

Shipping

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US offers to help Egypt unblock Suez Canal

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David Sheppard and **Harry Dempsey** in London and **Leo Lewis** and **Kana Inagaki** in Tokyo YESTERDAY

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Shipping companies have also raised fears that the billions of dollars worth of goods stuck waiting to transit the canal are vulnerable, with a number contacting the US Navy about the elevated threat of piracy.

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Shipping companies have begun rerouting vessels around South Africa's Cape of Good Hope to avoid the long wait, even though it adds at least seven days to average journey times between Asia and Europe.

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While east Africa has long been known for piracy, there has been a surge in [kidnappings at sea](#) and other maritime crimes in west Africa in recent months.

Vessels travelling around the Cape of Good Hope face additional costs for fuel, security and insurance but those could be roughly equal to the \$500,000 fee to pass through the Suez Canal.