



Combating Piracy and Maritime Terrorism – A Common Challenge for Europe and Asia

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Abstract

In his paper the author will introduce and give reasons for three theses:

Firstly: The identification of core interests of the international community of states can be the basis for joint anti-piracy and anti-terrorism measures.

Secondly: The threat situation caused by piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Indian Ocean will remain particularly tense in the foreseeable future; in the field of maritime terrorism in general we still have to be prepared for worldwide terror attacks.

Thirdly: The fight against piracy and maritime terrorism will continue to be successful only if we adopt the strategy of a “comprehensive approach”.

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ANALYSIS

Thesis 1

“The identification of core interests of the international community of states can be the basis for joint anti-piracy and anti-terrorism measures.”

Regarding the identification of core interests, the importance of the seas should receive attention by the European Union, as Georgios S. Koumoutsakos MEP expressed in an article for the magazine *The European – Security and Defence Union*. He writes: “Europe is a maritime continent having a 70,000 km coastline and being surrounded by two oceans and four seas. 90 percent of the Union’s external trade and over 40 percent of its domestic trade is transported by sea. Given that approximately 350,000 people work in ports and related services, together generating an added value of about €20 bn, it is clear that Europe’s well-being is inextricably linked with the sea”.¹

Also in the preface of the book “Maritime Strategies in Asia”, Volker Schlegel, the former ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Singapore from 1999 to 2002, writes: „Trade is one of the major cornerstones of our cooperation, and its importance will keep growing. Maintaining the steady flow of the energy, an indispensable prerequisite for steady economic growth, will be equally important. In this context, secure ways of transport on sea-lanes, free from piracy and territorial disputes, are of utmost significance. Maritime transport is still one of the major lifelines of trade. It is vital for every coastal country to adopt a maritime strategy: freedom of maritime activities is one of the cornerstones of prosperity for almost every nation”.²

A glance at the Defence Policy Guidelines of the German Ministry of Defence in May 2011 reveals one of the core interests of the Federal Republic of Germany: “Free trade routes and secure natural resources are crucial for the future of Germany and Europe. Around the globe, changes are taking place in markets, channels of distribution and the ways in which natural resources are developed, secured and accessed. The scarcity of energy sources and other raw materials required for high-technology products will have implications for the international community. Restricted access can trigger conflicts. Disruption of transport routes and the flow of raw materials and commodities, e.g. by piracy or sabotage of air transport, pose a threat to security and prosperity. This is why transport and energy security and related issues will play an increasingly important role for our security.”³

Looking to the Asia-Pacific region the Carnegie-Tsinghua Center and the Institute for Asia-Pacific Studies hosted a joint conference on East Asia maritime issues in 2011. Admiral Yang Yi (ret.) of the Chinese navy emphasized that, due to their common reliance on foreign trade, China shares the U.S. and Japanese interest in keeping the sea lines of communication open.

¹ Georgios S. Koumoutsakos MEP, “The EU’s Integrated Maritime Policy – steps forward”, *The European – Security and Defence Union*, vol. 12, (1/2012), 40-1.

² Jürgen Schwarz, Wilfried A. Herrmann and Hanns-Frank Seller, *Maritime Strategies in Asia* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2002), 13.

³ German Ministry of Defence, *Defence Policy Guidelines* (May 18, 2011), 3-4.



Admiral Yang also stated that China prefers to begin cooperation by resolving strategic issues and the United States by resolving details and that this may obstruct cooperation between the two countries.⁴

In this conference it became clear that Chinese and U.S. interests are obviously on the same line as far as piracy, humanitarian assistance, disaster response, and counter-proliferation are concerned, and for these reasons there should be ample opportunities for cooperation in these areas.⁵ But on the other hand, if we have a look at the diverging interests in the South China Sea, it becomes quite obvious that a lot of work has still to be done.

Also interesting is the statement of General Xiong Guangkai at a conference of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in September 2011 in Beijing: "Regarding the international security escort activities for ships, the Chinese Army has sent nine units with more than 7,600 navy officers and soldiers for operation in Somali territorial waters which have escorted more than 4,000 Chinese and foreign trading ships until mid of September 2011."⁶

These statements show identical interests and necessary common acting regarding the fight against piracy and maritime terrorism, as I will explain this later using the example of the *Operation Atalanta*.

Maritime terrorism, like all forms of terrorism, has mostly a political, ideological or religious background. Terrorists will therefore ask themselves where they can hit the infrastructure of the industrialized world most effectively. They may focus their attention on so called *choke points* and mega-harbors, with 75 percent of all international sea transport activities carried out by around 50,000 ships using 2,800 ports. The strategically important Strait of Malacca is one of the critical choke points. It connects the Indian Ocean with the South China Sea and the Pacific. It is the most significant trade route between the Far East, the Gulf States and Europe. 90,000 ships use the Strait every year and one third of the world trade, 80 percent of oil exports to East Asia and two thirds of LNG exports pass through the Strait of Malacca.

Should a super tanker be sunk in the Strait of Malacca it would block all traffic, and ships would have to use the Indonesian Sunda and Flores passage. This would result in a detour of at least 1,000 km and two extra days at sea. The resulting costs would increase to approximately \$8 bn per year.

As the largest ports of the world are in South and East Asia, terrorists will focus their planning on ports such as Kobe, Tokyo, Yokohama, Pusan, Shanghai, Kaohsiung, Hong Kong and Singapore. But also mega ports in the United States and Europe, such as Los Angeles and Rotterdam, could be in the focus of terrorists.⁷

A number of successful maritime attacks demonstrate the intentions of terrorists:

- **October 2000**

A successful attack was carried out against the U.S. destroyer USS Cole in Yemen. 17 U.S. Sailors were killed, 39 wounded.⁸

⁴ *Maritime Strategy: Security and Governance – China's Rise and Its Maritime Strategy*. Conference of the Carnegie-Tsinghua Center and the Institute for Asia Pacific Studies, May 26-27, 2011, Shanghai, <http://carnegietsinghua.org/events/?fa=3558>.

⁵ Ibid, 2.

⁶ Guangkai Xiong, „Chinas Sicherheitsbegriff, Internationale Sicherheitsarchitektur – Europäische und Chinesische Perspektiven“, *KAS Schriftenreihe China*, No. 101 (ch/de) (Beijing 2012), 61-3.

⁷ Peter Roell, "Seepiraterie in Südostasien", in: Sicherheit + Stabilität, *Bundesakademie für Sicherheitspolitik (BAKS)*, (Berlin: Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2004), 27-44.



- **October 2002**

The French oil tanker *Limburg* was attacked off Ash Shahir by a terrorist group with connections to Al Qaida. One member of the crew was killed and 90,000 tons of oil spilled into the Gulf of Aden. The monthly container traffic in Yemen shrank from 43,000 to 3,000. The economy of the country declined by one per cent of its GDP and 3,000 dockworkers lost their job.⁹

- **February 2004**

The Abu Sayyaf Group attacked a ferry in the Philippines, 116 people lost their lives.¹⁰

- **July 2010**

A suicide attack was carried out by the Abdullah Azzam Brigade against the Japanese oil tanker *M. Star* in the Strait of Hormuz, a militant group with connections to Al Qaeda. One member of the crew was injured and the hull severely damaged.¹¹

Blown up container ships could block harbors for weeks – quite apart from an attack in one of the mega harbors with a so-called dirty bomb. A closure of the Singapore harbor for example would cost more than \$200 bn per year. Also the terrorist attack of a fully loaded gas tanker in one of the mega harbors would have a devastating effect on the world trade and provide terrorists with an event comparable to 9/11 – one of their stated goals.¹²

To combat maritime terrorism the Container Security Initiative (CSI), initiated by the United States in 2002, is very helpful. The aim of this program is to identify – out of the 230 million containers transported by sea every year – those containers with weapons of mass destruction or dangerous nuclear substances, which could be used by terrorists for their attacks.¹³

Also, in cooperation with state organizations and industry, technical means are used for the protection against potential terror attacks. Scanning systems for large-size containers, the use of Long-Range Acoustic Devices (LRAD), special anti-boarding systems, such as 9,000-Volt-protective-fences for merchant ships making the boarding for pirates or terrorists more difficult, are just a few examples. Unmanned “inventus systems” with cameras are capable of searching large ocean areas and transmit data to a ship or a ground station.¹⁴

In conclusion we can say that world trade is potentially threatened by maritime terrorism and piracy. This includes Asia and Europe. Any kind of cooperation in this field would be well founded and could be the basis for anti-terrorism measures but also for joint anti-piracy missions.

⁸ Attack on the USS Cole, <http://www.al-bab.com/yemen/cole1.htm> [April 15, 2012].

⁹ “Yemen says tanker blast was terrorism”, *BBC News World Edition*, Oct. 16, 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2334865.stm [March 5, 2013].

¹⁰ *2004 SuperFerry 14 bombing*, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004_SuperFerry_14_bombing [March 5, 2013].

¹¹ “UAE confirms oil tanker attack”, *Al Jazeera*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2010/09/20108683953783853.html> [March 5, 2013].

¹² Peter Roell, “Maritime Security: New Challenges for Asia in Europe”, Institute for Strategic, Political, Security and Economic Consultancy (ISPSW) Berlin, *ISPSW Strategic Series, Issue No. 167* (November 2011), 7, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=134578> [March 5, 2013].

¹³ *Container Security Initiative*, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Container_Security_Initiative [March 5, 2013].

¹⁴ Roell, “Maritime Security”, 7.



There are many reasons to believe that also in the future we will have to expect maritime attacks of the kind, not limited to special regions but on a worldwide scale. There is no reliable information that Islamist terror groups, structured and institutionalized, cooperate with pirates in Somalia, although occasionally a few indications for such a cooperation seem to pop up.

Thesis 2

“The threat situation by piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Indian Ocean will remain particularly tense in the foreseeable future; in the field of maritime terrorism we have also to be prepared for worldwide terror attacks.”

In the last couple of years the good cooperation between Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia has successfully combated piracy in the region. Piracy once rampant has been largely exterminated because the littoral states have themselves stepped up their anti-piracy efforts. These efforts include the “Eye in the Sky” and Malacca Strait Patrols involving coordinated and sometimes joint Indonesian, Malaysia, Singaporean as well as Thai air and sea surveillance and considerable information exchange. They have also invited cooperation from outside powers such as India, the United States and Japan.¹⁵

In contrast to that is the situation off the coast of Somalia. According to a report of 19 January 2012 by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Maritime Bureau (IMB), the greatest threat for international shipping still comes from activities of Somali pirates.¹⁶

The total number of incidents has increased from 219 in 2010 to 237 in 2011. In contrast, however, the number of hijackings declined in the same period from 49 to 28.¹⁷ The main reasons for this improvement were naval activities of a number of nations and improved security measures taken by shipping companies. There has not been a single case reported of a ship carrying armed contractors being hijacked. Pirate activities contracted also considerably along the Indian coast because last year the Indian navy increased their patrols, enhanced surveillance and joint patrols.

Most of the attacks took place at the crossroads of the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden. For the first time, however, Somali pirates attacked an anchored vessel in Omani waters.¹⁸ This shows that the security of ships at harbors in the region needs to be improved.

On 30 August 2012 the ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB) made an update and reported for worldwide incidents and for Somalia for piracy and armed robbery the following figures:¹⁹

¹⁵ Mark J. Valencia and Nazery Khalid, “The Somalia Multilateral Anti-Piracy Approach: Caveats on Vigilantism”, *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* (2009), http://www.japanfocus.org/-Mark_J_-Valencia/3052 [March 5, 2013].

¹⁶ ICC Commercial Crime Services, *Piracy attacks in East and West Africa dominate world report*, (January 19, 2012), <http://www.icc-ccs.org/news/711-piracy-attacks-in-east-and-west-africa-dominate-world-report> [March 5, 2013].

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 1, see also STRATFOR, *Somali Piracy: 2011 Annual Update*, <http://www.stratfor.com/sample/analysis/somali-piracy-2011-annual-update> [March 5, 2013].

¹⁹ ICC Commercial Crime Services, *Piracy & Armed Robbery News & Figures*, <http://www.icc-ccs.org/piracy-reporting-centre/piracynewsfigures> [March 5, 2013].



- **Worldwide incidents**
Total attacks worldwide: 211
Total hijackings worldwide: 23
- **Incidents reported for Somalia**
Total incidents: 70
Total hijackings: 13
Total hostages: 212
- **Current vessels held by Somali pirates**
Vessels: 11
Hostages: 188

The statistics for this year are encouraging. The last successful pirate attack in waters off East Africa had occurred on May 10²⁰ and there has been no successful hijack since June 19, when a fishing dhow was seized, and no ship has been fired upon or a boarding attempted since June 26, when a Maltese-flagged cargo ship was attacked, according to data from the International Maritime Bureau (IMB).²¹

Analysts believe that increased use of private security guards on ships, international naval patrols, bad weather and increased efforts by local authorities in the Puntland region of northern Somalia to arrest pirates have also helped to disrupt piracy but have pushed criminals onshore.²²

Although acts of piracy in the waters around the Horn of Africa have fallen sharply in 2012, the threat caused by Somali piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Indian Ocean is and will remain for the foreseeable future of significance for international shipping causing also high economic costs.

Some examples may underline the common threat, common interests and common actions to counter piracy:

In January 2011 South Korean commandos from the destroyer *Choi Young* which had been shadowing the hijacked South Korean chemical carrier *Samho Jewelry* for a week, boarded the ship, killing eight pirates and arresting five others, with no loss of life to crew members. The surviving pirates were brought back to South Korea for trial.

On 10 February 2011, the South Korean cargo vessel *Daisy*, which was being chased by a number of speed boats in the Gulf of Aden, was rescued by the Chinese navy. The Chinese frigate *Xuzhou*, operating 40 nautical miles away from the incident, was instructed to act. A helicopter took off from the warship and reached the Korean ship within 20 minutes. While hovering over the merchant ship the helicopter sent warnings to the pirate boats as the cargo vessel continued to move away from the pirates.

Although South Korea and China are part of the multinational anti-piracy patrol in the area, the goodwill rescue mission had perhaps a positive effect on the bilateral relations, given the strained ties South Korea and China experienced last year over their differences how to deal with North Korea.

²⁰ Thom Shanker, "U.S. Reports That Piracy Off Africa Has Plunged", *The New York Times*, August 28, 2012.

²¹ Mike Pflanz, "Piracy attacks drop to zero for first full month in five years", *The Telegraph*, August 8, 2012.

²² Emily Alpert, "Pirate attacks down off Somalia, reducing worldwide numbers", *Los Angeles Times, World Now*, July 16, 2012.



Looking at the German side: On 5 April 2010 six marines from the Dutch navy, rescued the German ship *MS Taipan*; ten pirates were arrested and jailed in the Netherlands. On 21 November 2010 the Somali pirates went on trial for piracy in Hamburg charged with attempting to seize the German container ship.

A disastrous attempt to free the *Beluga Nomination* from the control of Somali pirates failed in January 2011. On 22 January 2011, the German multipurpose, heavy-lift project carrier was boarded by pirates at approximately 435 miles north of the Seychelles. Twelve crew members locked themselves in the vessel's citadel, transmitting emergency signals. On 25 January 2011, the pirates were able to cut their way into the safe room and capture the crew. A Seychelles coast guard patrol boat reached and attacked the *Nomination*, but was not able to recapture the ship from the pirates. One crew member was shot dead by the pirates. Seven were held hostage. Others could flee in a rescue boat and were rescued by a NATO ship.

On 13 April 2011, the pirates left the ship at the Bay of Haradere and the ship with seven seafarers on board left Somalia. It seems that a ransom has been paid.

These cases show that ships from Asia and Europe are facing the same threats and that in some cases common action is helpful in others the pirates are successful.²³

The U.S. think tank *Oceans Beyond Piracy* has published the report *The Economic Cost of Somali Piracy 2011*²⁴ in February 2012 in which it comes to the following conclusions:

- The economic costs of Somali piracy have resulted in costs of between \$6.6 and 6.9 bn. Expenditures are distributed as follows:
 - \$2.7 bn for higher oil consumption due to speed increases in high-risk areas
 - \$1.3 bn for military operations;
 - \$1.1 bn for security equipment and armed security guards;
 - \$635 million for insurance policies;
 - \$486 to 680 million for course changes along the West coast of India;
 - \$195 million for higher salaries and risk supplements.

The average ransom increased from \$4 million in 2010 to \$5 million in 2011. Although the total ransom paid in 2011 amounted to \$160 million, it only represents two percent of the total economic costs caused by Somali piracy.²⁵

Organizations donated around \$20 million in order to improve the situation in Somalia and other regions affected by piracy. This sum represents a fraction of the funds spent on fighting piracy at sea.

We also should keep in mind that the increasing tensions between Iran and the West pose risks and challenges to the international community too.

²³ Roell, "Maritime Security", 2-3.

²⁴ <http://www.oceansbeyondpiracy.org>.

²⁵ Peter Apps, "Out of sight, Somali piracy fight gets rougher", *Reuters*, February 21, 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/21/us-somalia-pirates-idUSTRE81K0XT20120221> [March 5, 2013].



The European Union has decided to increase the pressure on Tehran and in July 2012 enforced an oil embargo.²⁶ The U.S. had already announced new sanctions against Iran at the end of 2011. The reason was the non-compliance by Iran with IAEA regulations.

Tehran has threatened several times to block the Strait of Hormuz for oil exports to the U.K. and France and has threatened to impose the same sanctions on Germany. The U.S. made it clear that the blockage of the Strait of Hormuz is unacceptable.

According to the United States energy information administration 17 million barrels of oil were transported through the Strait of Hormuz in 2011, around 35 percent of all sea-traded oil.²⁷

Germany imports a mere one percent of its oil from Iran, Spain and Italy twelve respectively 13 percent, Greece 30 percent. China purchases 22 percent of all Iranian oil exports, almost as much as the entire European Union. India, Japan, South Korea and other countries in Asia together purchase two thirds of all Iranian oil and not much will change in the near future.

Oil exports are extremely important to Iran as around 70 percent of state income result from crude oil exports. A blockade of the Strait of Hormuz would not be in the interest of Iran. Nevertheless, the United States and her allies have the potential to keep the Strait open in the event of hostile military action.

Military experts are in agreement that Iran would be able to close the Strait of Hormuz for a limited period of time. Vice Admiral Mark Fox, the commander of U.S. naval forces of the region, reminded us recently that the Iranian navy had a number of small ships with large war heads which would be suitable for suicide attacks in the Persian Gulf.²⁸ This threat should be taken seriously, but the West needs to continue the political dialogue and maintain the ability for robust measures if required. A military response must remain an option.

At the moment a military attack on Iran by U.S. or Israeli forces seems not imminent because U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said 11 September 2012 on a CBS interview, that the United States would have a little over a year to stop Iran if it decides to make a nuclear weapon.²⁹

Also U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that the United States are “not setting deadlines” for Iran and still considers negotiations to be the best approach to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Sanctions are building pressure on Iran, and U.S. President Obama’s administration is watching the country very carefully. She mentioned that while the United States and Israel share the goal that Iran should not acquire a nuclear weapon, there is a difference in perspective over the time horizon for talks.³⁰

²⁶ *BBC News Europe*, 23 January 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-16674660>

²⁷ International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS London), Mobile Edition, *Strait of Hormuz: Iran’s disruptive military options*, <http://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-comments/past-issues/volume-18-2012/february/strait-of-hormuz-irans-disruptive-military-options/> [March 5, 2013].

²⁸ Dr. Peter Roell, “Piracy and Maritime Terrorism – Common Threats to South Korea and Germany”, *ISPSW Strategic Series*, Issue No. 183, (April 2012), 6, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=140892>.

²⁹ STRATFOR Global Intelligence, “Iran: U.S. Has 1 Year If Tehran Decides To Make Nuclear Bomb – Panetta”, September 11, 2012.

³⁰ STRATFOR Global Intelligence, “U.S.: No Deadlines Set For Iran – Clinton”, September 10, 2012.



Furthermore, on 12 September 2012, French President François Hollande spoke over the phone with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and encouraged him to seek a diplomatic solution to the Iranian crisis. He also said Iran should suspend its nuclear program and respect U.N. Security Council resolutions on the issue.³¹

Citing the Daily Mail, the Irish Times reported 12 September 2012, that MI6 chief Sir John Sawers paid a secret visit to Israel a few weeks ago to urge Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu against going to war with Iran.³²

What are the challenges for decision makers in fighting both maritime terrorism and piracy? Decision makers need to understand that fighting piracy and maritime terrorism at sea will not remove the threat. Suitable measures need to be taken onshore in order to achieve success.³³

In our ISPSW publication *Time to rethink the fight against maritime piracy in the Indian Ocean* by my colleague Maxim Worcester, we made the following recommendations:³⁴

- The first step should be a new look at the Maritime Laws governing the use of force on the high seas and within the territorial coastal areas. These laws need to be taken into the 21st century and adopted to the threats of today.
- The Rules of Engagement of the naval units charged with protecting the trade routes need to be coordinated and agreed on. Furthermore, a close look needs to be taken at the kind of naval vessels, which might be required to combat piracy more cost effectively.
- The use of Private Security Companies should be regulated and agreed.
- Shipping companies need to conform to the basic security requirements when operating in danger areas and should at all times comply with due care for their crew and cargo. They will need to invest in superior passive defense measures and adopt active measures, if required.
- Police and the Security Services should actively combat those international crime groups involved in piracy at the earliest possible point in time in order to reduce the attractiveness of piracy. They should also prevent piracy from being used by terrorist organizations to advance their aims.
- The banking community should take a much closer look at money laundering and report all suspicious transactions to the authorities.
- Long term plans to bring the beginning of stability to Somalia, and the establishment of an effective Coast Guard, need to be drawn up and funding made available. This could be a public-private partnership involving suitably qualified private security companies.

³¹ STRATFOR Global Intelligence, "France: Hollande Urges Netanyahu To Seek Diplomatic Solution With Iran", September 13, 2012.

³² STRATFOR Global Intelligence, "Israel: MI6 Chief Urged Netanyahu Against Iran Attack", September 12, 2012.

³³ Regarding the engagement of the European Union to combat piracy and indirectly maritime terrorism see also Lutz Feldt, "Operation Atalanta – Europe's Contribution", *ISPSW Strategic Series*, No. 185 (April 2012), <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail?id=140842> [March 5, 2013].

³⁴ Maxim Worcester, *Time to Rethink the Fight Against Maritime Piracy in the Indian Ocean*, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail?id=127107> [March 5, 2013].



Thesis 3

“The fight against piracy and maritime terrorism will continue to be successful only if we adopt the strategy of a ‘comprehensive approach’.”

In literature we do not find a general definition for the term „comprehensive approach“. But NATO’s new Strategic Concept, adopted at the Lisbon Summit in November 2010 underlines that lessons learned from NATO operations show that effective crisis management calls for a comprehensive approach involving political, civilian and military instruments. Military means, although essential, are not enough on their own to meet the complex challenges to Euro-Atlantic and international security³⁵.

If we have a look at the Operation Atalanta, formally European Union Naval Force Somalia (EU – NAVFOR – ATALANTA) and its mandate, we can see political, military, economic, social and humanitarian elements.

Operation Atalanta is the first operation to be taken by the European Union Naval Force. The operation was launched on 8 December 2008 in accordance with the EU Council Joint Action 2008/851 and the EU Council Decision 2008/918. The operation was in support of UNSCR Resolutions 1814 (Protecting of WFP Shipping), UNSCR 1816 (Deterrence of Piracy in SOM TTW), UNSCR 1838 (Maritime Operations of EU/Others) and UNSCR 1851 (Additional Measures on Somali Territory) which were adopted by the United Nations Security Council.

The mandate is to contribute to:

- The protection of vessels of the World Food Program (WFP) delivering food aid to displaced persons in Somalia.
- The protection of vulnerable vessels cruising off the Somali coast, and the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast.
- In addition, monitoring of fishing activities off the coast of Somalia.³⁶

Operation Atalanta is linked to the Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (MSCHOA), an initiative established by EU NAVOR in response to threats to shipping in waters of the Gulf of Aden and the Horn of Africa. MSCHOA monitors all international and domestic shipping in the region.³⁷

In his paper “Maritime Security: Operation Atalanta – Europe’s Contribution” Admiral Feldt emphasized the importance of intelligence in the operation Atalanta: „The sheer vastness of the area of operation has a detrimental effect on operational flexibility, agility and responsiveness of the force available. Maritime surveillance and through this the ‘Recognized Maritime Picture’ is a precondition for all operations.”³⁸

Somali pirates have also not changed their tactics over the last few years using so-called mother ships stationed far away up to 1,750 nautical miles in the Indian Ocean, waiting for easy, slow or visible less protected ships and then attacking the target ship with up to eight skiffs, but they have improved their

³⁵ NATO, A “Comprehensive Approach” to crisis management, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_51633.htm [July 11, 2012].

³⁶ Operation Atalanta, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Atalanta, [March 5, 2013].

³⁷ Ibid, 2.

³⁸ Feldt, “Maritime Security”.



methods using a captured dhow for a limited time or strikes and then capture a new one in exchange, without sailing back to their hide outs at the coast of Somalia.³⁹

On 15 May 2012 the EU's naval force off the Somali coastline carried out its first air strikes against pirate targets on shore. Maritime aircraft and attack helicopters took part in the attacks in the early morning. No casualties were reported in the raid along Somalia's central coastline in the region of Galmudug. Michael Mann, spokesman for the EU Foreign Policy Chief, Catherine Ashton, said: „This action against piracy is part of a comprehensive EU approach to the crisis in Somalia, where we support a lasting political solution on land“.⁴⁰

Bile Hussein, a pirate commander, told AP news agency that speed boats, fuel depots and an arms store had been targeted and that they destroyed their equipment to ashes. It has been a key supplies center for the pirates.⁴¹

It is noticeable that since this point in time there have been no reports in the international media regarding larger attacks by the EU NAVFOR on Somali mainland. This can have two reasons: Firstly, there have been no more attacks or secondly, they haven taken place under strict secrecy.

Currently the naval unit exists of six war ships with eight airborne helicopters including five Maritime Patrol Aircrafts (MPAs). Their joint operation area comprises around four million square kilometers of the Indian Ocean. At present the German Armed Forces take part with the frigate *Sachsen* in the Operation Atalanta.⁴²

How does the commander of the Operation Atalanta, British Rear Admiral Duncan Potts, assess the current successes? In an interview with the French news agency AFP he informed about significant successes of the operation. The pressure on the pirates is higher, but should not be diminished now. He gave the following reasons for his opinion: Last year the pirates captured 31 ships in the mission's operation area at the Horn of Africa, this year only five. Nevertheless, currently seven ships with around 200 seamen are in the power of pirates – compared to 20 ships with more than 500 crew members in 2011.⁴³

Besides the EU headed Operation Atalanta, the U.S. headed Combined Maritime Forces⁴⁴ and the NATO headed Operation OCEAN SHIELD⁴⁵, also the naval forces of further countries are engaged in fighting piracy at the Horn of Africa. The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is a frequent contributor. In this context I also would like to refer to the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) mechanism. SHADE is a platform for close cooperation where countries and coalitions involved in military counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and the Western Indian Ocean can exchange their views. The meetings are mostly held on a regular basis in Bahrain and co-chaired on a rotational basis by the Coalition Maritime Forces (CMF), NATO and EUNAVFOR⁴⁶.

³⁹ Dr. Michael Stehr, „Piracy off the Horn of Africa in 2012“, *The European Security and Defence Union*, vol. 13 (2/2012), 57.

⁴⁰ „EU forces in anti-piracy raid on Somali mainland“, *The Guardian*, May 15, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/may/15/eu-anti-piracy-raid-somalia> [March 5, 2013]

⁴¹ „Somali piracy: EU forces in first mainland raid“, *BBC News Africa*, May 15, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18069685> [March 5, 2013].

⁴² „Kontingentswechsel im ‚Atalanta‘-Einsatz“, August 28, 2012, <http://www.einsatz.bundeswehr.de>.

⁴³ „Operation Atalanta: Druck auf Piraten erhöht“, *AFP*, June 20, 2012.

⁴⁴ Combined Maritime Forces, http://www.cusnc.navy.mil/cmfc/cmfc_command.html [March 5, 2013].

⁴⁵ Operation Ocean Shield Current News, http://www.manw.nato.int/page_operation_ocean_shield.aspx [March 5, 2013].

⁴⁶ Oceans Beyond Piracy, <http://oceansbeyondpiracy.org> [March 5, 2013].



What makes Operation Atalanta and the contribution of the European Union so very special regarding anti-piracy and anti-terrorism measures off the Somali coast, in the Indian Ocean and beyond, is the comprehensive approach, which combines military and civil measures. This includes:

- EUCAP NESTOR: A regional strengthening mission enhancing the maritime capabilities of initially five countries in the Horn of Africa and Western Indian Ocean.⁴⁷
- EU Training Mission (EUTM) Somalia: Training of Somali Security forces in Uganda.
- Up to now, around 1,800 soldiers of the Somali interim government have been trained. Until December 2012 it should be around 3,000.⁴⁸
- Support of humanitarian measures by the German government. In 2011, the German government helped with an aid of more than €29 million, in 2008 to 2012 with €242 million via the EU commission.
- Supply of emergency and temporary financial assistance to the amount of €55 million between 2008 and 2011 by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).
- Drought crisis 2011: Supply of €25 million as special funds for refugees.
- Support of the project “Mine and Weapons Clearance” in the Somali region since 2009: €1.35 million.
- Financial assistance of €2.5 million for the „Trust Fund in Support of AMISOM“ since 2009.
- 2009/2010: Financial assistance of €400,000 for the training of Sierra Leonean policemen within the mission of the African Union for Somalia as well as around €670,000 for a UNDP project for the support of the rule of law in Somalia.
- Financial assistance of €110,000 in 2012 for the project „Global Programme against Money Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism“.⁴⁹

These measures which are coordinated by the „European Union Special Representative to the Horn of Africa“, Mr. Alexander Rondos,⁵⁰ explain very clearly the „comprehensive approach“ of the EU.

Conclusion

Although piracy is a worldwide phenomenon, the largest threat for international shipping routes will still emanate from Somali pirates. The reasons for piracy, the political and economic decline of Somalia and the desperate situation of the population form a good breeding ground for future recruitment. Any sustainable solution of the piracy problem – and here all experts are in agreement – cannot consist in the mere conduct of naval forces operations but only by a combination of military and civil means.

⁴⁷ Common Security and Defence Policy, *EUCAP NESTOR*, http://consilium.europa.eu/media/1617222/factsheet__eucap_nestor_en_.pdf [March 5, 2013].

⁴⁸ *EUTM Somalia*, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/EUTM_Somalia [March 5, 2013].

⁴⁹ Deutscher Bundestag, *Drucksache 17/9339*, April 18, 2012.

⁵⁰ Alex Roba, “Who is Alexander Rondos?”, *The Current Analyst*, February 6, 2012.



Therefore, the European Union and the Federal Republic of Germany will try hard to contribute to the stabilization of the conditions ashore by means of suitable measures. For this a long breath will be necessary.

In combating maritime terrorism good intelligence is and will remain a key element. Cooperation and the exchange of information between Europe, Asian and other intelligence services will continue to be essential.

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Remarks: Opinions expressed in this contribution are those of the author.

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