

THE EURO-ATLANTIC MARITIME SECURITY COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

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The update or development of the Euro-Atlantic Maritime Strategies has largely resonated with the assertion of the intentions of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) to promote and defend their values and interests both at the level of the vital space, represented by the Euro-Atlantic Maritime Space, and beyond wherever the situation and the needs of international maritime security impose it.

To this end, streamlining the Euro-Atlantic maritime security process and maintaining it must be a defining element for the success of this process, for which the aim of a comprehensive approach to maritime security calibrated on security community theory may be a viable solution.

Keywords: Maritime security comprehensive approach; Euro-Atlantic maritime security strategies; regional cooperation.

Introduction

The end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century found the Euro-Atlantic community connected to the challenges and threats to regional and international maritime security, and their diversity and dynamism prompted North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union (EU) to reevaluate and calibrate their own doctrinal and action choices to the odds imposed by maintaining international credibility and legitimacy in a comprehensive – interinstitutional and multi-disciplinary approach.

We therefore find NATO and the EU mandated to lead or act in an integrated conjugated effort to ensure and maintain international maritime security in the Mediterranean Sea or the Gulf of Aden against threats to maritime security – piracy, illegal migration, terrorism, and on the other hand acting in support of riparian nations to the operational areas to overcome existing challenges and build their own maritime leadership and execution capabilities.

In this respect, Margriet Drent¹ signaled that the full success of military operations and actions

undertaken to restore or maintain the climate of peace and stability as promoted by the United Nations Charter is dependent on the comprehensive approach of binomial determined by military and civilian institutions in support of initiating and developing their own capabilities that allow states in need to stabilize and sustain themselves socially, economically, militarily or politically.

We note, therefore, that the international security environment has compelled the international community to determine and adopt a comprehensive course of action to ensure the involvement, empowerment and cooperation of all relevant governmental or non-governmental actors across multiple converging directions.

The comprehensive strategic approach to Euro-Atlantic maritime security

NATO and the European Union have taken over the concept of a comprehensive or integrated approach to the individual and collective security process from its promoters and developers, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe² (OSCE) and the United Nations (UN), in order to initiate and develop security cooperation at regional and international level according to regional particularities, international legal provisions and common security interests, needs and safeguards.

The importance of security cooperation for the successful approach to collective security

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process is well emphasized by the OSCE in its own security concept, where it is seen as *"beneficial to all participating States while the insecurity in and/or of one State can affect the well-being of all"*³.

As a consequence, ensuring and maintaining internal security, individually and collectively by each state, is seen as defining for regional or international common security, stability and prosperity, in compliance with the provisions of the international treaties and fundamental laws (UN Charter), which will ensure the credibility and legitimacy of the entire security process in the end.

The adoption of a comprehensive approach to the process of securing Euro-Atlantic maritime security at NATO and EU level is determined on the one hand by the fact that all member states of the two organizations have assumed a comprehensive approach together with their member state of the UN and OSCE, and on the other hand that they have adopted, developed and implemented this approach in their own concepts and strategies by combining political, civilian and military instruments⁴.

Thus, the dynamics and the diversity of challenges and threats to Euro-Atlantic and international security prompted NATO to reassess and adapt its predominantly politico-military response options⁵, bringing on the NATO Summits' agendas in Bucharest (2008) and Lisbon (2010) the concept of comprehensive approach as a consequence of the idea that *"military means, although essential, are not enough on their own to meet the many complex challenges to our security"*⁶, unless these are complemented by interinstitutional and multi-country measures to ensure the development, stability and self-sustaining of the security environment at regional and international level.

The success of the comprehensive approach to the Euro-Atlantic security process is closely linked to the opening of the Alliance to regional cooperation and consultation with relevant actors, international institutions and organizations for security and cooperation in order to promote democratic values and strengthen mutual trust, as is also stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations⁷.

One year after the Lisbon Summit, the direction of the new Strategic Concept⁸ was already mirroring itself in the new Allied Maritime Strategy⁹ which placed the actions of allied maritime capabilities

under the comprehensive Euro-Atlantic security approach to crisis management and maritime security through cooperation (dialogue, partnership, consultation).

In this respect, NATO's maritime component is recognized and valued as the traditional feature of engaging in a comprehensive and fully-fledged approach to the Euro-Atlantic and international maritime space with other maritime actors interested in promoting and maintaining regional maritime security, also globally.

As part of NATO's comprehensive approach, the Allied Maritime Strategy aims to maintain traditional partnerships with relevant maritime actors (UN, EU) and to contribute to conflict prevention, developing maritime capabilities in line with current threats, maintaining freedom of navigation and enforcing the legal regime international shipping.

Also, within this comprehensive approach, the Alliance proposes that the planning process for potential maritime actions and operations should consider the possible consequences or influences they would have on regional or international agencies and organizations, partners or non-partners, but above all to exploit the benefits of attracting and actively involving them into the maritime security process.

The adoption of the comprehensive approach has materialized as a doctrinaire once allied implementation of the Allied Joint Doctrine¹⁰ (AJP-01) in 2017, thus managing *"to harmonize Alliance actions with the efforts of international organizations and NGOs"*¹¹ by assuming as objectives to develop cooperation with partners and therefore to increase NATO contribution beside them for regional and international stabilization and reconstruction.

Essentially, adopting the comprehensive NATO approach is clearly delineated by the unilateral positioning and firmly declares its readiness and openness to inter-institutional and multi-country cooperation on the line of Euro-Atlantic and international maritime security.

Having the same freedoms and democratic values as NATO, it was natural for the European Union to show the same interest for the comprehensive orientation of its own maritime security process.

As a result, through the security and defense policies such as the European Security and

Defense Policy (ESDP) and the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), the EU manifests its desire to address disputes and security crises in an integrated approach between the phase of their emergence and the process of political, social, military and economic reconstruction as characteristic to the process of reaching the desired final state¹².

The active involvement of the European Union alongside the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or other actors relevant to regional and international maritime security (China, India, Japan, Russia, USA) in combating piracy in the Aden Gulf and supporting Somalia to eradicate the causes of the pirate-like phenomenon and furthermore to develop regional countries' decision-making and action capabilities need it to manage illegal actions are good examples of a comprehensive approach to international maritime security with direct benefits to European and, implicitly, Euro-Atlantic maritime security¹³.

As a consequence, the comprehensive approach to European security aims to increase the level of cooperation between the EU and its partners and to empower¹⁴ all members to formulate complementary concepts and strategies that support the effort unity at the level of all military and civilian, governmental organizations¹⁵ with direct effects on conflict prevention and the elimination of threats (terrorism, illegal migration, cross-border crime, arms trafficking) to regional and international maritime security.

The European Union's Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS), which emerged in 2014 under the slogan "*the sea matters*"¹⁶, is the proof of the full understanding of the importance of the Euro-Atlantic maritime space for European security and its anchoring to the regional security community concepts as promoted by Wagenen¹⁷, Deutsch¹⁸, Adler¹⁹, Taylor²⁰, Cohen²¹ or Mihalka²² prove realism, measure and opportunity.

The main lines of action of the European Maritime Strategy follow the course of action defined by the integrated approach to maritime security and consist of initiating and developing regional maritime cooperation tailored to the particularities of the main Euro-Atlantic maritime basins (Baltic Sea, North Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, Atlantic and Arctic Ocean).

The interest in the European maritime security

comprehensive approach is highlighted by the fact that the EUMSS aims to cover "*both the internal and external aspects of the Union's maritime security*"²³ such as being a "*comprehensive framework, contributing to a stable and secure global maritime domain*"²⁴.

The EUMSS defines the political and strategic framework for involving all actors (military, civilian, governmental, non-governmental) at national, European and international level in order to overcome the challenges and combat symmetric or asymmetric threats to European maritime security within an inter-institutional and multi-country cooperation²⁵.

The entire European comprehensive maritime security process will seek to respect international legal requirements by channeling joint maritime security planning, risk management, conflict prevention and crisis response.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the Comprehensive Approach to Euro-Atlantic Maritime Security circumscribes perfectly the provisions of the UN Charter and the comprehensive approaches of the UN and OSCE, which also gives the Alliance and the Union equally credibility and international legitimacy as necessary for attracting and empowering all states, institutions or international agencies in the process of initiating and developing regional maritime security communities.

The dimensioning of maritime security communities at the Euro-Atlantic maritime basins subscribes the theory of streamlining the security process promoted by Taylor²⁶ and is the key element of the comprehensive approach by transferring the responsibility of maritime security to the regional actors, considering the regional geopolitics, particularities, opportunities and limitations and therefore connecting regional security to international maritime security.

Considering the direct contribution of NATO and EU to the Euro-Atlantic and international maritime security and the purpose and objectives of their own maritime security strategies, it can be said without any doubt that the Alliance and the Union are fully connected to the evolution of the Euro-Atlantic and international maritime security but there is a need to find out the optimal way to complement each other. Their comprehensive,

inter-institutional and multi-disciplinary approach is identified as essential to the success of the process of ensuring Euro-Atlantic, regional and international security, stability and prosperity²⁷.

NOTES:

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17 Donald J. Puchala, *International Politics Today*, New York, 1971, p. 165.

18 Karl W. Deutsch, et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

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