



13 August 2010

Maritime Operational Concept, MOC
CHENS MSD WG

Chiefs of European Navies

MARITIME OPERATIONAL CONCEPT

(CHENS MOC)

Written by the CHENS Working Group for Strategic Dialogues, MSD WG.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Chiefs of the European Navies, CHENS, is an informal and non-political forum. CHENS working group's aim is to promote understanding between navies of member countries. CHENS documents are not binding. The Chiefs of the European Navies Maritime Operational Concept (CHENS MOC) provides the contextual basis for European Navies' military activity in the Maritime environment. The purpose of this paper is to present a common Maritime Operational Concept as a professional opinion of the CHENS as a group of Commanders In Chief of independent European Navies.

Accelerating globalization and the increasing reliance of national economies in globalisation is creating a system of interdependence never experienced before in history. The effectiveness of this system relies almost exclusively on the ability of all peoples to use freely the global maritime commons on a day to day basis to exchange goods and services. This effectiveness is dependent on respect for international law, treaties and conventions. Oceans have proved to be the life blood of globalization, prosperity and economic growth.

Maritime safety and security has always been paramount for the global development and prosperity. The key differences today are that new and emerging challenges from the following areas have to be met:

- the **wide array of threats** to the significant volume of trade that depends solely on the security of the world's oceans;
- the **scale of the potential damages** which can be done on a nations territory by a threat from the sea;
- the **opportunities** that can be found on exploiting ocean resources;
- the **possibilities** of developing new routes north of America and Asia.

The oceans also provide an opportunity to expand security and stability. Exploiting the traditional role of the sea as the venue for relationships among littoral nations, applying the characteristics and abilities inherent to maritime forces, the European navies are in a position to play a key contributing role in extending trust and security beyond the European borders.

2 MARITIME CONTEXT

2.1 The age of Globalisation reinforced Europe's reliance on the sea.

The XXI:st Century is a maritime century; close to 80% of international trade, over five billion tonnes of goods travel by sea each year. 62 % of the world's oil is transported by sea much through major maritime lines of communications and choke points. This gives that threats against maritime traffic are as important as threats against territories.



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With a coastal borderline of 70,000 km, which is two thirds of Europe's entire borders, Europe prosperity and well being is inextricably linked with the sea. 90% of Europe's external trade and close to 40% of its internal trade is conducted by sea. The maritime area under the jurisdiction of Europe's nations is significantly larger than the European land mass. Europe accounts for 40% of the world's merchant fleets.

Europe's maritime regions account for some 40% of its GDP and approximately 40% of Europe's population reside in the coastal regions. Within Europe some of the key maritime activities are shipbuilding, shipping, ports and fisheries, with offshore energy and coastal and maritime tourism also generating significant revenues. Sea-ports and shipping allow Europe to benefit from the rapid growth of international trade and to play a leading role in the global economy. The Sea will also increasingly contribute to Europe's energy needs as new technologies associated with wave and tidal energy is developed. Globally marine biotechnology is now worth 3 billion euros' annually

The growing vulnerability of coastal areas, increasingly crowded coastal waters, the key role of the oceans in the climate system and the continuous deterioration of the marine environment, all call for a stronger governance of our oceans and seas. Nations have obligations to manage the resources in waters they control, e.g. sustainable exploitation of fisheries, enduring deep sea mining, prevention of pollution.

2.2 The Littorals and demography

The wide variation in topographical, demographic and environmental characteristics of the European littoral regions represents diverse challenges to those seeking to exploit these regions.

Population growth in coastal regions and islands has been double that of the European average over the last decade. Over 50% of the earth's population lives within 60 km of the sea.¹ UN reports predict significant global population growth - in the region of a 50% increase - by 2050, with the overwhelming proportion of this in third world countries.

This will result in an increase in urbanisation and settlement in the littoral regions (including into the sea), as well as a substantial proliferation of artificial structures, energy farms, power generators and aquaculture. Coastal areas are also the destination for the majority of tourists in Europe, making the need to reconcile economic development, environmental sustainability and quality of life particularly acute in these regions. Gas and oil infrastructures and port facilities are also likely to increase in complexity and footprint. Sectors identified with most growth potential include: cruise shipping, ports, aquaculture, renewable energy - Offshore wind energy, energy generation from ocean currents, waves and tidal movements - underwater marine telecommunications, marine biotechnology and ocean mining. As well as the consequences of climate change, the effects of extreme weather and other natural events will

¹ Naval Utility for Countering Asymmetric Threats (NUCAT).



also heavily impact on populated and developed littoral regions. Interests operating in these areas are affected by a combination of risks from the open seas and even from ashore.

2.3 Oceanic competition

The Oceans, including the Polar Regions, are likely to become areas of increased competition as advanced technology, increased accessibility and resource pressure encourage more intensive exploitation by states and commercial interests. Competition will focus on fishing, deep sea mining and the extraction of oil and gas, but may possibly extend to transportation and rights of free passage, even if these areas are ruled by international law including treaties and conventions.

The progressive thawing of the North polar ice-cap, the opening of the North-East and North-West Passages and increased accessibility across the top of the world will introduce new sources of risk and opportunity, as the topography of the region alters.

Increasing Global shipping raises the question of the vulnerability of straits and other choke points. Most of these areas are located in strategic sea lanes of communication. Their narrowness presents a high level of risk for shipping which transit these areas. They are also identified as weak points in the global energy supply network. An added focus on security and safety issues in these regions is required as a result.

2.4 The Ocean as an opportunity

The sea presents opportunities for conflict prevention and to tackle emerging crisis in distant theatres. The sea can be used to deploy forces to show determination with a graduated commitment according to national and international political requirements; also, the sea may be the access point through which to project initial entry (intervention) and follow-on (stabilisation) forces, to sustain them and to redeploy them when they are no longer required. In a conventional deterrence or prevention scenario, the sea is an open access area where forces can operate demonstrating presence and posture commensurate with the political direction, ready to apply rapid and decisive force as the situation evolves. Moreover, when a natural disaster strikes, the sea and the littorals quite often remains as the only venue available to deliver humanitarian assistance.

Maritime forces have the possibility of using the oceans to assist in expanding stability by outreaching to nations where naval diplomacy, maritime capacity building and other activities may be used to build trust and exert influence. These activities, in turn, should allow other coastal states to develop the capability of protecting the sea and its resources for their own benefit and for the benefit of the broader maritime community.

Additionally, the legal status given to the warship by international law is a powerful instrument to support maritime governance either autonomously or in support of other law enforcement agencies according to the relevant national regulations.



All in all, the oceans allow to create and to expand security spaces much easily than ashore.

3 MARITIME THREATS AND RISKS

3.1 Introduction; illegal activities

The High Seas are an unevenly regulated highway. They are the avenue for international communications and trade, but lack of effective Global monitoring of the High Seas also makes it an attractive environment to support a wide range of illegal activities.

The principle of freedom of the High Seas is enshrined in international law. It facilitates the development of commercial trades and of economies. Navies are the first to benefit from it when the situation requires deploying forces. But this freedom can equally be exploited by rouge elements, against a state or by engaging in illegal activities such as unregulated and unreported fishing, smuggling, arms trafficking –including proliferation of WMD-, illegal immigration or human trafficking, narcotic trafficking, international and national piracy and terrorism.² Furthermore, negligence or incompetent use of vessels, or the use of vessels not fit for seagoing, can cause major risks to the marine environment with consequences in terms of navigation, safety, pollution and can also endanger human life at sea

The growing number of States abusing the freedom of the High Seas, together with the limited ability of some States to enforce law in their waters, increases the insecurity at sea and provides a safe haven from which terrorists and criminal activity can take place.

Maritime forces can contribute to managing these risks with ships, submarines and aircrafts capable of operating continuously at sea. The units have high readiness and availability as well as long range and endurance. Also naval command and control systems, operating 365 days a year, allow continuous monitoring of maritime spaces.

3.2 Piracy and terrorism in the maritime domain

Piracy and armed robbery have developed in certain areas. The underlying factors are enduring, and they can be very destructive to the local economy and political stability. These illegal activities have for a long time remained local/regional and were a circumscriptive risk for maritime shipping. Piracy today however is emerging as an increasing threat to global trade. In the last number of years there has been an increase in determination and sophistication in organization by criminal elements at sea. This has led to an increase, both in frequency and violent nature, of the acts carried out by these criminal elements. These elements are now a days operating further offshore than earlier, causing a negative impact on the free movement of shipping, not only in the Littorals but in the High Seas.

² In monetary terms, the international trade of illegal drugs comes third after international trade in Petroleum and Agriculture. More than 200 000 deaths annually are attributed to drug taking in European Union's Member States.



Also genuine acts of terror against ships have occurred during the last decade which just underlines the need for an increased attention on security issues in the maritime domain. Finally, revenues from piracy today also have the possibility to give financial support to terrorist network or actions.

The legal status of the warship in international waters, as recognized in the international law, and the experience gathered by the European navies in long standing operations, should be building blocks to articulate global responses against this sort of activities.

3.3 Proliferation and Missile Threat

Nuclear proliferation, i.e. proliferation of WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) and the trade of CBRN (Chemical, Bacteriological, Radioactive, Nuclear) material for the production of missiles and dirty bombs, is able to become one of the most dangerous threats of the 21st century³. For many reasons, such as strategic independence and regional superiority, several States (more than 15) are seeking the military nuclear capability, even though some of these States are members of the Non Proliferation Treaty, (NPT).

Military nuclear technology is becoming more and more accessible making it harder to specify the nature of the threat which in turn encourages proliferation. At the same time, the proliferation of cruise missile and ballistic missile programs is facilitated by the lack of international legal framework on missile technology development and exportation. The acquisition and development of long range missile programmes globally has increased the amount of these missiles that can be deployed rapidly. It could lead to a change in the strategic regional balance of some regions.

The free use of the seas for transportation in general terms also gives vast opportunities for illegal, covert trafficking at sea of CBRN material for the production of missiles and dirty bombs, violating international non proliferation treaties.

In this context, maritime capabilities come up as a crucial element to achieve strategic balance in specific situations and to articulate surveillance, protection and defence from the sea taking full advantage of their strategic mobility and the open spaces provided by the high seas.

³ IAW IAEA data records.



4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE NAVIES

Navies are a unique expression of a States Sovereign capacity at sea. The legal status of a warship under International Law (UNCLOS)⁴ ensures that States can project sovereignty in both domestic and international waters. Modern navies have two main functions from a national point of view:

- To ensure the States national security and sovereignty at sea.
- To protect the States interests and support their foreign policy.

In the threats and risks just described, European navies provide an increasingly essential contribution to national and transnational strategies. The role of the European navies is defined by their contribution to deterrence, security, safety and stability of the global maritime domain. They have a readiness to deliver capabilities at short notice not only for defence, but also to attain maritime security and contribute to maritime capacity building, crisis management and law enforcement actions, within a joint, national or/and multinational framework. The navies can perform maritime surveillance and security activities with long endurance according to national regulations in support of the rule of law at sea.

5 MARITIME ROLES

European navies are, or can be, involved in a wide range of operational scenarios in (but not limited to) the maritime domain. In these scenarios, naval forces could co-operate with a wide range of joint, combined and interagency actors. The possible naval activities within the maritime security spectrum can be grouped in the following four roles⁵:

- I Maritime Defence (MD)
- II Maritime Security Operations (MSO)
- III Crisis Response Operations (CRO)
- IV Naval Diplomacy (ND)

I Maritime Defence

Firstly, European navies will continue to be prepared to provide Maritime Defence as part of the joint effort to defend national and/or coalition interests. In this, maritime forces provide war fighting capabilities that can be used, whether in deterrence or a power projection role, across the joint and/or single service spectrum, including the protection of sea lines of communications.

⁴ Para 29 of UNCLOS 111

⁵ There is no commonly used grouping for the range of possible maritime activities between various organisations (esp. EU, NATO) and individual nations. Therefore is this grouping done arbitrarily and there will/may be overlap between these areas..



II Maritime Security Operations

MSO are defined⁶ as 'those measures performed by the appropriate civilian or military authorities and multinational agencies to counter the threat and mitigate the risks of illegal or threatening activities in the maritime domain, so that they may be acted upon in order to enforce law, protect citizens and safeguard national and international interests'. MSO operations can focus on terrorism, weapons proliferation, narcotic trafficking, illegal migration, piracy and armed robbery, but might also include smuggling, the protection of national resources, energy security, the prevention of environmental impact, search and rescue and safeguarding sovereignty.

MSO require a high degree of synergy of civilian and military maritime security activities and information sharing in order to achieve a co-ordinated effort to address all kind of threats. The participation of navies in the MSO varies from country to country and very much depends on the national allocation of responsibilities within the maritime domain.

III Crisis Response Operations (CRO)

Most European navies have worldwide expeditionary capabilities that are ideally suited to be employed for joint or maritime CRO. Operations are ranging from peace keeping (mostly under UN auspices), or enforcement and conflict prevention, to Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR) and Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO).

During periods of tension, or when natural or manmade disasters occur, maritime capabilities can provide a protected sea base from which joint/combined/interagency forces can be deployed ashore and from which an operation can be commanded. European navies can therefore conduct CRO not only at, but also from the sea; favourably with specialized amphibious ships and embarked helicopters, landing craft and marine units. This flexibility allow operations to be conducted wherever and whenever necessary from the sea, even in extreme conditions and in areas that are difficult to access, such as jungle, hilly and mountainous areas, rivers and river deltas and in Polar Regions, and specifically in areas where harbour infrastructures are not available.

⁶ CHENS MSO Paper, 2007.



IV Naval Diplomacy (ND)

European naval forces provide support to national and transnational foreign policies through maritime outreach and capacity building, both of which aim at regional stability through enhancing maritime security, thus preventing possible future conflicts. The natures of naval forces allow ND to be conducted with a low footprint. ND works in three areas:

- (1) Building trust through port visits and exercises.
- (2) Maritime capacity building, improving national and regional frameworks for maritime governance and co-operation in enforcing the rule of law in the maritime environment.
- (3) Maritime presence: The forward deployment of surface ships, submarines and embarked marine units make it possible to switch quickly and efficiently between ND activities to the use of military assets for other maritime roles.

6 ENABLERS

6.1 The freedom of the High Seas.

The freedom of access to the High Seas and the freedom of navigation in the High Seas are strategic enablers that allow CHENS navies to exploit the sea as a strategic medium to enable the delivery and application of maritime capability packages. Packages capable of conducting the actions necessary to realise the desired effects across the Joint and Combined battle space. The degree of access and freedom will enable force elements to position strategically, without undue provocation, either to allow an approach to an objective or to permit unchallenged access to an area of operations. CHENS maritime forces are ready and capable of undertaking the full range of functions, from MSO and ND to CRO and MD, immediately on arrival, requiring little or no in-theatre build-up (including Host Nation Support/HNS) or training. Moreover, when required the withdrawal can be rapid.

6.2 Maritime strategic capabilities.

Maritime Defence, MD, is enabled by appropriate strategic air and sealift capabilities and its supporting operating infrastructure to support the full range and scales of military tasks. The routine deployment of maritime units and task organised formations, enables high readiness units to poise close to or within potential operating areas mitigating potential Asset Basing and Over flight constraints.

Early in a crisis, maritime forces are the principal means by which political and diplomatic influence and, if necessary, decisive force can be applied at acceptable levels of risk and without the need for long term commitment or an extended engagement. Matching sealift readiness profiles to those of the forces to be lifted and to pre-deployment warning time to load shipping, for prepositioning or direct transit, will be critical for a credibly agile expeditionary capability.



6.3 Maritime Situational Awareness.

MSA, inclusive national and international exchange of information, has always been recognised as the key enabler to successful Maritime Operations, and in particular it forms the basis of MSO. In an increasingly complex world, where most issues have an element of globalisation in their composition, the reliance on better and timelier MSA has never been more important. The issue is made more complex as each nation's navy within the CHENS grouping will have differing responsibilities within its own national MSO construct, but in almost all cases they are the most experienced and therefore well placed to provide MSA.

The CHENS navies have a unique position within their own national security architecture. They are viewed as a 'Trusted' entity that have expertise in picture compilation, fusion techniques and are proficient in handling data from unclassified to the most highly classified as well as 'sensitive' law enforcement information. The ability to draw this information together and form a national maritime picture is not without its challenges; the legal aspect being key amongst them.

As CHENS navies are beginning to achieve this significant advance, their ambition continues to foster and exert greater influence in maritime surveillance integration projects within the European, NATO and multinational arenas.⁷

6.4 Inter-agency capacity

One of the complexities that define the present maritime scenario is the great number of agencies and organisations that exercise their legal competences at sea. These may be civilian or military, national or international, private or public. In any case, what is clear is that the solutions to maritime issues must be approached from an inter-agency perspective, integrating views in a constructive manner and seeking cost-effectiveness. This mindset should be applied to the employment of navies in the four roles previously identified. However, an effort will have to be made to develop the required interoperability among civilian agencies and military, not only technological but also procedural and finally, to practise and refine it through exercising.

6.5 Societies and the Global Commons

In the maritime domain national Navies in cooperation with other national agencies have their distinct part to play to ensure maritime situational awareness, to participate with their unique capabilities in maritime security operations as well as in ensuring safety in the global common. By partaking in these roles Navies are well up to foster the continuation of debates in their countries upon various maritime issues as well as the increasing importance of our oceans.

⁷ The EDA MarSur Project, the EU Pilot Projects, the Future NATO Maritime Services or the V-RMTC are but just a few examples of the way ahead.



7 CONCLUSIONS

The Sea remains vital not only to the European, but to the Global development of economic vitality, trade and prosperity. The Sea gives the ability for a nation, or group of nations, not only to protect, but also to develop national or common interests in the Global perspective. The maritime environment will remain crucial for the security, prosperity and stability of many nations, as well as for the conduct and support of crisis management operations.

The Sea continues to remain a major source of food for the world. Navies bring unique capabilities and skill sets to cooperation with civilian agencies, and will increasingly cooperate with them so as to ensure that the resources in our oceans are protected and exploited in a sustainable way.

The Sea will continue to provide critical access, allowing influence in support of political objectives, to the conduct of a wide range of security and peace support activities. The Sea also provides, when necessary, the means to assemble and apply decisive combat power at a time and place of political choice.

As the maritime environment continues to evolve, a number of irregular threats and risks to security, such as piracy, terrorism and armed robbery against international shipping come up. They are posed by new actors whose identities, capabilities and interests are not always clear, but never the less they constitute an international threat which now requires an international response.

Maritime forces are today and will remain a key element in the joint effort to ensure credible deterrence, defence and crisis response. Maritime forces will continue to take advantage of the Sea as a strategic medium in providing security, preserving international order at sea and in promoting national values and interests in the wider world. Future crises and conflicts will require maritime forces to be agile and networked in order to cope with situations characterised by complexity, tempo and unexpected events. This will entail dynamically tailored force packages incorporating increasingly diverse capabilities operating at a high tempo to control situations and engage adversaries in depth and, if necessary, from increased range.

However, to optimize and achieve a successful result of such response, it must also have an inter-agency perspective and be part of comprehensive efforts, aligning political, economical, information and military objectives.

The CHENS navies will continue to offer and provide maritime advices and maritime expeditionary capabilities, being ready to support the Global development of economic vitality, trade and prosperity.

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