-al-Mandeb and represents 40% of maritime traffic and is the fourth most important strait in the world. Yemen and Somalia border the Gulf of Aden. These two countries are in a state of high tension and crisis due to civil wars. Somalia suffers from an intense humanitarian crisis and impoverishment of the population, leading to migration near the coast. Most Somali fishermen are now part of a criminal organization. As a result, the presence of foreign trawlers has depleted Somalia's

resources to the detriment of the already starving population. Piracy is one of the responses of the Somali people, but piracy is also a fact of life for the Houthis.

Somali piracy increased in intensity in 2005, particularly in Puntland. Illegal fishing licenses are sold and are beyond the jurisdiction and control of the state. Somali pirates have made piracy attractive to the vulnerable Somali population. Unfortunately, the instability created by this situation has made it difficult for international aid to reach Somalia.

As for the Houthis, they started their activities in 2004 after their rebellion in western Yemen. Over the years and through wars, the Houthis have expanded their territory and are now trying to control Bab-el-Mandeb and the Gulf of Aden.

According to a 2012 investigative piece by the Somalia Report, the OBP paper and other similar reports that attempt to calibrate the global cost of piracy produce inaccurate estimates based on a variety of factors. The report also exaggerated the impact that piracy has had on the shipping sector, an industry which has grown steadily in size from 25,000 billion tonnes/miles to 35,000 billion tonnes/miles since the rise of Indian Ocean piracy in 2005. Moreover, the global costs of piracy reportedly represent a small fraction of total maritime shipping expenses and are significantly lower than more routine costs, such as those brought on by port theft, bad weather conditions or fuel-related issues. In the United States alone, it is estimated that between \$10–\$15 billion were stolen from ports in 2003.

❖ Arctic Ocean

The Arctic's growing geopolitical attention will likely bring increased military activity to protect the national interests of key stakeholders. These interests include both natural

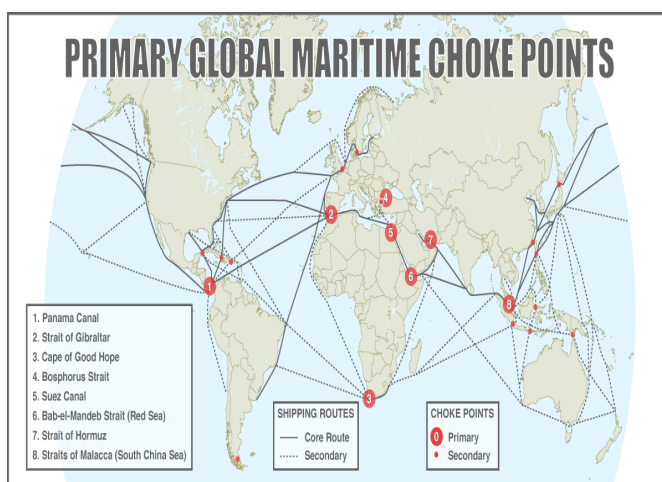
resources - the huge reserves of oil and gas as well as minerals - and the opening up of maritime trade routes. While the number of ships in transit will remain low for the foreseeable future due to the complexities of operating in the region, there will be an increase in commercial shipping activity in support of resource extraction.

Over the past decade, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and the US have prominently expanded their military capabilities in the Arctic region. Military exercises continue to be carried out in these harsh conditions, on a larger scale and with greater frequency.. The development of capabilities, together with the increase in weapons testing and military exercises, indicates a growing margin for the risk of escalation or outright conflict.

A 2021 US report notes the growing success of Chinese technologies in icebreaker construction and observes that Chinese interests in the Arctic have presented possible bilateral frictions with Russia over the use of the Northern Sea Route (NSR), but also opportunities for greater cooperation.

D. Global Maritime Routes and Chokepoints

Maritime chokepoints are the narrow passages that connect the world's oceans, and they are vital for global trade. **The Strait of Hormuz**, for example, carries almost one-fifth of the world's oil and is often a flashpoint in U.S.- Iran tensions. The **Bab el-Mandeb** Strait, which



connects the Gulf of Aden to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal, has been exposed to attacks by Houthi rebels, threatening ships heading toward Europe. The **Suez Canal** itself handles about 12% of global trade,

but the 2021 Ever Given blockage showed how fragile this route can be. In Asia, the **Strait of Malacca** is crucial for energy imports and is also known as a piracy hotspot. The **Panama Canal**, linking the Atlantic and Pacific, is facing new risks from climate change as droughts limit water supply. Meanwhile, melting ice in the Arctic is opening new routes that could shorten journeys but also spark disputes over sovereignty and environmental safety. The **GIUK Gap and Danish Straits** are strategically important for NATO and Russia, especially for energy exports to Europe.

E. Key Issues

1. Piracy and Armed Robbery at the sea

Piracy remains a major maritime security threat, causing global losses of \$25 billion in 2023. The Gulf of Guinea accounts for most kidnappings, especially in Nigeria, Togo, and Côte d'Ivoire, while Somali piracy resurged with regional instability. International task forces like CTF 150/151, EU Operation Atalanta, and SADC Operation Copper coordinate anti-piracy efforts through SHADE. Other hotspots include the Strait of Malacca, Singapore, and Venezuela, where attacks are tied to organized crime.

(You can check the piracy and armed robbery map in 2025 via <https://icc-ccs.org/map/>)

2. Maritime Terrorism and Illegal Trafficking

- **Maritime Terrorism:** Politically motivated violence or sabotage at sea or against maritime targets (ships, ports, offshore platforms) to influence governments or societies.

- **Illegal Trafficking:** Smuggling of goods, drugs, weapons, or people via maritime routes, bypassing customs and border controls. Includes human trafficking, arms smuggling, fuel theft, and wildlife trafficking.

USS Cole Attack (2000): In Aden, Yemen, Al-Qaeda conducted a suicide bombing against the USS Cole, killing 17 U.S. sailors and injuring dozens more. The attack highlighted vulnerabilities in port security and the risks posed by terrorists using maritime routes for attacks. It also led to increased international naval presence in high-risk waters and strengthened counter-terrorism cooperation.

Mumbai Attacks (2008): Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists infiltrated Mumbai by sea, using small boats to land in the city and carry out coordinated attacks on hotels and public areas, resulting in over 170 deaths. The incident demonstrated how maritime routes can be used to bypass traditional security measures and support terrorist operations in densely populated coastal cities.

Red Sea Attacks (2023–2024): Houthi rebels have targeted commercial shipping with drones and missiles, causing temporary disruptions to global supply chains and drawing attention from the UNSC. These attacks underline the increasing use of remote and asymmetric tactics in maritime terrorism, which can affect international trade and regional stability.

Though rare, high-profile incidents such as the 1961 Santa Maria hijacking and the USS Cole bombing in 2000 highlight the risks. The 9/11 attacks spurred global efforts to strengthen maritime security, leading to the creation of the ISPS Code.

Smuggling and drug trafficking remain major threats to global maritime security. In Latin America, maritime drug routes are the primary channels for transporting cocaine from the Andean region to global markets. An estimated 90% of cocaine produced there is moved by sea, impacting countries across the region.

Africa: Terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab in Somalia and ISIS in Mozambique have capitalized on the conditions, using the Indian Ocean's maritime domain to expand criminal activities including piracy, human trafficking, illegal fishing, and smuggling. These groups have formed deep connections with local criminal networks, further complicating counter-terrorism efforts in the region.

Maritime routes have become critical to the operations of these terrorist organizations. Al-Shabaab, for instance, has used Somali ports to fund its activities through illegal businesses such as charcoal smuggling, generating an estimated \$70 to \$100 million annually. Similarly, ISIS has utilized maritime networks in both Somalia and Mozambique, collaborating with local criminal groups to smuggle arms and transport personnel via maritime routes.

The convergence of terrorism and crime in East Africa's maritime domain poses a significant threat to regional stability. Despite international legal frameworks addressing piracy, there has been a lack of coordinated efforts to combat maritime terrorism specifically.

3. Protection of Underwater Infrastructure

Critical undersea infrastructure, including submarine cables, energy pipelines, and underwater power grids, is the lifeline of global communication, economic stability, and national security.

The need for heightened security has never been more pressing. A noticeable rise in attacks on undersea cables has alarmed policymakers and industry leaders alike in recent years. These incidents, often occurring in politically sensitive regions, such as the Baltic Sea and the South China Sea, serve as stark reminders of how vital these hidden networks are. With submarine cables transmitting a huge percentage of international data, their role in ensuring communication, financial transactions, and industrial operations cannot be overstated.

Understanding and identifying illicit maritime behaviors is key to preempting and mitigating threats. Vessels engaged in undersea sabotage often exhibit distinct operational patterns, including:

- **Dark activity:** The disabling of AIS transponders to avoid detection, often occurring near sensitive maritime assets.
- **Slow-speed sailing and drifting:** Prolonged stationary positions near infrastructure hubs may indicate reconnaissance or preparatory activities.
- **Repeated area visits:** Vessels appearing frequently in high-risk locations can signal potential involvement in infrastructure interference.
- **Erratic route changes:** Sudden and unusual alterations in sailing paths may indicate an attempt to evade surveillance or prepare for illicit operations.
- **Illicit actor grouping:** The sudden clustering of many flagged vessels near underwater cables

The sabotage of the Nord Stream pipelines in 2022 highlighted just how fragile and exposed such infrastructure can be. Attacks, accidental damage, or even natural disasters could disrupt global communications, trade, and energy supplies in a matter of hours. In response, many states have begun investing in seabed surveillance and militarizing their undersea capabilities, raising concerns over a potential arms race beneath the oceans.

5. Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a broad term that captures a wide variety of fishing activity.

Illegal fishing:

- conducted by national or foreign vessels in waters under the jurisdiction of a State, without the permission of that State, or in contravention of its laws and regulations;
- conducted by vessels flying the flag of States that are parties to a relevant regional fisheries management organisation but operate in contravention of the conservation and management measures adopted by that organisation and by which the States are bound, or relevant provisions of the applicable international law; or
- in violation of national laws or international obligations, including those undertaken by cooperating States to a relevant regional fisheries management organization.

Unreported fishing:

- which have not been reported, or have been misreported, to the relevant national authority, in contravention of national laws and regulations; or
- are undertaken in the area of competence of a relevant regional fisheries management organisation which have not been reported or have been misreported, in contravention of the reporting procedures of that organisation.

Unregulated fishing:

- in the area of application of a relevant regional fisheries management organization that are conducted by vessels without nationality, or by those flying the flag of a State not party to that organization, or by a fishing entity, in a manner that is not consistent

with or contravenes the conservation and management measures of that organization;

or

- in areas or for fish stocks in relation to which there are no applicable conservation or management measures and where such fishing activities are conducted in a manner inconsistent with State responsibilities for the conservation of living marine resources under international law.

IUU fishing undermines national and regional efforts to conserve and manage fish stocks and, as a consequence, inhibits progress towards achieving the goals of long-term sustainability and responsibility. Moreover, IUU fishing greatly disadvantages and discriminates against those fishers that act responsibly, honestly and in accordance with the terms of their fishing authorizations. IUU fishing takes advantage of corruption and exploits weak management regimes, in particular those of countries lacking the capacity and resources for effective monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS). IUU fishing threatens marine biodiversity, livelihoods, exacerbates poverty, and augments food insecurity. The focus of the international community remains on IUU Fishing as a serious issue for the global fishing sector that impacts negatively on safety, on environmental issues, on conservation and on sustainability.

Through fora such as the UN and its specialized agencies IMO, FAO and ILO, a range of international instruments covering flag, coastal, port and market State responsibilities, which together comprise a powerful suite of tools to combat IUU fishing, have been developed, and the cooperative work, particularly through a Joint FAO/IMO/ILO ad hoc Working Group on IUU fishing and related matters (JWG), has been undertaken within the context of each organization's mandate. IUU fishing-related matters are under the purview of the Sub-Committee on the Implementation of IMO Instruments reporting to the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee.

The European Community is a valuable target for IUU operators since it is the largest importer of fishery products in the world and one of the main producers and exporters worldwide. It also has many trading partners on all continents on both import and export side. In 2007, the Community imported nearly €16 billion of fisheries products. Imports derived from IUU catches have been conservatively estimated at €1.1 billion in 2005.

6. Energy and Port Security

Port security plays a critical role in maritime security, focusing on protecting seaports, enforcing laws and treaties, and preventing terrorism. It involves safeguarding port facilities, inspecting cargo, and monitoring surrounding maritime areas.

Key risks include physical threats to port infrastructure and vulnerabilities within the maritime supply chain. Ensuring secure port operations helps prevent smuggling, trafficking, and potential attacks, strengthening global trade and transportation networks.

It refers to the security and law enforcement measures used to safeguard a shipping port from unlawful activities such as terrorism. Port security also concerns the measures in place that ensure treaties entered into with other countries are enforced appropriately.

Port security comes under the purview of the IMIO and the International Ship and Port Security Code introduced in 2002 as part of the Safety of Life At Sea (SOLAS) convention. In addition to these organizations, many port security measures are incorporated from the UN's own marine security enforcement agenda.

1.Theft: To ensure that cargo theft does not take place, Ports are busy areas and spread over a very large area of space. Because of this, certain areas of ports can be inaccessible for patrols at all times- leading to cargo theft and other crimes.

2. Sabotage: Vessels calling at ports are susceptible to acts of sabotage. If maritime sabotage does occur, this can have serious effects on commercial shipping and maritime transportation networks. Sabotage attacks and terrorism against shipping, ports, and terminals aim to threaten vessel missions and the seas' safety.

3. Smuggling: Smuggling at sea has been a problem for years. In recent years, port staff and port security have played a major role in the smuggling of illegal material such as drugs.

The International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code is an amendment to the SOLAS convention on maritime security-including minimum security arrangements for ships, ports, and government agencies.

Essentially, the ISPS Code is a set of measures to enhance the security of ships and port facilities, developed in response to perceived threats in the wake of the 9/11 attacks in the US (IMO).

F. Practical Problems Facing Maritime Security

Smuggling & Organized Crime

- **Drug Trafficking:** South American cartels frequently use semi-submersible vessels and fishing boats to transport cocaine across the Atlantic to Europe and Africa, exploiting the vastness of the oceans and gaps in law enforcement.
- **Human Trafficking and Migration:** Thousands of migrants attempt dangerous sea crossings from North Africa to Europe each year. Overcrowded boats and unsafe conditions often lead to mass casualties, while smuggling networks profit from the desperation of those fleeing conflict or poverty.

- **Weapons Smuggling:** Maritime routes are also used to transport arms to conflict zones such as Yemen and Libya, fueling ongoing violence and complicating peacekeeping efforts.

Robbery

The Security Council notes with concern that piracy and armed robbery at sea, while historically persistent, continue to evolve and adapt to changing enforcement strategies. Although large-scale piracy has declined due to concerted international naval operations and the deployment of private security, the threat is still present, and the main problems like weak governance, poverty, and overfishing have not yet been addressed. The Council further observes that the Gulf of Guinea has now become the global epicenter of piracy, where incidents are marked by high levels of violence and the frequent kidnapping of seafarers for ransom.

Terrorism

The Council expresses its concern over the continuing use of maritime routes by terrorist organizations and organized crime syndicates, which exploit both legal loopholes and technological vulnerabilities. While maritime terrorism remains relatively rare, incidents such as the attack on the USS Cole in 2000 and the bombing of the Limburg tanker in 2002 reveal the potential for catastrophic consequences when high-value targets are struck. Terrorist groups such as the Houthis in Yemen, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, and affiliates of ISIS have all demonstrated the capacity to use the



maritime space for attacks, weapons transfers, or logistical support, thereby threatening regional stability and global trade.

Legal and Jurisdictional Gaps

The Council acknowledges that weaknesses in international and domestic legal frameworks remain a significant barrier to effective maritime security. UNCLOS, piracy is narrowly defined as acts of violence on the high seas, excluding armed robbery within territorial waters, where most incidents actually occur. This definitional limitation creates jurisdictional grey zones and complicates prosecution. Furthermore, many states lack the necessary legislative tools, trained judicial personnel, or institutional capacity to prosecute pirates, traffickers, or smugglers, often resulting in the release of apprehended offenders without trial. New and emerging crimes such as cyberattacks on ports and sabotage of undersea infrastructure highlight the inadequacy of existing legal systems, raising urgent questions about attribution, responsibility, and accountability in the maritime domain.

Environmental and Climate Challenges

Rising sea levels endanger ports, naval bases, and coastal cities, many of which are critical nodes in global trade. The increasing frequency and severity of storms damage infrastructure and disrupt shipping lanes, as demonstrated by recent hurricanes and typhoons that caused severe global supply chain interruptions. The melting of Arctic ice, while opening shorter navigation routes and new opportunities for resource exploitation, simultaneously increases the risk of accidents, oil spills, and heightened geopolitical competition over sovereignty claims. The Council stresses that these climate-driven dynamics do not exist in isolation but amplify other maritime threats, acting as threat multipliers that destabilize already vulnerable regions.

Technological Vulnerabilities

Technological interdependence in the maritime sector has created new layers of vulnerability. Ports and vessels rely heavily on systems such as AIS, GPS, and digital logistics platforms, all of which are increasingly exposed to cyberattacks. The 2017 ransomware attack against Maersk illustrated how a single cyber incident could paralyze global shipping operations and cause economic losses in the hundreds of millions. The Council further recalls incidents of sabotage against undersea pipelines and communication cables, including the Nord Stream explosions in 2022 and Taiwan's cable cuts in 2023, as evidence of the fragility of this infrastructure.

Dependence on Major Naval Powers

Many developing coastal states remain unable to secure their maritime zones due to inadequate naval and coast guard capacity, limited resources, and insufficient training. As a result, they continue to rely heavily on external powers, including the United States, the European Union, and NATO, to ensure the safety of vital shipping lanes. While such external support has been effective in deterring immediate threats, overreliance on external actors risks undermining sovereignty, perpetuating unequal burden-sharing, and creating neo-colonial dynamics. Regional frameworks such as the Yaoundé Code of Conduct in West Africa and the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) demonstrate promising avenues for regional cooperation but remain constrained by weak implementation capacity and limited resources.

Humanitarian and Migration Pressures

The Council expresses profound concern over the continuing humanitarian crises caused by irregular maritime migration across the Mediterranean, the Bay of Bengal, and the Caribbean.

Thousands of migrants and refugees, fleeing conflict, persecution, and economic desperation, embark on unsafe and overcrowded vessels provided by smuggling networks, leading to frequent mass casualties at sea. Beyond the immediate human tragedy, these migration flows place immense pressure on coastal states and international organizations, while simultaneously empowering smuggling networks that profit from human vulnerability. There is an urgent need for a coordinated, rights-based approach that integrates border security with humanitarian obligations.

Territorial Disputes and Freedom of Navigation

Territorial disputes and restrictions on freedom of navigation are major sources of maritime tension, especially in regions like the South China Sea. UNCLOS guarantees freedom of navigation in Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs); states often impose restrictions that challenge international law. The United States, through its Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs), routinely challenges China's expansive claims in the South China Sea, leading to frequent confrontations. These disputes are not merely legal questions but carry the risk of escalation between great powers, particularly when naval vessels operate in close proximity. The militarization of disputed maritime zones threatens global commerce, as a significant share of world trade passes through contested waters.

Environmental and Humanitarian Dimensions

Environmental degradation and humanitarian crises are inseparably linked to maritime security. Climate change compounds these challenges, with rising sea levels threatening to submerge low-lying Pacific islands and storm surges increasingly damaging critical port infrastructure. The melting of Arctic ice opens new navigation routes, but also heightens risks of environmental disasters and geopolitical competition. Meanwhile, maritime migration

remains one of the most pressing humanitarian dimensions. Thousands of people perish each year attempting perilous sea crossings across the Mediterranean, the Bay of Bengal, and the Caribbean, driven by conflict, persecution, and climate-related displacement.

G. Relevant International Laws & Frameworks

1. Global Legal Frameworks

UNCLOS (1982): Known as the “constitution for the oceans,” UNCLOS codified maritime law after nearly a decade of negotiations. It defined concepts such as Territorial Sea (12 nautical miles), Exclusive Economic Zone (200 nautical miles), and Continental Shelf rights. It also established dispute settlement mechanisms through the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS). UNCLOS represented a turning point in global maritime governance, balancing coastal state rights with freedom of navigation.

IMO Conventions:

SOLAS (1974): Originated after the Titanic disaster (1912), revised in 1974 to strengthen maritime safety standards.

MARPOL (1973/78): Landmark treaty preventing pollution by oil, chemicals, sewage, and garbage from ships. It evolved with later annexes addressing air pollution.

SUA Convention (1988): Adopted after the Achille Lauro hijacking (1985), criminalized terrorist acts at sea and attacks against ships/crew.

ISPS Code (2002): A direct response to 9/11, introduced mandatory security plans for ships and port facilities, elevating counterterrorism in maritime law.

2. Regional Codes of Conduct

Djibouti Code of Conduct (2009):

Signed under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), this framework was created at the height of Somali piracy. It brought together East African and Western Indian Ocean states (including Kenya, Tanzania, Seychelles, and Yemen) to improve regional coordination. The Code initially focused on piracy suppression- sharing information, harmonizing laws, and enabling joint patrols.

Yaoundé Code of Conduct (2013):

Adopted by 25 West and Central African states, facilitated by the UN, African Union, and regional organizations (ECOWAS, ECCAS, GGC). Its purpose was to address piracy, armed robbery, and other illicit activities in the Gulf of Guinea. The Code established a maritime security architecture with Inter-regional Coordination Centres and regional Maritime Coordination Centres, promoting real-time information sharing and joint naval operations. It also extended cooperation to tackle trafficking, IUU fishing, and oil theft, issues especially critical to coastal economies.

ReCAAP (2006):

It was the first government-to-government agreement to address piracy in Asia. With its Information Sharing Centre (ISC) in Singapore, ReCAAP became a model for multinational maritime information exchange. It compiles incident reports, alerts member states, and facilitates responses. Beyond piracy, it now also tracks robbery, kidnapping, and other maritime crimes, making it central to Asia-Pacific maritime security.

3. Operational & Multinational Frameworks

EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta (2008–present): Launched at the height of Somali piracy, this was the European Union's first naval mission under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Its main tasks included protecting World Food Programme (WFP) and AMISOM shipments, deterring pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden and Western Indian Ocean, and monitoring fishing activities.

NATO's Operation Ocean Shield (2009–2016): NATO deployed naval forces to counter piracy in the Gulf of Aden. It focused on deterrence, surveillance, and supporting capacity building for regional navies.

Combined Maritime Forces (CMF): A US-led coalition headquartered in Bahrain, currently involving 34 member nations.

It operates several task forces:

- CTF-150 for counter-terrorism and maritime security in the Gulf of Oman, Red Sea, and Indian Ocean.
- CTF-151 for counter-piracy off Somalia.
- CTF-152 for Gulf maritime security.

Operation ASPIDES (2024–present): A new EU mission launched in response to Houthi missile and drone attacks against commercial shipping in the Red Sea. It reflects how multinational operations are no longer limited to piracy, but also deal with state-backed non-state actors and threats linked to regional conflicts.

4. Emerging Frameworks

As maritime security evolves, new challenges have emerged that go beyond traditional piracy or armed robbery. These include cyber threats, environmental concerns, and geopolitical changes, which require updated frameworks and international coordination.

Cybersecurity & Maritime Data: Recognizing challenges, the IMO issued guidelines in recent years to improve cybersecurity, encouraging states and shipping companies to implement protective measures and share threat information. Cybersecurity in maritime operations is now seen as a core component of overall maritime security, alongside traditional naval patrols.

Environmental Security: The IMO is collaborating with the UNFCCC and other agencies to align shipping practices with decarbonization goals. New frameworks include regulations on low-sulfur fuels, energy efficiency measures, and emissions monitoring, which also serve as security measures by reducing environmental risks and disputes over marine pollution.

Arctic Governance: The Arctic Council has become the main forum for discussions on maritime safety, search and rescue, and environmental protection. However, tensions between Russia and Western countries limit the Council's effectiveness in enforcing binding agreements. The Arctic demonstrates how emerging frameworks must balance economic opportunities, environmental protection, and geopolitical security.

V. Previous UN Actions

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has played a critical and evolving role in maritime security.

Somali Piracy and the Gulf of Aden (2008–2011):

Resolution 1851 (2008): Authorizing states to conduct operations on Somali soil against pirate infrastructure with Somali consent. This showed a willingness to extend maritime enforcement into land-based support networks.

Shift to Regional Approaches (2010s):

Resolution 2039 (2012): Addressed the growing problem of piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea, urging West African states to strengthen regional cooperation. While less operationally intrusive than the Somali mandates, it marked recognition that maritime insecurity was spreading.

West Africa and Global Expansion (2020s):

Resolution 2634 (2022): The first resolution explicitly focused on piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea. It acknowledged that maritime crime in West Africa had become the world's most dangerous piracy hotspot. Unlike earlier Somali-focused resolutions, it emphasized capacity building, regional ownership, and cooperation with organizations like the Yaoundé Code of Conduct.

Maritime Security in Armed Conflicts (2024):

Resolution 2722 (2024): Condemned Houthi attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea during the Yemen conflict. This resolution highlighted how the UNSC is increasingly framing maritime threats not only as criminal issues but also as extensions of armed conflict, terrorism, and threats to international peace and security.

VI. Questions to Ponder

- What role should the United Nations Security Council play in ensuring maritime security?
- How can states balance sovereignty with collective security at sea?
- Should the United Nations Security Council expand peacekeeping or naval missions to cover maritime threats?
- How can international law be enforced effectively in disputed waters?
- How can navies and coast guards share intelligence effectively against piracy, smuggling, and terrorism?
- What ethical considerations arise from the militarization of contested waterways?
- Are the current international frameworks like UNCLOS, IMO regulations etc. sufficient to protect maritime security?
- How do technological and environmental actors affect providing maritime security?
- What emerging technologies should be prioritized for maritime security?
- How can international law be enforced in contested waters?
- How should the United Nations Security Council address sabotage of undersea infrastructure?
- Should the United Nations Security Council integrate climate, environment, and humanitarian issues into maritime security frameworks?

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