

A New Hope for the New Millenium.

Four steps could change the shape of the global community.

1. Long term finance for the international public goods.
2. Rich and poor should join in a quest for common actions.
3. Mobilisation of science and technology for poor country problems.
4. Knowledge is becoming the undisputed centrepiece of global prosperity.

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SOUTH SEA PIRACY — A SERIOUS AND BLOODY BUSINESS TODAY

Pirates were the first predators of global commerce, and in Asia at least, they are on the rise again. Pirate attacks have doubled during the 1990, to 200 a year.

It is important to distinguish between two forms of piracy. The more mundane kind takes place in inshore waters, perpetrated by ill-organized gangs in speedboats. It tends to take place where the concentrations of shipping are greatest, or where law enforcement is weakest. Pirates, armed with guns, will kill even for paltry rewards, that's why the crews are under strict instructions to follow pirates orders.

Attacks are usually too sudden for the crew to sound the alarm. Much can be done on board to deter them: sharp watch is essential, firehouses are kept spraying, cardboard cutouts are used.

Shipowners and their crews are becoming increasingly concerned about a relatively new, and far more sophisticated, sort of crimes: the high-seas hijacking of ships and cargoes by international crime syndicates (examples with me Petro Ranger, an oil tanker carrying diesel and paraffin bound from Singapore for Vietnam; the Alondra Rainbow with a cargo of aluminium ingots bound for Japan; and the Cheung Son with furnace slag; she has never been found).

Pirates conceal the whereabouts of a ship by painting over the name and registration of ownership in laxer «flag» states (like Honduras). The paperwork for cargoes has also become easy to forge.

Mainland China is often suspected as the destination for many stolen cargoes. The rule of law in China is weak. There is also a huge Chinese market for «no-questions-asked» commodities.

There is another way of obtaining a vessel in which to transport a stolen cargo — getting the so-called «phantom» ship (a ship to be sold for scrap). This is given fake registration papers, then is put out for charter, to carry rice, rubber, etc. And changes its name each time it leaves port. Phantom ships usually can earn \$40m-50m for their syndicates.

Different solutions of the problem are suggested: antipiracy law; «right of hot pursuit» -the right for navies to chase pirates across national boundaries; electronic bill-of-lading system; transmitters that beam the ship's positions; employing mercenaries - armed teams to deal with pirates.

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