

Pioneering for solutions against Piracy

La Haye, 8 juillet 2009

"Challenges in the cooperation between different naval powers"

I first wish to thank my hosts for having invited me to this seminar on a currently polarizing issue. I also thank all the precedent speakers for their brilliant inputs.

I will try not to sound repetitive and to keep the floor briefly, in order to give time enough for discussion.

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First, let me just provide you a quick overview on the battle order in our fight against piracy.

With Atalanta, CTF151, Allied Protector and the assets deployed under national command mainly by China, Russia, India and Japan, the international commitment off the coasts of Somalia weights around 30 ships. Malaisia, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran also used to deploy some vessels and the number of countries involved in this endeavour is still expected to increase : Australia, New Zealand are considering a contribution to Atalanta as Third States. We're seeking for a South African commitment. The Arab countries bordering Red Sea and of the Golf Cooperation Council are talking about a joint Arab force to fight piracy.

On the other side, there is no recession for piracy off Somalia. This criminal activity has flourished until the arrival of the monsoon, few weeks ago. As a consequence, the pirates acting off the coast of Somalia are more numerous,

better equipped, but also increasingly daring and considering their area of operations as extensive (Hijacking in the Somali Basin, in Seychelles waters, in Omanese territorial waters, etc..).

From this picture stems a need for a better coverage, a need for more assets and therefore a need for a better coordination. This coordination is currently relying on the SHADE mechanisms in Bahrein. Although we appreciate the outcomes of SHADE mechanism, I won't tell you a good story. NATO, EU and US forces are used to work together. But we do estimate that military coordination could work better, especially with non western navies, deployed under national command. Exchanges of information are improving but there are still duplications, or triplications in the area of operation, especially along the International Recognized Corridor, where a lot of navies are legitimately focusing. To keep pirates' audacity in check, the international community to has consider its commitment as pragmatic and realistic to effectively use and coordinate available resources to the greatest extent possible. It could for example allow to deploy more naval resources off the East Coast of Somalia and to conduct there more coercitive actions to gain in efficiency.

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More than intelligence, command and control, rules of engagement or information exchange, coordination seems to be the major challenge of the cooperation between all those naval powers off Somalia. Indeed, on one hand, the more the number of actors increases, the more legitimate and comprehensive the fight against piracy will be; on the other hand, the more the number of countries involved increases, the more effective coordination becomes crucial.

More than for any other operation, the key point today is to manage to match different strategic interests, mandates and end states in order to enhance coordination in a way that is convenient for everybody. We all know the term of

references of the western-led operations. Let me highlight the discrepancies with the Chinese, Russian, Japanese and Indian ones.

With the Faina hijacking, Russia was the first of the focused countries to deploy assets off the Coast of Somalia, in September 2008. There's an evident will with this commitment in a strategic area to testify from, but also to show off the Russian power. India followed naturally in the fight against piracy, mid-November 2008, in the view of building a safe environment for economical development and trade. India intends also to be recognised as an essential security actor in the Indian Ocean. From January 09, China's commitment to the fight against piracy is mainly linked to the need for securing the sea lines of communications used for one third of its energy supply. For its first out of area deployment since the 15th century, China also intends to demonstrate its active behaviour for the world security and peace (the suggestion from the Chinese navy to set up geographical coordination has to be understood in this way) and the ability of her navy to face the multidimensional challenges for its national security. We should also consider the Chinese willingness to take benefit from unusual cooperation with western navies. Few months later Japan decided to protect its own interest, mainly energy supply also, after the pressure of the Japanese shipping companies.

As for the mandates are concerned, the four countries are operating within the limitations of the appropriate UN security council resolutions and international law. Chinese, Japanese, and Russian navies are essentially tasked to protect their flag vessels and crew and are focusing their patrols in the Gulf of Aden. Operating both in the Gulf of Aden and in the Somali Basin, especially off Seychelles, to protect vital sea lines of communication for her economy, the Indian Navy is theoretically able to protect foreign Flag State vessels if they wish to. The Chinese Navy did it also a few times and intends to take part to the humanitarian mission of the World Food Program. As far as I know, they never

conducted this task. Japan agreed a law at the end of may authorizing its vessels to disrupt any acts of piracy. All these Navies agreed a light cooperation framework with Atalanta. India and Russia are willing to go much deeper into their coordination with Atalanta.

India, China and Russia are supporting the establishment of an *ad-hoc* coalition, operating under a United Nation mandate. Russia repeatedly declared that the EU ATalanta operation was the current unique framework that could be able to make apply the United Nations Security Council resolutions.

There is nor clear end state, neither precise end date for these missions. As the EU agreed to extend Atalanta for one more year, as NATO is considering its long term involvement in the fight against piracy, the Chinese deputy CHEN, Admiral Zhang Deshun told "We feel this is not a short mission. The length of the mission depends on the Somali political situation and whether Somali pirates can be eventually kept away".

I will suggest three conclusions for this quick analysis :

- We can assume that the international commitment in the fight against piracy off Somalia will be long-lived and that western navies will keep on patrolling besides or with Russian, Chinese and Indian ones ;
- There's a strong political will for these countries to assume a wide spectrum of missions and to be considered as key actors in the fight against piracy ; India, China and Russia are definitively looking for a better political, and perhaps operational visibility, but in the same time, will keep on trying to hide operational and technical difficulties.
- On a military point of view, they're looking for results (to justify at the political level the value of their commitment) and are expecting a flexible and more efficient coordination. However, they do not consider a western led structure legitimate enough to be tasked with the international community coordination.

As the RIC fleet represents one third of the international community involvement, this key factors highlight the need to do more in coordinating actions, from a political and an operational standpoint.

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So do we have to press the reset button ? I don't think so. We can build on existing structures, mechanisms and tools. But we have to take more advantage from every assets. This requires a coordination on a more regular basis, not to say on a permanent basis. There's no other option to allow, from time to time, the Chinese navy to escort World Food Program convoy or to optimize in the IRTC the patrol sectors assignments with India and Russia. But real time coordination will remain a matter for military staff and should not be complicated as soon as we do not create an extra C2 layer. At the polmil level, we have to find the institutional framework that will sound music to everybody's ears. To this effect, my understanding is that we have to move towards a pragmatic, neutral, flexible and operational framework. We identified three potential solutions to enhance the informal type of coordination we're looking for.

The establishment of a regional Counter Piracy Coordination Center (CPCC), that was recommended in the UNSCR 1851, is certainly what non western navies are expecting. This light, swift and flexible multinational civilian/military structure, as we drafted it in our February non paper, was designed to bring together a community of interests at a single location. The liaison officer board was a solution to respect the pre-eminence and the integrity of any national or multinational chain of command activated, while promoting a coordination on a non-hierarchical basis between all the actors involved. The CPCC was an easy way to provide a common hub for exchanges of information among the security providers community, to deconflict ongoing and future operations (programs,

ports of call, areas of operation, logistics), and to respond to emerging situation, whenever necessary, but also to facilitate interconnectivity, trust, confidence and integration of additional security actors through a “plug and play” concept. Due to the delays and costs necessary to set up the centre, but also perhaps, due to the possible formal link to the UN, this idea has not been supported by western navies. To my mind, it still makes sense as a way to optimize the international community involvement, but also to address progressively the long term needs of regional appropriation. I'm sure we'll be obliged to come through in a few years. We should perhaps reconsider it again.

On the very short term, a second option should be pragmatically to build on SHADE mechanisms. But for Russian, Indian and Chinese navies, we need to suggest a renewed SHADE, something more neutral, less western led, that could be considered legitimate enough for coordination and not only dedicated to information exchange. To this effect, we suggested a rotating presidency of the SHADE meetings. With this open-minded option, China, India or Russia could gain the political visibility they're looking for. Furthermore, a rotating venue of these meetings could be appreciated as a way to better involve all regional actors (Seychelles, Kenya, Oman, ...) in the fight against piracy. France supports this option as a possible solution to gather the international community.

Lastly, we believe that there is an in-between option that could meet the short, medium and long term perspectives. The idea would be to take more benefit from the legitimacy and from the credibility of the EU comprehensive approach in the fight against piracy. Under cover of the near extension of the UNSCR 1846, in December, we have the possibility to strengthen the military coordination role of *Atalanta*, by tasking the EU with the international community coordination. We all know that the EU framework is consensual enough to federate the international community action. It is legitimate to the RIC eyes. A territorial footprint for the EU, possibly at the FHQ level, is the

only material enabler required. This idea, which is personal, should be supported by a strong European political will before being submitted to our main partners, like the United States, and then, finally if agreed, suggested to the United Nations.

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As it is time for conclusion, I hope you're now aware of the challenges we have to meet to gain a better coordination in our fight against piracy off the coasts of Somalia. We all seem determined first to minimize the symptoms of this criminal activity, and then, to eradicate it. Further efforts from all sides are necessary to maximise the effects, to better channel resources and to optimize the International community response to this scourge. We should better manage to do it quickly, before piracy reaches a new and irrepressible dimension, in possible link with organised crime or terrorism. Be sure that I'm convinced with my conclusions and suggestions. I had the opportunity with this speech to get your feelings on a few ideas, that are not French official at this stage. I would very much appreciate to hear your first reaction on it, and I'm now open to your questions.

