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(U) **WORLDWIDE: Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) Report** **26 March–22 April 2020**

23 April 2020

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1. (U) **Scope Note**

1. (U) The Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) message provides information on threats to merchant vessels, the shipping industry, and other maritime stakeholders worldwide in the last 30 days. This report is produced primarily to inform merchant mariners and naval forces.

2. (U) **Warnings and Advisories:**

A. 2020-004A-Gulf of Mexico-Vessel Attacks. Effective dates: 04/17/2020 to 04/24/2020. Description: A maritime threat has been reported in the vicinity of Ciudad Del Carmen and Dos Bocas, Mexico, in the Bay of Campeche area in the southern Gulf of Mexico. The nature of the threat are four reported attacks that took place between 4 and 14 April 2020, involving crew injuries and theft. A previous attack was reported in November of 2019. Exercise caution when transiting this area. Further updates will be provided when available. This alert will automatically expire on April 24, 2020. Any maritime industry questions regarding this alert should be directed to GMCC@uscg.mil. For more information about U.S. Maritime Alerts and Advisories, including subscription details, please visit www.marad.dot.gov/MSCI.

3. (U) **Summary:**

- A. (U) **INDONESIA:** On 22 April, crewmembers on a bulk carrier detected two robbers armed with knives on their vessel approximately 20 NM east southeast of Singapore at 01:15N - 104:04E.
- B. (U) **VIETNAM:** On 20 April, robbers boarded the anchored Bermuda-flagged tanker MASAGANA in Vung Tau Anchorage.
- C. (U) **BENIN:** On 19 April, armed men kidnapped eight crew members from the Portugal-flagged container ship TOMMI RITSCHER in Cotonou Anchorage.
- D. (U) **NIGERIA:** On 18 April, robbers attacked a passenger boat transiting in Okoroma Creek in the Niger Delta.

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- E. (U) INDIA: On 18 April, robbers boarded the unmanned Liberia-flagged tanker SEAFROST in-tow by the tugboat ATLANTIS off Alang Anchorage.
- F. (U) GHANA: On 16 April, robbers boarded an anchored supply vessel in the Takoradi Anchorage.
- G. (U) INDONESIA: On 16 April, robbers boarded the transiting Belgium-flagged VLCC ARAFURA.
- H. (U) INDONESIA: On 16 April, robbers boarded the Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier PALAIS approximately 3.2 NM north of Nongsa Point, Pulau Batam in the eastbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait.
- I. (U) MEXICO: On 14 April, robbers boarded the anchored Gibraltar-flagged offshore accommodation barge TELFORD 28 approximately 12 NM north of Ciudad Del Carmen.

4. (U) Details: Monthly Incidents by Region

(U) This section lists reports of active violence against shipping, credible threats to shipping, or the potential for a situation to develop into a direct threat to shipping over the last 30 days. Every effort is made to ensure that incidents are not double-counted. In the event double-counting is detected, or an incident is later found to be different than initially reported, an explanation of the cancellation of the inaccurate report will be made in at least one message prior to dropping the erroneous report.

A. (U) NORTH AMERICA:



Figure 1. North America Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. MEXICO: On the evening of 14 April at 2230LT, approximately six robbers boarded the anchored Gibraltar-flagged offshore accommodation barge TELFORD 28 approximately 12 NM north of Ciudad Del Carmen at 18:51N - 091:52W. The robbers, armed with automatic weapons and pistols, attempted to enter the accommodation area and then opened fire

toward the superstructure. The robbers managed to steal high-value project equipment from the vessel before escaping. One crew member was injured during this incident and was transferred to a hospital. The Mexican Navy responded and assisted TELFORD 28 following the incident. (Clearwater Dynamics, IMB, Maritime Bulletin, Marine Link)

2. (U) MEXICO - **UPDATED**: On 12 April, robbers boarded the Denmark-flagged offshore supply vessel MAERSK TRANSPORTER approximately 7 NM north of Ciudad Del Carmen at 18:46N - 091:49W. The robbers took crew members hostage while ransacking the vessel and stealing valuables. The robbers released the hostages when they disembarked. (Clearwater Dynamics, Marine Link, Fleetmon)

3. (U) MEXICO - **UPDATED**: On 9 April at 2230LT, eight pirates boarded the drifting Italy-flagged offshore supply vessel REMAS in the Gulf of Mexico, 13 NM northwest of Puerto Dos Bocas near 18:36N - 093:19W. The pirates took a number of crew members hostage and used them as "human shields." The pirates ransacked the vessel, stealing personal belongings and ship's equipment before releasing the hostages and escaping. The robbers fired several shots during the incident, but no one was injured. (IMB, Clearwater Dynamics, Fleetmon, Maritime Bulletin)

4. (U) MEXICO: On 4 April at 0906LT, eight armed individuals in a boat approached a pipe-laying vessel at high speed 13 NM northwest of Puerto de Dos Bocas, State of Tabasco in position 18:37N - 093:19W. The crew sounded the alarm, locked down the accommodation area, and mustered. As the boat approached the stern of the pipe-laying vessel, the armed men fired at the vessel. The master was able to use the vessel's thrusters to prevent the boat from coming alongside. The armed persons subsequently abandoned their approach and departed the area. The crew notified port control via VHF radio of the incident and a patrol boat was dispatched to the location. (IMB, Clearwater Dynamics)

B. (U) CENTRAL AMERICA - CARIBBEAN - SOUTH AMERICA:

1. (U) ECUADOR: On 11 April at 0035LT, six armed robbers boarded a container ship under pilotage at 02:52S - 080:23W, approximately 7 NM west of Isla Puna. They took two crew members hostage and tied them up. When the master spotted the robbers, he raised the alarm and notified the coast guard. Upon seeing the crew response, the robbers fired warning shots and fled. A subsequent search of the vessel revealed some containers were broken into. (IMB, Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (U) ECUADOR: On 8 April at 2230LT, eight armed robbers in two speedboats approached a container vessel underway in the river passage Guayaquil at approximately 02:34S - 080:06W. The robbers fired warning shots before boarding the vessel and accessing 15 containers. The master activated the SSAS and directed searchlights at the robbers who responded by firing shots at the bridge. The robbers stole items of cargo from the containers before disembarking. Port Control and Coast Guard were informed. The Coast Guard later embarked the vessel to investigate. No crew members were injured during the incident. (IMB, Clearwater Dynamics)

3. (U) VENEZUELA: On 30 March shortly after midnight, the Venezuela Coast Guard patrol ship NAIGUATÁ approached and contacted the Portugal-flagged cruise ship RCGS RESOLUTE via radio questioning its intentions. At the time, RCGS RESOLUTE was in international waters off Venezuela's La Tortuga Island conducting routine engine maintenance prior to its arrival at Willemstad, Curaçao. NAIGUATÁ instructed RESOLUTE to follow it to Puerto Moreno on Isla De Margarita, a Venezuelan port. While the master was in contact with the head office, gun shots were fired and, shortly thereafter, NAIGUATÁ approached at speed the cruise ship's starboard side with an angle of 135 degrees, and purposely collided with the ice strengthened (steel reinforced) hull. The coast guard ship continued to ram the starboard bow in an apparent attempt to turn RESOLUTE's heading toward Venezuelan territorial waters. NAIGUATÁ subsequently began to take on water and sank. The cruise ship informed the international Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) of the incident and offered to assist. After one hour, RCGS RESOLUTE was informed by MRCC that assistance was not required as NAIGUATÁ's 32-crew members had been rescued by the Venezuelan Navy. RCGS RESOLUTE reportedly sustained only minor damage during the incident. (gCaptain, Columbia Cruise Services)

C. (U) ATLANTIC OCEAN AREA: No current incidents to report.

D. (U) NORTHERN EUROPE - BALTIC: No current incidents to report.

E. (U) **MEDITERRANEAN - BLACK SEA:** No current incidents to report.

F. (U) **WEST AFRICA:**



Figure 2. Gulf of Guinea Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) **BENIN:** On 19 April, armed men in a speedboat approached and boarded the Portugal-flagged container ship TOMMI RITSCHER in Cotonou Anchorage at 06:16N - 002:32E. Eleven of the 19 crewmembers managed to secure themselves in the citadel; the armed men kidnapped the other eight crew members. On 20 April, Nigerian Special Forces conducted an unopposed boarding and freed the 11 crew members in the citadel. Reports indicate the TOMMI RITSCHER had Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, and Filipino crew members. (MDAT-GOG, Clearwater Dynamics, IMB, Dryad Global)

2. (U) **NIGERIA:** On 18 April at 0850LT, armed men attacked a passenger boat while underway from Brass to Yenagoa in the Niger Delta. The attackers injured one passenger, but the other passengers and boat driver managed to escape. Authorities rescued the injured passenger approximately 45 minutes later and took him to a hospital in Yenagoa with two gunshot wounds. (Nigerian Pilot)

3. (U) **GHANA:** On 16 April at 0105 UTC, seven individuals in a canoe came alongside an anchored supply vessel in the Takoradi Anchorage at 04:52N - 001:41W. Two of the men managed to board the vessel and were subsequently discovered by the deck officer in the paint store. When the crew raised the alarm, the two robbers jumped overboard and fled in the canoe. Five buckets of paint were stolen during the boarding. The crew notified the local authorities, who dispatched two patrol boats to secure the area. (MDAT-GOG, Clearwater Dynamics)

4. (U) **GHANA:** On 15 April at 0527LT, six robbers in a fishing boat came alongside and attempted to climb onto an anchored tanker within the Takoradi Anchorage at 04:54N - 001:41W. The robbers attempted to board at the forecandle using a grappling hook. When the crew noticed the robbers attempting board, they sounded the tanker's whistle. The robbers subsequently abandoned their attempted boarding and fled empty handed. (Clearwater Dynamics)

5. (U) GHANA: On 10 April at 0717 UTC, seven individuals onboard a red and white 15-meter-long skiff approached an underway tanker 57 NM south of Takoradi at 03:56N - 001:45W. The crew activated the fire hoses and undertook evasive maneuvers. The skiff continued to follow the tanker for 30 minutes and approached to within 50 meters at one point. The crew observed no weapons or ladders on the skiff during the incident. (Clearwater Dynamics, MDAT-GOG)

6. (U) NIGERIA: On 6 April at 1230LT, armed robbers from a speedboat boarded an underway passenger vessel 17 NM south of Port Harcourt near 04:28N - 007:03E. The robbers stole goods worth millions of Nigerian Naira. All passengers are safe. (Clearwater Dynamics)

7. (U) NIGERIA: On 27 March at 0700 UTC, 10 pirates armed with AK47s in a speedboat fired upon a cargo vessel approximately 98 NM south of Bonny Island at 02:45N - 006:55E. When the cargo vessel's armed guards responded, the pirates departed the area. (Clearwater Dynamics, MDAT-GoG)

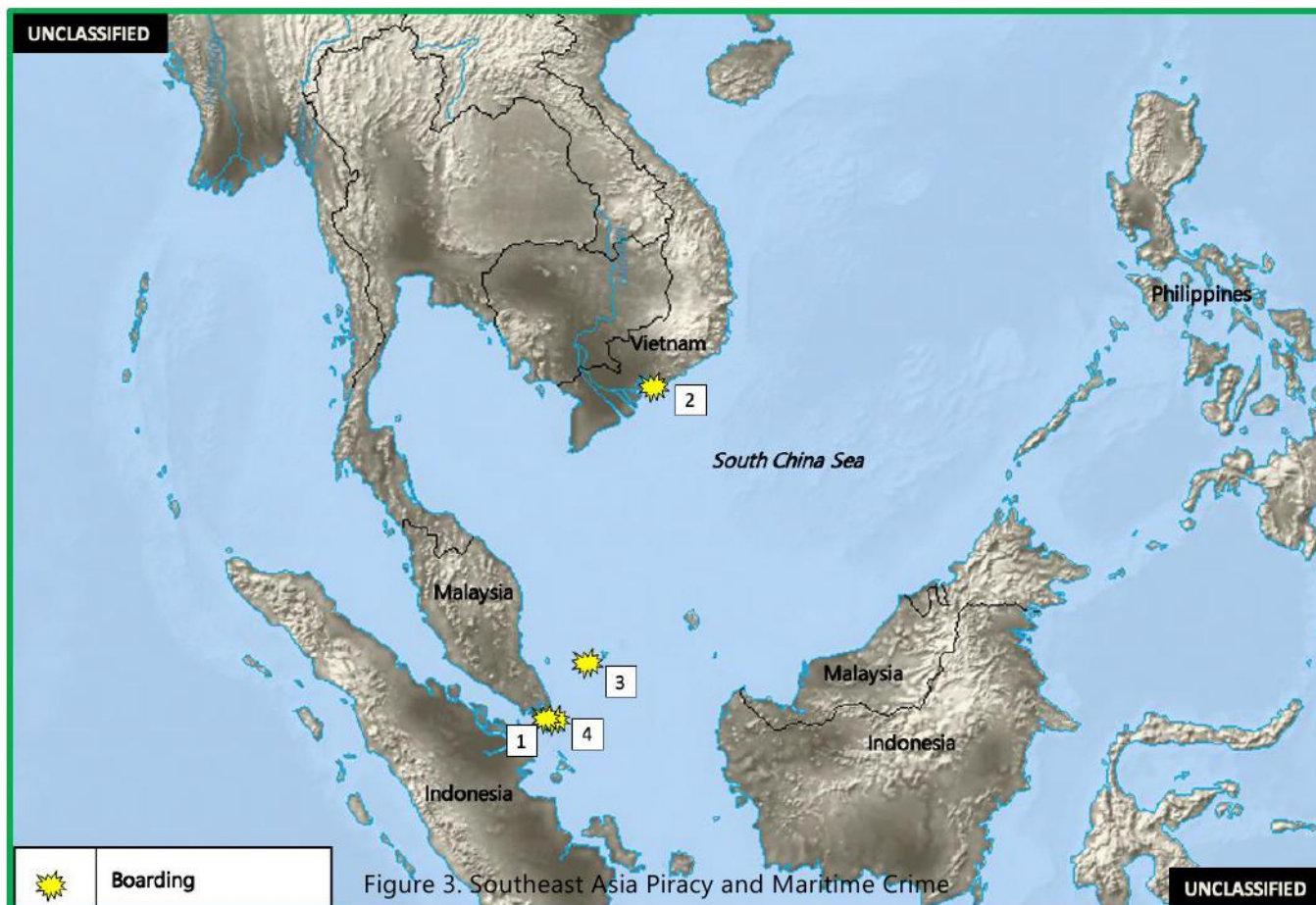
8. (U) BENIN: On 26 March at 0820 UTC, a speedboat with up to five individuals onboard approach an underway tanker approximately 21 NM south-southwest of Cotonou at position 05:59N - 002:21E. The tanker crew observed no weapons on the speedboat, but did see some hooks. The tanker increased speed and undertook evasive maneuvers. After 30 minutes, the speedboat ceased its pursuit. (Clearwater Dynamics, MDAT-GoG)

G. (U) ARABIAN GULF:

1. (U) On 27 March at 1226 UTC, two skiffs with 5–6 people onboard made a suspicious approach on an eastbound tanker approximately 31 NM southeast of Kish, Iran, at position 26:11N 054:31E. The tanker took evasive measures. The tanker crew observed a raised a ladder during the incident. (UKMTO, Clearwater Dynamics)

H. (U) INDIAN OCEAN - EAST AFRICA - RED SEA: No current incidents to report.

I. (U) EAST ASIA - SOUTHEAST ASIA:



1. (U) INDONESIA: On 22 April at 2310LT, crewmembers on a bulk carrier detected two robbers armed with knives on their vessel. At the time the vessel was approximately 20 NM east southeast of Singapore at 01:15N - 104:04E. The vessel was transiting in the eastbound lane of the traffic separation in the Singapore Strait at the time. The Captain altered course and began to return to Singapore and request assistance. The Singapore Coast Guard responded and carried out a search of the vessel, which determined the robbers had fled empty handed. (Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (U) VIETNAM: On 20 April at 0145LT, four robbers in a wooden boat approached and boarded the anchored Bermuda-flagged tanker MASAGANA in Vung Tau Anchorage at 10:21N - 107:02E. When the robbers were detected, the crew raised the alarm and sounded the ship's whistle. The robbers then jumped overboard and escaped in their wooden boat. The crew subsequently searched the tanker and discovered the robbers had managed to steal 80 liters of deck red paint from the forward store. The crew reported the incident to Vung Tau Port Control.

3. (U) INDONESIA: On 16 April at 0800LT, the crew of the Belgium-flagged VLCC ARAFURA discovered padlocks to restricted spaces had been cut with a heavy cutter. At the time, the vessel was approximately 40 NM southwest of the Anambas Island at 02:29N - 105:50E en route from the port of Sungai Linggi, Malaysia to Qingdao, China. The robbers sometime earlier had managed to board the tanker undetected and steal a breathing apparatus air compressor unit and various spare parts. The master subsequently notified ReCAAP and other regional authorities. The exact location of the robbery remains unknown. (ReCAAP)

4. (U) INDONESIA: On 16 April at 0100LT, the crew of the Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier PALAIS detected three robbers on the stern of the vessel. At the time, the vessel was approximately 3.2 NM north of Nongsa Point, Pulau Batam in the eastbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait at 01:14N - 104:06E. The master raised the alarm and a search of

the vessel was conducted to locate the robbers. No robbers were found, but some engine spares were discovered stolen. The crew notified the Singaporean and Indonesian authorities. (ReCAAP)

5. (U) PHILIPPINES - **UPDATED**: On 14 April at 0310LT, two robbers in an unlit boat pulled alongside and boarded the anchored Singapore-flagged cargo vessel NYK JOANNA in the Manila Anchorage at 14:36N - 120:52E. A duty crew member carrying out routine inspections noticed the boat and raised the alarm. Seeing the crew response, the robbers fled with some of the ship's property. The crew reported the incident to the Vessel Traffic Management System. (ReCAAP, Clearwater Dynamics, IFC MARSEC Weekly)

6. (U) MALAYSIA - **UPDATED**: On 11 April at 1030LT, the master of the Marshall Islands-flagged tanker LEYLA K discovered items had been stolen from his ship while anchored at Tanjung Kelesa, Johor, Malaysia at 01:42N - 104:28E. The robbers had managed to board the vessel undetected and steal a breathing apparatus air charging compressor and an M4 weldon pump. The captain subsequently informed regional authorities of the robbery. (Clearwater Dynamics, IMB, IFC MARSEC Weekly)

J. INDIAN SUBCONTINENT:

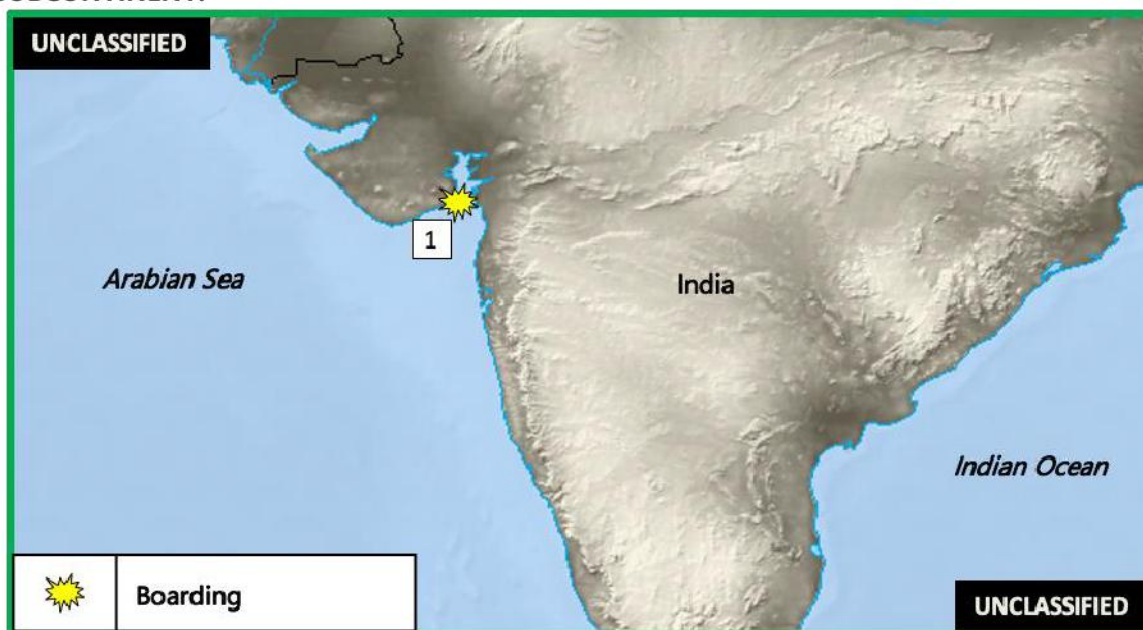


Figure 4. India Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) INDIA: On 18 April at 2354LT, robbers using a dinghy boarded the unmanned Liberia-flagged tanker SEAFROST in-tow by the tugboat ATLANTIS off Alang Anchorage at 21:25N - 072:19E. SEAFROST was waiting for dismantling. The crew informed the local Vessel Traffic Service at Khambhat, who in turn relayed the incident to the Indian Coast Guard. Coast Guard Station Pipavav requested the Marine Police Alang and Customs Bhavnagar to investigate. The robbers managed to steal some ship's property. (IMB)

L. (U) AUSTRALIA - NEW ZEALAND - PACIFIC OCEAN AREA: No current incidents to report.

5. (U) Appendix A: Further Contact Information and Resources

(U) This appendix provides contact information for the author of the WTS as well as other entities that can be contacted with maritime crime reports. It also lists other resources where the WTS is posted and where piracy and maritime crime incident information can be found.

(U) Contact

(U) Originator of this WTS report requests consumer feedback. Originator will incorporate all anti-shipping events and violence against the maritime industry into this weekly message where appropriate. To aid in our reporting, please add the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) to your normal corporate and organizational reporting requirements. The 24-hour watch can be reached at +1 (301) 669-4141.

(U) Other Resources

(U) This Worldwide Threat to Shipping Report is posted at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency's Maritime Safety site: <http://msi.nga.mil/NGAPortal/MSI.portal>. The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) also publishes a live piracy report based on reporting from the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, listing all piracy and armed robbery incidents in the last ten days: <http://www.icc-ccs.org/>. The PAWW and WTS reports are posted weekly on the ONI Intel Portal: <https://www.oni.navy.mil/News/Shipping-Threat-Reports/>

6. (U) Appendix B: Terminology and Sourcing

(U) This appendix is provided to promote consistent use of accurate terms of reference in reporting and also identifies those references that were used to gather the information contained in this report. ONI welcomes comment and suggestions for addition or amendment.

(U) Terminology

(U) In order to promote consistent use of accurate terms of reference, the following have been adopted to describe the range of criminal anti-shipping activity and impediments to safe navigation in our worldwide reporting and analysis. Please note that these terms relate to observable activity and are independent of target vessel status and exclude actions by governmental powers in lawful pursuit of their authorities:

(U) Attempted Boarding – Close approach or hull-to-hull contact with report that boarding paraphernalia were employed or visible in the approaching boat.

(U) Blocking – Hampering safe navigation, docking, or undocking of a vessel as a means of protest.

(U) Boarding – Unauthorized embarkation of a vessel by persons not part of its complement without successfully taking control of the vessel.

(U) Fired Upon – Weapons discharged at or toward a vessel.

(U) Hijacking – Unauthorized seizure and retention of a vessel by persons not part of its complement.

(U) Kidnapping – Unauthorized forcible removal of persons belonging to the vessel from it.

(U) Robbery – Theft from a vessel or from persons aboard the vessel.

(U) Suspicious Approach – All other unexplained activity in close proximity of an unknown vessel.

(U) Sourcing

(U) ONI derives information in this report from government agencies, piracy reporting centers, maritime security companies, and open press.

(U) ICOD: 22 April 2020

(U) The Weekly Threat to Shipping (WTS) reports are posted each week on the ONI Intel Portal and can be found at: <https://www.oni.navy.mil/News/Shipping-Threat-Reports/>