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Panel V : Maritime Security : Does the EU need a maritime strategy?

After this very comprehensive introduction, it is my intention to focus a bit upon my observations to our topic based on recent work for the EU.

First, yes, there is still a “Sea Blindness” in most of the member states .This is the biggest concern for all who are responsible for Security and Defence.

Inside the EU it is up to now only the Commission who is taking care about maritime issues, for good reasons with emphasis on Safety and Security issues.

The ongoing, rather successful, Operation Atalanta is a good example for the potential of the EU, if there is a political will behind such an activity.

This operation, under the framework of ESDP, is, of course in line with the different papers mentioned during the introduction. It is in line with the European Security Strategy, but the obvious Sea Blindness which you can identify in this document from 2003 has diminished. Keeping in mind that

Europe, the Europe of 27 Member States, is a peninsular, it needs a lot of brave men and women not to mention the European Maritime Domain with one single word. Europe, even without the ambition “to build security in our neighbourhood”, is surrounded by the Arctic Sea, the North Atlantic, including the approaches to the Mediterranean, the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea. Close neighbours are Russia, Turkey and Georgia. I think this brief view shows very impressively where a great part of Europe’s challenges and tasks for the near future are.

Second, yes, the Commission has identified these challenges and possible tasks. The Green and Blue Papers are proving that a lot of good initiatives are on their way and that from the aspects of Safety and to a certain degree Security a lot has already been achieved.

Third, no, there is not a comprehensive approach taken by the Commission so far, all activities to achieve safety and security are more or less sectoral activities, developed to serve only one purpose and with a rather low degree of integration .

Fourth, yes, the Commission has identified this as an area with much room for improvement and has developed with great emphasis and engagement the now discussed “Integrated Maritime Policy” which is, from my point of view, a big step forward to the right direction.

Fifth, yes, there was a great engagement by the French and the Swedish Presidency for Maritime Security and Maritime Surveillance as

prerequisite for for all Maritime activities, which will be continued by the Spanish and hopefully by the Belgian Presidency as well. So there is from the Presidencies' point of view a continuous support for Maritime Security. This political support is vital to overcome the wide spread Sea Blindness in some Member States.

Sixth, yes, up to now I have spoken about Safety and Security only. For a better understanding I will try to separate the three terms: Safety, Security and Defence and will allocate tasks to them :

Safety is from a more or less international accepted definition the internal safety of a ship and the overall navigational safety,

An allocation of tasks for a Navy could be a contributing actor when called upon to assist, for example in Search and Rescue missions or in the prevention of pollution.

Security is the area where a common understanding has not been achieved yet.

Taking into consideration that threats are no longer caused by combatants only, but by all sorts of criminals, including pirates, and terrorists, we are in a situation that constabulary task and naval tasks are no longer separated from each other. The separation between internal and external Security is taken over by events and not longer valid for effective and affordable solutions. Some Member States have solved this challenge, others, like Germany, are trying to find a way out of this dilemma.

The spectrum of Security missions is reaching from combating illegal migration, combating piracy and robbery at sea up to protecting critical infrastructure, including pipelines, oilplatforms and sea based windmills.

Navies are contributing when called upon and will support civilian agencies as well as acting as a military force, when the asymmetric threat is causing a danger to one or more states.

Defence missions see the Navies as global actors, and the allocation of tasks is defined from controlling areas of interests, detecting and evaluating Maritime Domain threats up to combating proliferation of armament.

But even the traditional tasks of a Navy need today and in the future a comprehensive solution.

Seventh, yes, there is an international legal framework, and the International Maritime Organisation, the UN organisation taking care of all maritime matters, is doing a good job, but it is a long and sometimes painful process to achieve progress.

Eighth, yes, we urgently need a change of the mindset of all people involved in Maritime Safety, Security and Defence matters. What we need is called a comprehensive approach, an integrated answer to respond to the present and future challenges and threats. The Lisbon Treaty is a unique opportunity to achieve this.

Ninth, if you look into the ESS you can identify under the headline “Key Threats” five threats and one challenge. They all have an impact on

Maritime Security and Defence. Terrorism has proved this with a great number of killed people. The Proliferation is, as all threats, not limited to only one aspect: There is a clear and present danger that the seaways are still a preferred way of dealing with all kinds of weapons including that odd mass destruction.

Regional conflicts can be prevented and influenced from the sea, an old and proven concept, State Failure can be reduced by Naval and Maritime operations/initiatives.

Organized Crime is a threat for many states, including European States, and to fight it successfully needs comprehensive action.

I am sure that the discussion about a European Maritime Strategy will support this process . And all discussions which are supporting the change of mindset towards comprehensive and integrate solutions are more than necessary.

As a conclusion, I am in favour of the process which is beginning with a the development of an European Maritime Strategy.

