

The European Security and Defence Union

Geopolitics and maritime security

Challenges facing Europe
in times of global
power struggles



The new EU Maritime Security Strategy

Charlina Vitcheva,
Director-General,
DG MARE,
European Commission,
Brussels



Europe as a security provider – time to step up

Josep Borrell Fontelles,
High Representative/
Vice President, European
Union, Brussels



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FUTURETECH

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We need more Europe, in spirit and in substance!

by Peter Tamm, Publisher, Hamburg,
and Hartmut Bühl, Editor-in-Chief, Paris

This 48th edition marks a new beginning for “The European – Security and Defence Union” magazine!

Starting with this issue, Peter Tamm, owner of Tamm Media Group, Hamburg, via its publishing house, Mittler Report Verlag GmbH, Bonn, takes over the magazine’s ownership from the previous publisher, Hartmut Bühl. Hartmut will continue in his function as Editor-in-Chief of this politically independent European publication, as he has done since the magazine’s founding in 2008, keeping his international editorial team with him.

We are both looking forward to this new cooperation, the new synergies it creates and the opportunities for the magazine to be more widely distributed and reach new readers.

At the present time, with the ongoing war in Ukraine and the current geopolitical powerplay, a politically independent magazine like ours, which focuses on European but also international politics, with the ambition to serve as a platform for high-level discussions of the most burning security and defence issues of the day, is of great importance for the whole community.

Under its new publisher, the magazine will of course continue to cover global crises and conflicts and their effects on Europe’s security, analysing how the Union can contribute to peaceful solutions. We will keep a special eye on the antagonism between China and the US, since the Taiwan Strait has become one of the most sensitive geopolitical zones in the world.

Indeed, we have decided to dedicate this 48th edition to geopolitics in a world in turmoil, where great powers are striving for global or at least regional superiority on land but above all at sea, and where maritime safety and security have become key challenges.

Furthermore, we will continue to highlight topics such as human security and human rights, civil protection and disaster management, and, last but not least, the burning problem of climate change, the challenges of the European green deal and the energy transition – topics that are close to the heart of the younger generation of European citizens, who consider the European Union as an asset in their lives.



*Hartmut Bühl and Peter Tamm (r.)
meeting in Hamburg, July 2023*

The European project has been shaped by seven generations. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the founding fathers strived to consolidate peace and saw in the reconciliation of nations the way ahead for the continent, symbolised, over three decades later, by Kohl and Mitterrand linking hands in Verdun in 1984.

We will therefore resolutely continue to defend the idea of the European project with its values of freedom and democracy, which today are seriously threatened by extremist and anti-democratic movements in many EU Member States.

However, we will also continue to monitor EU decision-making processes very closely and point out their inconsistencies and problems in the harmonisation of legislation, as is currently the case in Brussels on migration issues.

Today, as from February 2022, there is once again a war in Europe. For us, it is a political imperative that Europe must be prepared to ensure its security and territorial integrity, even without the US if necessary. However, as long as we are far away from a European strategic autonomy, it remains a fact that European security and defence can only be provided in conjunction with the Atlantic Alliance.

We need more Europe and a heightened awareness that we are all in the same boat.

Peter Tamm

Hartmut Bühl

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Masthead



THE EUROPEAN –
SECURITY AND DEFENCE UNION

Volume 48
3/2023

www.magazine-the-european.com

Published by

**MITTLER
REPORT**

Mittler Report Verlag GmbH
A company of the
TAMM Media Group

Office Address:

Mittler Report Verlag GmbH
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Layout: AnKo MedienDesign GmbH, Germany

Production: Lehmann Offsetdruck
und Verlag GmbH, 22848 Norderstedt,
Germany

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Cover Photos: Picture Alliance,
European Union, 2020/EC-Audiovisual Service
(left); European Union (right)

Reduced annual subscription rate for
distribution in Germany: €95.00 incl. postage
Annual subscription rate: € 78.00 incl. postage



The European – Security and Defence Union is the winner of the 2011 European Award for Citizenship, Security and Defence, and was awarded in 2019 the Jury's Special Prize of the same competition.



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King Felipe VI of Spain (right) receiving European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez at the Royal Palace in Madrid, 3 July 2023

EU Presidency “Europe, closer”

(nc) On 1 July 2023, Spain took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) from Sweden for the second half of 2023. Under the motto “Europe, closer”, the Spanish Presidency has established four priorities:

- reindustrialising the EU and guaranteeing its open strategic autonomy;
- advancing in the green transition;
- promoting greater social and economic justice;
- strengthening European unity.

During its Presidency, Spain's aim is to promote institutional deepening and improved decision-making processes, as well as the enlargement of the EU. Regarding the challenge of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Spain sees it as essential to continue providing strong support to Ukraine. Presenting the political priorities of the Spanish Presidency programme in June, Pedro Sánchez, Prime Minister of Spain stated: “Throughout these last decades, Europe has shown how much it can do for Spain. Now, the time has come for Spain to show the world how much we can do for Europe.”

<https://spanish-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/>

Global Politics

Strategic decisions at Camp David



Republic of Korea / Kim Yong Wili; flickr CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

From left to right: Yoon Suk Yeol, Joe Biden and Fumio Kishida meeting in Camp David

(hb) On 18 August 2023, US President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol met at Camp David (US) to “inaugurate a new era of trilateral partnership”.

In view of Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, China's concerning actions in the South Chinese Sea and its maritime territorial claim, and the continuous nuclear threat from North Korea's dictator, the three leaders concluded a strategic cooperation.

They decided to hold regular trilateral meetings between the leaders, foreign ministers, defence ministers, national security advisors, finance ministers, and industry ministers. As regards security and defence, they agreed on the creation of a three-way “hotline” to enable administrations to rapidly exchange views in case of crisis, the planning of annual multi-domain exercises, as well as pursuing enhanced cooperation on ballistic missile defence. In the economic and industrial field, to better prepare for confrontation and to overcome economic coercion, they decided to install an “early warning system”, to share information, coordinate on global supply chains and prepare for possible disruptions to them.

As regards security and defence, they agreed on the creation of a three-way “hotline” to enable administrations to rapidly exchange views in case of crisis, the planning of annual multi-domain exercises, as well as pursuing enhanced cooperation on ballistic missile defence. In the economic and industrial field, to better prepare for confrontation and to overcome economic coercion, they decided to install an “early warning system”, to share information, coordinate on global supply chains and prepare for possible disruptions to them.

<https://tinyurl.com/bddtzaa>

Economy

BRICS enlargement – what's behind it?

(nc) On 24 August 2023, under pressure from China and Russia, the BRICS group of big emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa)

have agreed at their 15th summit in Johannesburg to open up to six new members in 2024 (Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia and Argentina). With 11 members, the BRICS group will considerably increase its weight, counting among them Middle Eastern countries and oil producers and the two largest countries in Latin America, and representing 46% of the world's population and just over a third of the world's gross domestic product.

Behind the economic objectives, it seems evident that the political aim pushed above all by China's President Xi Jinping – supported by Russian President Vladimir Putin taking the opportunity to deny his international isolation – is to make the BRICS group an instrument for the rivalry with the United States and western democracies, capable of opposing the G7 and western alliances.

However, the heterogeneity of the BRICS members with their different political systems, being neither an international organisation nor having a permanent structure or sharing a common market, will not be an instrument easy to handle.



Eurocorps

Change of command in Strasbourg

(hb) On 29 June 2023, a change of command ceremony was held at the Eurocorps headquarters in Strasbourg, Lieutenant General (BE) Peter Devogelaere handing over the command to Lieutenant General (PL) Jaroslaw Gromadziński. It was a historic moment, being the first time that a Polish general is commanding the multinational Eurocorps.

Lieutenant General (GE) Markus Laubenthal, German Deputy Chief of Defence, was responsible for the ceremony which was held in the presence of the Polish Minister of Defence, Mariusz Blaszczak, and the Chiefs of Defence from the other Eurocorps framework nations, as well as representatives from civil and military authorities and numerous guests.

General Laubenthal, highlighted that the outgoing commander has been faced with a variety of challenges, since major elements of Eurocorps were deployed in EU training missions from January 2021 to June 2022 – two in Mali and two in Central Africa, with more than 200 Eurocorps personnel deployed. After taking command of Eurocorps, General Gromadziński said: "I am convinced that Eurocorps, as a multinational structure with solid operational experience, both within EU and NATO frameworks, is capable to address all of the present and future challenges."

Headquarters Eurocorps is a force available to the EU and NATO consisting of six framework nations (Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Poland and Spain) and five associated nations (Austria, Greece, Italy, Romania and Türkiye). At the end of 2023, Eurocorps will be certified by NATO as a Joint Force Headquarters for a wide range of missions.

 www.eurocorps.org

CSDP

EU Defence Ministers meeting in Toledo

On 30 August 2023, EU defence ministers informally met in Toledo. On the top of the agenda: long-term military support for Ukraine and the security situation in the Sahel.

During a videoconference, Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov gave an update on the situation in his country. The ministers reaffirmed the European Union's (EU) support for Ukraine's defence against the ongoing Russian military aggression and discussed the next steps to achieve "solid and sustainable military support in the long term", as explained High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at a press conference. Ministers further discussed the plans of the Union to create before the end of the year an assistance fund for the country of up to €5 billion per year for the period 2024-2027, which would be integrated into the European Peace Facility (EPF).

As regards the situation in Sahel, the defence ministers once again expressed the EU's alignment with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) vis-à-vis the putsch in Niger. "It is very clear that the coup in Niger has opened a new chapter of instability in an already fragile region and this will undermine the stability of the region," highlighted Borrell. He asked the ministers to discuss the advisability of adopting an "autonomous sanctions

regime" to take measures against the coup plotters, a subject that has been also on the agenda of the EU foreign ministers meeting in Toledo on 31 August 2023, together with a discussion on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's peace plan.

Green Deal

New legislation on energy savings


(nc) Before the summer break, the European Parliament voted in favour of a directive that set new energy saving targets for 2030 as part of the European Green Deal. After the approval by MEPs, the Council formally adopted the new legislation on 25 July.

Under the new directive, Member States will have to collectively ensure a reduction in energy consumption of at least 11.7% at EU level by 2030 compared with the energy consumption forecasts for 2030 made in 2020. The annual energy savings target for final energy consumption will gradually increase from 2024 to 2030. Member States will ensure new annual savings of 1.49% of final energy consumption on average during this period, gradually reaching 1.9% on 31 December 2030.

To make sure Member States deliver on their national contributions to this binding EU target through measures in sectors such as public administration, buildings, businesses, data centres, etc, a robust monitoring and enforcement mechanism is foreseen.

The new rules set a specific obligation for the public sector to achieve an annual energy consumption reduction of 1.9% that can exclude public transport and armed forces.

Rapporteur Niels Fuglsang (S&D, DK) said: "Today's vote is a great victory; it is not only good for our climate, but bad for Putin."

 <https://tinyurl.com/48rec99u>

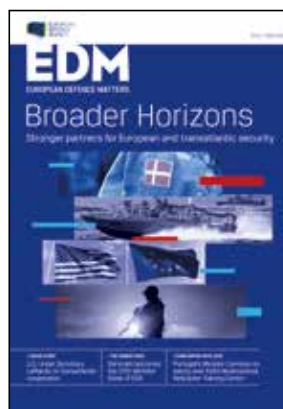


Publications

Latest edition of the EDA magazine

(nc) In July 2023, the European Defence Agency (EDA) issued the 26th edition of its magazine "European Defence Matters". Against the background of Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, the magazine focuses on how European and western

countries are coming together to deepen their relationships in defence. The publication also highlights Denmark joining the EDA as the 27th member country.



The EDA magazine can be downloaded here:



<https://tinyurl.com/y97wptkj>



A moment of truth for the European Union

Europe as a security provider – time to step up

by Josep Borrell Fontelles, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President
of the European Commission (HR/VP), Brussels

It is time to build the European Union (EU) into a real security provider. In response to a radically changing security environment, we are taking many steps to defend the security of our citizens and our partners, and act for global security. Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine has become the largest war in Europe since 1945, with hundreds of thousands killed and injured, and millions of displaced Ukrainians in and outside the country. In response, the EU and its Member States, with partners from around the world, rallied swiftly around Ukraine, providing unprecedented levels of military support, economic assistance, and humanitarian aid. The outbreak of war also saw the transatlantic alliance reinvigorated with close EU-NATO cooperation and the United States' commitment to European security reaffirmed.

A brutal wake-up call

Russia's invasion has been a brutal wake-up call. It forced the EU to act rapidly and decisively. EU leaders immediately recognised it as a moment of truth for Europe and the wider rules-based international order. Accordingly, the EU and its Member States mobilised all tools at their disposal.

Crucially, the EU oversaw the first-ever joint financing and delivery of weapons and ammunition to a country under attack. For the first time ever, the EU took the decision to

use the European Peace Facility (EPF) to pool funds and then reimburse Member States for their arms deliveries to Ukraine. By mobilising €5,6bn under the EPF, the EU has incentivised the delivery of military assistance by EU Member States of over €13bn so far.

In another historical first, the EPF was also used to fund the most ambitious training mission based on EU soil – the EU military assistance mission (EUMAM) for Ukraine. Launched on 15 November 2022, EUMAM will train 30,000 Ukrainian soldiers by the end of 2023 and, by mid-2023, had already completed training of some 24,000 troops in close coordination with partners such as the US, the UK, Norway and Canada. The innovative use of the EPF showed how the EU and its Member States can cooperate on defence with third

Josep Borrell Fontelles

is High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission since 2019. Previously, he was the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation (2018-2019), the Jean Monnet Chair of European Economic Integration at the Complutense University of Madrid (2013-2016), and the President of the European University Institute in Florence (2010-2012). He was also President of the European Parliament from 2004-2007. Previously to his political and diplomatic career, Mr Borrell was a professor at the Higher Technical School of Aeronautical Engineering and the Complutense University of Madrid (1972-1982).



states in the full range of support, from advice and training to supplying arms and ammunition at large scale.

The Strategic Compass – first results

The EU's response to Russia's war against Ukraine also led to renewed impetus for the Union's overall security and defence agenda. Indeed, just a few weeks after the Russian invasion, the EU adopted the "Strategic Compass", a guiding framework for the EU's security and defence up to 2030. It sets out concrete actions and timelines in four chapters entitled Act, Secure, Invest, and Partner with more than 80 specific deliverables, of which some 50 were to be implemented by the end of 2022.

In the first year of the Strategic Compass, there was already significant progress. The EU has become more effective in the deployment of its missions and operations, in terms of speed, flexibility and responsiveness. It also strengthened its ability to address threats and secure access to strategic domains such as cyber, space and maritime routes.

Member States decided to increase their defence spending and investments in an unprecedented manner. To be effective, they will need to ensure that more of that investment is spent jointly, i.e. together. To this end, in addition to co-financing defence R&D with the European Defence Fund (EDF), for the first time the Commission has proposed to incentivise short-term joint procurement of military equipment among Member States through the EU budget.

“Europeans live in a world full of threats and challenges. Citizens, quite rightly, expect their political leaders to provide answers.”

HR/VP Josep Borrell Fontelles

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EUMAM Ukraine

(nc) The EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine) launched in November 2022 aims to strengthen the capacity of the Ukrainian armed forces to defend the country's territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. EUMAM works closely together with other like-minded international partners to provide training support to the Ukrainian armed forces and is open to the participation of third states. So far, 24 EU Member States have offered training modules and personnel. All mission activities are located on EU soil. The training is supported by the delivery of equipment to the Ukrainian armed forces, which is provided by Member States and funded by the European Peace Facility (EPF).

Source: EEAS

EU support to the EU defence industry, especially in ramping up production capacity, continues to be at the top of our agenda in 2023.

Ongoing EU missions and operations

While Ukraine rightly sits at the top of our agenda, the EU continues to be a security provider in other parts of the world. Drawing on civilian and military assets, the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) provides a comprehensive approach towards crisis management in 22 ongoing missions and operations, of which 13 civilian and 9 military, in which over 4,000 women and men support peace and security while building resilience in fragile societies in Europe, Africa and Asia.

The EU has launched for example a new CSDP mission in Armenia in January 2023. The EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA), is a civilian mission observing and reporting on the security situation along the Armenian side of the international border with Azerbaijan.

Providing answers in an unstable world

Europeans live in a world full of threats and challenges. Citizens, quite rightly, expect their political leaders to provide answers. Clear and stable majorities indicate that they want a greater role for the European Union in building a strong European security and defence policy. As the world becomes more unstable and unpredictable, Europeans must increase their collective investment in their common security. We have achieved quite a lot, but there is even more work to be done. ■

SPOTLIGHT

EU CBRN Centres of Excellence annual meeting

Making the world safer in these challenging times



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by Nannette Cazaubon, Paris

Having reported several times on the “Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence” (CBRN CoE) initiative in our magazine, we are continuing to follow this success story, launched by the European Union (EU) in 2010. Aimed at fostering national and regional cooperation in the face of CBRN risks and threats across the planet, the initiative – counting 64 partner countries organised around eight Regional Secretariats – has developed into the Union’s largest external security programme today with 100 projects funded.

From 14 to 15 June 2023, together with Editor-in-Chief Hartmut Bühl, I participated in the CBRN CoE initiative’s annual meeting in Brussels, as we have done since 2019. We were pleased to see familiar faces, to talk with participants from new partner countries, and to discover the latest format of this annual high-level event.

(Brussels, June 2023) News from the eight regions, thematic sessions with experts, alongside a walk through an exposition; a “world café” session and an award ceremony followed by a closing dinner in Victor Horta’s architectural masterpiece, the Centre for Fine Arts (BOZAR), one of my favourite places in Brussels.

The conference programme announces quite an exciting new shape for this 9th International National Focal Points (NFPs) meeting organised by the European Commission’s Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPi), with the support of the United Nations International Crime and Justice Institute (UNICRI).

I am impressed by this year’s venue, a former theatre that has kept its ancient decor and provides a beautiful background for the event. Silvia Bottone, Programme Manager at FPI and Marian de Bruijn, Head of UNICRI’s CBRN programme, both responsible for

the organisation and “spirit” of the two-day meeting, tell us that over 150 participants are gathered, including 51 NFPs out of the 64 CBRN CoE partner countries, as well as representatives from EU institutions and Member States, the United States and Canada, and various United Nations’ offices and programmes.

Opening session

The opening takes place in the beautiful auditorium and starts with Peter M. Wagner’s welcome speech at his first CoE meeting as FPI’s Director. He recalls that CBRN incidents have “a low probability but a high impact” and that “being ready requires extremely well organised and specialised response capacities”.

Joanneke Balfourt, Director of Security and Defence Policy at the European External Action Service (EEAS), explains how the EEAS is supporting the CBRN CoE initiative by using both the service’s global network of EU delegations and its interactions with partners. Bernard Magenmann, Deputy Director-General at the EU Joint Research Centre (JRC) is represented by Margarida Goulart, Head of the Euratom Coordination Unit, who highlights the JRC’s engagement to foster nuclear safety and security and reaffirms its continuous technical support of the CBRN CoE initiative.

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Impressions from the 9th National Focal Points meeting

Finally, Francesco Marelli, Head of UNICRI's CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance Unit, highlights the continuous support for Ukraine from all the EU CBRN Centres of Excellence before concluding: "our solid cooperation built over the past decade makes the world safer, even in these most challenging of times."

Updates from the regions

The rest of the morning is dedicated to panel sessions with the Heads of the eight Regional Secretariats, who present updates on their region's many activities (projects, meetings, workshops, field exercises...). Now that more than half of the partner countries have accomplished the drafting of their CBRN National Action Plan, they engage more and more in regional activities, with two regions – the Middle East (MIE) and South East and Eastern Europe (SEEE) – having already adopted a Regional Action Plan. This year, we are also observing a clear shift to closer inter-regional cooperation.

Thematic sessions and networking

A variety of highly interesting thematic sessions in relation to CBRN is offered in the afternoon, ranging, amongst others, from Canada's Weapons Threat Reduction Programme activities and the German Biosecurity Programme to experiences from the creation of the CBRN Steering Board in Estonia and an update on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540.

After the dense afternoon programme, we join the relaxing networking reception in the evening, allowing us to enjoy a Belgian beer or a glass of Italian wine while walking through the exposition illustrating flagship projects in the different regions. Silvia Bottone passed by and reminds us to vote for our favorite project, the winner being awarded at the end of the event. We do our duty and go find the voting box.

World café

When I enter the "theatre" the next morning, the rows of chairs have been replaced by circular tables. The participants, some bringing their cup of morning coffee, are taking place in the "world café". Not familiar with the concept, Hartmut and I like it very much, as it encourages an intense exchange of views: participants discuss three questions (linked to climate change, National Action Plans and CBRN response) under the lead of a table host, and then rotate from one table to another. The lively discussions we observe clearly prove that the participants appreciate this form of communication.

EU priorities complementary to CBRN

In the afternoon it is the European Commission's turn to present EU programmes and priorities that are complementary to CBRN. Charlotte Renckens (HERA) introduces the new European Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA), while Tristan Simonart (DG ECHO) highlights possible synergies between the CoE initiative and DG ECHO's work in the field of prevention, preparedness and response to natural and human-made disasters. Then, Maureen Wood (JCR) reports on scientific support for chemical safety and security.

Award ceremony

The traditional award ceremony for the best success story takes place before dinner in BOZAR's majestic entrance hall, which has been converted into an elegant pop-up restaurant, with a DJ placed in front of the large stairs.

The project I voted for, "The EU CBRN CoE support to Ukraine" makes third place and is much applauded. The second place goes to the Uzbek project "Integrating Mobile Labs into the Public Health System", and the winning success story is the Lao-Philippines project "Country-to-country training in Southeast Asia strengthens implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)".

Take-aways

It is evident that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has pushed discussions on CBRN hazards into the public and political discourse. People have become aware that CBRN incidents have the potential to become cross border emergencies with overwhelming cascading effects. Factors such as climate change are worsening this broader risk picture. Having been held in this worrying context, the 2023 National Focal Points meeting made clear that the 64 partner countries, conscious of the role the EU CBRN CoE initiative has to play in preparing for and responding to these growing threats, are ready to put in the energy necessary to push regional and inter-regional cooperation ahead in CBRN risk mitigation – to make the world safer.



<https://tinyurl.com/3vdfjyhj>

Nannette Cazaubon
Deputy Editor-in-Chief



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Commentary

NATO summit 2023 – the renaissance of geopolitics

by Editor-in-Chief Hartmut Bühl, Paris

As the war in Ukraine continues, the NATO summit in Vilnius from 11 to 12 July 2023 was a major test for the allies' security capabilities and for their willingness to remain united around the key challenges of the day: security support for Ukraine, the enlargement of the Alliance and the security of Europe in the face of the threat from Moscow.



At the summit, the Europeans once more endorsed the comfortable role of a "vassal", that does not have to worry about the supreme protection of their "suzerain", but is unable to exert much influence over its future strategy.

Indeed, since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and four years after French President Emmanuel Macron called NATO "brain dead", the Alliance has found its "raison d'être" once again. But its long-term survival will require a rebalancing of power between the two sides of the Atlantic.

Even before the summit, it was clear that Ukraine, a country at war, would not be given a firm commitment to NATO membership. But Ukraine has nevertheless put one foot in the Alliance's door by receiving security guarantees and thus achieving what Vladimir Putin has tried at all costs to avoid. However, even if the summit approved the creation of a NATO-Ukraine Council, which constitutes an unprecedented level of partnership between the Atlantic Alliance and Kyiv, Volodymyr Zelenskyy did not manage to obtain a timetable for accession.

NATO continues its support for Ukraine, structured around three axes: firstly, arming the Ukrainian forces so that they can inflict sufficient damage on the Russians to oblige Putin to negotiate peace; secondly, strictly controlling the risks of escalation and thirdly, maintaining a dialogue with Moscow.

In Vilnius, the Alliance demonstrated both unity and strength, but this new solidity is also NATO's old weakness: the military organisation remains dependent on the United States and stands in fear of the outcome of the US presidential elections every four years.

At present, with the return of high intensity war to Europe, the continent has lost its strategic stability. This war is indeed anachronistic for the Europeans who have placed their faith since the end of the Cold War in demilitarisation and globalisation.

Not so for those who view the world through the lens of great power rivalries: China, Russia and the US. While the first two intend to reverse the world order to their advantage, the US strives to maintain order and rules, but wisely, not at any price.

Faced with authoritarian empires gambling on the instability and versatility of democracies, it is more than ever essential for Europe to exercise political patience and consistency. The continent needs the European Union to develop its military power, a coherent EU-NATO strategy as well as a United States that continues to accept its responsibility as the only remaining western power able to project significant military forces to different corners of the globe simultaneously. And in doing so, also guarantees Europe's security.

Change of times in the Middle East?

The Saudi-Iranian rapprochement – background and perspectives

by Gerhard Arnold, Theologian and Publisher, Middle East correspondent for this magazine, Würzburg

On 10 March 2023, senior government officials of Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed in Beijing, after mediation by Chinese leadership, to resume their diplomatic and economic relations. On 6 April, the foreign ministers of both states met for further talks, also in Beijing. Two months later, the Iranian embassy in Riyadh resumed its activities; the Saudi embassy in Tehran is to be opened later. A thaw seems to have begun between the two Persian Gulf states after seven years of extremely hostile mutual rhetoric.

A new beginning with a bang

The political rapprochement on the Saudi side had been in the offing for some time, so it was not surprising. In 2021, four rounds of talks between government representatives of both states took place in Iraq. They began immediately after an interview, sensational in many respects, that Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman had given to the Saudi television station Al-Arabiya in April 2021. The presenter asked him: "is there any effort to reach a settlement on the unresolved issues between Saudi Arabia and Iran?" The de facto ruler replied: "at the end of the day, Iran is a neighbouring country. All we ask for is to have a good and distinguished relationship with Iran. We do not want the situation with Iran to be difficult. On the contrary, we want it to prosper and grow as we have Saudi interests in Iran, and they have Iranian interests in Saudi Arabia, which is to drive prosperity and growth in the region and the entire world." Solutions should now be found for the previous problems, the nuclear programme, missile development and support for illegal militias.

Policy change in regional conflict situations

Since he came to power in 2017, Prince Mohammed has been confronted with different regional conflicts demanding to be dealt with. This was equally true for the ruling houses and governments of the Middle East region.

In 2019 and 2020, numerous critical analyses of the state of the Arab world appeared in various Arab countries. There is ongoing instability and turmoil. The region lacks a framework for collec-



tive security. Middle East expert Hamed Al-Ghwell wrote in the Arab News in August 2020 that if the Middle East wants to have a good future, it needs comprehensive reforms and a new solidarity-based cooperation. But "before that happens, the region must first grapple with its woeful realities. Civil conflicts, political intransigence and high unemployment prove that the old ways are no longer sustainable. The upper echelons of politics and society remain strangled by entrenched interests and patronage networks, which poison well-intentioned reforms via corruption and malfeasance. Existing social contracts continue to exhaust and frustrate the public as each new government proves to be as out of touch as the previous one."

The security conflicts include the civil war in Syria since 2011, economic collapse in Lebanon since 2019, the Israel-Palestine problem, the political and economic disaster in Iraq since 2003, and the civil and militia war in Libya since 2011.

SPOTLIGHT

Prince Mohammed had already conceived the gigantic "Vision 2030" in 2016, the economic, industrial and social modernisation of the kingdom. To advance these projects, which are now well underway, he needed a pacified regional environment and cooperation. For this, he can rely on "the quartet", the group of four states with Egypt, the UAE and Bahrain, pursuing common political and ideological goals.

A particular problem for Prince Mohammed was the Yemen war, in which the ruler intervened militarily with the UAE in 2015 in the deceptive hope of quickly defeating the Huthi rebels. The military conflict widened due to Iran's military intervention. In September 2019, Saudi Arabia suffered a devastating airstrike with drones and cruise missiles on its largest oil processing facility, most likely of Iranian origin. More air strikes on Saudi infrastructure followed at short intervals. Things could not go on like this.

The Saudian course change and the US

The Covid-19 pandemic and its devastating economic impact increased the pressure on the governments of the region to find solutions and to cooperate economically.

Another development made a change of policy towards Iran without alternative: the election of Joe Biden as president of the US in autumn 2020. Harshly attacking the Saudi crown prince over the Khashoggi murder in Istanbul in October 2018, Biden's announcement that US policy wanted to withdraw from the Middle East region and focus on China as the main adversary was irritating. Therefore, he said, he would try to revive the Iran nuclear deal – unilaterally terminated by his predecessor Donald Trump in 2018 – and dissuade Iran from developing a nuclear bomb for the near future. With this reformulation of US policy, the balance of power in the Middle East changed as the US no longer supported the group of four's anti-Iran course and withdrew from Saudi Arabia. Mohammed bin Salman had to try a policy of understanding with Iran, while the west's Afghanistan disaster with the ignominious withdrawal after the Taliban victory in August 2021 has further encouraged the geopolitical reorientation.

Gerhard Arnold



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is a German protestant theologian and publisher. Born in 1948, he served as minister in the Lutheran Church of Bavaria and was teacher of religion at a High School in Kitzingen from 1982 to 2009. Mr Arnold published numerous monographs and essays in the field of contemporary church history on the themes and issues of ethics of peace and international security policy.

Further geopolitical reorientations

In view of the permanent conflict with Iran, the UAE wanted a reliable military and technological partner besides the US. The choice fell on Israel. Under US President Trump, the UAE together with friendly Bahrain agreed in September 2020 in Washington on the "Abraham Accords", close cooperation and the opening of embassies.

“Critical is the fact that the new political initiatives have also led to the strengthening of authoritarian systems in the region.”

The relationship between the group of four and Qatar was also cleared up, at least on the surface, through the mediation of US President Trump. At the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit in January 2021 in Al Ula, Saudi Arabia, there was a reconciliation between the crown prince and the Emir of Qatar.

The Arab League suspended Syria's membership at the end of 2011 in response to the civil war atrocities. If standing on the sidelines and criticising the Assad regime had not brought about anything positive, then a realpolitik turn would have to be made, according to the Gulf state's logic. At the end of 2018, the UAE embassy in Damascus was reopened, breaking the "front" against the Assad regime, but the major breakthrough in relations with the Syrian leader, however, did not occur until the Arab League Summit on 19 May 2023 in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, to which he was invited and warmly welcomed.

A thaw also began in relations with Türkiye. There were reciprocal visits by crown prince Mohammed bin Zayed (UAE) to Türkiye and Erdoğan to the Gulf emirate (2022). Egypt followed this policy of understanding in spring 2023.

Outlook

Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt's geopolitical reorientation of the region may contribute to a longer-term calming of the conflict. It remains to be seen whether Syria's leader Assad is serious about ending the war in his own country and whether Iran will change its destructive behaviour in the region. The Mullah regime's ambition to build a nuclear bomb would immediately revive the old conflict constellation.

Critical is the fact that the new political initiatives have also led to the strengthening of authoritarian systems in the region, especially through the upgrading of Syria. The Arab Spring now seems to have been laid to rest. In any case, the new Middle East will remain a volatile region. ■

MAIN TOPIC

Geopolitics and maritime security

With the great powers striving for planet-wide or at least regional superiority, the Sea has become the stage for culminating geo-economic struggles, meaning huge challenges for maritime security: growing tensions due to China's unhidden reach for hegemony in the Indo-Pacific with its important trade routes and fishing grounds, Russian plans to dominate the Arctic region with its mineral and energy resources, and European concerns about the stability in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea – this chapter will highlight what is at stake.



Responding in a coordinated manner to evolving threats

The new EU Maritime Security Strategy

by Charlina Vitcheva, Director-General, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), European Commission, Brussels

The new EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS)¹ comes at a time of increasing geopolitical strife and rapid technological developments, answering a broad range of security challenges in the global maritime domain.

The EU Member States combined have the largest Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the world. Our economy depends on the ocean for over 80% of global trade. About 99% of data exchanged worldwide is transported through undersea cables. And about two thirds of the world's oil and gas supply is either extracted at or transported by sea.

Evolving threats in the maritime domain

The interests and security of the EU and its citizens are increasingly subjected to new and evolving threats in the maritime domain. Much has changed on the global geopolitical arena since the adoption of the original EUMSS in 2014. We are living in an increasingly multipolar world, witnessing large-scale

acts of aggression, most notably Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine, which has repercussions across the world. We are facing an increase in revisionist threats, expansionist rhetoric, violations of national sovereignty and challenges to the rule of law and the international order, many of which are carried out at sea.

Recent attacks on critical infrastructure

In the last year or so, we witnessed the attack on the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, the deliberate severing of communication cables between Svalbard and the Norwegian mainland, the suspicious presence of Russian vessels around energy installations in the North Sea, and various other attacks and threats on European maritime critical infrastructure.

Vital protection of a blue economy

The development of a sustainable blue economy also clearly depends on maritime security, but one needs to picture the scale of investment we have to undertake in Europe in the coming years for offshore energy production to reach our climate targets, to understand the challenges ahead. This type of critical infrastructure will not only have to be resilient but requires constant surveillance and protection against physical and cyber threats.

Degradation of the marine environment

The new EUMSS highlights the significant and potentially long-lasting impacts of climate change and degradation of the marine environment on maritime security, including flooding in coastal areas and islands, the loss of coral reefs, mangroves and other wetlands, and the depletion of fish stocks.² These risk multipliers increase instability and inequality, exacerbating transnational crime, piracy, tensions over marine resources, and contribute to forced migration and migrant smuggling.

Charlina Vitcheva



has been the Director-General of the European Commission's DG MARE since June 2020. Prior to this, she was the acting Director-General for the Joint Research Centre (JRC) from November 2019 to April 2020. Previously, she was Director of Smart & Sustainable Growth in Southern Europe at the DG Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) and also held a director's position on Inclusive Growth, Territorial and Urban Development and Northern Europe.

¹ Adoption of a joint communication by the Commission and the External Action Service on 10 March 2023; the Council is expected to adopt the final texts of the revised EU Strategy and its Action Plan this autumn.

² IPCC SROCC (2019) and WGII report, AR6 (2022)

Tackling the problem of piracy

In various regions, piracy, kidnapping for ransom, the trafficking and smuggling of people, and the trafficking of weapons and illicit substances at sea are increasingly challenging. While EUNAVFOR Atalanta has been successful in tackling piracy around the Horn of Africa, in the last few years the Gulf of Guinea has become a hotspot for piracy and kidnapping for ransom, threatening EU interests linked to trade, energy and shipping. The EU is tackling this threat head-on, through the

“The interests and security of the EU and its citizens are increasingly subjected to new and evolving threats in the maritime domain.”

Coordinated Maritime Presence (CMP) concept, where Member States have ensured a constant presence of their naval assets in the region. Given the success of the CMP in the Gulf of Guinea, we are now expanding the concept to the north-western Indian Ocean. Building on such successful missions and considering the geopolitical developments, it is important that the EU increases its contribution in the international arena, also drawing on the world-class naval capabilities of its Member States.

Objectives of the EUMSS

The new EUMSS will respond to the new and old challenges in the maritime domain. The EUMSS now comprises six strategic objectives: stepping up maritime activities at sea; strengthening cooperation with partners; leading on maritime domain awareness; managing specific risks and threats; boosting capabilities; and enhancing education and training in maritime security fields. To meet those objectives, the revised action plan of the EUMSS contains a multitude of actions, including:

- a large-scale annual maritime security exercise with naval assets, coastguards and relevant authorities from as many Member States as possible;
- expanding the Coordinated Maritime Presence concept to new maritime areas of interest;
- strengthening cooperation between the EU and NATO and like-minded countries; furthering information exchange platforms;
- strengthening and interconnecting information exchange platforms such as the Common Infor-

mation Sharing Environment for the maritime domain (CISE) and the naval platform (MARSUR);

- protecting critical maritime infrastructure and ships from physical and cyber threats and tackling unexploded ordnance and mines at sea;
- developing common requirements and concepts for defence technologies;
- stepping up work on projects such as the European Patrol Corvette, unmanned systems, improving our anti-submarine capabilities;
- boosting hybrid and cybersecurity qualifications and conducting training and exercises open to non-EU partners;
- strengthening capabilities and training to respond to climate-related disasters at sea;
- and developing renewable technology suitable for use by navies and coast guards.

Preparing for future challenges

Maritime security challenges are expected to increase in number and complexity over the coming years, while perpetrators undermining maritime security are also increasing in numbers and diversity, including state and non-state actors. In the face of these challenges, the revised EUMSS constitutes an integral framework, fully adapted to respond, in a coordinated and comprehensive manner, to present and future maritime security challenges.



Plea for a powerful and permanent maritime Atlantic power

Europe and the Sea



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The French nuclear-powered aircraft carrier "Charles de Gaulle" in the harbour of Toulon

by Admiral (ret) Alain Coldefy, President, Société des Membres de la Légion d'Honneur (SMLH), Paris

War made a tragic return to continental Europe when Russia invaded neighbouring Ukraine in early 2022 in an attempt to terrorise the entire country. It is a land war, partly air-land but relatively little naval, even if the French daily "Le Monde" titled the front page of its edition of 21 July 2023 with: "War in Ukraine: the major issue of the Black Sea".

Admiral (ret) Alain Coldefy



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has sailed the seas of the world, starting as an ensign and rising through the ranks to become commander of the French aircraft carrier "Clemenceau". As a Rear Admiral, he led a Franco-British fleet in the Adriatic during the Balkan Wars. Promoted to the rank of Admiral, he was appointed Vice Chief of Defence ("major général des armées") in 2002

before assuming the position of Inspector General of the armed forces (2005-2006). Having subsequently worked in industry for several years, he became President of the "Académie de Marine" in 2016 and President of the "Société des Membres de la Légion d'Honneur" (SMLH) in 2018.

The end of pacifist illusions

The consequences are multiple, but we will consider only two of them here.

Firstly, in a world that has been rearming everywhere for years, Europeans, who have long been cradled in pacifist illusions under the American military umbrella, have (finally) realised that the tragedy of history has returned home.

Secondly, the common spaces, hitherto relatively preserved from open wars, are henceforth and for the foreseeable future, spaces of conflict, starting with the oceans, all oceans without exception. These global common spaces have generated broad-based economic activity open to the world, belonging to everyone, vital for everyone. The famous "res nullius" that characterised the high seas in previous centuries has become disputed and is imperfectly covered by law. It is therefore one of increasing militarisation, including in the Atlantic zone. Strategists have likened maritime flows to the fluidity that characterises ocean waters, but these flows are now sources of friction.

The shock of reality

In reality, global naval rearmament is nothing new, nor a surprise to professionals. The era of supremacy of large navies, both in blue and brown water operations is long gone. Admittedly, human and material trafficking of all kinds is

increasing, without so far having a negative influence on world maritime trade, including that of hydrocarbons. But the control of maritime spaces has become an issue for an ever-increasing number of states, for whom sea power is no longer an abstract concept.

The increase in naval capacity of the permanent members of the UN Security Council is generally well known to observers: on the one hand, an overpowerful American navy (11 aircraft carrier battle groups and 75 nuclear attack submarines, SSN), a Chinese navy, which now aims to overtake the American navy in tonnage but does not yet have the professional sailors to do so, a Russian navy which is still strong in SSNs and which reoriented its naval policy in 2022, and on the other hand, the British and French navies, which maintain their rank of nuclear powers but are falling back in global tonnage rankings.

The rise of regional players in the Indo-Pacific zone is just as spectacular: India, Japan, South Korea and even Taiwan are in the top 10 navies of the world. And elsewhere Iran, Türkiye, Algeria, Egypt are progressing rapidly. The indicators of this policy are the growing number of aircraft carriers and the proliferation of modern submarines – about 450 for about forty countries.

Maritime theatres in open crisis

Before analysing the Atlantic theatre – which includes the Arctic, the Baltic and the area in the South Atlantic outside NATO, it is useful to recall that today all seas and oceans are theatres of war.

The Mediterranean, including the Black Sea, has been a place of almost excessive concentration of nearly all the naval powers bordering its coastline as well as the great powers, China included, for the past decade. Europe must play the role of a stabilising power beyond the European Union (EU) Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex.

The Indo-Pacific region is currently attracting a lot of attention, in particular because of the face-to-face between China and the United States. European countries, including and especially France – a nation bordering the Indian Ocean and Pacific Oceans, with nearly 8 million km² of national Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) there – are acting within their means. The EU has intervened in the fight against piracy and, more modestly, against illegal fishing.

The Atlantic theatre

The Cold War has adapted to hybrid strategies and Russia is implementing them on a grand scale. In reality, for the NATO navies, the “classic” Cold War has never ceased, particularly in submarines.

The emergence of hybrid strategies will result in the engagement of greater resources by European navies in the Atlantic area in return for greater engagement by the United States in the

Indo-Pacific zone (their Pacific Joint Command in Hawaii, PACOM, became INDOPACOM in 2018... that says it all).

The European allies will implement these strategies by a re-inforced and permanent presence of combat ships, of a sufficient level in quantity and quality to see action if necessary.

The capabilities of force projection by amphibious ships and helicopter carriers and power projection by aircraft carriers

will thus be less urgent than in other more distant theatres. On the other hand, anti-submarine warfare capabilities (attack submarines, maritime patrol aircraft and frigates) and anti-aircraft warfare (frigates) by large numbers of surface ships will be essential.

It is in this area that European nations can make a big contribution; they have the competence and the quality, they will have to make efforts on the quantity of assets but the conditions for doing so are quite straightforward:

Operations conducted under the EU banner

- Since “Berlin plus” in 2003, cooperation between the EU and NATO is a reality that must now be implemented on a large scale, that of the entire Atlantic Ocean.
- Brexit has changed neither geography nor British commercial and strategic interests. They are obviously included in the ambitions of EU Member States.

Definition of the area of the Union’s responsibilities

- The Baltics: The real change here is the entry of Sweden and Finland into NATO, which should strengthen their security and encourage their commitment to Europe. Their border with an aggressive but blocked Russia is still one of the longest. A permanent surface and submarine naval force with maritime patrol aircraft can be set up there (in imitation of NATO STANAVS).
- The Arctic: The Arctic region is once again becoming an area of major strategic importance for several reasons, namely global warming and global strategic competition between the US, Russia and China.
- Africa: Oil in the Gulf of Guinea is threatened by terrorist groups.

Single command

- The prerequisite for success is a single command.

Relevant means

- Roughly 7 combat vessels (CV), 1 nuclear powered aircraft carrier (CVN), 119 frigates, 72 submarines (6 nuclear attack, submarines), 27 amphibious ships and 157 minesweeper-hunters.

As always within the EU, the means exist, but the political will to use them jointly is often lacking. The Atlantic could be a catalyst of European ambitions, even of European power. ■

“As always within the EU, the means exist, but the political will to use them jointly is often lacking.”



Sebastian Unger participating in the deployment of a floating measuring station on the Baltic Sea

International marine policy at a crossroads

Working together for a healthy ocean

by Sebastian Unger, Federal Government Commissioner for the Ocean, Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, Germany

The world's seas ensure the very survival of humankind. They produce oxygen and sequester carbon. They regulate the climate, supply us with food and provide habitats for countless numbers of species. And much of the global population depends on healthy seas for their livelihoods.

Massive pressure on marine life

For us humans, the ocean is fundamental to life on Earth – but life in the ocean is itself severely threatened. The triple planetary crisis caused by humans – the climate crisis, biodiversity loss and pollution – is putting massive pressure on marine life.

We are seeing record-breaking temperatures in the oceans as a result of the climate crisis. And the ocean is becoming increasingly acidic. Both are already having devastating effects on marine flora and fauna. Fishing and shipping, nutrient and toxin input, oil and gas platforms and offshore wind farms further pollute our seas and oceans.

Last but not least, marine litter, especially plastic, poses a threat to marine life. We are all familiar with the images of massive patches of floating plastic waste, littered beaches and seabirds entangled in plastic nets. Plastic finds its way into the stomachs of animals and thus also into our food chain. Plastic waste can also be found on the seafloor, even in deep-sea trenches.

New instruments for protecting the ocean

The need to protect the ocean is more urgent than ever before. And cross-border, global cooperation is crucial to these efforts. The ocean knows no borders. It is a single, interconnected habitat that compels us to work together. Only together, through a well-functioning multilateral system, can we successfully tackle the ocean crisis.

It is therefore very encouraging that the international community has taken several far-reaching decisions in recent months to

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protect life in the ocean – despite all geopolitical tensions.

UN High Seas Treaty

This March in New York, the international community agreed on a new UN High Seas Treaty. It establishes binding rules for the conservation and sustainable use of the Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), which cover nearly half of our blue planet. The German government supports swift ratification and implementation of the BBNJ Treaty. This agreement finally gives us the necessary tools for the establishment of marine protected areas in the high seas, but also for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits associated with marine genetic resources of these areas.

Global Biodiversity Framework

Last December, at the Kunming-Montreal UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the international community agreed on a new Global Biodiversity Framework, which includes the goal to protect at least 30% of terrestrial and marine areas to preserve biodiversity. Protected areas are an important refuge for many species and habitats, such as coral reefs. They help to make our seas more resilient to the effects of the climate crisis. Our ocean is also a powerful ally in the fight against global warming: it sequesters carbon and stores much of the surplus heat. These functions must be preserved at all costs through rigorous climate and marine protection.

Combatting plastic pollution

National borders do not stop living creatures and ecosystems – but the same applies to marine pollution caused by waste and other harmful substances. We therefore need new ways of fighting the pollution crisis that enable us to work better together as an international community in the future. Last year, we therefore launched a key process with the mandate for a legally binding UN treaty to combat plastic pollution.

A first draft of an ambitious agreement is currently being written, with the most important options already on the table. The discussions have shown that reaching consensus will not be a foregone conclusion. Some countries still need convincing because the agreement is intended to cover the entire life cycle of plastics, not just voluntary measures at the end of the value chain. Important issues that need to be clarified include the binding nature of the targets and measures, and specifically a possible restriction on plastic production, the interpretation and implementation of extended producer responsibility, as well as conformity and financing.

It is clear that we cannot wait for the agreement to be finalised and enter into force to take action. Countries must already accelerate their action now. Internationally, we have mainstreamed the issue at G7 and G20 levels and facilitated further commitments. Regionally, we have established it prominently in the action plans for the North-East Atlantic through the OSPAR Commission and

“It is very encouraging that the international community has taken several far-reaching decisions in recent months to protect life in the ocean – despite all geopolitical tensions.”

the Baltic Sea through the Helsinki Commission. Nationally in Germany, the Environment Ministry is working on a law to reduce packaging waste, for example. This is because the problems arise on land, and single-use plastic in particular ends up far too often in the environment and in the seas and oceans, where it causes harm over many decades. We want to rely primarily on reuse systems, both nationally and internationally.

International cooperation is a key priority

The German government supports partner countries around the world to foster marine protection, with programmes such as the International Climate Initiative (IKI), the Grant Programme against Marine Litter and the Blue Action Fund. With the UN BBNJ Treaty, the Global Biodiversity Framework of the CBD, and the future agreement to combat plastic waste, we have new and powerful instruments for marine protection and a significant opportunity to strengthen international cooperation as a whole.

We can only be successful if we work together. In the future, the German government will therefore focus even more on international cooperation for the ocean as a key priority. We only have one ocean – which connects our continents and countries, feeds us and is our ally against the triple crisis. It is high time that we protect our ocean more effectively because by doing so we protect ourselves. ■

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UN High Seas Treaty

(nc) On 19 June 2023, after nearly two decades of negotiations, the United Nation’s 193 Member States formally adopted a legally binding marine biodiversity agreement aimed at protecting the high seas beyond national boundaries, covering two thirds of the planet’s oceans. The new agreement “on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction” (BBNJ) contains 75 articles aimed at protecting the ocean, promoting equity and fairness, tackling environmental degradation, fighting climate change, and preventing biodiversity loss in the high seas. The treaty sets up a procedure to establish large-scale marine protected areas in the high seas. It also establishes the sharing of benefits from marine genetic resources and foresees capacity building and the transfer of marine technology between the parties. Finally, it contains clear rules to conduct environmental impact assessments, before running activities in the high seas.

 <https://tinyurl.com/y2wuucsh>



The harbour of Hong Kong

Preventing Chinese dominance in Asia

The United States' Indo-Pacific Strategy

by Michael Singh, Managing Director, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington

There is transatlantic agreement that the “China challenge” is the most serious we face; but do we have a strategy to confront it? Whether in business or in geopolitics, strategy is a three-step process – first, setting a focused objective; second, mapping out a set of mutually reinforcing choices that will accomplish it; third, marshaling the resources to carry it out. But it is also a competitive process – objectives can be shared among rivals, and strategies bested or copied. The winner is often the party which is more disciplined in executing its strategy, and has superior resources to do so.

Global goals versus regional strategies

The US, UK, France, Germany, and Canada have all published Indo-Pacific strategies, reflecting the region’s importance to their interests. They have much in common – laying out ambitions to strengthen the international order, promote prosperity, and combat climate change, among other goals. However, there is little about these documents that is particular to the Indo-Pacific. Climate change is not an Asian phenomenon, nor is it the region harboring the most transnational threats. Indeed, one could simply replace “Indo-Pacific” with another region and the documents would be equally applicable. Rather than regional strategies, these are listings of global goals, all of which must be pursued locally and regionally, including in the Indo-Pacific. What is unique about the Indo-Pacific is the chief obstacle to advancing these goals. As the US strategy notes, the “intensifying American focus [on the Indo-Pacific] is due in part to

the fact that the Indo-Pacific faces mounting challenges, particularly from the PRC [People’s Republic of China]. The PRC is combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological might as it pursues a sphere of influence in the Indo-Pacific and seeks to become the world’s most influential power.” That is to say, China has both the ambition and increasingly the capability to establish regional hegemony in Asia. The US objective, plainly stated, is to prevent it. This is the American aim because Chinese dominance in Asia would threaten US interests there, threaten democracy and free-market capitalism, and perhaps presage a broader contest for global influence recalling the Cold War.

Preventing the regional hegemony of China

Transatlantic Indo-Pacific strategy should focus squarely on that challenge – not to the exclusion of pursuing goals, but in recognition that failing would limit our ability to do so. Our strategy should consist of the following mutually reinforcing actions.

Defending Taiwan

A key focus of American strategy in the Indo-Pacific has become the defense of Taiwan. The seizure of Taiwan by the PRC would threaten US interests and be the likeliest flashpoint for a US-China conflict that would inflict enormous costs on the world. Thus, US strategy begins with deterring such a conflict – first by repositioning US forces in the region to establish deterrence by denial, and in the longer term by expanding



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and modernizing US military forces to disabuse the PRC of any hope of military victory and further bolster deterrence.

Reducing Beijing's leverage over us

But strengthening our own military is insufficient; three supporting lines of action are needed. Strategies are competitive – the PRC is executing its own strategy as we pursue our own, and will adapt to our actions and exploit our weaknesses. In recognition of this, the US and Europe must first ensure our commercial sectors are not helping the PRC to advance its own capabilities; second, reduce Beijing's leverage over us, both by shielding key supply chains from Chinese capture as well as by addressing other forms of PRC influence in our societies; and third, urge regional allies to take parallel steps, and strengthen regional mechanisms like the Quad, AUKUS, and ASEAN.

Expanding our diplomatic and economic role

If, as it must, deterrence succeeds, the primary theaters of US-China competition will be non-military. To this end, Washington must play an expanded diplomatic and economic role in the Indo-Pacific. While more remains to be done diplomatically, the most glaring gap in US engagement is economic – while the PRC has moved ahead with its Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and US allies have inaugurated the Comprehensive and Progressive Transpacific Partnership, the US is absent when it comes to setting the region's economic agenda. The disastrous decision to admit the PRC to the WTO has helped convince Americans that trade agreements benefit our adversaries. Today, however, it is our absence from economic diplomacy that aids our rivals, leaving Beijing with less competition and our partners without our support.

“While the US aims to prevent Chinese hegemony in the Indo-Pacific, it does not seek to establish its own.”

The American strategy must reach beyond

As it seeks to bolster its regional and global positions, China has looked outside Asia for advantage by expanding its military presence, investing in industries such as mineral extraction, and building leverage over other states. Beijing understands that while any crisis with the United States may center on Asia, its outcome will depend in part on what transpires elsewhere, whether in terms of access to resources and sea lanes or the formation of diplomatic coalitions. Our strategy too must look beyond the Indo-Pacific.

As a well-established power, the US has an advantage in any global competition. We must strike a balance between preserving this advantage and making difficult tradeoffs elsewhere in order to devote the necessary attention and resources to the Indo-Pacific. This would be true even with increases in the US defense budget, which have so far proven elusive. In regions outside Asia, this will mean an increased emphasis on burden-sharing, increased acceptance of “aligned autonomy” from allies, and greater emphasis on prioritization and great-power competition in regional strategies.

This need to prioritize portends a time of friction with US partners, as Washington asks them both to work with it in addressing global threats, while at the same time asking them to invest more in their own capabilities and act more decisively in their neighborhoods. In the long run, however, the shift may prove a boon, as states like Saudi Arabia and India find that they prefer being approached as a partner in US policy rather than the object of it. Scarcity may also spur innovation, for example in the increased use of uncrewed vehicles and artificial intelligence in place of capital assets needed in the Indo-Pacific.

A free and open Indo-Pacific

US partners often complain that they do not wish to choose between Washington and Beijing. But they are not being asked to do so. While the US aims to prevent Chinese hegemony in the Indo-Pacific, it does not seek to establish its own. Rather, Washington subscribes instead to a vision articulated by late Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe – of a free and open Indo-Pacific. This is the choice before states – an order where every state is equally sovereign and relations are conducted according to norms that

are fundamentally fair, or one divided into spheres of influence where some are more sovereign than others. This is not a choice the US has imposed, but one that has arisen inexorably alongside the PRC. ■



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Michael Singh

is the Managing Director and Lane-Swig Senior Fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy and former Senior Director for Middle East affairs at the White House (from 2005 to 2008).

Gauging the maritime dimension of competition

The maritime theatre of confrontation in the Asia-Pacific

by Jean Dufourcq, Rear Admiral (ret), Co-founder of “La Vigie – cabinet de synthèse stratégique”, Paris

A strategist should lift his gaze from the sound and fury in Ukraine and take the long view of issues in the Asia-Pacific space. The shift in the world's centre of gravity towards the East is clear for all to see, from the hitherto dominant Euro-Atlantic world to the ancient Asian world with its land mass, its interests and its very own vision of the world.

Rivalry of established and rising powers

But the strategist knows that geography links continents together, North America with South America, Europe with Africa, Asia with the immense empty space of the Pacific Ocean. He has noted that Mahan and Mac Kinder recommended that, sheltered by their insularity, the mercantile maritime powers should confront the land-based powers to ward off continental domination of the heart of the world. He has learnt from history the “trap of Thucydides”, the rivalry between established and rising powers and applies it to Washington and Beijing. He notes the fragility of strategic, Euro-Atlantic, Euro-Mediterranean and Transpacific transversalities and the nervousness of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) which have just met in Johannesburg.

This analytical focus can help us gauge the maritime dimension of competition in the Asia-Pacific and assess the risk of confrontation in this vast space that is cutting loose from yesterday's world order. Looking in more detail, we discover that the Asia-Pacific maritime theatre has two contradictory dynamics: the first is the rebalancing of the world and the “multiplicity” (and not multipolarity) which it generates. The second is the commercial vitality of a planet eager for resources, in which globalisation accentuates interdependence. The dilemma of the Asia-Pacific powers is therefore either to confront each other or to establish a charter of stability for a region whose diversity results from its immensity.

The rebalancing of the world

The rebalancing of the world at the end of the Cold War released the vast central space between Europe and Asia from the Soviet yoke and sharpened the global appetite for the energy resources of Western Asia (the

“The dilemma of the Asia-Pacific powers is either to confront each other or to establish a charter of stability for a region whose diversity results from its immensity.”

Middle East), Central Asia and the Arctic. Global warming henceforth facilitates intercontinental maritime exchanges via the seasonal circumnavigation of the Arctic and feeds speculation as to the agricultural viability of

Siberia. It was China's spectacular economic success that triggered Obama's “pivot to China” in 2011, with the aim of containing it through the “Indo-Pacific” concept and the associated QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue – Australia, India, Japan, US) to protect Taiwan.

The current Chinese doxa, inherited from Deng, “taking the best of the West to keep the best of China”, combined with that imposed by Xi, “bringing China together in 2049” (Centenary of the PRC established by Mao) is the modern translation of the founding Chinese myth of “Tianxia”, “everything and everyone under the same sky”. It is a similar reflex which led Biden to set “the Ukrainian trap” for Moscow in 2021. The combined effect of these developments on the Asia-Pacific world is to force the other two Asian poles that are India and ASEAN (with China, half of humanity) to adopt a balanced wait-and-see attitude vis-à-vis its rivals and thus benefit from a lucrative multi-alignment, accentuating the planet's strategic diversity, a concept defended by the BRICS.

Securing maritime routes

On the other hand, the commercial, technological and agricultural interdependence of consumers all over the world means that all powers are driving an unprecedented expansion of trade, requiring the security of the busy maritime trading routes whose security, practicability and reliability are an essential shared global asset. China, with its overland silk roads (BRI), maritime arteries and port investments, has no interest in disrupting trade and therefore pleads for “peaceful coexistence”, or what it calls “cooperative harmony”, in the Asia-Pacific. The United States uses the comparative military advantage of its Navy's 7th Fleet to defend an often provocative “freedom of navigation” in the maritime approaches to China. For its part, China is operating an accelerated naval reset. We can consider that these are still prudent role-playing games, discreetly agreed between the protagonists, as during the exchanges between President Xi and US Secretary of State Blinken in Beijing on 19 June of this year.

In the future, the high seas should not be used to amplify economic competition on land. ■

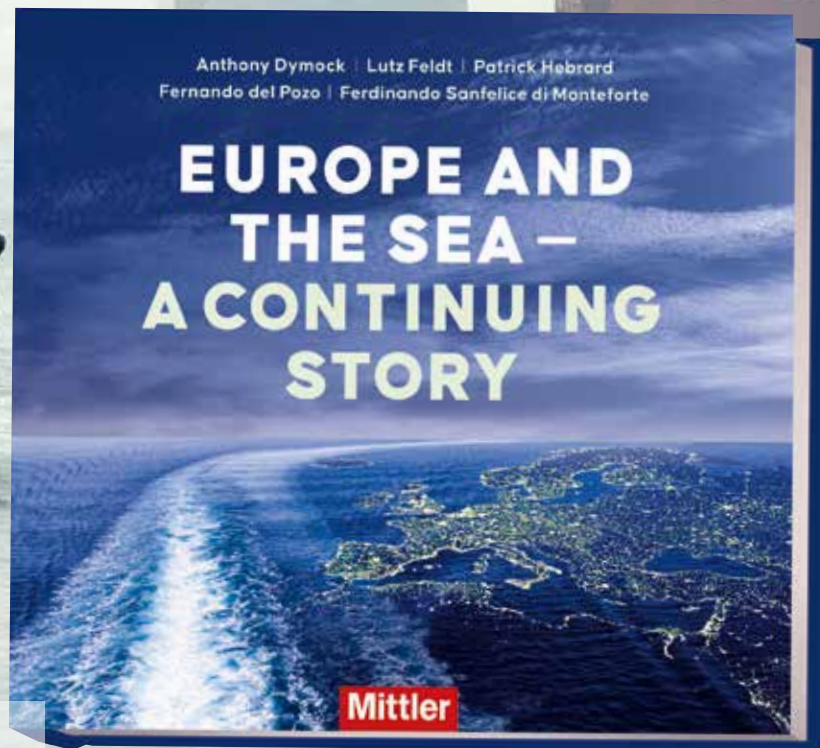


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The country's shift to a more robust self-defence policy

Japan as a more reliable security partner in this connected world

by Professor Hideshi Tokuchi, President of the Research Institute for Peace and Security (RIPS),
and Asia correspondent for this magazine, Tokyo



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg meeting with the Prime Minister of Japan Fumio Kishida in Tokyo, 31 January 2023

The Government of Japan released its new National Security Strategy in December 2022. The document states that it is a dramatic transformation in implementation of Japan's national security policy after the end of the second world war.

Japan's new National Security Strategy

Japan's new National Security Strategy aims to establish a robust defence posture which enables the country to defend itself on its own by strengthening its comprehensive national power.

Not only diplomatic and defence capabilities but also economic, technological and intelligence capabilities are to be enhanced as integral elements of comprehensive national power. The focal points in the new strategy are economic security and military defence.

Economic security

As for economic security, Japan will enhance its efforts for supply chain resilience, protection of critical infrastructure, sensitive data and information, and the fostering of advanced critical technologies, as a wide variety of threats through economic means from foreign countries is surfacing, particularly after the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Military defence

As for military defence, Japan will invest a great deal of financial resources in the fundamental reinforcement of defence capabilities. Japan pledges to increase its defence budget to the level of 2% of its current GDP in 2027. Its strong will to achieve this challenging goal is evident in the 27.4% increase in defence budget for 2023 while the average annual increase of Japan's defence budget in the past decade was only around 1%. In order to effectively address sophisticated missile threats, Japan will have counterstrike capabilities against the territory of adversaries while continuing to defend against incoming missiles by a missile defence network. As having counterstrike capabilities was a sensitive issue in Japanese politics for a long time, the decision of the Kishida cabinet is a bold one. In addition, restoration of Japan's military industrial base is highly prioritised, including reinforcement of research and development of new equipment.

Strong public support for the reform

The Japanese public support for the new strategy seems strong for the time being due to the acute security environment of the Indo-Pacific region. While it is necessary to keep monitoring it carefully, Japan's efforts for national defence in accordance with the new strategy will take hold as far as Japanese politics continues to be stable.

Background of the strategy's transformation

The work for the revision of Japan's National Security Strategy started in the fall of 2021, i.e. before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The previous strategy document of 2013 was already outdated. It was established even before the Russian annexation of Crimea. As 2013 was still the age of constructive engagement with China, the systemic rivalry between the US and China was not as serious as today.

Russia, China, and North Korea

Russia has swayed the rules-based international order by invading Ukraine. Its military forces are active in the Pacific theatre, too. China aims to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and to fully transform the People's Liberation Army into world-class forces by the mid-21st century. Tension over the Taiwan Strait is high and China never denies the possibility of using military force against Taiwan. Partnership between Russia and China is being strengthened. North Korea clearly jettisoned its commitment to denuclearisation. It also continues to launch ballistic missiles against UN resolutions. Japan neighbours all these three nuclear authoritarian powers. Japan's Prime Minister Kishida said several times that Ukraine today might be east Asia tomorrow. A similar expression is also found in the new National Security Strategy. As he said in his keynote address at the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue in June 2022, no country or region in the world can shrug off the Russian invasion of Ukraine as someone else's problem. This recognition is widely shared among the Japanese public.

Tensions between China and Taiwan

Of particular concern for Japan is the tension between China and Taiwan. Japan is only 110km away from Taiwan. G7 leaders reaffirmed "the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait as indispensable to security and prosperity in the international community" in the G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Communiqué in May 2022. It is a global challenge.

The nuclear threat and other challenges

Russia's continuous threat of use of nuclear weapons is undermining the credibility of US extended deterrence. It is also wasting the global efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. Japan's further efforts to strengthen the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-US Alliance,

including extended deterrence, as well as Japan's diplomatic initiative for nuclear arms controls, disarmament and non-proliferation has become extremely important.

All these issues together with serious non-traditional security challenges such as climate change necessitated the revision of the 2013 edition of the National Security Strategy.

Security cooperation with the EU and NATO

In today's globalised world, no one country can achieve its national security by itself. International partnership is indispensable. Security cooperation with like-minded countries continues to be one of the pillars of Japan's national security policy. Security cooperation with European countries, NATO and the EU is going to be enhanced as a priority in accordance with the new National Security Strategy.

NATO's Secretary General Stoltenberg said in Tokyo in February, "We may be oceans apart. But our security is closely connected." A more accurate expression would be "We are connected by the oceans, and our security is in-

separably connected." Japan and Europe should align their views and policies, including strategic assessment of the security environment, coordination of their strategic priorities, and sharing of scarce resources to address common threats.

The Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP), which Japan and NATO agreed upon in July 2023 on the occasion of Prime Minister Kishida's attendance at the recent NATO Summit, will work as the guideline for the enhancement of cooperation. Japan and NATO will enhance interoperability and their individual resilience across the peace-crisis spectrum, based on the ITPP, in which 16 specific goals in four priority issues are identified, including cyberdefence and maritime security.

As Japan continues to invest in its national defence and to enhance its partnership with NATO based on the ITPP, Japan will be a dependable partner for Europe for common security. ■

“Security cooperation with like-minded countries continues to be one of the pillars of Japan's national security policy.”

Professor Hideshi Tokuchi



joined the Defense Agency (the predecessor of the Ministry of Defense) of Japan in 1979 and served as Japan's first-ever Vice-Minister of Defense for International Affairs from 2014 to 2015 after completing several senior assignments including Director-General of the Defense Policy Bureau. He is the President of the Research Institute for Peace and Security (RIPS) and teaches

international security studies as a visiting professor at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS).



India participates together with Australia, Japan and the United States in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)

The need for a credible missile defence strategy

India's maritime policy in the Indo-Pacific

by Debalina Ghoshal, Non-Resident Research Fellow at the Council on International Policy (Canada), and India correspondent for this magazine, Kolkata

One of the key objectives of maritime powers in the Indo-Pacific region is to protect and secure their sea lines of communication (SLOCs). These include major maritime routes between ports used for trade, logistic support and naval power. Securing “choke points” so that maritime activities flow smoothly is a necessity for states like India that exert influence throughout the Indo-Pacific. As India also aims to become a big player in the ASEAN market and is a participant in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) together with Australia, Japan and the United States, it needs to exert a balanced maritime influence in the region.

India's maritime interests

Since the Indo-Pacific region is crucially important for economic and strategic reasons, states like China have established military bases in the region, like the naval base in Djibouti. To enhance its maritime presence, India therefore needs to counter military-driven challenges in order to further its economic interests, especially as its doctrine in the region is “Security And Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)”. As its name suggests, SAGAR goes beyond defence and also encompasses “security, capacity building, collective action, sustainable development, maritime engagement and regional connectivity”.

While advancing cooperation remains a major regional objective for India through its “Act East Policy”, countering competition and conflicts in the region remains a challenge – a challenge that can only be met under the jurisdiction of the United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). In managing

both regional competition and creating scope for cooperation, maritime supremacy is a necessity.

Strengthening blue water capability

A strong blue water capability would enable New Delhi to secure its SLOCs. An often overlooked aspect of this capability in the Indo-Pacific is the need for a robust air and missile defence system. While aircraft carriers strengthen states’ blue water capability and

“Strong maritime influence cannot be exerted in the region without a credible blue water capability.”

Debalina Ghoshal



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make them greater naval powers, they are always an important target for adversaries. Naval missile defence capability is therefore crucial to protect these key sea-based assets.

In April this year, India conducted successful flight testing of a sea-based interceptor that would provide it with a naval Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) capability that could intercept hostile missiles and airborne warning and control systems (AWACS). The Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) responsible for the development of this naval BMD capability is focussing on highly complex network-centric anti-ballistic missile systems. Dr Samir V. Kamat, Chairman of DRDO, assured that “the next generation of dedicated BMD vessels will be equipped with such systems with long range radars and sensors to detect, track and destroy hostile missiles.”

Regional complexities

India’s partners in the Indo-Pacific region like Australia and Japan already possess naval missile defence capability through their Aegis Ashore systems. India conducts maritime exercises with these states. These enable the development of greater deterrence vis-à-vis China, that possesses advanced long-range missile capabilities that could threaten India and its partners’ maritime influence in the region.

However, maritime deterrence will not only be strengthened through credible offensive assets but also by a robust “defence by denial” capability. Hence, while India is developing its indigenous BMD assets, it needs to ensure that they are interoperable with the naval BMD capabilities of its partners. This is all the more necessary as India must be able, with its partners, to counter China’s influence in the region and justify the tag it has earned of being a “balancer.” In focusing on naval BMD capability, India also needs to consider the threats emanating from cruise missiles. Hence, its future missile defence capability must also be able to counter cruise missiles as well as systems like multiple-independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs), manoeuvrable re-entry vehicles (MaRVs) and complex hypersonic glide vehicles (HGVs). The missile defence system must therefore encompass hypersonic threat interception capability, including glide phase interceptors (GPI) for intercepting hypersonic missiles and glide vehicles respectively.

Conclusion

India obviously has a keen interest in the Indo-Pacific region owing to its economic and strategic significance. However, strong maritime influence cannot be exerted in



The law of the sea – UNCLOS



(nc) The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is a multilateral treaty that resulted from the third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea (1973-1982). The opening for signature on 10 December 1982, in Montego Bay, Jamaica, marked the culmination of more than 14 years of work involving participation by more than 150 countries representing all regions of the world, all legal and political systems and the spectrum of socio/economic development. The Convention entered into force on 16 November 1994.

UNCLOS lays down a comprehensive regime of law and order in the world’s oceans and seas and establishes rules governing all uses of the oceans and their resources. It embodies traditional rules for the uses of the oceans, however, it introduces at the same time new legal concepts and regimes and addresses new concerns.

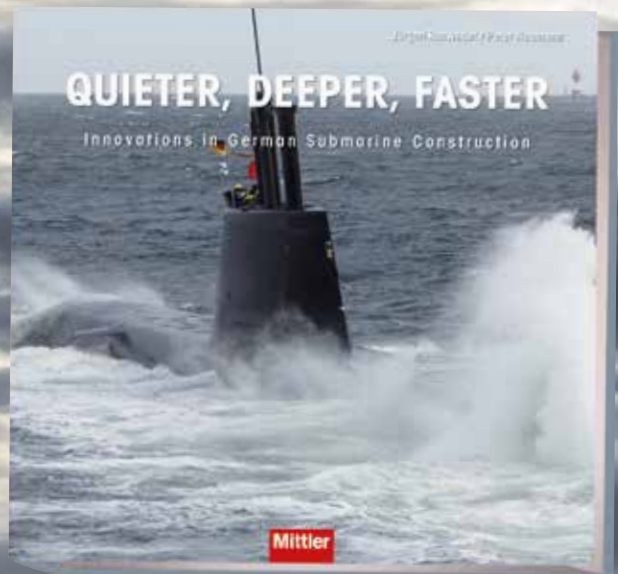
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the region without a credible blue water capability, which means not just possessing it, but also being able to protect and defend it. India therefore needs to focus on maritime missile defence capabilities that could mitigate these challenges and enable New Delhi to become a major player in the Indo-Pacific region.



The principal maritime routes between naval ports in the Indo-Pacific

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Too big a challenge for individual coastal countries

Maritime security in the North and Baltic Sea

by Dr Moritz Brake, independent expert and consultant on maritime security and strategy, Cologne

When on 26 September 2022 the two “North Stream” pipelines exploded, there was a striking lack of awareness of the general situation at sea or under water in the vicinity of the incident. European coastal countries on the North and Baltic Seas knew less about the comings and goings in their maritime backyard than they did about those in the Mediterranean – a partial blindness, which was of little consolation at least to those of the European countries that are also members of NATO. After all, ever since the establishment of an expansive and continuing NATO-led maritime surveillance effort in the Mediterranean in the wake of the international response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, European countries substantially benefitted from the increase in maritime domain awareness that the “Operation Active Endeavour” (OAE) has entailed towards their south.

Benefiting from NATO operations

Judging by what is at stake at sea, the available resources of the European Union (EU) Member States individually are insufficient to address the scope and quality of the maritime security threat posed by Russian hostility. Over 80% of the EU’s energy supply is imported by sea, while a growing share of the domestic energy production is maritime in nature. It comes from offshore wind parks or oil and gas rigs. Also, fishing is more than just a business

“Maritime security is a key element of EU security, a cornerstone of its power in a world of competing great powers, and therefore ultimately indispensable for Europe’s liberty.”

– it feeds people and provides livelihoods. At the same time, the EU economy depends on maritime commerce and data transmitted by undersea cables.

With its comprehensive maritime security approach in the Mediterranean, NATO has become the chief provider of maritime domain awareness and integrated intervention capabilities for Europe’s southern coast. Indeed, ever since NATO set up its much broader maritime security mission “Sea Guardian” to supersede and continue the work of OAE in the Mediterranean in 2016, allied military surveillance and intervention capabilities not only



A German Navy sailor during the NATO exercise BALTOPS 23

provide a comprehensive and multinational integrated resource of maritime awareness, NATO warships in the area can also speedily respond to any criminal, hybrid or military threat to European maritime security.

For a Northern Flank maritime mission

When it comes to the North and Baltic Seas, the so-called Northern Flank of NATO and the EU, no comparable, comprehensive maritime security mission exists – even one year after the attacks on the North Stream pipelines exposed blatant gaps in surveillance and intervention capabilities of the Member States. The role of such a mission is – as OAE and Sea Guardian demonstrate – more than just symbolic.

A Northern Sea Guardian-type EU and/or NATO maritime security mission could:

- pool and coordinate scarce resources across states, working with established shared procedures;
- facilitate the integration of assets from other NATO and EU Member States;
- unify command structures, clearly delegate authority and reliably implement political rules of engagement;
- exercise adapted procedures to make them commonly accepted practice when reaction times need to be short;

- assist in capacity building and training efforts to rapidly expand capabilities;
- provide integrated maritime surveillance;
- establish a long-term database of maritime activity to quickly discern anomalies;
- provide a single point of contact for interconnection with civilian and military member state agencies for information-sharing and security assistance.

Germany – a key NATO coastal state

As an added benefit, concerning Germany, the most powerful EU Member State and key NATO coastal state in the Baltic Sea, a NATO or EU operation would solve the lingering debate about its navy's authority to intervene against non-military threats. The Federal Republic's post-war constitution calls for separating civilian and military security. This creates – at least from the point of view of some political and legal commentators – the paradox that a Russian hybrid, quasi- or para-military threat to maritime security requires a civilian German law-enforcement response. The police, equipped to face criminals, is likely to lack the capabilities to deal with hybrid threats, while the navy – which has the capabilities – lacks the legal authority. To avoid having to rely on courageous last-minute political action to overcome constitutional grey zones, a multi-national mandate could provide a feasible alternative. As proven by over thirty years of deployments – including as a maritime security provider – the Bundeswehr can be employed against non-military threats as part of NATO, EU and UN missions.

Guaranteeing Europe's liberty

Drawing on its strengths and past experience, the EU would greatly benefit from a coordinated maritime presence, a formal EU or NATO operation to provide comprehensive maritime security in the North and Baltic Seas. This would facilitate the cooperation of all Member States, their comprehensive effort including civilian and military capabilities. Furthermore, through such a mission, integration and close coordination with NATO's superior capabilities and information sharing environment could draw on decades of experience. Europe must protect its maritime security. It needs to leverage the full potential of its civilian, military and allied capabilities in order to maintain its competitive edge and preserve the quality of life of its citizens. Maritime security is a key element of EU security, a cornerstone of its power in a world of competing great powers, and therefore ultimately indispensable for Europe's liberty. ■

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is an independent expert and consultant on maritime security and strategy. He is an officer in the reserve of the German navy, serving with the German Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies (GIDS), senior fellow at the Center for Advanced Security, Strategic and Integration Studies (CASSIS) and member of the German Maritime Institute (DMI).

Strategic moves in the High North

The stakes in the Arctic

by Hartmut Bühl, Paris

The Arctic policy of the European Union (EU) has undergone continuous evolution since 2008, focussing for years mainly on the security implications of climate change. The last update of October 2021, mentioning for the first time military security, marks a new strategic orientation, in line with the Green Deal and NATO 2030.

At the same time, a European Parliament report expressed serious concern over the progressive Russian military build-up in the Arctic, which MEPs said exceeded legitimate defensive purposes, and the Chinese attempts to integrate the Arctic's Northern Sea Route into its Belt and Road Initiative – Xi Jinping's 2013 infrastructure development strategy to invest in more than 150 countries and international organisations.



© MoD Russia

Russian submarine in the Arctic

Indeed, Russia's Arctic Strategy (2020-2025) makes it clear that hydrocarbon development, the transformation of the Northern Sea Route as a new global shipping route and the permanent expansion of Russia's military presence in the region triumph over climate goals. However, following the Russian invasion in Ukraine, things became more complicated for Putin, with the Arctic Council (the leading intergovernmental forum for cooperation in the Arctic of which Russia is a member) suspending its cooperation with Russia. Since then, Putin has actively addressed China as a suitable partner to jointly develop the Arctic. For China, collaboration with Russia is both an opportunity and a challenge. With its strategic economic plans to connect its Polar Silk Road to the Northern Sea Route assuring energy and transport of resources, China needs to carefully handle this partnership to avoid being pilloried by other Arctic states.

The west must acknowledge that Russia and China will continue their strategic goals in the region. In response, NATO, with the support of the EU, will need to enhance situational awareness, presence and a deterrence strategy to ensure the Arctic does not become a flashpoint for international conflict. Experts from The Arctic Institute even recommend the creation of a NATO Arctic Command (ARCCOM) as a centre of excellence for reflection and the relevant preeminent authority for NATO operations in the region. ■

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Reinforcing the partnership with the European Union

The Mediterranean – a region striving for stability

Interview with Ambassador Dr John Paul Grech, Deputy Secretary-General,
Social & Civil Affairs, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), Barcelona

Hartmut Bühl: *Ambassador, in June of this year, the high-level conference “Climate Change, Civil Protection and Human Security – towards efficient Euro-Mediterranean cooperation” took place in Rome. The event was the occasion for the launch of a new Mediterranean programme on disaster prevention, preparedness and response, initiated by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO). Could you tell us about the objectives of this programme?*

John Paul Grech: This new phase of the fourth Euro-Mediterranean programme, entitled “Prevention, Preparedness and Response to natural and man-made Disasters” (PPRD Med, see box), is in line with an initiative that begun in 2008, when the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was created. Based on the previous programmes PPRD South I, II and III, the basic target is to increase the resilience to natural and man-made disasters in the southern neighbourhood countries and the whole Mediterranean region, by strengthening the links between all relevant governmental actors and civil society stakeholders as well as the scientific community. Reinforcing cooperation and partnership between the EU and Mediterranean countries in this important area is key.

Nannette Cazaubon: *Ambassador, you are the Deputy Secretary-General of the UfM, an intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organisation bringing together the 27 EU Member States*

and 16 countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean. Could you tell us about the specific role of the UfM in PPRD?

J. P. Grech: The UfM, currently co-chaired by the European Commission and Jordan, acts as a relay and amplifier of the EU’s strategy towards the countries of the south. Nonetheless, the UfM is also developing its own roadmap and an action plan, which builds, among others, on the activities and outcomes of PPRD Med. We form part of the programmes steering committee and bring forward the work results of our regional civil protection dialogue platform, in liaison with DG ECHO. We can safely say that we have established a virtuous circle around the theme of civil protection in the Mediterranean basin.

H. Bühl: *Two other initiatives were launched in parallel in Rome: a multi-country disaster risk landscape study and an external technical on-site assistance (OSA). How do these initiatives complete the PPRD Med programme?*

J. P. Grech: All three new programmes, initiated by DG ECHO and followed in particular by its Unit B1 – International Cooperation, are remarkably complementary. The multi-country study, led by the Italian Dipartimento de la Protezione Civile, lasting 36 months and with a €2.5m budget, will carry out a comprehensive analysis of the disaster risk landscape in the targeted regions to find out where the main national, cross-border, or regional risks are and help identify the capabilities and the gaps in addressing



Ambassador Grech (second from the right) speaking
at the Rome conference, June 2023

them. Furthermore, the study will provide priorities for future actions, programmes and partnerships in the southern and eastern countries benefitting from the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA).

N. Cazaubon: *And the On-Site Assistance (OSA) project?*

J. P. Grech: The third project consists of the contractualisation of a regional expert for the southern countries and one for the eastern neighbourhood.

Both posts are funded by DG ECHO with a total budget of €2.2m for a duration of 36 months.

The main objectives of the OSA are fourfold: firstly, support the partner countries' respective civil protection authorities with on-site technical assistance (meetings, workshops, trainings); secondly, support partner countries in building sustainable capacities for disaster risk prevention, preparedness and response, based on a multi-hazard approach and interactions with the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM); thirdly, strengthen technical cooperation at sub-regional and regional level between all relevant governmental actors and civil society stakeholders as well as the scientific community; and fourthly, enhance technical, institutional and operational cooperation in the southern neighbourhood countries and IPA III beneficiaries under the UCPM.

H. Bühl: *At the Rome conference, the UfM Secretary-General, Nasser Kamel, made a strong statement about climate change in his keynote speech. Does it mean that the UfM is striving for a climate protection flagship programme? Is the UfM planning something similar like the European Union's Green Deal?*

J. P. Grech: The UfM has a mandate that gives it a transversal vision of the themes on which it works with its 43 member countries and the partners of its regional platforms, projects and networks. The division in charge of climate action within the UfM has created a network of experts, the MedECC (Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change), which in November 2020 published a first Mediterranean assessment report entitled: "Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin – Current Situation and Risks for the Future"¹. Civil protection draws on this work to improve the UfM countries' capacities to adapt to the effects of climate change inherent in the southern countries but also already impacting certain European countries. Flash floods, wildfires, palm trees fires, locust invasions or dust storms are just a few recurring examples of climate change effects.

N. Cazaubon: *Indeed, at the time of our interview, fires are raging in Greece, Italy, Algeria and Tunisia. The countries of the southern Mediterranean, including, inter alia, Israel, Jordan, Egypt and Malta, have mobilised to assist Greece.*

J.P. Grech: Right, and in this respect, the UfM fully ensures its important role as a regional space for the exchange and sharing of experiences and good practices on both shores of the Mediter-

anean. We also want to find ways to work towards pooling our capacity response resources, in synergy with the UCPM.

H. Bühl: *Ambassador, what are your expectations ahead of the fourth meeting of the UfM's Directors-General for Civil Protection to be held in on 18-19 October 2023 in Spain, four years after the last edition of February 2019 in Barcelona?*

J. P. Grech: This year will be the first time that this major meeting is being organised back-to-back with the meeting of the Directors-General of the EU Member States and participating states of the UCPM. This constitutes a strong political and operational message that will be held symbolically in Valencia, on the border of the Mediterranean.

My expectation is that the meeting will highlight this Euro-Mediterranean identity, considering its basin as a zone of common and shared risks, with stakes on both sides, north and south.

H. Bühl: *Ambassador, we would like to thank you for this interview.*

 <https://ufmsecretariat.org>

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PPRD Med

(nc) Officially launched in Rome on 6 June 2023, PPRD Med aims to:

1. Build sustainable capacities of partner countries' respective civil protection institutions for disaster risk prevention, preparedness and response to natural and man-made disasters at sub-regional and regional level, not excluding at national level on a case by case basis.
2. Strengthen links between all relevant governmental actors and civil society stakeholders as well as the scientific community, promoting a national inclusive approach to prevention, preparedness and response to natural and man-made disasters.
3. Enhance regional and sub-regional coordination, institutional and operational cooperation between the southern neighbourhood countries and with the UCPM.

PPRD Med is implemented by the International Science and Technology Centre (ISTC). www.istc.int/

The programme involves 10 countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia, for a period of 36 months, availing themselves of a €3m budget.

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/3db4pvsk>

Guest commentary

Towards a Black Sea security regime?

by Professor Ioan Mircea Paşcu,

former Defence Minister of Romania/former Vice-President of the European Parliament, Bucharest



“The Black Sea is an essentially closed body of water in a region that hosts confluent trade routes but also conflicting strategic interests among Europe, Eurasia, the Middle East and North Africa” (Nick Childes)¹

Russia, which, through the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, acquired a position of control in the Black Sea, now fights to close all access to the sea for Ukraine, attempting to transform it into a landlocked country. However, for that, Russia needs a land offensive towards Odessa, supported by a maritime landing near it, which cannot be achieved due to the defensive posture the Russian navy has adopted, following the significant losses at sea suffered during the war. However, the Russian navy can still enforce a blockade on Ukrainian trade, with only cereals being allowed through, following an arrangement mediated by Türkiye and the UN, which needs periodic renewal. In the meantime, Russia cancelled its participation and the deal is dead.

“The perspective opened by the exploitation of large deposits of natural gas underlines the need for a Black Sea security regime after the current war is over.”

Although war is dominating the landscape in the Black Sea, the need for export of Ukrainian cereals, already mentioned, and especially the discovery of large natural gas deposits in the area, underscore the salience of the economic dimension, which cannot be discarded even in time of war. Türkiye has found deposits of 700bn cubic meters, worth \$500bn, and Romania

deposits of 200bn cubic meters, covering 90% of the country’s consumption at a rate of 1 billion cubic meters/year.² Practically, Romania’s energy needs – at current consumption – would be covered for the next 19 years, marking the country’s complete energy independence, especially from Russia.

The exploitation of those deposits – requiring important investments, now attracted and facilitated by the changes to the relevant law operated by the Romanian authorities – would begin in earnest around 2026, breaking the Russian embargo, which has excluded Romania from all gas and oil transport projects crossing the area since early 1990s.

The perspective opened by the exploitation of such large deposits of natural gas underlines the need for a Black Sea security regime after the current war is over. Both economic, commercial, environmental and security aspects will have to be addressed, so that the Black Sea can accommodate all interests, allowing for the full exploitation of its potential.

Much of such a regime will be influenced by the current regulation of the Montreux Convention of 1936, which Türkiye adamantly defends because it recognises its control of transit in and out of the Black Sea. Besides, that future Black Sea regime will also have to take into account, on the one hand, Türkiye’s decision to develop a man-made channel of 45 km, which will run parallel to the Bosphorus (outside of the Montreux Convention) whose regulation will thus be left entirely to Türkiye’s authorities and, on the other, the Danube River as the other gate – often underestimated – to the Black Sea, recently underlined by Russia’s attacks against Ukrainian Danubian ports of Izmail and Reni.

In conclusion, although “long considered a side-show, the Black Sea, therefore must now be central to EU and NATO strategy”³, as a major step towards establishing such a regime.⁴

1 Nick Childes, “The Black Sea in the Shadow of War”, *Survival*, vol 65 no 3, June – July 2023, p 25.

2 The Romanian deposits are situated 120 km from the shore at a depth of 70 metres.

3 Sven Biscop “War for Ukraine and the Rediscovery of Geopolitics”, *Egmont Paper* 123, June 2023, p.4

4 If history is an indicator, Britain, France, Sardinia and Türkiye have been able to impose a special regime for the Danube, comprising the Black Sea Straits, creating the maritime Danube section, when Russia – defeated in the Crimean War of 1853-1856 – had been pushed northwards from the Danube River.



Security and Defence

Afer three decades of western disarmament, lulled by the illusion that Russia could be a security partner, NATO and the European Union (EU) are forced to return to a robust defence structure on their eastern and northern flank. Yet, the question arises whether EU Member States are ready to use the full potential of the existing instruments developed under the Common Security and Defence Policy, and if they are fully committed to putting theory into action when it comes to joint armament cooperation.



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Far from being used as a strategic Policy element

Force projection to Africa

by Luke Hally, founding Director of
Terra Nova Consultancy, Brussels

French soldiers participating in the Mali military operation Barkhane (2014-2022)

The European Peace Facility (EPF) plays a significant role in Africa by supporting continental security initiatives. As an instrument of the European Union (EU), the EPF finances armament and operational support for security actions, including peacekeeping operations. It aims to enhance the EU's ability to address security challenges and promote stability in Africa, particularly in unstable regions. The EPF facilitates the provision of equipment, training, and logistical assistance to African partners, strengthening their ability to respond to security threats. Force projection, the deployment of military capabilities to achieve political objectives, also plays a role in stabilising the African continent. Despite the EU's geopolitical interests in Africa, there are limitations to the EPF's effectiveness in complementing African security preservation. An elucidation of effective reform can be highlighted in assessing these challenges.

The challenges of force projection

Within the context of EU policy, force projection safeguards European interests, promotes stability, and contributes to international security. In Africa, force projection holds relevance for the EU due to the continent's strategic importance, security chal-

lenges, and economic opportunities. By projecting force, the EU aims to address conflicts, counter terrorism, protect trade routes, and enhance its regional influence. However, force projection must be implemented within a framework of cooperation, adherence to international law, and respect for the sovereignty of African nations.

The EPF is a key instrument in financing military operations under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and supporting the African Union's Peace Support Operations. It can also provide military and defence assistance to partner countries beyond Africa, helping regions facing security challenges. Additionally, it can equip partners with military equipment, ensuring compliance with human rights and International Humanitarian Law. By enhancing the EU's ability to project force, the EPF aims to complement strategic effectiveness in Africa.

As a strategic element of EU policy, force projection to Africa faces numerous challenges, obligations, and limitations. First, political hurdles within the EU, such as diverging national interests and lengthy decision-making processes, hinder effective coordination and cooperation. This lack of unity undermines the EU's ability to project a coherent force. Second, rules of engagement limit the extent to which force can be deployed, particu-

larly concerning respect for human rights, international law, and the principle of non-interference in sovereign nations' affairs. Third, African nations often resist external military intervention due to historical legacies, concerns over neo-colonialism, and a desire to maintain autonomy in resolving conflicts. These challenges have led to third-party gains within Africa.

EU regional gains usurped by Russia

Russian threats to EU influence have involved private military corporations such as Wagner PMC, who have gained strategic prominence by engaging in security operations for African clients and not being beholden to the challenges and obligations of EU operations. Wagner's entry into Africa has been controversial, conducting covert operations, human rights violations, regional destabilisation, and backing autocratic regimes. They

“By adopting a comprehensive cooperative approach and addressing conflict causes, the EU can enhance its role in promoting peace, stability, and development in Africa.”

compete for contracts with their experience, networks, and combat effectiveness. Furthermore, its legal and privatised nature has allowed the group to rapidly usurp EU regional gains and strategic objectives, such as in Mali, Chad, Sudan, and Burkina Faso. Wagner's presence has since expanded to 19 African nations. Wagner also operates a mining company, Midas, which receives concessions for security support, solidifying its strategic position in Africa. With the release and cooperation of arms dealer Viktor Bout, they will be able to access a substantial supply of Russian weaponry, increasing interoperability and formidability. This influence risks establishing an African alliance counter to EU strategic interests.

Mixed results for the EPF's implementation

The EPF's effectiveness in utilising force projection as a strategic element of EU policy requires careful evaluation. Assessing the EPF's implementation and outcomes reveals mixed results. While the EPF has facilitated some successful force projection operations in Africa, challenges persist. For instance, the EPF's fragmented funding mechanisms and reliance on voluntary contributions limit its sustainable impact. Furthermore, the EPF's focus on military solutions can overshadow the importance of addressing underlying socio-economic and political factors contributing to conflicts. Additionally, the EPF's limited focus on capacity building and long-term institutional strengthening in African partner countries may undermine security sustainability. Further aligning with European operations in Africa, such as the prior Operation Barkhane, would improve the versatility and

long-term objectives of the EPF. Ensuring training, operations, and equipment align with Member States' strategic engagement will ensure a symbiotic reinforcement of objectives for the states involved and the EPF. Increased interoperability could have alleviated the strategic pitfalls of French operations in the Sahel. Additionally, EPF alignment can benefit new strategic approaches such as SQF-MILOF (Sectoral Qualification Framework for the Military Officer Profession).

The EU needs a holistic approach

Several critiques and approaches to force projection in Africa can be identified. The EPF's approach is predominantly militaristic, neglecting the effective oversight of multidimensional security approaches, conflict prevention, and due diligence of lessons learned. A holistic approach that integrates interoperability, security governance, and human rights dimensions is essential. Alternative strategies for EPF engagement in Africa's security challenges include greater emphasis on regional integration, further support for African-led peacekeeping initiatives, and investing in long-term conflict prevention. Additionally, fostering stronger partnerships with African states and respecting their leadership and decision-making processes can enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of force projection efforts. Force projection to Africa remains distant as a strategic element of EU policy. The EPF's limitations and criticisms highlight the need for improved strategies and policy adjustments. By adopting a comprehensive cooperative approach and addressing conflict causes, the EU can enhance its role in promoting peace, stability, and development in Africa. ■



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Soldiers of the multinational Eurocorps in Strasbourg

Thinking and defending our Europe together

On the effectiveness of the European Union in matters of defence

by Jacques Favin Lévêque, General ret., Versailles

Despite nearly three decades of a slow and timid rise in power, the reality of European defence is modest and the result does not live up to the ambition of a major geopolitical player, which the European Union (EU) claims to be, but always with its inescapable dependence on the United States in matters of security. However, the situation is not hopeless.

Two ways to get out of dependencies

The first track consists in following with interest, but above all with patience and realism, the initiative now launched by the European Parliament to revise the treaties on which the political and legal reality of the EU is based. In particular, this could lead to the abolition of the European Council's veto in decision-making and an increase in the competence of the Union in matters of defence. This would improve efficiency and speed of intervention.

The second track consists in starting from the current institutions of the EU and the possibilities they offer in terms of defence. In

fact, firstly, we could deepen the conditions for the implementation of article 42-7 of the Treaty on European Union when a Member State feels the need to use it to deal with a threat of military nature. The EU Military Staff (EUMS) could specify the modalities of the intervention of the Member States within the framework of article 42-7.

This would also be an opportunity to address the difficult question of caveats. Indeed, each of the Member States that agrees to commit forces to an EU defence operation specifies the conditions under which its men and women can be called upon. These caveats should be the subject, if not of a pure and simple abolition, at least of the adoption of a level of risk accepted by mutual agreement. For a large number of countries, this question arises from political positions in which national parliaments play a restrictive role. The French model, which gives its president the right to engage the armed forces without consulting parliament, is in fact the exception, and many within the Union have much less freedom of action in the use of armed force.

Options for pushing European capacities

Force generation

As soon as the EU decides to carry out a military operation under its responsibility, it would be appropriate to simplify and accelerate the force generation process at the level of the EU military headquarters. Rather than composing the intervention force by successive iterations, it would be faster to take as a starting point the Rapid Action Force of 5,000 men and women, provided for by the Strategic Compass, even if it means adapting it to the specific needs of the operation.

Harmonisation of operational demands

The schedule for equipping the forces is largely the responsibility of the European Defence Agency (EDA) under the responsibility of the ministers of defence, but it involves co-ordination with the EUMS as well as with the national armament directors and the national parliaments. The definition of joint armament programmes and the timetables for their entry into service stem from an analysis of the threats that the EUMS should undertake, in particular on the basis of the Strategic Compass. The modes of acquisition of these weapon systems could be simplified, drawing inspiration, for example, from the group purchasing procedure, tested during the Ukrainian conflict. The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) opens up prospects for carrying out joint programmes or simplifying procedures that have not been sufficiently exploited to meet the most critical needs.

Size the General Staff to the needs

The rise in power of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) remains slow and modest. A European Union General Staff must now be sized, both in terms of personnel and functional premises, commensurate with the Union's international responsibilities, without however aiming for a European "NATO shape". It must, in particular, be able to assume the fullness of the functions of an Operational Staff: planning, plan of operation, command and control.

Use existing structures

This is particularly the case of the Eurocorps, the Franco-German Brigade, the EUROMARFOR Naval Force, the European Air Transport Command (EATC), or the European Union Satellite Centre (EU SatCen) in Torrejon:

- The Eurocorps should regain its initial objective of containing large units, armoured or mechanised divisions, in other words find again its original dimension as an operational army corps of 60,000 people, when it is now only a staff without troops. The decision-making power of its employment, which currently rests with the 6 participating countries (France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Luxembourg, and since 2022, Poland) and which does

not depend on the European Union bodies, should be transferred to the European Council.

- The Franco-German Brigade should be made available to the EU so that it can be engaged as such in EU operations.
- In the maritime field, EUROMARFOR brings together France, Italy, Spain and Portugal to set up a common naval force. We could make this operational structure permanent and again transfer the decision to use this naval force at the EU level.
- In the field of military air transport, the EATC is a particularly eloquent example of the effectiveness of pooling the air transport fleets of seven Member States (Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Spain and Italy) and already constitutes a valuable defence tool available to the Union.
- It is the same with the Torrejon Satellite Center whose services are valuable to the EU both for geostrategic analysis and for EU operational commitments.

“It only depends on the political will to apply in practice what the European institutions allow in their current state.”

Conclusion

There is a lot to be done to optimise the current means of the EU in terms of defence. The implementation of the necessary measures in terms of personnel and equipment and an optimisation of the existing means are perfectly possible in the short term. It only depends on the political will to apply in practice what the European institutions allow in their current state. Some of these measures involve a more pronounced sharing of competences and we can well understand the reluctance of Member States to lose a little of their sovereignty. Nevertheless, Europeans expressed themselves clearly in the report of the Conference on the Future of Europe, so it is up to European and national decision-makers to fulfill their obligations vis-à-vis our future! ■

It only depends on the political will to apply in practice what the European institutions allow in their current state. Some of these measures involve a more pronounced sharing of competences and we can well understand the reluctance of Member States to lose a little of their sovereignty. Nevertheless, Europeans expressed themselves clearly in the report of the Conference on the Future of Europe, so it is up to European and national decision-makers to fulfill their obligations vis-à-vis our future! ■

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is a member of EuroDéfense-France. After graduating from “École Polytechnique”, he chose a career in arms and served during the cold war in the French forces in Germany and at the General Staff of the Army in Paris, then at the General Delegation for Armaments (DGA). He managed the “Groupement des Industriels de l’Armement Terrestre” (GIAT) from 1993 to 2003. Campaigning

for a Europe capable of assuming its own defence, he launched a message of hope to young people in his latest book entitled *Grand-père, c’est quoi l’Europe? (Grandfather, what’s Europe?)*

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A view from the German industry perspective

The stakes in the European armament cooperation arena

Conversation between Dr Hans-Christoph Atzpodien, Managing Director of the Federation of German Security and Defence Industries (BDSV), Berlin and Hartmut Bühl, Paris

At the end of July, I met with Dr Hans-Christoph Atzpodien, Managing Director of the Federation of German Security and Defence Industries (BDSV) in Hamburg to talk about Germany's current security policy and armament orientations and European armament strategies, political choices, and international competition.

Germany's security and defence policy

We first agreed on the cornerstones of Germany's security and defence policy: firstly, national and alliance defence within NATO remains the core task of the Bundeswehr. The German armament industry must bear this in mind while observing the European Union's (EU) influence in this area. Secondly, the focus for the armed forces is on leadership improvement by innovation and digitalisation, with interoperability as a main objective. Thirdly, Germany gained new weight in the EU and NATO after Chancellor Scholz announced the "Zeitenwende" (turning point) in February 2022, with a €100bn special fund to prepare the Bundeswehr for action. Finally, we agreed that Germany's armament industry will continue its crucial role for the Bundeswehr as a premium customer.

The BDSV, bringing together the voices of 230 members – Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) – and bundling their internal and external supplier's interest, plays a major role in this field. "We as a lobbying platform care about our members not only in the overarching approach for Europe, but also in specific matters like sustainability and raw materials", Dr Atzpodien explained.

Lacking an industrial policy strategy

I noted that Germany, in contrast to France, Great Britain, Italy, Spain or Sweden, is still missing an industrial policy strategy, making it difficult for the German armament enterprises to follow a strategic line. Dr Atzpodien confirmed that "we need a German armament policy that particularly protects and consequently strengthens industry's strategic core capabilities. Political decision-makers should turn to the highly qualified German products and developments all over the armament sectors and their reliable availability". In his view, Germany started protecting much too late key industrial defence technologies, however, he expressed the feeling that the new Federal Defence Minister Boris Pistorius is moving in

the right direction. "Still in many areas the strategic profile for us as industry could be clearer, but overall, we seem to be on the right track!", he affirmed.

European armament cooperation

I confronted my interlocutor with the statement that European allies find it difficult to tackle joint armament projects with Germany, because too many hindering regulations prevent industries from reacting flexibly and quickly. He confirmed that "we are still missing a clear and consistent strategic direction for our industrial policy towards Europe. How else could one explain that of the 61 first-wave projects of the European Defence Fund (EDF), Germany only has the lead in three of them (while France is leading 17 and Spain 15)?" He added that certain specificities like Germany's unpredictable export control policy are far away from a European harmonisation and "does not recommend German companies for European cooperation schemes."

We then discussed the European Defence Agency's (EDA) supposed leading role in armament cooperation. On this, Dr Atzpodien was clear: "the EDA has an analysis and coordination function, though the EU doesn't really have a mandate to create its own capabilities. It must leave this field to NATO and its members." Here, the EU should assist and support, even with money from the EDF, "but not lead", he added.

The EU – a sea power?

We then addressed European naval armament in times of fragile stability in the Indo-Pacific. I noted that maritime capabilities are at the centre of strategic considerations; China is reaching out for influence and hegemony and making its way island by island in the western Pacific; the US, Japan, Australia and Europe are trying to contain this development by rearmament and a diversification strategy in trade. We spoke about the importance of reliably available maritime transport capacities, freely accessible transport routes and ports and a naval sea power, as it is promoted in the European Maritime Strategy. Dr Atzpodien stated that "Europe is well positioned in terms of maritime competencies in individual countries, having the most modern maritime technologies on the continent and can be seen as a global maritime actor, but the EU in itself has, of course, no stakes as a genuine maritime actor".

Competitive European shipyards

My interlocutor mentioned the example of surface vessels, saying that in Europe there are several powerful competitors such as Naval Group (France), Navantia (Spain), Fincantieri (Italy), Damen (the Netherlands), tkMS and NVL/Lürssen (Germany) but also SAAB (Sweden) – all oriented towards the global market. These countries generally use frigate or corvette programmes to strengthen the competitiveness of their shipbuilding industry, even more so when the state is directly or indirectly involved. Dr Atzpodien was bitter about the fact that Germany has not awarded its largest frigate order ever placed to the German shipyards. "Something like this wouldn't have been conceivable in any other country, a remarkable carelessness towards its own naval industry", he commented.

“We are still missing a clear and consistent strategic direction for our industrial policy towards Europe.”

When we were switching to the conventional undersea sector, he argued that the prospects for harmonisation in the submarine landscape appear to be far better than in the field of surface vessels. "We already have a broad family of users of German submarines in Europe and NATO (Germany, Norway, Italy, Greece, Portugal and Türkiye), which should trigger the political reflection that new European demands for conventional submarines – like in the Netherlands and Poland – might also be satisfied with German submarines in order to reach the frequently desired harmonisation." Dr Atzpodien feared that the Federal Government's reluctance in promoting German submarines more vividly in such projects would end up reducing their industrial strength even in areas where Germany has claimed its own key sovereign technology strongholds.

European land, air and space industries

I did not want to leave out the subject of land, air and space. Dr Atzpodien outlined that, for land, the most pressing issue is to generate European user families for the well-known German products to keep Korean competitors in clear distance. In the air and space domain "the procurement by the German government of the American F-35 fighter jet and Chinook helicopter has so far been digested as a somewhat painful fact but needs to trigger more local content in terms of manufacturing and especially maintenance, so that our Bundeswehr as the client always is in full operational control of the devices", Dr Atzpodien highlighted. Procurement from outside the EU, and in particular Korean products breaking into the EU market with big numbers, "can end up as strategic risks for German defence industrial core competencies", he feared.

Conclusion

Summing up our conversation, Dr Atzpodien took the view that the secret for any successful path towards true European armament cooperation must firstly be initiated by the military users and the procuring governments, and not by participating suppliers. "Governments need to clearly define their priorities regarding both their sovereign technology demands as well as their industrial interests." Regarding Germany, he added: "the 100% privately owned German defence industry has to sustain itself with the helpful support of BDSV but in full competition, while other nations subsidise or support their defence companies strongly." ■



Dr Hans-Christoph Atzpodien (right) and Hartmut Bühl in Hamburg, July 2023



Industry is an essential part of the solution

Cybersecurity is a societal problem

by Mo Cashman, EMEA Field CTO, Trellix, The Hague

The World Economic Forum identified cybercrime and cyber “insecurity” as two of the key risks contributing to the current world polycrisis. Cyberattack capability has created an inversion of power, allowing criminals, nation-state actors or even small groups to have a much greater disruptive influence across all aspects of society from consumer to business to government services.

Cyber threats – new trends

This threat has been growing exponentially for several years but most recently we have seen some disturbing new trends. First, the use of “Ransomware” as an effective way to disrupt critical infrastructure and government operations. The G7 identified Ransomware as a national threat and called on nations to do more to combat criminal cyber gangs operating

“Cooperation between security industry peers and government agencies has been very successful in reducing the risk of cybercrime across the globe.”

“Ransomware As A Service” networks. These networks operate across international borders and have political as well as financial motivations. Another key attack trend is nation-state actors aiming to compromise corporate supply chains. Companies have a diverse supply chain spanning Information Technology (IT), Operational Technology (OT), Cloud, and other external service or product suppliers. At-

tackers using trusted supply chain connections are particularly difficult to detect initially. Within the last few years, attackers have exploited IT management software to gain entry to thousands of businesses as well as government agencies globally. In the face of this polycrisis, what role can the security industry play to increase societal and organisational resilience?

A Zero Trust based security architecture

Zero Trust is a security architecture design principle that all companies, especially cybersecurity companies, should adopt as their goal. The Special Report of the US National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) defines Zero Trust as an evolving set of cybersecurity paradigms that moves defence from static, network-based perimeters to focus on users, assets and resources. Zero Trust requires that no implicit trust be granted to assets based solely on their physical or network segment. A Zero Trust based security architecture works together with other assurance practices such as business continuity and information protection to produce a resilient organisation. Cybersecurity companies are part of the trusted supply chain in all organisations. Security software requires constant updates from and data exchange with a security vendor's network. As such they are primary supply chain targets for cybercriminals. Companies producing security solutions must adopt Zero Trust as an architecture strategy to ensure better protection for their software and management systems.

Industrial security – a shared responsibility

The convergence of enterprise IT Networks with OT systems increases the risk of cyber-attacks on critical industrial operations systems. This convergence presents a unique challenge for the Enterprise Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) given the different stakeholders and systems involved in securing operational technology systems and networks. Questions arise such as:

- Who is responsible for implementing security controls?
- What security controls are validated to run on supplier systems?
- How does the Security Information Centre (SOC) monitor OT systems?
- What is our response plan for incidents involving supplier-managed systems?

It is important to determine the roles and responsibilities for incident response before a security breach! To solve these issues, we need to treat OT networks as part of the enterprise security architecture and not a separate environment. We also need to

Mo Cashman



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Further Information

Global Risks Report 2023:	https://tinyurl.com/4827vwxz
NIST Special Publication:	https://tinyurl.com/4vudyxxu
No more Ransom portal:	www.nomoreransom.org
Cyber Threat Alliance:	www.cyberthreatalliance.org
White House Order on Cybersecurity:	https://tinyurl.com/44khn5c2

develop a common shared responsibility model for OT security. We are very familiar with the shared responsibility model when it comes to securing cloud platforms. In the early days of cloud adoption, there was confusion as to what level of security was provided by the service provider. The cloud shared responsibility model defined the security responsibilities between the organisation and cloud service providers. We need the same type of model for securing OT systems and networks. These systems underpin critical national infrastructure; ensuring their security requires cooperation between the business, security vendors and the manufacturer of the specific technology. By establishing such a model, we can improve resilience of the business as well as critical infrastructure services that power society.

Industry-government cooperation

Cooperation between security industry peers and government agencies has been very successful in reducing the risk of cybercrime across the globe. I think one of the best examples of collaboration between public and private organisations is "nomoreransom.org". This initiative was established between Law Enforcement agencies and IT security companies over 6 years ago with 4 founding partners. It has since expanded to include over 150 public and private entities and is credited with saving organisations an estimated \$900 million. Additionally, the Cyber Threat Alliance is a great example of cross-industry collaboration. Having the right threat intelligence is critical to defending against cyber criminals and nation-state actors which is why threat intelligence sharing was a key pillar of the White House's Executive Order on Improving the Nation's Cyber Security. The Cyber Threat Alliance is a cross-industry consortium which shares about 6 million threat indicators between members and partners every month. These are shining examples of ideal public-private initiatives that have made a positive impact on reducing the risk of cybercrime over the last decade.

This type of cooperation must now expand to tackle emerging security challenges with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and resulting new technologies. The cybersecurity industry should adopt AI to tackle complex security challenges and empower analysts. It also needs to develop new security controls to protect AI-enabled technologies and data from exploitation.

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