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The Gist

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2 HK BOATMEN KILLED IN RAID NEAR PRATAS

TWO Hong Kong boatmen were killed and two others injured on Saturday when a group of men boarded their vessel near the Pratas Islands and opened fire on them, many papers reported in extensive news and pictorial coverage today.

In headlines, some papers noted that the attackers were dressed in green army uniforms similar to those worn by Chinese militiamen.

Several other papers said the boatmen were smugglers trading in television sets, cassette recorders and watches with Chinese fishermen for silver coins.

According to the papers, the Hong Kong trawler, loaded with goods worth more than \$1 million, was anchored near the Little Pratas when a fishing junk approached it.

Several civilians on the junk boarded the trawler and took a look at the goods. One of them suddenly pulled out a revolver and fired three shots.

Three more men, dressed in army uniforms and armed with double-barrel guns, shotguns and grenades, then emerged from the vessel and fired more than 20 shots at the crew.

The attackers unloaded the cargo from the trawlers to their junk and sailed off.

The trawler returned to Hong Kong last night and the injured were taken to hospital where they were treated and discharged. Police had not yet classified the case.

Wen Wei Po said the scene of the incident, though near China, was also close to Taiwan. The area was "under nobody's jurisdiction," the paper said.

The chairman of an Aberdeen fishermen's association told the Express that the scene was within Taiwan waters, although Chinese vessels sometimes patrolled the area. He called on local fishermen not to engage in smuggling activities at the risk of their lives.

The two Hong Kong boatmen killed were identified as Law Pak (40) and Cheung Fu (25).

There were different reports on the identity of the raiders. Some papers said they were pirates while the others identified them as Chinese militiamen or smugglers.

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