

## AN ANALYSIS OF NATO AND EU MARITIME STRATEGIES

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In the context of the upgrading or initiation of NATO or European Union’s maritime strategies, ensuring, maintaining and promoting the security, stability and prosperity of the Euro-Atlantic maritime space must be at the forefront of the process of streamlining and harmonizing transatlantic maritime security due to the fact that the Alliance and the Union have assumed similar values and interests and have targeted the same vital maritime space - the Euro-Atlantic maritime space.

In this respect, the analysis of NATO and the European Union’s maritime strategies is the key element of understanding the vision, ambition and interest of the two organizations in order to determine the convergence elements on which to build a complementary action course to support Euro-Atlantic maritime security.

**Keywords:** Euro-Atlantic maritime security; maritime security strategies; regional cooperation.

### Introduction

The evolution of the global security environment in recent years has been triggered by an increase of challenges and threats raised especially from the maritime space, for which the Euro-Atlantic community has reassessed and declared its maritime security priorities and interests through their own maritime strategy security.

In this regard, Mrs. Federica Mogherini – High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – said that the EUMSS is the way the European Union “*is reaffirming its role as a global maritime security provider. It promotes international cooperation, maritime multilateralism and the rule of law at sea, in line with the strategic priorities identified in the EU Global Strategy*”<sup>1</sup>.

Through the Allied Maritime Strategy (AMS) and the EU Maritime Strategy (EUMSS), both NATO and the EU aimed at countering threats to Euro-Atlantic and international maritime security, such as illegal migration, piracy, cross-border crime, terrorism, arms trafficking and prohibited material and, on the other hand, to exploit the credibility and legitimacy gained from recognition by the United Nations for their decisive contribution to the success of major operations or actions conducted in recent years to ensure international maritime security in the the Mediterranean Sea, the Aegean

Sea or the Gulf of Aden – “Ocean Shield” (OOS), “Atalanta”, “Unified Protector” (OUP), “Sophia”, “Active Endeavor” (OAE) / “Sea Guardian” (OSG) to Combat Illegal Migration in the Aegean Sea (AEG).

### Fundamentals of the Euro-Atlantic maritime strategies

Under the motto that “*sea matters*”<sup>2</sup>, the EU developed and adopted for the first time in 2014 the European Union’s Maritime Safety Strategy<sup>3</sup> (EUMSS), centered mainly on securing its own maritime security and, above all, on promoting and capitalizing its statute as relevant actor for regional and international security based on the legitimacy offered by the international legal framework.

The EUMSS has as course of action the initiation and development of the maritime security cooperation with key international players in a comprehensive interinstitutional and multi domain approach to the main European sea basins – the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, the North Sea, the Ocean Atlantic, Arctic and international waters.

The regional focus of the EUMSS subscribes to Taylor’s<sup>4</sup> theory of avoiding the globalization of a security community, which is why it can be said that the strategy has a conceptual foundation that will enable it to be effectively implemented on the four directions defined by the interinstitutional approach, functional integrity, the respect for rules and principles, and maritime multilateralism.

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Through the four directions of action, the European Union aims to credibly and legitimately engage and relate to all its military and civilian structures in a joint effort, both domestically and internationally, in order to ensure maritime and international maritime security.

Thus, the multilateralism of maritime security cooperation with relevant international actors such as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), United Nations (UN) or International Maritime Organization (IMO) complement each other with the functional integrity that assures the assertion and enforcement of the rights and jurisdiction offered to the Union by the international legal framework.

Following the provisions of the Allied Strategic Concept<sup>5</sup> NATO adopted its Maritime Allied Strategy<sup>6</sup> (AMS) on March 18, 2011 having as a goal to secure the Euro-Atlantic maritime space through interinstitutional and cross domain cooperation with relevant regional and international actors and in full consideration to international legitimacy.

As in the case of the Union, NATO as a promoter of values, rights and freedoms guaranteed by international law aims to subscribe to regional and international efforts to ensure maritime security.

Thus, through NATO's Allied Maritime Strategy, NATO aims to achieve Euro-Atlantic and international maritime security by acting for collective discouragement and defense, crisis management and maritime security through cooperation in full compliance with international law, agreements and treaties (UN Charter, International Convention on the Law of the Sea).

In essence, the defining elements that create the basis of the two maritime strategies are represented by respect for international values, rights and freedoms as promoted by the Charter of the United Nations, but above all that, the fact that NATO and the European Union are open to cooperation and point to each other as the main partners in ensuring, maintaining and guaranteeing Euro-Atlantic and international maritime security, stability and prosperity.

Also, NATO and EU's orientation towards regional cooperation is seen as the key element of the process of making Euro-Atlantic and international maritime security more efficient, and as I have emphasized earlier, it subscribes to Taylor's theory that the universality of a security community is impossible<sup>7</sup>.

### **Common elements of AMS and EUMSS**

In order to talk about the efficiency of the Euro-Atlantic maritime security process it is necessary to bring NATO and EU maritime strategies to the same common conceptual and action denominator.

According to the provisions of their own maritime strategy, NATO and the EU aim at deterring threats, ensuring collective defense, crisis management and maritime security, namely risk management, conflict prevention and crisis response. This highlights common strategic visions focused on ensuring Euro-Atlantic and international maritime security and this is absolutely natural, given that the Alliance and the Union promote and defend the values and interests of 22 states that are found among both organizations.

Thus, shared elements defining the common denominator of these two strategies are mutual trust and respect, consideration of international maritime legislation, individual and collective values and rights, interest in comprehensive regional maritime cooperation, global ambition, common maritime space of interest (Euro-Atlantic) and in particular the fact that they target more than 75% of maritime capacities belonging to the same states (22 out of 29 NATO members are also EU members – 76%).

Asserting their willingness to promote and defend their interests on a global basis under international legitimate conditions confers NATO and the EU the breadth of United Nations (UN) agreed and accredited maritime actors as real benchmarks for international maritime security, stability and prosperity.

In this respect, NATO and EU interest in developing regional security communities at the level of the main Euro-Atlantic maritime basins fits perfectly into the provisions of the UN Charter<sup>8</sup> and becomes the center of gravity of the process of making Euro-Atlantic and international maritime security more effective through regional cooperation because its considerations and exploitation of the opportunities and vulnerabilities belonging to each sea basin.

This approach exploits the consideration of states and regional and international actors relevant to international laws and treaties, fosters their acceptance, support, empowerment and involvement in the joint effort to ensure international maritime security.

Thus, if we are referring to Russian Federation as the second world maritime power, it declares in

its new Maritime Doctrine<sup>9</sup> the intention to promote and defend its global maritime interests in a comprehensive approach based on the development of modern maritime capabilities that allow it to be present at regional and international level under conditions of full international legitimacy.

The same orientation on legitimate regional maritime cooperation is shared by the main maritime power of the world, the United States, through its own maritime strategy tailored around the vision of the former US Naval Forces commander, Admiral Jonathan William Greenert: *"The reality of today is that we have to think about the global network of navies. All it takes is a willingness to cooperate – there's no commitment, you don't have to join an alliance, anyone can plug-and-play. There's a mission for everybody whether it's humanitarian assistance and disaster response, counterterrorism, counter transnational organized crime, or counter piracy"*<sup>10</sup>.

However, the conceptual common denominator of the two Euro-Atlantic Maritime Strategies (AMS, EUMSS) focused on comprehensive regional maritime cooperation has not always been complemented by an unity of effort to implement their provisions from a variety of causes attributable to lack of joint strategic vision and actions' complementarity between NATO and the EU, which has not rarely witnessed rivalries, indecision, precipitation or reorientation that tense the transatlantic historical link, marked by numerous declarative episodes<sup>11 12</sup> between the main European leaders Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron and the President of the United States of America, Donald Trump.

Thus, *"the times in which we (Europeans) could completely depend on others (UK and US-NATO) are, to a certain extent, over"*<sup>13</sup> and Europe must *"take its fate into its own hands"*<sup>14</sup> resonates negatively with the fact that the EU military *"is not an army against, and it can be a good complement to NATO"*<sup>15</sup> in which United Kingdom and US represent two maritime powers whose nuclear capabilities are complemented by that of France, which remains singular in the hypothesis of crediting Mrs. Merkel's vision, to ensure strategic nuclear deterrence against any threats of symmetric or asymmetric nature that could jeopardize Euro-Atlantic security and stability.

All this debate has generated the lack of a complementary strategic vision of the NATO-EU binomial and has led the eastern flank states, faced

with increasing economic and security challenges and threats, to initiate and develop cooperation communities such as the Three Seas Initiative<sup>16</sup> (3SI) or Bucharest 9<sup>17</sup> (B9).

This direction was the proof of understanding the need to make Euro-Atlantic strategies more effective through regional focus, but also the puzzling of small European states regarding the perception of a common Euro-Atlantic vision that respects existing political-military or political-economic arrangements.

However, it should be noted that at least until this moment the declarative disagreement did not break the transatlantic link, and NATO continued to benefit from the unmatched support of the United States<sup>18</sup> and form a firm stand-on with respect to the collective security guarantees of its members by increasing its presence and support on the eastern flank, especially as a result of the evolution of the geopolitical situation after the events in the Black Sea Basin after 2014.

It is also worth noting the effort that the European Union has put forward and continues to make to ensure Euro-Atlantic and international maritime security against illegal migration or piracy in the Aegean Sea, the Mediterranean Sea or the Gulf of Aden.

### Conclusions

Reducing the operational effort of NATO and EU Member States maritime capabilities and articulating a common Euro-Atlantic strategic response is the essence of the process of streamlining NATO and EU maritime strategies and in this respect defining Euro-Atlantic conceptual and actionable complementarity and adopting a possible model of security through maritime cooperation that exploits the theories of security communities initiated and developed by Wagenen, Deutsch, Adler, Barnett, Taylor, Cohen or Mihalka has to cover the agenda of NATO and EU leaders.

Only this way will the relationship between NATO<sup>19</sup> and the European Union get the dimension of unity and will be able to capitalize on the strength of the historic transatlantic link and the advantages of political-military instruments on the one hand and political-economic instruments on the other.

As a result, the adoption of a maritime security model through regional cooperation based on NATO-EU complementarity would ensure the valorization of the conceptual common denominator and implicitly the timely, credible and

legitimate implementation of the two Euro-Atlantic maritime strategies for the benefit of Euro-Atlantic and international maritime security.

In conclusion, the Allied Maritime Strategy and the Maritime Security Strategy of the European Union promote convergent conceptual visions on maritime security and the efficiency of the Euro-Atlantic and international maritime security process must be framed on the coordinates of the doctrinal and action complementarity of the NATO-EU binomial.

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