Abstract

South-East Asia is the most prolific piracy region in the world which seldom receives any attention from international governments or media alike. The purpose of this thesis is to understand why piracy can exist at such high levels without gaining the attention of other piracy spots such as Somalia and the Gulf of Guinea and how it is combatted in lieu of more international responses seen in those African regions. Various methods and sources have been used to answer this puzzle like qualitative methods through analysing academic articles, international treaties and up to date news in the region. Furthermore, quantitative analysis through piracy statistic databases have been vital to understanding the situation in not only the South-East Asia but Somalia and the Gulf of Guinea too. The geography of the region is constrained by international law creating tight political boundaries in maritime spaces. The consequences of this are that states value protecting their sovereign territory over combatting piracy. Pirates understand this and can cross transnational boundaries to commit crimes and escape where security forces cannot follow due to respecting maritime territorial boundaries. States do not want to give authority for other states to perform security in their territory and this creates a situation where pirates can gain an advantage over the law. Furthermore, territorial disputes and the failure of regional agreements to enforce their targets add to this problem meaning that sovereignty is always the main consideration for security

cooperation. The implications of this research is that more must be done to enhance cooperation in the region to balance concerns for sovereignty and the need to tackle transnational crimes like piracy. Whilst piracy typology exists at a petty level just now, the potential for violence and increased attacks to return is evident due to most boardings being successful. The current mechanisms of security would need to be enhanced to tackle this situation if it were to arise.