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U S Navy anti-intruder tech reworked for merchant

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A fully automated system created for the US Navy to thwart attempts by unwanted visitors gaining access to grey-ships has been adapted for the merchant fleet as an anti-piracy solution.

The system – which is being marketed by WatchStander LLC, a US-based maritime security company – is designed to make it 'physically intolerable' for the pirates or any other aggressors to approach the ship and to persuade them to abort their attacks.

The system employs high-resolution radar to automatically identify surrounding traffic and assess its behaviour over time to identify hostile targets. It then operates non-lethal countermeasures to respond to the threats if they continue to approach the ship. Video and data from all incidents is archived for subsequent transmission to shipowner and WatchStander data-centres for training and evidential purposes.

The idea is to keep the attackers beyond the range of their guns and thereby protect the ship and its crew from potential danger. 'What makes our system unique is that it disrupts the attack without burdening the crew,' says company president David Rigsby. Having been tested on a number of deep-sea ships over the past six months, the system is now ready for installation on vessels sailing through piracy hotspots, he adds.

The design is based on technology developed by the Applied Research Laboratory at Penn State University for use by the US Navy and is suitable for both commercial tonnage and other maritime installations such as oil-rigs.

For more information, visit: <http://watchstander.com/>

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