Comprehensive
Floating Armoury Survey Report

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Agenda

• Background
• Concerns
• Principles and purpose of survey
• Proposed conduct of survey
• Floating Armoury Visit
• Conclusions
• Recommendations
Background
History of Floating Armouries (FA)
Situation in 2008
Internationally Recognised Transit Corridor (IRTC) established Feb 09
Consequently!
FA Clusters
SAMI estimated that in 2012/2013/2014/2015 there were 17-20 FAs on the fringes of the HRA providing PCASP to commercial ships transiting the HRA.

At its peak SAMI estimated more than 40% of vessels carried PCASP across HRA.

Last commercial vessel successfully hijacked in the HRA for ransom was in May 2012.

Reduction of HRA on 1 Dec 15 resulted in an estimated reduction in PCASPs being used by around 19% and a consequential 18% reduction in SAMI members.
Concerns 1

• FAs hold 100s of weapons on board, 1000s of rounds of ammunition (each weapon will have at least 200 rounds on average) and Security Related Equipment (ballistic helmet, body armour with ceramic plates, radio, GPS, binoculars, Sat phones, trauma first aid kit) and could be regarded as a “coup in a box!”

• Vulnerability of FAs to attacks by terrorists or criminals/pirates.
Concerns 2

• Reduction in the number of PMSCs is likely to result in their weapons, ammunition and security related equipment being left with FAs — what will happen to these items?

• Reduction in PMSCs could lead to FA companies going out of business resulting in “stockpiles” of weapons, ammunition and security related equipment being “available” — what will happen?
Principles and purpose of survey

• FAs and their use has been the subject of exaggeration, miss information and rumour that attracted considerable subjective and often alarmist comment without any tangible objective evidence.

• Aim of survey was to provide the MSC with an accurate picture of what, where, when, how and provide recommendations for implementation of a pragmatic regulatory structure for FAs.
Proposed conduct of survey

• At MSC 95 Marshall Islands proposed to conduct a comprehensive survey of the number of FA in the HRA and ascertain the extent of their use and methods of operation.

• Concurrently - table top research/fund raising from stakeholders (only 10% of budget for survey achieved!)

• Visit FA company offices/operations rooms.

• Visit a representative sample of FAs.

• Produce report for MSC 96.
Conduct of survey
Research

SAMI Report on Sri Lankan FA Oct 12


Growing media interest

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-30512185


https://theferret.scot/fears-guns-sea-end-terrorists/

• Initial understanding of the situation regarding FAs in NW Indian Ocean.
• Extent of extant international Treaties, Standards, Guidelines etc that exist which could be used to provide a robust regulatory structure for FAs.
• Exposure of liabilities to flag States, Ship owners, charterers, insurers and coastal States
Floating Armoury Visit
Gulf of Oman
Visit Programme

This was not an inspection or audit of the vessel or the practices and procedures on board.

- Meeting with FA Company Offices & flag State offices prior to trip.
- Visit FA for 72 hours embarked to look at following areas:
  - Seaworthiness of vessel including “Floatel” services
  - Practices and Procedures of armoury service
  - Physical security of vessel from pirate/terrorist attack and port of refuge arrangements
- Post visit meetings with FA Company and flag State.
“Seaworthiness”

“… that degree of fitness that an ordinary and prudent ship owner would require his vessel to have at the commencement of the voyage having regard to all probable circumstances of it … ”
Example Floating Armoury

• Offshore Supply / Tug built 1984 – 815 gt
• Middle East owners, Grey listed flag (Paris MOU), IACS class
• Armoury consisting of 3 x 40 foot containers
Armoury Procedures

Armourer checks weapons for serviceability, serial numbers etc when arriving on board FA.
Armoury Procedures

All boxes containing weapons, ammunition and security related equipment are checked, catalogued and bar coded for ease of accounting.
Armoury Procedures

Boxes containing weapons, ammunition and security related equipment are stored in climate controlled 40 foot containers with access managed by FA staff.
Armoury Procedures

Three 40 foot containers welded to the deck of the ship hold the weapons, ammunition and security related equipment in a climate controlled environment with access managed by FA staff.
Example Floating Armoury

- Offshore Supply / Tug built 1984 – 815 gt
- Middle East owners, Grey listed flag (Paris MOU), IACS class
- Armoury consisting of 3 x 40 foot containers
- 2 high speed RIBs (for transfers)
Transfer Process

2 FA staff move towards client vessel in small high speed boat.
Transfer Process

PCASP waiting to depart ship

Crew lower weapons, ammunition, Security related equipment and PCASP personal kit to boat.
Transfer Process

FA staff unload weapon boxes onto FA vessel
Transfer Process

PCASP embark FA vessel
Example Floating Armoury

• Offshore Supply / Tug built 1984 – 815 gt
• Middle East owners, Grey listed flag (Paris MOU), IACS class
• Armoury consisting of 3 x 40 foot containers
• 2 high speed RIBs (for transfers)
• Accommodation for 103
  — 16 crew, 4 FA Management Team, 83 armed guard personnel
“Drift Factor”

Dining Hall seats 36

Recreation Space

Washing hanging around the ship

Galley staff provide 3 good meals per day
Cabins are small but do have air conditioning and are clean with shared heads & shower between 2 cabins.
Seaworthiness of example FA

• We were unable to visit the ship owner to assess the management system implementation ashore.
• All statutory and class certification on board was valid.
• The general condition of the ship satisfactory.
• However there was considerable room for improvement in maintaining compliance with the ISM Code.
Concerns over Seaworthiness of FAs

- Isolation of FA vessel and uniqueness of role resulted in ship owner not fully committed to compliance with the ISM Code.
- Lack of port State control inspections because the ships don’t enter port.
- Ship’s position and operation restricts flag State inspections.
- Ambiguity over insurance and Charter Party requirements for FAs.
Questions raised

• Compliance with MLC 2006?
• Category of armed guards embarked between contracted transits (passenger, seafarer, supernumerary)?
• “Drift Factor” – lethargy caused by lack of activity, purpose and communication for crew & embarked guards.
Practices and Procedures of armoury service

• The UN’s Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) have established the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) for the management of stockpiled weapons on land. These can be adapted to FAs and we were part of this process by completing a questionnaire which is being analysed.

• International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) may also be applicable.

• The UN Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), ratified by 80 countries and signed by a further 53 (incl many flag States of FAs) may also be an effective tool for the management of the movement of weapons.

• Part of the INTERPOL Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System (iARMS) available to 190 member countries.
Security

Daily activity around the Floating Armouries.
Security

Daily activity around the Floating Armouries.
Security

Daily activity around the Floating Armouries.
Security

• Potential conflict between ISPS Code, application of vessel protection from piracy/terrorist attack (ship’s crew, dedicated PCASP v embarked guards (command & control)).

• Port of refuge arrangements (mechanical or structural failure, pollution, human casualty, foul weather).
Conclusions

- PCASP have provided “turn key” solution to piracy in NW Indian Ocean (CMF - 80% of vessels transiting along Somali Coast/Gulf of Aden have PCASP embarked, whereas on 20% East of 65°E) facilitated by FAs.
- Location of FAs results in the vessels not being subject to normal compliance inspections.
- Regional management of weapons and ammunition is impossible without a consistent centralised control regime that complies with INTERPOL’s iARMS programme.
- “Drift Factor” could cause lethargy and significant disharmony on board FAs.
- Potentially undisclosed liability exposure for stakeholders.
- Many of the treaties, conventions etc are extant but have not been brought together to form a robust regulatory structure.
Extant Treaties, Conventions and Standards that could apply

- ISM Code:
  - Flag State
  - Classification
  - Marine insurance (Hull & Machinery and P&I etc)
- ISACS
- IATG
- Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) - 80 signatory countries and signed by a further 53 (all of which are flag States)
- INTERPOL’s iARMS programme.
Conclusions

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• Regional management of weapons and ammunition is impossible without a consistent and centralised control regime that complies with INTERPOL’s iARMS programme.
• “Drift Factor” could cause lethargy and significant disharmony on board FAs.
• Potentially undisclosed liability exposure for stakeholders.
• Many of the treaties, conventions etc are extant but have not been brought together to form a robust regulatory structure.
• Piracy in the HRA has not been eradicated, therefore a drastic change to the status quo and the abolition of FAs (and thereby PCASP) would expose seafarers to the risk of piracy again in the region.
Recommendations

• Fund completion the survey of a representative sample of FAs in order to ascertain a median of practices, procedures and conduct.

• Work with IMO to develop an international standard (ISO 28000 series), incorporating extant international treaties, conventions, international and national legislation that is effective and pragmatic.

• Appoint an independent body with the knowledge and understanding of the problem to ensure effective compliance with the new standard.
“You may choose to look the other way but you can never say you did not know.”

William Wilberforce (1759-1833)
British MP who abolished slavery in UK

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