



Report for December 2006

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Executive Summary

For the month of December 2006, a total of nine armed robberies against ships were reported in the Asia region, five of which were actual incidents and four attempted incidents. The incidents took place in the waters of Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. The majority of these incidents occurred while ships were either berthed alongside in ports or at anchorages. The details of the incidents are described in the Annex. Part 3 of this report also highlights three incidents that are worthy of greater elaboration for the purpose of sharing of good practices and preventive measures.

Part 1 - Definitions & Methodology Used

1.1 Definitions Adopted by ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre

The definitions of piracy and armed robbery adopted by the Information Sharing Centre (ISC) are in accordance with the ReCAAP Agreement, wherein:

Piracy in accordance with Article 101 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is defined as:

- (1) any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed:
 - (a) on the high seas, against another ship or persons or property on board such ship;
 - (b) against a ship, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State;
- (2) any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft;
- (3) any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b).

Armed Robbery in accordance with the International Maritime Organisation's Code of Practice for the Investigation of the Crimes of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships, is defined as:

- (1) any illegal act of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends and directed against a ship, or against persons or property on board such ship, in a place within a Contracting Party's jurisdiction over such offences;
- (2) any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship with knowledge of facts making it a ship for armed robbery against ships;
- (3) any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraphs (1) or (2).

1.2 Methodology for Classifying Incidents

1.2.1 To provide some perspective on incidents of piracy and armed robbery, the ISC evaluates the significance of each incident in terms of two factors – the level of violence and the economic loss incurred. The indicators for these two factors are as follows:

a. **Violence Factor.** This factor refers to the intensity of violence in an incident, and the three indicators used to determine this are:

(1) Types of weapons used. Incidents of pirates/robbers who board a ship with no visible weapons are generally deemed as less violent compared to those equipped with pistols, knives, machetes, or other dangerous weapons. In cases where more sophisticated weapons are used, such incidents would be considered more violent.

(2) Treatment of the crew. Incidents where pirates/robbers kill or kidnap crew are deemed to be more violent compared to petty thieves who flee upon being noticed. Other cases could include threatening crew members, assault, or serious injury.

(3) Number of pirates/robbers engaged in an attack. As a rule, an incident where a larger number of pirates/robbers was involved would be considered more significant as having a large capacity (as well as probability) for use of force. A larger number of pirates/robbers may also indicate the involvement of gangs or organised syndicates rather than petty and opportunistic pirates who *generally* operate in small groups.

b. **Economic Factor.** This factor takes into consideration the value of the property taken from the ship. Cases of theft of cash or personal effects are generally less significant incidents compared to cases where the entire ship is hijacked either for the cargo onboard or theft of the vessel.

1.2.2 Using these indicators, the ISC categorises all incidents into one of the three categories to determine their overall significance.

Category	Significance of Incident
CAT 1	Very significant
CAT 2	Moderately significant
CAT 3	Less significant

1.2.3 This classification of incidents allows the ReCAAP ISC to provide some perspective of the piracy and armed robbery situation in Asia.

1.3 Note on Sources of Information

The ISC makes use of various sources of information in producing its reports. The primary source is the ReCAAP ISC's Information Network System (IFN). Where necessary, the ISC leverages other secondary sources of information, including those from the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the International Chamber of Commerce-International Maritime Bureau (ICC-IMB), and other publicly available sources to facilitate analysis on patterns and trends, and to make recommendations. The ISC makes every effort to acknowledge these sources.

Part 2 - Report for December 2006

2.1 Number and Significance of Total Incidents

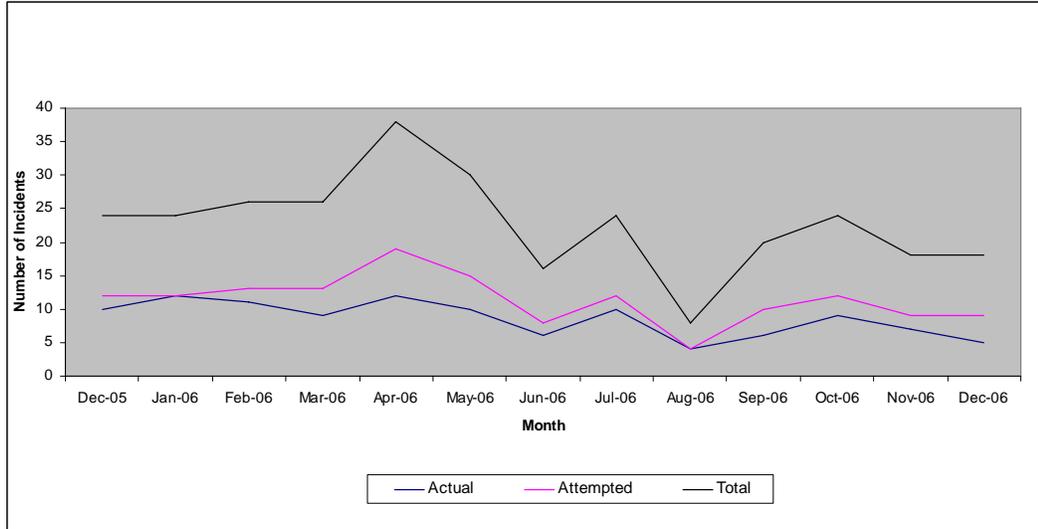
2.1.1 For the month of December 2006, a total of nine incidents were reported. Of these, five were actual incidents and four were attempted cases. Of the five actual incidents, three were Category 3 incidents, one was a Category 2 incident and one was a Category 1 incident. It is noted that 60% (three out of five) of the actual attacks were Category 3 incidents. Further details of the incidents are described in the Annex.

2.1.2 Compared to December 2005, when there was a total of twelve incidents (ten actual and two attempted), there was a 25% decrease in the total number of incidents in December 2006. While the number of attempted cases in December 2006 has increased from two to four, the number of actual incidents has dropped from ten to five cases.

	December 2006	December 2005
Actual	5	10
Attempted	4	2

Table 1– Type of Incidents during December 2006 and December 2005

2.1.3 Regarding the total activity for the period December 2005 to December 2006, there were fluctuations in the number of incidents, with the highest monthly number occurring in April 2006, and the lowest in August 2006. *Figure 1* shows the number of actual and attempted incidents during the period from December 2005 to December 2006. The ISC will monitor this pattern and conduct further analysis with other periods.



Source: ICC-IMB Reports

Figure 1 – Number of Incidents from December 2005 to December 2006

2.2 Analysis of Incidents in December 2006

2.2.1 **Location of Actual and Attempted Incidents.** Of the five actual incidents that occurred in December 2006, three occurred in Indonesian waters. Table 2 further illustrates that this was a lower number than in December 2005, when nine incidents occurred. *Figure 2* shows the general location of incidents in December 2006.

	December 2005		December 2006	
	Actual	Attempted	Actual	Attempted
Bangladesh			1	
India	1			
Indonesia	9	1	3	
Philippines				2
South China Sea		1		
Sri Lanka			1	
Straits of Malacca and Singapore				2
Total	10	2	5	4

Source: ICC-IMB Reports

Table 2 – Location of Incidents during December 2006 and December 2005

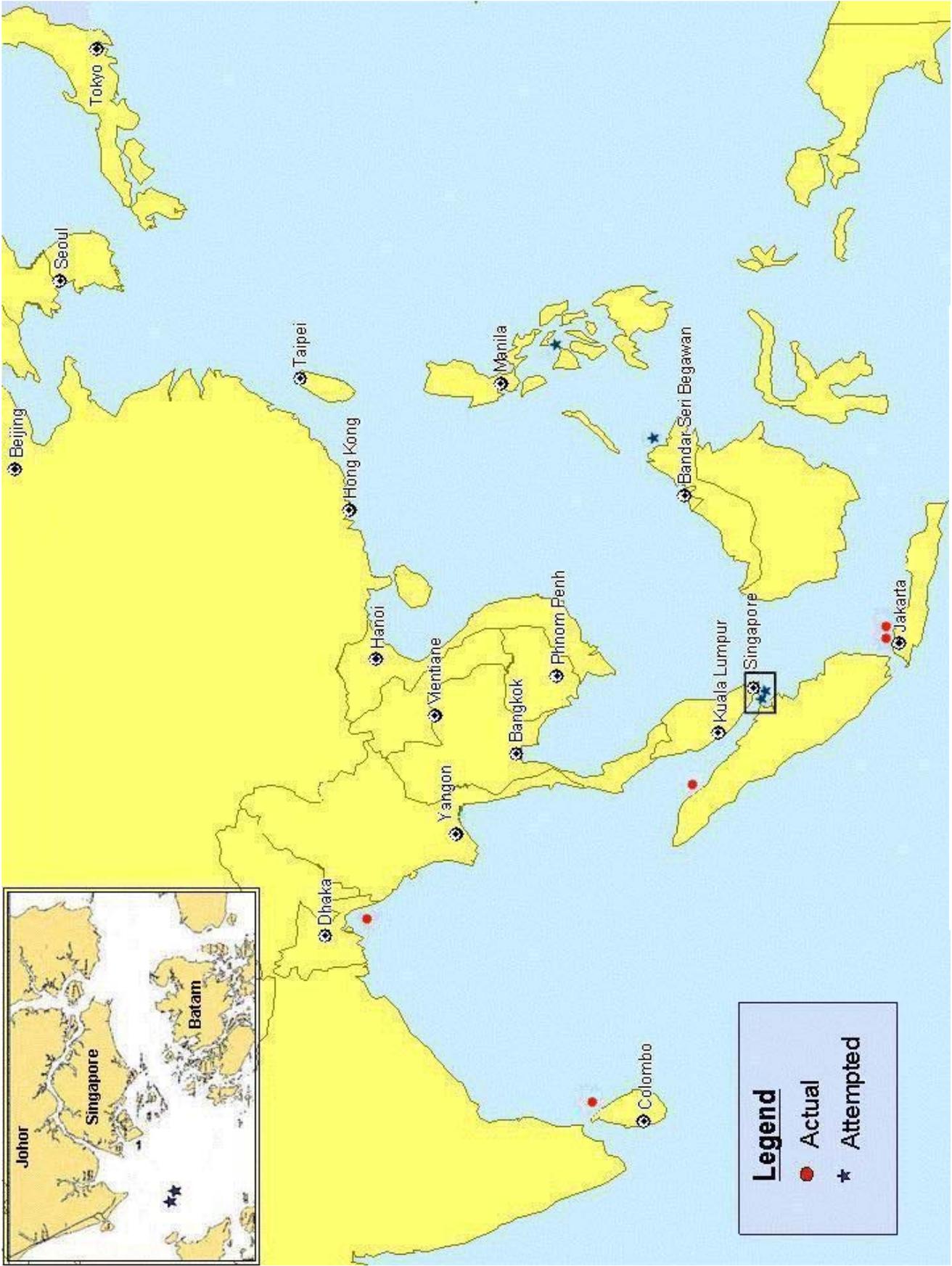


Figure 2 – Location of Incidents in December 2006

2.2.2 **Weapons Used.** No conclusive deductions can be made regarding the weapons used in incidents during December 2006.

Incidents in December	Guns/Knives	Other weapons	Not stated/ Nil
December 2006	2	0	7
December 2005	6	1	5

Table 3 - Weapons Used in Incidents during December 2006 and December 2005

2.2.3 **Type and Status of Ships.** Tables 4 and 5 illustrate that no specific type of ship was more susceptible to attack in December 2006. However, the majority of incidents involved ships that were either berthed alongside in port or at anchor. Of the five actual incidents in December 2006, four involved boarding of ships in anchorages or while berthed alongside.

Type of Ship	December 2005	December 2006
Container	1	1
Bulk Carrier	6	1
Chemical Carrier	1	2
Oil Tanker	1	2
LPG/LNG Carrier	1	0
General Cargo	0	1
Fishing Boat/Trawler	1	0
Supply ship	1	0
Not stated	0	2
Total	12	9

Table 4 – Type of Ships Involved in Incidents (December 2006 and December 2005)

	Actual Incidents			Attempted Incidents		
	Berthed	Anchored	Steaming	Berthed	Anchored	Steaming
December 2006	1	3	1	0	1	3
December 2005	0	9	1	0	1	1

Table 5 - Status of Ship during Incidents (December 2006 and December 2005)

2.2.4 **Time of Incidents.** 78% (seven out of nine) of the incidents occurred between late evening and early morning. This is expected since ships remain most vulnerable during the hours of darkness. This is comparable to that in December 2005 where 67% (eight out of twelve) of the incidents happened during the same window.

No. of Attack in December	1800 hrs to 2359 hrs	2400 hrs to 0559 hrs	0600hrs to 1159 hrs	1200 hrs to 1759 hrs	Not stated
December 2006	6	1	1	1	0
December 2005	2	6	0	2	2

Table 6 – Time of Incident (December 2006 and December 2005)

Part 3 - Details of Selected Incidents

3.1 Armed Robbery onboard *MV Kimtrans Mega-Lift*

Name of Ship : *MV Kimtrans Mega-Lift*
Type of Ship : General Cargo Ship
Flag of Ship : Singapore
IMO Number : 9275799
GT : 1366

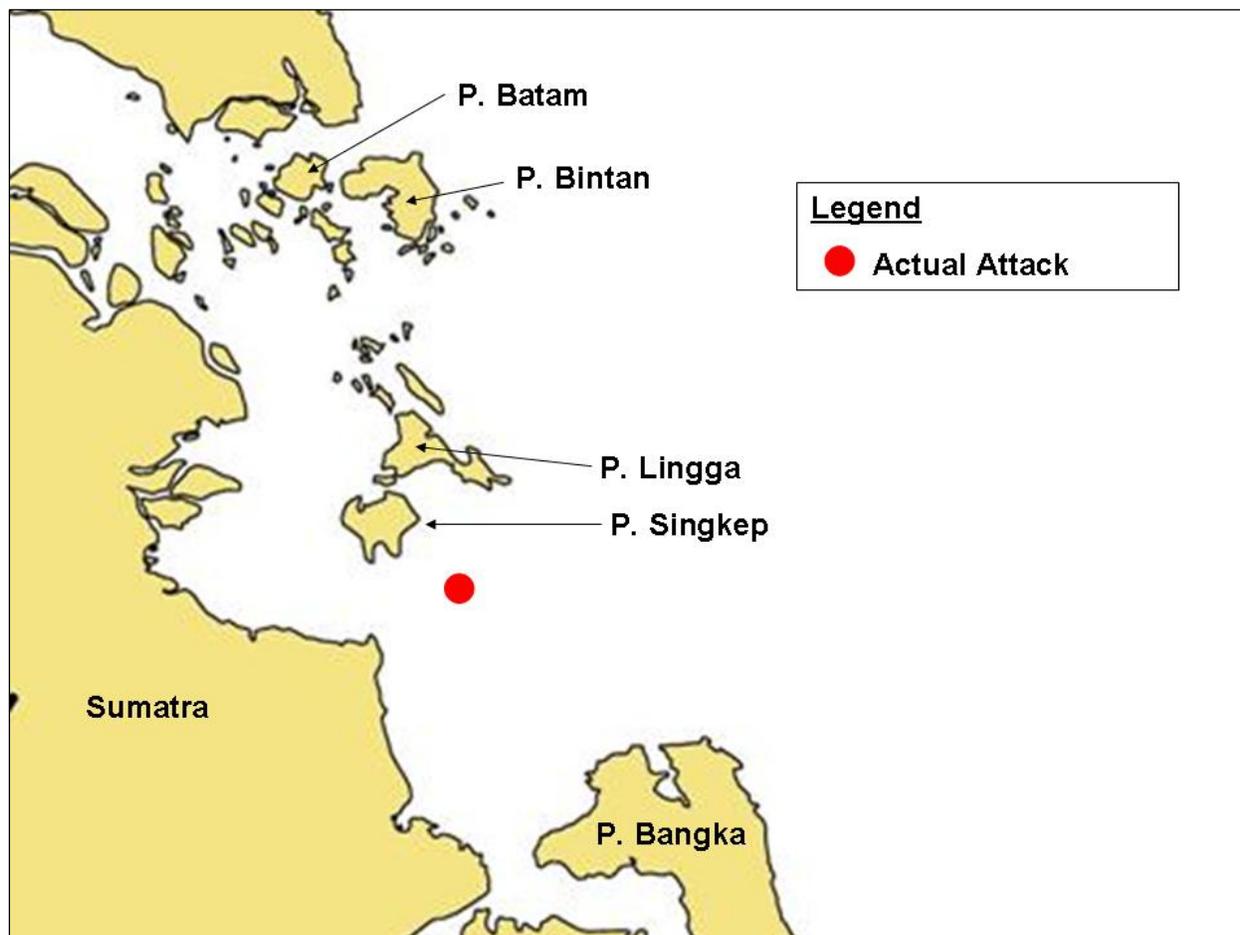


3.1.1 The *MV Kimtrans Mega-Lift*, a general cargo ship owned and managed by Sembawang Kimtrans Limited, departed Pangkal Balam, Indonesia on 10 July 2006. The vessel was loaded with 32 TEUs of tin ingots (of approximately 800 tonnes), 9 TEUs of pepper and 3 TEUs of empty containers, and was scheduled to arrive at Singapore on 13 July 2006 at 1500 hrs.

3.1.2 On 12 July 2006 at about 0900 hrs, Singapore's Maritime Rescue and Coordination Centre (MRCC) picked up the activation of the vessel's Ship's Security Alarm System (SSAS). At 1300hrs, the agent reported that he lost communication with the ship.

3.1.3 On 13 July 2006, the agent reported that the vessel has been hijacked on 12 July 2006 at about 1640 hrs in the area south of Pulau Lingga (between Pulau Bangka and Pulau Singkep) about 120 nm southeast of Singapore. Please refer to the map on the next page. A group of more than ten masked robbers, armed with pistols and parangs had boarded the vessel. The eight Indonesian crew members were blindfolded, transferred to a smaller boat and abandoned at Pulau Tudjuh, located about 24nm off Pulau Bangka. They were subsequently rescued by fishing boats and brought to Pulau Bangka where they reported the incident to the authorities.

3.1.4 Later that day, an Indonesian Navy's vessel informed Sembawang Kimtrans Limited that the *MV Kimtrans Mega-Lift* was found sinking at 00°34.19' S 105°39.99' E (around Bangka Belitung).



Location on Incident Involving MV Kimtrans Mega-Lift

Subsequent Online News Report

3.1.5 It was reported in the Indonesian newspaper, *Rakyat Merdeka* that, in late August 2006, the Indonesian authorities arrested five out of the fifteen armed robbers¹. Of these, one was a Customs officer who had provided information on the vessel's departure schedule to the other robbers. He was arrested at his home in Pangkal Pinang, Indonesia on 28 August 2006. The remaining ten are still at large. The report also mentioned that the robbers had set off in two boats from separate locations in Batam to intercept the *MV Kimtrans Mega-Lift*.

¹ *Rakyat Merdeka* <http://www.rakyatmerdeka.co.id/nusantara/index.php?q=news&id=2272>)

Past Attacks

3.1.6 According to ICC-IMB reports, there have been at least two other cases of armed robbery in the same area²:

a. On 22 April 2005, the Indonesian general cargo ship *MV Inabukwa* was attacked and hijacked by armed robbers while underway in the vicinity of 00°27.1' S 105°09.0' E, off Pulau Lingga, Indonesia. The crew members were forced to discharge the cargo at Pasir Gudang Port, Malaysia.

b. On 30 September 2005, the Indonesian general cargo ship *MV Prima Indah* was attacked and hijacked by armed robbers while underway in the vicinity of 01°28.6' S 106°41.1' E, off Pulau Bangka, Indonesia. The ship was carrying a cargo of tin ingots loaded at Pangkal Balam, Indonesia.

Observations

3.1.7 Of the three incidents, two reportedly carried cargo of a similar nature that was relatively valuable. The occurrence of armed robbery incidents in the same area suggested inadequate port security measures. Enhancing local enforcement capabilities and implementation of greater port security measures through capacity building initiatives may help reduce the incidence of such attacks.

3.1.8 The owner of the *MV Kimtrans Mega-Lift* revealed that they were able to track the movement of the ship and the location where it sank due to the tracking system installed onboard the ship. This allowed the owner to locate the ship before it sank fully, and enabled the owner to initiate salvage operations³.

² International Chamber of Commerce, International Maritime Bureau, *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships, Annual Report, 1 January – 31 December 2005*, (January 2006).

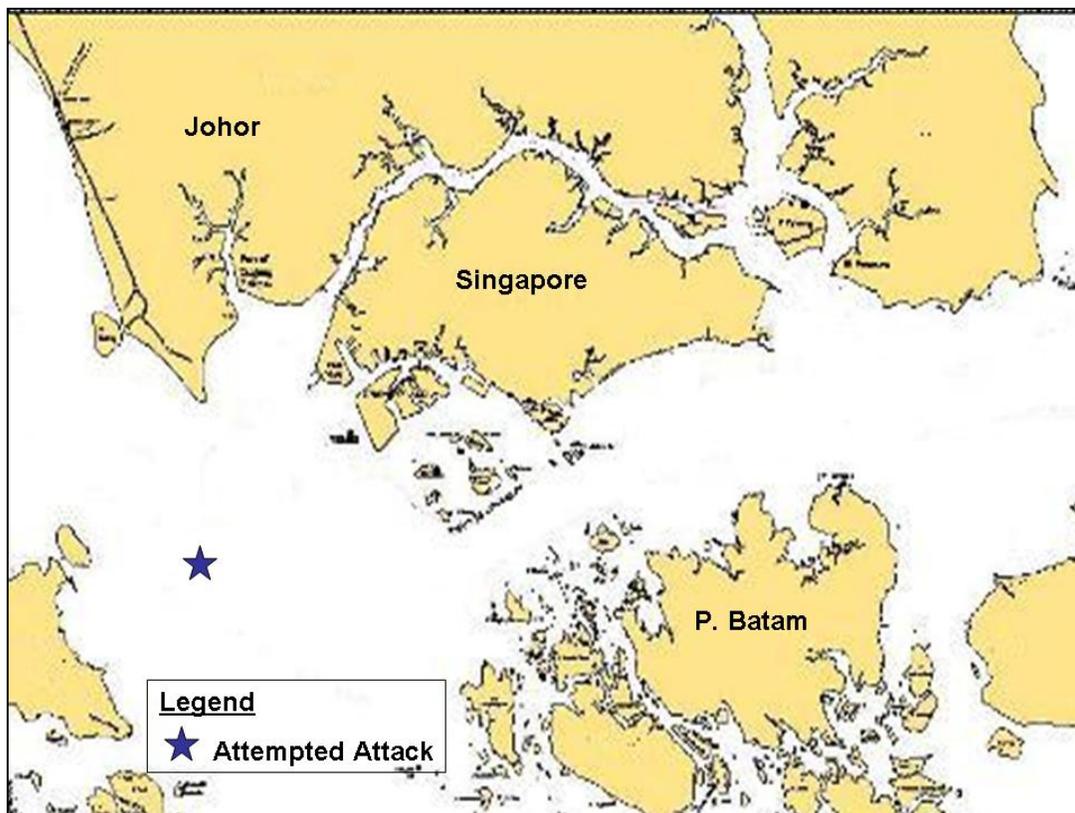
³ Sembawang Kimtrans Limited.

3.2 Attempted Robbery of *Eastern Honesty*

Name of Ship : *Eastern Honesty*
Type of Ship : Chemical Carrier
Flag of Ship : Panama
IMO Number : 9246944
GT : 5,372



3.2.1 On 8 December 2006, ISC Focal Point (Singapore) reported that at 2340 hrs, persons in four small boats attempted to board the *Eastern Honesty*, a chemical carrier then steaming to join the eastbound lane of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. The map below shows the approximate location of the *Eastern Honesty* when the attempted attack occurred. The ship's agent reported that the ship master took evasive maneuvers, sounded the alarm, switched on all deck lights, blasted the ship's whistle and mustered all crew members⁴. After ten minutes, the boats abandoned the attempt and fled away.



Location of Attempted Attack

⁴ UNIX Line Pte Ltd

Past Attacks

3.2.2 This is the third time an attempted attack was made on the *Eastern Honesty*, the previous attacks having occurred on 22 June 2003 and 21 June 2006. Details of these attacks are as follows:

- a. On 22 June 2003 at 0520 hrs, two robbers armed with guns boarded the ship at the poop deck from a speedboat, while underway off Bintan Island, Indonesia in the vicinity of 00°43.80' N, 105°27.20' E. When their attempt to break open the accommodation door failed and the crew began to muster, they escaped leaving behind a coil of rope which they had used to tie their speedboat alongside the vessel⁵.
- b. On 21 June 2006 at 0300 hrs, three robbers in an unlit boat boarded the carrier at the stern while she was anchored at Godau Port, Vietnam. The seaman on duty raised the alarm and mustered the crew. The robbers stole ship stores and safety equipment before escaping⁶.

3.2.3 The ISC verified with the ISC Focal Point (Vietnam) on the incident that occurred on 21 June 2006. According to ISC Focal Point (Vietnam), the *Eastern Honesty* had berthed at Berth 1, Godau Port, Vietnam on 20 June 2006 at 1700 hrs. The ship was carrying a cargo of 6,865 tonnes of chemicals. On 21 June 2006 at about 0300 hrs, three robbers boarded the ship and took away some ship items, including its portable compressor, remote and cable line for provision crane, life boat hoisting remote with cable line and fire hoses.

⁵ International Chamber of Commerce, International Maritime Bureau, *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships, Annual Report, 1 January – 31 December 2005*, (January 2006)

⁶ Ibid, Annual Report, *1 January – 31 December 2003*, (January 2004).

3.3 Armed Robbery onboard *Farah -3*

Name of Ship : *Farah-3*
Type of Ship : General Cargo Ship
Flag of Ship : Jordan
IMO Number : 7602390
GT : 9,123



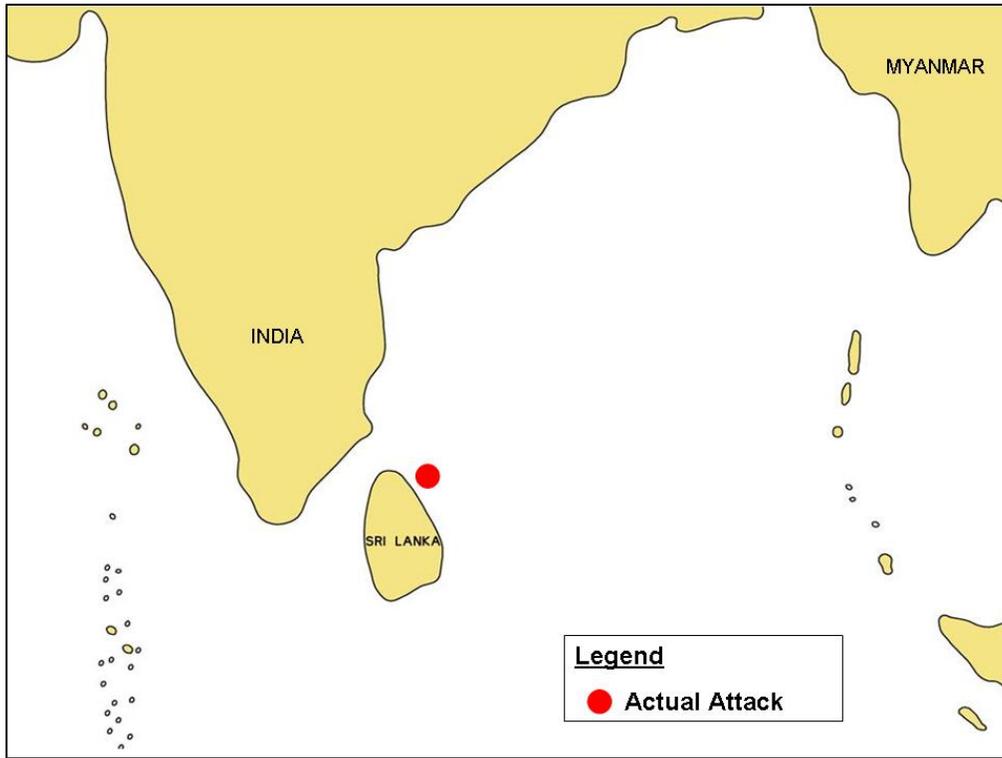
3.3.1 On 23 December 2006, the ISC Focal Point (Sri Lanka) reported to the Information Sharing Centre that the *Farah-3* was under ‘armed pirate attack’, and attempts to establish communication with the vessel were unsuccessful as the attackers were believed to have had disconnected all communication equipment.

3.3.2 Subsequently, the *Jordan Times* reported that the Jordanian merchant vessel carrying 14,000 tonnes of Indian rice bound for South Africa was seized by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)⁷. On board were 25 crew members comprising eleven Egyptians, thirteen Jordanian and one Iraqi. The attack occurred when the ship drifted into the LTTE-controlled waters after its engine failed. The map shows the location of the attack. The *Jordan Times* also quoted the Sri Lankan Defence Ministry saying that a maritime distress message indicating that the vessel was “under armed pirate attack”, was received by the Britain’s Maritime Rescue Co-ordinating Centre, and was conveyed to the Sri Lankan naval authorities.

3.3.3 The Agence France-Presse quoted a Sri Lankan Navy spokesman saying that the salvage of the ship could take time and an inspection needed to judge whether the ship, which was stuck on a reef near the LTTE-held Mullaitivu coast, could be commercially viable again⁸. The spokesman added that some 30 to 40 foreign ships travel along that same route daily, and advised vessels to steer 40 to 50 nautical miles off Sri Lanka’s troubled north-east coast to be safe from LTTE attacks.

⁷ The *Jordan Times*, 24 December 2006 (<http://www.jordantimes.com/sun/homenews/homenews1.htm>).

⁸ Agence France-Presse, as reported in *The Business Times*, 28 December 2006.



Location of Incident

Past Attacks

3.3.4 This is not the first time the LTTE is reportedly involved in ‘piracy’⁹. It is believed that the LTTE is known to hijack ships and boats of all sizes, kidnapped and killed crew members, and has a history of attacking international merchant shipping in the area.

⁹ The Asian Tribune, 26 December 2006 (<http://www.asiantribune.com/index.php?q=node/3826>)

Part 4 - Observations for December 2006

4.1 Compared to December 2005, the number of incidents of armed robbery against ships in the Asia region in December 2006 has dropped by 25% (from twelve to nine). Overall, the following observations can be made for incidents in the month of December 2006:

- a. there was a drop in the overall number of cases in Indonesian waters in December 2006 compared to December 2005.
- b. most of the actual incidents were of Category 3 status.
- c. attacks did not seem to be targeted at any particular type of ships.
- d. the majority of the incidents took place during the hours of darkness.
- e. most ships were targeted while in anchorages, or berthed alongside.

ANNEX

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS IN DECEMBER 2006

Actual Incidents

S/N	Ship Name, Type of Ship, Flag, IMO No., GT	Date Time	Location of Incident	Status of Ship	Details of Incident	Consequences for Crew, Cargo, Ship Equipment, etc	Reporting Agency	Significance Level (classified by the ReCAAP ISC)
1	<i>MV Medi Melbourne</i> Bulk Carrier Panama 9290983 29,963	07/12/2006 0545 hrs	Chittagong Anchorage, Bangladesh 21° 47.9'N 091°42.7'E	Anchored	The duty seaman spotted six robbers armed with long knives during his routine rounds on board a bulk carrier. The robbers tried to take the duty seaman hostage but he managed to escape and informed the Duty Officer who alerted other crew members and raised alarm. The robbers escaped with stolen items. Upon inspection it was found that a forecastle store had been broken into and ship's stores were missing. The authorities were informed.	Ship's stores stolen	ISC Focal Point (Bangladesh) ICC-IMB PRC	CAT 2

2.	Oil Tanker	08/12/2006 0015 hrs	Lawe-Lawe Anchorage, Indonesia	Anchored	Robbers boarded an oil tanker at anchor and forced the fore-castle store open. Ship's stores were stolen.	Ship's stores stolen	ICC-IMB PRC	CAT 3
3.	Chemical Tanker	18/12/2006 0125	Belawan Outer Anchorage, Indonesia	Anchored	Robbers boarded a chemical tanker and broke the padlocks of a starboard side chemical equipment locker and paint room door. The security watchman reported to the Duty Officer who raised the alarm, sounded the ship's whistle, activated the fire pump with pressurized water jets, closed all access to the bridge and accommodation areas, and gathered the crew on the bridge. The robbers jumped into the water and escaped in a waiting boat. There were no injuries to crew.	No injuries to crew	ICC-IMB PRC	CAT 3
4.	Container Ship	19/12/2006 0430	Pilot Ground, Jakarta roads, Indonesia	Anchored/ Berthed	Robbers armed with long knives boarded a container ship waiting for her pilot. The robbers unlashed a starboard life-raft and threw it overboard. They jumped overboard and escaped when the crew noticed them. The incident was reported to the authorities.		ICC-IMB PRC	CAT 3

5.	Farah-3 General Cargo Ship Jordan 7602390 9,123	23/12/2006 0300	NE coast of Sri Lanka 09°24'N 080°:52' E	Drifting	A general cargo ship carrying 14,000 tonnes of Indian rice encountered engine problems and drifted into the waters off the Mullaitivu Seas on the eastern coast of Sri Lanka. The vessel was surrounded by six small boats with armed LTTE personnel on board. Shots were fired and the vessel was boarded by the armed group who forced the Master to weigh anchor. Communications and computer equipment from the ship were reportedly stolen. The 25 crew members were taken from the vessel to an LTTE camp ashore and finally released to the International Committee for the Red Cross in Colombo. The ship is presently resting about 3 nm off the Mullaitivu Seas.	Reportedly the cargo was taken, crew unhurt	ISC Focal Point (Sri Lanka) ICC-IMB PRC Open sources including The Jordan Times, The Asian Tribune, Agence France-Prese, etc.	CAT 1
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Attempted Incidents

S/N	Ship Name, Type of Ship, Flag, IMO No., GT	Date Time	Location of Incident	Status of Ship	Details of Incidents	Reporting Agency
1	<i>Grand King</i> VLCC 8800286 153,662	04/12/2006 1330 hrs UTC	Off Racon Delta, Eastbound lane of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore 01°09.5'N 103°30.0'E	Steaming	A boat approached a VLCC under way in the eastbound lane of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore at high speed. The master altered course violently to avoid the boat. Despite numerous evasive measures, the boat continued to close in on the vessel. The alarm was raised and crew was placed on standby. The men in the boat aborted their attempt to board after 30 minutes.	ICC-IMB PRC
2.	<i>Eastern Honesty</i> Chemical Carrier Panama 9246944 5,372	08/12/2006 2340 hrs	Eastbound lane of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore 01°09'N 103°33.93'E	Steaming	While under way, four small boats came alongside a chemical carrier and their occupants attempted to board her. The master took evasive action, sounded the alarm and mustered the crew members. After 10 minutes, the boats disappeared and the master reported the incident to the Singapore authorities.	ISC Focal Point (Singapore) ISC Focal Point (Vietnam) ICC-IMB PRC

3.	<i>Celfalu</i> LPG Carrier 9140663 4,071	18/12/2006 0610 hrs	Cebu Inner Anchorage, Philippines 10°18.32'N 123°56.30'E	Anchored	Two boats came close to an LPG carrier and their occupants attempted to board her. The ship's crew raised the alarm and directed water hoses on the boats to foil the attempt. The boats then left the vessel.	ISC Focal Point (Philippines) ICC-IMB PRC
4.	Chemical Carrier	21/12/2006 0345 hrs to 0445 hrs	Sibutu Passage, Philippines 05°52.80'N 119°25.50'E	Steaming (assessed)	Three wooden boats traveling at about a speed of 30 knots each approached a chemical carrier while she was under way. The boats approached simultaneously from the chemical carrier's starboard bow, port bow and stern. The master took evasive manoeuvres and directed search lights on the boats. The robbers aborted their boarding attempt after an hour due to the effectiveness of the anti-piracy measures taken by the vessel.	ICC-IMB PRC