

Focus on Delivery! In conversation with Phil Holihead, IMO

In this conversation Phil Holihead, head of the Project Implementation Unit of the Djibouti Code of Conduct of the International Maritime Organization, lays out some of the lessons from piracy from the perspective of an implementation agency. He underlines the importance of the CGPCS for networking and identifying collaborative projects. Holihead stresses that the emphasis of the CGPCS work has to be put on implementation, delivering, or “doing” as he puts it. There is a continuous risk that meetings of the Contact Group become talk shops, not the least because too many different actors and agendas are combined in some of the formats. Holihead moreover outlines how important the relationship between containment and capacity building is, and that capacity building should focus on the broader long-term perspective. He also lays out how the international community should react to future outbreaks of piracy and stresses the importance of taking a long term and preventive perspective. The interview took place at IMO Headquarters, 9th September 2014.

Thank you for taking the time to speak to the Lessons Learned Consortium. As a first question, can you tell us how you heard for the first time about the Contact Group?

PH: The Contact Group was formed before I came to the IMO; the IMO’s counter piracy project implementation unit was formed in April 2010. Right from the start, one of the things I promoted was that WG1 of the Contact Group, as it was UK chaired, should use the IMO building as its HQ which was good for the IMO and good for the Contact Group. So we came together very quickly in 2010.

You participated for the first time at this working group meeting?

PH: Yes, it was a meeting of WG1 and it ran in here in London for quite a long time. Later it was moved out to the region after the first chair had moved on and basically one of the things he left behind was the idea that it should become more regional.

What were your expectations for the first time you went to the working group meeting?

PH: Well IMO at a policy level had some concerns about the Contact Group because it felt that the Contact Group was doing the work that IMO was mandated to do in terms of industry and in areas of maritime security. There was a feeling that some of the work of the Contact Group would overlap with the IMO as a body. My expectation as a capacity builder with a more defined job to do: that is, to build regional capacity to counter Somali piracy was different. The WG opened a lot of doors and made a lot of contacts, so I found it an excellent networking facility. For example, one of the very first meetings, if not the first that I went to, we made the contact with NATO that had, in six months, set up the regional training programme using the spare capacity in the NATO centre in Greece. That was all through a NATO attending a working group 1 meeting saying we want to do something on capacity building, and is there something we can do together. So it formed those sorts of relationships. I think it’s good from that point of view.

Was this idea to collaborate with NATO invented at the actual meeting?

PH: The two of us sat down and talked about what we were both trying to achieve without any real clear plan at that stage, it was very early in my time and one of the things I knew I

had to approve was regional training. By that stage I hadn't got my regional training partners sorted out as to who was going to do what and NATO were looking to do some training, so it was a partnership made in heaven and has been good ever since. My expectation at the WG was to get some kind of coordination and find out who was doing what, so you could situate yourself in that. Now you've got to remember that in 2010 we didn't have the large EU missions on the ground, so not a lot of people were doing much. So IMO was one of the few games on the ground, EU MARSIC team was running, EU MASE was just coming over the horizon. EUCAP NESTOR hadn't been invented at that stage. That came along later, although it was through a WG1 when the EEAS started talking to IMO about it and was looking for ideas about how they might develop that programme. For the bigger CG, the plenary and the main event, I just saw that as giving steers, strategic insight, to the working group and in many ways that suited what we were doing. It wasn't necessary and IMO was not prepared to be tied down by the working group as to what we should be doing, it was purely a mechanism through which we wouldn't duplicate what others were doing. In the early days, when we were only starting delivery, that wasn't an issue, later on it became an issue for WG1. In its mid-life and up to today, coordination with all sorts of actors on the ground has become one of its main themes, including coordinating capacity building. In 2010 that wasn't its role, it was more focused on the navies and operational actors, than capacity building. I used to jump up and discuss what the Djibouti Code of Conduct would look like and that was good because I was one of the few discussing capacity building at WG1 at that stage. The legal working group, which I used to sit at the back of, was very much going down that line. Already UNODC and France who did the big tour of looking at what was needed were reporting into WG2. So in those early days it was fact finding and UNODC was aligning itself to a legal programme which is what eventually resulted in the prisons and the courts. This has moved forward very well. WG2 took a very different approach to WG1 it looked like the right approach. Over all of this, the CG plenary was giving strategic weight, I think, I wouldn't even say much guidance, it was just somewhere to report to that would carry gravitas and that would be able to report, even though it wasn't a UN mechanism, into the UN Sec General's report on piracy. Again the IMO had a bit of a conflict of interest as we were already reporting, and had been for years, on piracy. So there was a bit of a split between me as an IMO capacity building project who found it of use and the policy desk who were concerned that it duplicated work that was naturally IMO's in the first place.

Would you say that the informal component of the CG meetings were more important than the formal?

PH: Yes, without a doubt because that is where you do your business. You do your business like we have been talking, you don't do it with formal emails and papers. It's about who is doing what, and 'oh there is a niche there, that's part of my remit, do you want me to do that' or 'I'll do that if you're not minded to ask'. Or 'oh you're looking to do training, I'm looking for training can we work together?' We put the NATO training courses together. Of course there was a lot of detailed work done to decide what the courses would include, but the principles were agreed over two WG1s over coffee and two video teleconferences. That's not bad as an outcome of the meetings.

Sounds quite efficient. So why do all these lengthy briefings in the plenary and working groups? What is their function?

PH: Well I think they're a waste of time. We have a phrase which I used in the Navy, it's become a self-licking lollypop. It's become too big and too complex, whereas if it kept its mind on the nuts and bolts of things, the 'who is doing what, why are we doing that and what

are the effects of doing that' it would be much more effective. I'm not sure we've ever really, really, looked at that. Regarding the Plenary I'd say it is necessary because you do need to have individual governments engage and say we are engaged with the CG as the only body able to pull the counter piracy effort together, we are engaged as a nation, going back to the taxpayers and your own governments saying were engaged, we are in there. This is a very necessary process, but I see the CG, the main body, as something that draws everything out of the WGs and the WGs have therefore got to work to produce things. The WGs shouldn't be having lots of discussions and drawing things up themselves, they should be getting on with things. The WGs grew and grew until that was not the case, apart from WG2 which kept on delivery and when it had delivered walked away from the problem.

What was so different between WG2 and all of the others?

PH: It's smaller, and it kept itself focused on a few issues right from the start and that was down to strong leadership. I'm not saying the others had weak chairmanship. The WG1 chairman was the UK, but they were faced with rooms full of more people, therefore more ideas and more political agendas. I think the strength of WG2 was that it found consensus very quickly and this consensus was turned into actions through the toolbox mechanism. This was created by the chair who then got the group to sign up to it, and then that was the basis for what then developed. It was clear, it was the sort of things people wanted to do in terms of capacity building and it led to an end result that you could see. That was the perfect solution. WG1 had a lot of issues, from quite early on the Somalis in the room only wanted to make political messages, and there was a lot of politics in the room. At times there were three agendas running in the room at WG1 and it was very hard to pin down hard actions. At the end the chair figured out the key points. But that didn't fulfil everyone's aspirations in the room as so much had been discussed. It was too big a meeting. WG3 was very much the work that had been passed inside the IMO building. Everything WG3 had discussed would be discussed by the IMO's Maritime Security Committee and the IMO had a particular problem with the necessity of WG3. As it moved on I think it has a better reason for being. I think the reformed CG is a good idea. The breakup of WG1 in the latter stages of the Contact Group into the operational WG3 and and capacity building WG1 is a good thing because there was too much going on in WG1 in the first place, it was operational and capacity building and they didn't really meet. There were all sorts of agendas going on that didn't match.

Have you ever seen any controversies or conflict over what should go into the chairman's summary of the working groups?

PH: There's horse trading that goes on, definite horse trading. We all push our corner. And that's why the summary of WG1 was such a deft piece of penmanship because the chairperson has to please a number of people. WG2 didn't have to face that. It's a matter of what drives the chairman, is the chairman interested in having an output that can work or is he only interested in reporting to plenary. You only have to look at the output from WG4 to see that. I think that's the key. If it is only about reporting on what the WG talked about, the plenary is prepared to accept that. But if the focus on 'what are you doing' is lost, a WG can quickly become a talking shop. My personal problem with WG1 – I used to tell even the first chair this – was that there's too much talk, not enough doing. He used to get this comment from me at every WG meeting and he'd basically say you have got to understand that "this is a political process". I don't think WGs should be a political process. It should be a practical process that reports to a political process that holds it to scrutiny and says 'what have you actually done'. If all you've done is talking and reporting then you are wasting time.

Was part of the problem the fact that there were too many diplomats rather than implementers in the room?

PH: Yes, absolutely clear about that. Too many, but not just diplomats, there were not enough doers. Too many people were seeking a diplomatic or political gain or a diplomatic or political voice.

What is the difference between a 'doer' and the other participants?

PH: Well all those guys are doers as well. But we only have to ask ourselves what has been successful in the CGPCS?. What has been successful in terms of capacity building to counter Somali piracy? What has been successful in terms of law enforcement? For law enforcement it was the SHADE mechanism. It worked because it was kept at the lowest level where people rolled their sleeves up and said this is the problem, what are we going to do, how are we going to coordinate all these ships that have turned up to make it work. At the lowest level they could possibly do that. And it was effective and they worked with industry. At the highest levels there was a senior forum, but it was face to face and it was 'our needs are this, we expect to see this from you', 'our needs are that' etc. and it was done like that. That isn't what diplomats do, they talk around the situation and I would say that's the difference. Similarly the successful projects, UNODC's prisons and counter piracy project, generally recognised to be a success, grew out of WG2 which gave them very clear deliverables. The Djibouti Code of Conduct has had an element of success, most of that wasn't steered by WG1 in any form. It was looking at the problem and looking at what others were doing – at that time it was only UNODC and the EU – looking at how can we fit into this and play a lead role or support this, getting on and doing things. So meetings of WG1 and what was discussed there had no direct effect on the programme we were doing. Later, as I've already said, as others came along to deliver similar things, the role became coordination. But, in the early days it just needed a clear definition of what needed doing. WG2 was successful. So the doers are those who are saying 'we can't solve piracy, if we had a silver bullet we would do it, so we've got to go along the way to make a difference'. Now, the Djibouti Code of Conduct was a coordination and capacity building project, but my remit was to solve piracy in 2 years. The Djibouti Code of Conduct was never going to achieve that. What the Djibouti Code of Conduct is doing, what we were focused on, was creating something so that the regional countries could police their waters, exchange information and coordinate to try to stop the events that allowed piracy to start in the spike it's been in since 2006-7-. In other words, it was about allowing them to coordinate more so that they can either give a warning that something is happening to bring in the cavalry, or to become the cavalry themselves and police the sea effectively. So we are looking further ahead. It is not about trying to stop the current spike, but trying to create better conditions so that it doesn't happen again. And I think that's very useful thing. UNODC has been more reactive and looked into how the interface with the navies can be improved so that suspected pirates can be handed to some legal mechanism.

Back to the work of the CGPCS, if you do attend a meeting, how do you prepare for it, and when do you start?

PH: For a CG plenary, the IMO really only starts preparing for it as the papers come out to see if we disagree. We don't feel a strong need to go to the CG plenary to be honest; we have our own plenary here in London. All the countries affected are in our 170 member states of the IMO. So there is not a strong feeling about going to plenaries. But I do work ahead of a WG, on the basis that we might get some output and do some work, as opposed to just being

a second plenary. I live in hope of that, but it has not always been fulfilled. But at WG is where I would hope to be called to account and either justify what I am doing, or see how it fits into what everyone else is doing. So there's some form of corporate output and we have a view of what everyone's doing. Knowing that we are moving in the same direction would be a good output for a WG. Hence, there is definitely preparation for that. A lot of the plenary is just being reported to by the WGs anyway, so preparation is for the WG.

A lot of time has been spent drafting the communique for the plenary and you sometime get the impression that after it has been drafted everyone forgets about it. Why then do communique drafting in the first place?

PH: Well I'm not a fan of it. I have seen some of the ridiculous things that made it into earlier drafts, and the priority they've been given. The communique is so diluted, so diplomatic and political, but in the worst use of those words. I really think it has little strength. The only value is if it's used by the larger international organisations who do have the power, as the Contact Group actually being an ad-hoc group shouldn't really have any power other than our persuasion and influence. Organisations like the UN, the EU, the IMO, can be influenced by the communique. I really think that the larger organisations, the international organisations that want to make a difference, are more influenced by the output of WGs and the other thing is just diluted down, you restrict yourself to so many words, making in one line sentence something quite complicated that you're trying to paraphrase. Empowerment takes the form of a strategic aim, and freeing funds to allow the smaller delivery teams to be given a pretty free hand to go and deliver. That was the success of IMO's implementation work, and UNODC's work: the delivery teams were empowered to channel the money into capacity building. So there is a role for everyone in this, but – if I'm allowed to be critical – this is somewhere where the EU doesn't give the freedom to its front end. There is always reporting back either at the national level or the EU level and they spend a lot of time-the people who should be delivering-reporting and money is held at the centre meaning that there is little empowerment that goes on in terms of 'here is your job and here is the money to do it' and that's why they struggle to do delivery. I've not faced that, I've been empowered to use the money and do this work and I've been supported by the Secretary General of the IMO and my Director to go ahead and do that work. A short command chain with a delivery body at the end of it is what works; Alan Cole at UNODC has enjoyed pretty much the same. This is why we work so closely with UNODC and at times overlapped with them, and we've always managed to overcome that overlap because nobody wants a duplicate as it's not good value for money. So you talk to each other, that's more difficult to do with large EU projects who come on and do a myriad of things, a lot of which looks like duplication because they've come quite late to the game. They have a strength that projects like mine and Alan Cole's don't have because they are probably slightly more sustainable. There is more money and people in an EU project and so you could probably take it a point further down the line, do a lot more planning and say 'we're going to get there, we need to develop from there onwards.'

Do you think there's a lot of competition between different agencies, different implementing agencies over donor money?

PH: That is a good question; it's not something I've noticed. When we started with our donor base, again we were pretty much the first act to stand up, our donor base came to us, particularly Japan who came aboard this project, because they are a member of IMO and wanted to put through the IMO type project and the Djibouti Code had been written and it looked like a good way forward. And we have managed, throughout the Code of Conducts lifetime, to attract further donations every year, down the line by saying that we've got to

here, we'd like to do that. And at WG1 meetings, just standing up and speaking one to one has attracted people to say 'we're looking to do something similar, could you do this for us or with us?' and so again it's a bit of a barter, but there is a lot of bilateral interest in doing work in the region either one on one or one with a couple. If you're already going down the line and are known for delivery, you become attractive for people to say 'could you deliver that for us' and if it falls within the remit of what we're trying to deliver, I'd never turn the money down. We've gained quite a bit of donor money that way towards the middle and end of our project and so we've never been openly fighting for funds. Where the fight comes is more the duplication of a number of agencies doing much the same thing. That has always been a concern and people know that is not good value for money. But we all do talk with each other, contrary to popular belief in the Contact Group and WG1. The EU team, UNODC, UNDP, FAO and IMO have always talked to each other. What we don't tend to do is consult and say 'we're thinking of doing this, does this step on your toes?', because we've all got deliverables in our plans and programmes that we have got to deliver and some of those are very similar. With the best will in the world, if you have told your donors you're going to deliver something, just because somebody else in the room is going to do something similar, you're still going to deliver it. And that's a human reality, you're not going to go back with a million dollars saying 'I don't think we should spend this because it looks like what they are already doing'. It would be good if you could join together and say 'let's do this together' and in fact UNODC and IMO are doing that in the Seychelles at the moment and have done so elsewhere previously. We have got some funding to deliver something and they were also delivering it from a slightly different angle, so we've put the two together and the sum of the parts actually adds up to something a lot more and the Seychelles will benefit from that. So, it is those sorts of negotiations, knowing who is doing what, that are the key. But fighting over donor funds? I don't think so, I think our donor bases are sufficiently separate anyway.

What is your impression from the WGs and plenary, is there any actor missing? Did you sometimes had the feeling that this person or organisation should be represented?

PH: My answer to that is no. My experience of WG1 was that there are too many. So looking for more, I'd say no. No, I think the meetings need to be more focused. If we had had regional capacity building as a WG, as we sort of have now the right people would have been in the room and would hopefully have been fewer. If we had had operations, as we have now, the right people would have been in the room and it would have hopefully have been fewer. It might have looked a bit like SHADE which I guess is the operations sub-working group discussing that. But doing it at that level, I know is day to day business at sea, but they have to talk about the bigger issues, 'we need you to talk to us and we need to have reports' and interface between those being protected and those doing the protecting. SHADE is pretty the much the output of what the navies bring and report to WG1 anyway, so why do we re-report at WG and again at Plenary? To convince us all that it's working? Ok, but we come back again to the need for the nations to have a mechanism that tells them it's working: 2 captains, half a dozen people sat around a table in Bahrain probably won't instil the confidence at higher government level where you're trying to see funding and continuing support for warships to be there. You do need to have some of the political layers, thus a multi-layer approach is the answer. The reality is that you do have to have the higher level meetings, but I think you could reduce them down. If your output comes out of SHADE, why go to WG1 and then plenary, why not go straight to plenary? So I can't think of who was missing because I'm basing my evaluation on WG1 and there was too much in the room because it was trying to be all things to all men.

If you could advice to a newcomer to the contact group, say you were briefing your successor in preparation for them attending the Contact Group plenary what would be your advice?

PH: I would not do it that way, can I say I think that is the wrong question. If I was hiring somebody tomorrow based on what I know now, what would I create? It's a different question. Well my advice would be not to go, to answer the question you asked! My advice would be deal with what you have in front of you. Deal with it the best you can and do it in as inclusive a way as you can. Focus on delivery. Don't be focused on reporting and telling people you're going to deliver. Focus on actually doing something. Word of this will get out because you're making a difference. I would say do your business in the margins, if you've got something to say then say it, otherwise don't raise your hand because it just starts people off on new lines. The amount of time we have spent discussing things that have never come to fruition. I know a discussion to dismiss things can be valuable. But the amount of time in the WG 1 when we've just talked and listened on discussions which had no impact, but seemed a good idea at the time. Just keep it simple and talk about what it is you're doing. Talk privately with people, use it to do your deals, background deals, look for people who are potential deliverers, particularly the big organisations – the NATOs, EUs who are desperate to be seen to deliver something, but also those who want to be seen to deliver something, but who have no plans on what to deliver because they are your allies. If you have got a clear plan, you are their ally and that is when you make the right formations and that is what I would be looking for. So if you want to call it networking its more than that, it's picking partners and deciding the art of the possible. But you don't do that in the formal part of the meeting. You inspire people to come up and talk to you in the room by saying 'we are looking to do this, but we're a bit short of this', etc. That might inspire people to come up to you and say 'we are looking to do that, can we help?' That works. So be honest, be open, but only say what you need to say, including things that you think you should do, but haven't found a way of doing yet because you may find somebody doing a similar thing.

Can you give an example of these unproductive conversations you had?

PH: Yes, all these Somali briefings we used to get just to keep them in the room. The history of Somalia, how many times have I heard that? And we would all go 'how terribly sad', whereas we needed 'what is wrong is this', but weren't in a position to do that. It is unfair that I point at Somalia, but the amount of times I have heard the history of Somalia given at a WG1 meeting as the only output is just unbelievable, and you hear it over and over again. Nothing about what they are doing about piracy. Nobody was prepared, because it was terribly undiplomatic, to pin their slides down and say 'what we need from you is this.' And that is still sort of happening, it's getting better, but I didn't think we pinned them down enough for instance at New York in May. We had some clear questions we wanted to ask them. It is difficult when you're trying to do this in a diplomatic way, in a sleeves rolled up way you start testing and asking what are you actually trying to achieve.

If you could design the contact group, how it is supposed to be, based on your experience how would it look like?

PH: There are two answers to this question because I'm in IMO. Since IMO probably wouldn't have invented it, IMO as a body would have said what could we do with what's existing, we might have ended up at the contact group, but IMO as body would probably have looked at this elsewhere. I think one of the best creations coming out of counter piracy is SHADE. We tried to make the capacity building coordination group look like SHADE in the CBCG and failed dismally because we kept filling the room with people, instead of having

half a dozen really committed people talking straight in the room. So my lesson is don't overcomplicate, keep your structures small and focused. I think I would start bottom-up: 'let's get some WGs together, what is the problem, right what do we need to address.' I think five years on we're almost there. As piracy is a crime it needs a legal element so I would make that probably my first WG because everything's got to be based in law in some way or another. It is a crime so therefore you have got to check law, and you have got to abide by some rules, so I would have a legal WG. Now the second thing is if you have got a legal WG, you need law enforcement, so the next question is: who is going to enforce that. That would be operations. So I would have operations, so I'd effectively have WG3. Now one problem is of course, that IMO believes that this is its territory. So I would try to link WG3 as a conduit if practices need to be changed to endorsement within this body. This effectively happened, but it was always a bit of a face off and I think I would tie it more closely to the desires in IMO. So I'd have legal and law enforcement, because that's your containment for piracy. I think that's the truth whether your piracy is here or in West Africa, where there are very different challenges, but you still need it. You've got to get that right first that is where the first focus should be. After that you need to ask: 'where has the piracy come from?' 'what are the locals doing?' 'what has failed?' so that you can focus on what needs to be done in a broader context. So containment, what does the law say, how can we improve it and how can we use the law to support operations. After that everything else is about dealing with the root causes, where has this come from. If this has come from a lack of regional capacity, then undertake capacity building. If this has come from a failed state, then we need to look at which bit of the state we need to fix to stop the piracy. Or we never go just for piracy and our main message would be that we can't do piracy on its own, we've got to look at the bigger picture-where this came from, the criminality that must have been there, because you don't just grow a capability like piracy. There's a capability and criminal element that comes together to create piracy. I think what we haven't addressed this and need to address the broader endemic issues such as the smuggling, whether that be arms, charcoal or people, whatever it is, drugs, that takes place in the Horn of Africa. We should have looked at that from the start. It's a discussion that needs to be had, are we just going to focus on the one crime and try to contain it, or do we contain the one crime, whilst addressing the regional basis in the extent of the other criminalities, because I think we have a fairly good idea of the other crimes going on: the smuggling and the illegal fishing. Does our capacity building address the bigger problems, while the containment addresses the specific crime.

Is this not a contradictory position? On the one side you are arguing to broaden the focus, while on the other you say it is important to target only the specific crime of piracy?

PH: Remember we are doing this with hindsight, this is a lesson, and the lesson is that the containment has made a real difference, the containment has been just enough to contain the piracy problem. If you'd asked that containment to do all the other things I think it would not have done so well at countering piracy. So I'm saying you've got to focus your containment and your law. But capacity building should look at the broader issues of where piracy is coming from. Therefore it's got to pick apart the constituent parts of piracy and the endemic criminality, the poverty and all the other issues. The two should always be recognised as being partly complimentary of one another, but containment is very much holding the ground while this improves things. Capacity building needs to be focused on all the things that containment isn't doing, it's got to improve things so that if containment is successful, as we find ourselves today, have we moved forward in terms of the region's own capacity to police itself and provide its own law enforcement. The answer is not really enough and therefore capacity building and containment have been seen in isolation, and actually at some stage they do come together if you ask: 'when can the navies go home in the surety that the region

and the country is better placed to do things?’ There’s going to be a disconnect and therefore we’ve got to push these things together right from the start. Long answer to a simple question, but... it’s not a simple question, it’s the fundamental question really.

In 2025 what are going to be leftovers from the Contact Group?

PH: 2025? In terms of what we’ve delivered? I don’t think the Contact Group has delivered anything.

Is there still going to be a Contact Group in 2025?

PH: Others have delivered it and the Contact Group has claimed credit for it. Others have delivered because the Contact Group delivered the environment in which they were able to do things. But leftovers? In 2016, we’re in danger of going home and holding our breath. I’m not saying the pirates will come back, and if the pirates don’t come back then in 2025 who knows? Capacity building will have slowed right down, because capacity building has been done in the name of piracy. I think the people that really need to learn a lesson from what has occurred in Somalia are the African Union. They need to learn the lesson of what they need to do to actually deliver something in 2050 in their maritime strategy for the African continent. I really think that is important. They can draw on things like the Djibouti Code of Conduct, the West African Code of Conduct, since they are the only documents in town that get people working together. They need to strengthen those bonds. So if there was one thing I would try to handover, it would be for the African Union to recognise that if they’re going to deliver their own maritime strategy they need to learn the lessons and start, not from zero, but from what has been done and started and the momentum and not have a big gap.

If there is a major outbreak of piracy in 2025, let’s say in Sri Lanka, where is this going to be discussed: in the IMO, in the Security Council, or elsewhere?

PH: Well the IMO was involved in discussing piracy and pushing ideas out there about piracy for a lot longer before Somali piracy peaked. So if there’s an outbreak of piracy in Sri Lanka where’s this going to be discussed. Well I expect it to be discussed early in the Security Council, of course, and I expect it to be discussed at IMO. I think it needs to have a body that can react to it quickly at the international stage. Now when you look around there aren’t many of them. The IMO does not have a Security Council or rapid reaction body that can make decisions on behalf of our members, and few organisations do. So I think we would need to start looking for the Security Council to lay down again, as they did with Somali piracy, for some fundamental ‘this is what we need to do’, ‘this is an outbreak of piracy that is affecting international trade, it has a danger of spreading, so we need people to come together to start working.’ They’re not going to start with WGs so they are probably going to start by saying ‘on our behalf we’d like to deliver something, chair something.’ Now wherever that they need to empower somebody to show high level interest and attract the sort of money you need to put this sort of thing together. Attract those who have got naval forces, law enforcement forces, those sorts of things. Start working up what they can spare and what they can’t spare. That’s what you have got to do. I don’t think there is any smoother way of doing things, because piracy will come along and catch us all by surprise again, and therefore it will be a reactive process rather than any great plan. How we react will depend on what we’re doing around the world, if the navies are cut in size globally there’ll be less of a law enforcement force available. The only way you could do something about that and be able to buy the time to put together such a force would be to keep running effectively the prevent strategy of capacity building and regional capacity building so that the regional neighbours can do some containment for longer in the hope that it doesn’t break out in sufficient number

to attract the international attention that Somalia's attracted. If the first attacks had been policed, we would not have had this long-term problem we have just live through. Nobody policed the low level crime that was occurring every day and it allowed the crime of piracy to grow. It only became policed when ships in the high seas, when international crime was taking place and it looked like it was starting to affect world trade.

So the lesson is prevention, prevention, prevention?

PH: Yes. You prevent by doing: by doing the African Union maritime strategy, by policing the EEZs and territorial waters, it's very difficult for pirates to operate if you've got control of your beaches and your territorial waters, so it's about preventing. It's about having control of your land and your close in water space.

Was there anything that really surprised you during the five years on the Contact Group, something you didn't expect?

PH: I was saddened by how unfocused the Contact Group and at times the WGs became. I'm not going to blame the chairs because they were doing their best, it was the people in the room who weren't staying focused. Although there was a political gain from moving meetings into region, I think it devalued the output, because the diplomats that turned up tended to come from the embassies in the region and had no brief, so there was no continuity. One of the strengths was corporate knowledge and continuity. Another of the strengths of the Contact Group and WGs brings is something to report back to and generate interest. I think doing it into the region devalued it, because I don't think the people in the room were necessarily briefing back to their capitals, so I don't think it had the same value as doing it in New York. I can see why it was done, and why it was thought to be good, but I just don't think it worked. Going to New York, if you're doing a plenary meeting then do it where the world is listening. Don't do it where a First Secretary is sat next to somebody who doesn't know anything about it and doesn't make very clear notes and it simply doesn't carry the same weight. So there's a couple of sadness's there: one that it became fluffy, and the other was that it lost its focus, and by moving around the region I think that devalued it.

Thank you.