

## **"SARNIA NEWS" CIRCULAR**

(Ref: 318/17/GP)

TO ALL SHIPOWNER CLIENTS

### **Re: 1) Merchant Ship Attack off Yemen – 2) Strike by Customs Official Threatens Delays – Chile**

Please find here attached two new **ALERTS** from Gray Page, a specialist maritime consulting group, which provides important information regarding 1) the recent attack of a merchant ship off Yemen and 2) a strike by customs officials in Chile which could cause delays, which is highly relevant for all ship owners' whose trading warranty within their insurance terms includes these areas.

We suggest the information is distributed to your office, as well as being sent to the Master(s)/Chief Officers(s) of your vessel(s), if relevant to the trade.

Best Regards,

Loss Prevention Team



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### UPDATE: Merchant ship attack off Yemen

#### Background

Earlier today UKTMO Watchkeepers issued a warning that a merchant ship had been attacked in the Bab-el-Mandeb.

Well-known maritime journal TradeWinds has since named the vessel, a panamax tanker, as the "MUSKIE".

According to unidentified sources quoted by TradeWinds, "the assailants fired an RPG at the ship, which suffered some damage. It is unclear if this was caused by the RPG."

The TradeWinds article goes on to say, "The same sources suggest that the armed guards onboard Muskie opened fire against the pirates' skiff, which exploded."

#### Assessment and Analysis

If the source information in the article is correct, then the attack on the MUSKIE appears to approximate the attack on the LNG-carrier GALICIA SPIRIT in October 2016. (See Enduring Risks section for further information)

Although the term "pirate skiff" has been used in the article, small boats or "skiffs" are very common in the region and not used solely by pirates. Further, the report that the skiff exploded when fired at by armed guards on the MUSKIE suggests that it would, at present, be premature to attribute this attack to Somali pirates.

Ships transiting the area are advised to be highly vigilant and report all suspicious activity to UKMTO / MSCHOA

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### Chile: Strike by customs officials threatens delays

#### Background

A strike by customs officials in Chile threatens to disrupt port operations.

The strike began on May 24, 2017. The National Association of Customs Officers of Chile (ANFACH), which represents the striking officials, said the stoppage would be 'indefinite'.

Chile's National Customs Service said it had implemented a contingency plan to ensure 'operational continuity'.

The plan gives priority to 'dangerous, perishable or emergency cargoes'. It said the status of 'all control points where Customs was present' would be monitored and promised a quick response to 'any demands for attention' that might arise.

#### Assessment and Analysis

The strike is similar to one two years ago and involves grievances over staffing issues, working hours and retirement benefits.

The strike threatens to disrupt or limit the flow of imports and exports and has been condemned by the country's Chamber of Exporters.

Felipe Sandoval, chairman of the Association of the Chilean Salmon Industry (Salmonchile), said that as well as damaging the economy the strike threatened the country's image and reputation.

He said the salmon industry, for one, couldn't rely on the contingency plan being operated by the National Customs Service.

A previous customs strike in May 2015 lasted nine days.

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