



MINISTÈRE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT,
DE L'ÉNERGIE ET DE LA MER

MINISTÈRE DU LOGEMENT
ET DE L'HABITAT DURABLE

EPREUVE 4

**CONCOURS D'ELEVES ADMINISTRATEURS
DES AFFAIRES MARITIMES
(article 4-1 ET 4-2 du décret statutaire n°2012-1546)**

EPREUVE 3

**CONCOURS D'ELEVES STAGIAIRES ADMINISTRATEURS
DES AFFAIRES MARITIMES
(article 6-1 du décret statutaire n°2012-1546)**

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REPELLING PIRATE ATTACKS

On August 21, 2008 gangs of heavily armed pirates in tiny skiffs were able to seize three merchant vessels and hold their crews and cargos to ransom.

The costs of such a simple hijacking could be vast for a shipping firm. As well as the threat to the crew and the cost of the ransom, the largest vessels were often being rented at tens of thousands of dollars a day and were carrying cargo worth hundreds of millions.

Ships began to employ non-lethal weapons such as high-pressure water hoses and even hi-tech creations, including sound guns. Yet tanker operators remained wary at first of employing private security companies to guard ships.

To many, the idea of armed guards conjured images of unaccountable mercenaries. One of the toughest challenges for security firms was persuading ship operators they could be trusted

Firms who did take the risk with armed guards soon saw their worth. Merchant ships are like castles at sea. When there were no weapons, pirates are happy to assault these castles, but when they are fortified it's a completely different situation.

Since the dark days of 2008 and 2009, Somali piracy has plummeted. There were only two hijackings in the first eight months of 2013, down from dozens four years ago.

Levels of piracy have fallen so far that it feared that the industry is again becoming complacent. Amid the ferocious competition of international shipping, operators are again beginning to see security as a cost that can be cut. That would be a big mistake, it is only a matter of time before another big ship falls prey to the pirates.

Eight ways to protect a ship

• Armed guards

These have become standard for many ships sailing through Somali waters in 2013. A large ship now typically sails with four guards. Those may be experienced former Royal Marines who have been keen to cash in on their skills.

• Sound guns

A sonic weapon called a Long Range Acoustic Device. The LRAD emits an intolerable beam of sound to drive off attackers. Operators say the device can be hard to focus on a fast-moving skiff.

- **Lasers**

In 2011 a British arms firm developed an anti-pirate laser to dazzle approaching pirates. The firm said the green beam was strong enough to make it impossible to aim weapons into its path and was effective at up to a mile but would not permanently damage eyesight.

- **Water cannons**

High-pressure cannons or hoses spraying from the ship are designed to blow away pirates as they try to scale the ship's sides, or to swamp their tiny craft as they approach. They can be fitted with remote controls and operated from safety if the pirates open fire.

- **Razor wire, cages and electric fences**

Ships have bolstered physical defences with layers of barriers, wire and cages. The defences are designed to stop pirates getting aboard and, if they do, to stop them reaching the crew.

- **Boat traps**

Nets or wires can be used to snare and entangle the propellers of pirate skiffs as they approach.

- **Foam**

Slippery anti-traction foam can be sprayed over a ship's sides or decks to hamper pirates as they try to climb aboard.

- **Foul-smelling liquid**

Devices shoot slicks of foul-smelling liquid which can cause a burning sensation on the skin, causing pirates to break off their attack or jump in the water to clean themselves, according to designers.

Extracts from "The Telegraph", January 2017.