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Comparison of the US New Maritime Strategy and the CHENS documents

A study conducted by the CHENS MSD working group

Executive Summary

The CHENS Maritime Strategies Dialogue Working Group (MSD WG) has compared the US New Maritime Strategy: “A Cooperative Strategy for the 21st century Seapower” and the endorsed CHENS documents. This paper provides a point-to-point comparison between two sets of documents. Based on this comparison it examines in detail the topics of maritime security operations and inter-agency cooperation. This paper's main comparison findings are:

- There are significant but understandable differences in terms of time, scale, character and aims but not in general context of the documents.
- The threats and challenges identified are broadly similar but are more systematically described within the US document. The minor differences are that:
 - the latter covers some threats and challenges not addressed in CHENS documents, such as potential national conflicts, climate change, the attractiveness of extremist ideologies, extremism and threats posed by attacks on legal, financial and cyber systems.
 - the CHENS documents pay more attention to marine natural resources and safeguarding biodiversity.
- Tasks and strategic concepts are handled in similar way, especially in the areas of the unique attributes of naval forces, the desire to operate in forward areas and legal aspects of the use of naval assets. There are differences in how jointness is viewed, the emphasis placed on non-military interventions and the prioritisation of action areas.
- Core capabilities were handled differently, with a greater emphasis placed by the US on strength whereas CHENS emphasised co-operation. Both shared a similar conclusion regarding core capabilities for future navies, underpinned by forward presence, sea control and power projection. However most European navies tend to project power primarily in peace enforcement operations.
- MSO is given a higher priority by CHENS navies who also emphasise Information Sharing. The principle aims of counter-terrorism and counter-piracy are implicitly agreed, as is the need for Layered Maritime Security, the desire for greater commercial interest in MSO and a robust legal framework.
- Interagency and Co-operation are interpreted differently. The US New Maritime Strategy views it as being internal between the USN, USCG and USMC. The focus is more inter-national / inter-agency within the CHENS documents. Despite this, both give a high degree of priority to this issue.

Introduction

The CHENS maritime Strategies Dialogue Working Group (MSD WG) was created to support a CHENS-US Navy Dialogue. In the first phase the working group produced a synopsis of CHENS documents and in the second phase consolidated CHENS naval activities for a presentation to the US Navy International Seapower Symposium.

In the third phase of this task it has compared the US New Maritime Strategy: “A Cooperative Strategy for the 21st century Seapower” and the following CHENS documents:

- The maritime dimension of European joint operations (MDEJO) (issued 2002)
- A Generic European Maritime Concept of Operations (GEMCO) (issued 2003)
- Naval utility countering asymmetric threats (NUCAT) (issued 2004)
- A vision for the future role of European maritime forces (ENV 2025) (issued 2005)
- Developing a European interagency strategy for maritime security operations (issued 2007)
- CHENS comments on the EU maritime policy green paper (issued May 2007)

Due to the fact that CHENS documents are each topic oriented they do not provide a comprehensive view on European navies approaches to seapower. This does not mean that such missing views would not exist.

This paper is divided into two sections. Initially it will conduct a point-to-point comparison between US documents “A cooperative strategy for 21st Century Seapower” and the relevant maritime strategic elements from the recent CHENS documents. After that, it will review the increasingly relevant topics of maritime security and inter-agency cooperation.

1- General points

In conducting this comparison the following general points were noted:

Time scale:

- The CHENS documents have been produced over the last seven years. The US document was written in 2007 and therefore does not suffer from any latency.

Character:

-The CHENS documents represent the opinion of an independent and professional (non-political) forum. They do not reflect the sum of all the national positions and cannot reflect any individual national positions that couldn't be endorsed by the whole group. Their substance and the tone are therefore consensual.

-The US document is not similarly constrained, but as a joint national document has had to achieve internal consensus between the US Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

Aims:

- The US document is a strategic one. It is a steering paper aimed at US citizens and decision makers in order to re-orientate maritime strategy.
- The CHENS documents position themselves more at an operational level. The CHENS documents can be looked at as a roadmap leading to a strategy. However, some strategic conclusions can be drawn from their findings.

Context:

- Both documents have been written in comparable political / societal contexts.
- The documents are designed to highlight the usefulness of navies and to explain their role and potential to an external public.
- To a certain extent both documents raise the awareness of the importance and role of navies, in times of growing land centric trend in political and military thinking.
- Both documents share the same understanding of Seapower's political and strategic role, in military balance and in globalisation and its consequences on States' new vulnerabilities.

2- Comparison

The methodology used for this comparison utilises the US document's layout and structure to articulate the differences and commonalities with the CHENS document. The US document "A cooperative strategy for 21st Century Seapower" is divided into 3 main chapters, which are used to structure the following comparison.

2.1 Threats and challenges

General Comparison

The CHENS documents articulate threats and challenges in a different way depending on their objectives. In MDEJO (2002) and GEMCO (2003) the threats and challenges are only used as a background illustrating the role of the Maritime Forces in European Joint Operations. NUCAT (2004) has a section on the nature of the asymmetric threat that closely mirrors the challenges identified in the US New Maritime Strategy and is of relevance to this comparison.

Threats and challenges are not fully addressed by ENV2025 (2005) which looks at 4 possible future scenarios and comments on their impact on Constabulary Duties, Naval Participation in Defence, Force Projection, Defence Diplomacy and Technical and humanitarian Assistance. However, it recognises that in order to address these

threats and challenges sea control is one of the main contributors to Naval operations. This echoes some of the themes within the US New Maritime Strategy.

MSO (2007), being dedicated to developing a European interagency strategy for maritime security operations, is focused on threats and challenges. This document contains a list of activities to be achieved by military assets, which mirror many of the challenges identified in the US New Maritime Strategy.

The Green Paper Comments (2007) identifies a wide variety of illegal acts occurring in the maritime domain and also emerging threats and risks, which threaten the security and safety of European citizens. This document identifies the unique capabilities of navies to enhance maritime security.

Given the different origins of the CHENS documents and the objectives of this comparison, the threats and challenges identified in the US New Maritime Strategy are broadly similar.

Point by Point Comparison

The threats and challenges will be compared under the following 8 headings taken from the US New Maritime Strategy:

- Protection of Trade.
- Competition for Resources.
- Climate Change.
- Social Instability.
- Transnational Actors and Rogue States
- Proliferation.
- Terrorism.
- Inter-agency approach.

Protection of trade. There is broad agreement between the US New Maritime Strategy and all CHENS documents in the need to protect sea lines of communication and supporting infrastructures. The CHENS documents identify that this is vital for Europe whereas the US New Maritime Strategy takes a more global perspective.

Competition for resources. The CHENS documents cover this threat, especially in the more recent papers. However, they do not articulate the particular risk identified in the US New Maritime Strategy, of nations exerting wider claims of sovereignty over greater expanses of ocean, waterways and natural resources – potentially resulting in conflict. In contrast GP Comments (2007) pays more attention to natural resources and mention the threat of illegal fishery and the need to safeguard biodiversity.

Climate change. The issues of Climate Change, including the opening of Arctic areas, catastrophic storms, loss of arable lands and coastal flooding, are much more clearly articulated in the US New Maritime Strategy. The CHENS documents only mention the challenges of Climate Change in very broad terms.

Social instability. This is widely reflected by both sets of documents, however, the CHENS documents do not mention the increasing danger from the spread of extremist ideologies.

Transnational actors and rogue states are covered in some of CHENS documents. However, they do not mention religious extremism and ethnic nationalism, which are referred to in the New US Maritime Strategy.

Proliferation is well covered in both the US New Maritime Strategy and almost all CHENS documents.

Terrorism is also extensively covered in the US New Maritime Strategy and in most of CHENS documents. MSO (2007) refers to water borne Improvised Explosive Devices, which is only mentioned obliquely in the US New Maritime Strategy. In contrast the threat posed by attacks on legal, financial and cyber systems is not covered in CHENS documents.

Inter-agency approach is more challenging for CHENS, who devoted an entire document to the promotion and development of a European interagency strategy for maritime security operations. This emphasises the need for an inter-ministry, inter-governmental and multinational approach involving the international organisations, multinational agencies and relevant actors. The US New Maritime Strategy focuses less on the inter-agency approach and more on international partnerships of common interest to counter emerging threats.

Concluding remarks

The New US Maritime Strategy identifies the threats and challenges more systematically than the CHENS documents. However, almost all threats and challenges are mentioned in at least one of the CHENS documents. The threats and challenges are therefore similarly covered.

The US New Maritime Strategy pays more attention to:

- The potential conflicts caused by wider claims of sovereignty exerted by nations
- The risks associated with climate change
- The extremist ideologies, namely religious extremism and ethnic nationalism
- The threat posed by attacks on legal, financial and cyber systems.

The CHENS documents pay more attention to:

- The protection of live resources and the need to safeguard biodiversity
- Th improvised explosive devices
- The interagency approach.

2.2 Tasks and strategic concepts

Similarities

The tasks and strategic concepts in both the CHENS documents and the US New Maritime Strategy are similar in the following areas:

The unique attributes of naval forces to address and counter the threats are covered in both the CHENS document and the US New Maritime Strategy. Both emphasise this issue, as they have been written to assist an understanding of the contribution that maritime forces can make to both joint and independent security operations. They also highlight the utility of naval forces and their unique attributes of flexibility, versatility, mobility, self-sustainability, expeditionary capability, joint nature, command and control, poise and availability.

There is broad agreement in substance and minor differences in style and emphasis in the way that the US New Maritime Strategy introduces its six strategic imperatives in comparison to the CHENS key priorities of: constabulary duties, sea control and maritime interdiction operations, naval participation in defence, force protection, enforced entry and strike operations, defence diplomacy and technical and humanitarian assistance.

The desire to neutralize threats as far from national shores as possible and the consequent need of forward deployment are core elements of the US New Maritime Strategy and are also widely mentioned in MDEJO and GEMCO. The political and military advantages to despatching a substantial maritime force to a theatre of operations during the early stages of a crisis are strongly emphasised in both the US New Maritime Strategy and CHENS documents.

The legal aspects of naval tasks are covered by both the US New Maritime Strategy and CHENS documents. However, the CHENS documents more explicitly refer to UN principles whilst the US strategy only states the necessity of enforcing the rule of law in the maritime domain. Both put equal emphasis on the sovereign status and the legal standing of the navies and the way this adds to their utility in countering asymmetric threats.

Non-military interventions: the CHENS documents highlight that military capabilities may be critical enablers for the success of non-military operations. The potential contribution that the maritime component can make to non-military operations is identified wherever possible, not only to provide humanitarian aid or hospital and casualty reception facilities but equally to support policing activities or to mount a rescue mission. The US New Maritime Strategy raises the importance of MSO and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, which are given the status of core capabilities of US maritime power.

Differences

Differences appear in the consideration of tasks and strategic concepts in the following areas:

Jointness: CHENS documents put more emphasis on joint and combined operations for collective defence. Joint service cooperation is repeatedly emphasised as a force multiplier and identified as a key principle in Europe's military capabilities. Air, land and maritime forces are not regarded as separate entities but as components of a Joint Force.

Prioritisation of action areas: The responsibility of the CHENS navies concerning their own and adjacent waters are not fully comparable with the responsibilities of the three US services concerning the US and adjacent waters. CHENS put more emphasis on their home and adjacent waters reflecting national interests and tasking as well as recognising the strategic importance of their waters as geographic buffer areas. The US New Maritime Strategy is by nature less focused on territorial and adjacent waters and only needing to treat the Caribbean as a comparable buffer area. However, it does place a far greater emphasis on global waters, particularly the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Concluding remarks

Both the US and CHEN navies share a common view on the utility of naval forces. The CHENS view the UN as more relevant actor in the naval field.

2.3 Core capabilities

Similarities

The similarities in core capabilities expressed in the CHENS documents and the US New Maritime Strategy are:

General. CHENS documents and the US New Maritime Strategy stress roughly similar core capabilities for future navies. Both have a classical vision of the final outputs of the naval forces (sea control, power projection, deterrence by the mere existence of fighting capabilities) but also consider the application of soft power as part of a strategy for influence. Though not comparable in size with the USN, European naval forces have comparable aims.

Forward presence. Both the US New Maritime Strategy and CHENS documents emphasise the principle of forward presence exploiting the unique attributes of naval forces. Both expand on the necessity of countering the threats as far forward as possible, which relies on both maritime poise and presence in the vicinity of foreign shores and the ability to intervene effectively.

Sea Control is a common theme in both the US New Maritime Strategy and CHENS documents. The link between “the ability to operate freely at sea” and “joint and interagency operations” made within the US New Maritime Strategy, does not appear in the CHENS documents. Freedom of navigation is stressed as key element and most European navies are well prepared for sea control. However, the CHENS documents do not make specific mention of the submarine threat.

Power Projection is a predominant theme in both the US New Maritime Strategy and CHENS documents. The US New Maritime Strategy envisions a USN that is well prepared to conduct and sustain power projection operations in order to defend US interests around the globe. This capability is considered the basis of the US armed forces combat credibility. In contrast CHENS ambitions are only envisaging force projection in support of a peace enforcement scenario. GEMCO and ENV 2025 recognize the important role of naval powers in support of military operations ashore (enforced entry, amphibious ops, strike operations, etc). They assess the current level of preparedness for amphibious assault operations and enforced entry operations as being sufficient. Although the required CHENS capability levels vary in significance between alternative futures, the roles and contingent capabilities discussed are similar between CHENS and US. The question of the strategic lift is closely connected to Power Projection and is deemed essential in both documents. However, the US seeks to 'maintain' their capability with a strong commercial maritime transportation, whilst the CHENS papers note these capacities as underdeveloped.

Differences

The main differences in core capabilities expressed in the CHENS documents and the US New Maritime Strategy are:

Strength. The US New Maritime Strategy places an emphasis on the importance of the strength. The navy is seen as a fighting force, which must remain strong and retain the ability to fight “alone.” This principle of fighting “alone” cannot be found in the CHENS documents and the word “war” is not mentioned.

Humanitarian Assistance. Both US New Maritime Strategy and CHENS documents agree on the importance of maintaining a capability to conduct humanitarian assistance and consequence management. However, the descriptions of the concepts are different. CHENS focus on the critical success factor of cooperation with international and other national agencies or organizations and more specifically NGOs and CIMIC. The US New Maritime Strategy envisions the navy role rather as the vanguard of interagency and multinational efforts. This difference is a consequence of US naval forces being more permanently deployed overseas in sufficient quantity to allow a quick and independent reaction to a humanitarian crisis if needed.

Deterrence. CHENS documents make no mention of nuclear deterrence owing to the political sensitivity of the topic whereas the US New Maritime Strategy does address this issue.

Coalitions. Because of their individual sizes European Navies forces tend to be forced to operate within coalitions for major operations, be they within a NATO, UN or EU frameworks. The US New Maritime Strategy views coalitions as a mechanism to achieve political goals rather than to achieve military effect. Consequently CHENS documents acknowledge the extent to which access to other assets and capabilities will be required. Depending on the nature of the mission rather than the size of the force, access to NATO capabilities is required for the more challenging crisis management tasks to ensure effective planning and command and control of units assigned. Aiming at similar results the building up of an European force is also covered in the CHENS documents, in particular in the scenario of "Separation of parties by Force." This represents the most demanding of the Petersberg tasks. By discussing mechanisms and procedures for force generation and decision-making, the GEMCO paper describes the existing European maritime and military capabilities as well as mentions the forces identified in the Helsinki Headline Goal¹. This underlines the value of CHENS maritime and military capabilities also as political tools for crisis management.

Concluding remarks

The USN is ready for fighting wars alone as the CHENS are apt to conducting independent naval operations. The USN uses coalitions as a political tool while the CHENS mainly use multinationality as force multipliers. CHENS use power projection primarily in peace enforcement.

¹ Now Headlibne Goal 2010.

3- Detailed Examination

The MSD WG identified two specific topics covered by both the US New Maritime Strategy and CHENS documents which would benefit from a more detailed examination. These are maritime security operations and the interagency approach.

3.1 Maritime Security Operations

The main differences in MSO expressed in the CHENS documents and the US New Maritime Strategy are:

Emphasis. The CHENS documents expand more on MSO in their documents than is the case within the US New Maritime Strategy. It is reasoned that this is because CHENS navies give a higher priority to MSO.

Information Sharing. The CHENS papers promote an information line of development whose objective is to develop an information led approach, facilitating decision making by appropriate national authorities responsible for and directing MSO. Numerous initiatives, both civilian and military, are ongoing within Europe for the creation of a Recognised Maritime Picture. The US paper also recognises the need to expand cooperation arrangements with other nations to contribute to the security and stability of the maritime domain, and talks about building trust and cooperation but it is much less specific about how information will be shared.

The US New Maritime Strategy identifies two principle aims of MSO: counter-terrorism (to foster protection of US citizens) and counter-piracy (to foster US prosperity). These two aspects often draw on common capabilities, for example counter-terrorism at sea can be seen as facilitating the sea-transport of goods, which also contributes to the global prosperity. Although not explicitly stated as having such a distinct duality, the aims of the MSO within the CHENS documents are broadly similar. The main commonalities are:

Layered Maritime Security. The need for layered maritime security from the high seas to territorial waters, including littoral areas, is common to both the US New Maritime Strategy and CHENS documents. Although many CHENS nations still monitor and act primarily within their territorial waters, EEZ and Designated Maritime Areas, most of the threats originate in international waters where surveillance and powers to act are more limited. The US New Maritime Strategy and CHENS documents both identify that MSO is underpinned by the ability to maintain a co-ordinated comprehensive picture of maritime activity, which encompasses territorial and international waters.

Commercial interest in MSO. Both the CHENS documents and the US New Maritime Strategy have similar conclusions on this area, stressing that an economic approach to the MSO questions is also necessary. They also

encourage a better mutual awareness and understanding of how the commercial shipping sector might contribute to and benefit from MSO, most notably in the energy sector. The majority of global trade is transported by sea, co-operation and partnership with commercial shipping agencies is therefore of primary importance in order to progress a holistic approach to MSO, as is done within the CHENS MSO document.

Jurisdictional. Both CHENS and US highlight the need of an enforced jurisdiction for the MSO. Noting that whilst there is welcome progress in providing greater maritime enforcement powers as part of amendments to the IMO Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts at Sea, the ability of ill-disposed elements to exploit weaknesses in the system remains. The strong engagement of the CHENS in favour of UNCLOS is mirrored in their ratification of the text.

3.2 The interagency and cooperative approach

One of the aims of the US New Maritime Strategy is to improve integration and interoperability. Both US and CHENS documents agree that in meeting the threats to the global security environment a strong and enduring partnership between civilian and military authorities is necessary. The common aim is to achieve synergy of civilian and military maritime security activities in a co-ordinated effort to address all maritime threats. Both documents also stress the necessity of a wider cooperation.

Interoperability and interagency cooperation have therefore been given some degree of priority in both series of documents, but there are some differences on the perception of this concept:

- Cooperation and interoperability. The US New Maritime Strategy document focus looks inward with the stated aim of the protection of its citizens and their interests. Similarly, this document views interoperability primarily as cooperation between the Navy, the Coast Guard and the Marines Corps. The CHENS documents consider interoperability in a broader concept, including cooperation between partner navies (i.e. combined activities) and with other services (the joint operations mentioned earlier).

For the CHENS, cooperation is a key element of effectiveness in real world operations. CHENS cooperation has been a key enabler for success in maritime operations such as Sharp Guard, Active Endeavour and in the maritime contribution to UNIFIL II. The success of these operations demonstrates the synergistic effects of the cooperation between navies of different size, capabilities and specialisations. Within the CHENS documents, the scope of capabilities brought to bear, directly depends on the ability to cooperate broadly.

The CHENS documents illustrate that an effective increase in naval power is provided by strong cooperation. This illustrates the benefits of multilateralism and interoperability. The force multiplication effects of cooperation and

interoperability against a backdrop of economic constraints, allow cooperating navies to field similar capabilities to better-funded, stand-alone navies. Therefore, multilateralism and interoperability can have as large an impact on naval capability as a favourable economic environment.

Forced to cooperate to achieve a critical mass for major operations, the CHENS have already experienced the strategic situation foreseen in the US New Maritime Strategy. On different scales, both US and CHENS share the same need for cooperation but for the US the capability resources may be available but the fundamental issue is ubiquity.

- Interagency. The CHENS share a view at the international level, that an inter-agency approach to MSO is vital. Given the civilian / military nature of the MSO tasks, they stress the need to advance it outside a single institutional structure. They agree on the necessity to invigorate existing national and multi-national governance mechanisms to ensure that the benefits of MSO to European nations are fully realised. CHENS view what the US New Maritime Strategy terms “integration” as being more appropriately termed “interagency”, albeit at a National or European level. It is a wider concept² than a combined US Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard approach. It has also been implemented on a broader scale and for a longer time.

It is noted that the US New Maritime Strategy does not mention the United Nations. The Strategy does mention the Global Maritime Partnership as the core initiative and catalyst for an increased international interoperability. CHENS documents stress, that the co-ordination of such an inter-agency approach involves the cooperation of international actors such as the EU (and its constituent agencies), NATO, United Nations, International Maritime Organisation (IMO) as well as law enforcement authorities in line with their responsibilities.

Facing more budgetary constraints than the USN, CHENS are convinced that Maritime Security cannot be achieved by navies on their own but require their integration into broad networks. They are convinced that the full benefit of naval forces in countering maritime security threats is only obtained through an interagency strategy. Accordingly CHENS documents offer a comprehensive approach to optimise the use of interagency cooperation, both civil and military.

• ² In the CHENS documents, the inter-agency qualifier designates a co-ordinated national inter-ministry, inter-governmental and multinational approach involving the International Organisations, multinational agencies and relevant actors concerned in MSO.

Final Conclusions

The comparison between the US New Maritime Strategy and the endorsed CHENS documents showed a high degree of similarity. The noted differences could mainly be attributed to the basic nature and scope of the documents.

Both the US New Maritime Strategy and CHENS documents assess threats in a comparable manner. Any differences are in emphasis rather than revealing fundamental differences in context or approach. Thus minimal divergence is noted between the USN and CHENS in the philosophy of maritime power and in the relative assessment of the aims and utility of navies.

As part of the review process in comparing both the CHENS and US documents, two productive face-to-face meetings were conducted with USN representatives. During these meetings both sides demonstrated their mutual interest in their respective views in strategic maritime matters, joint co-operation, and inter-agency interaction.

The CHENS / USN convergence on the majority of issues together with the inherent ability of European Navies to act in forward waters offer the potential for greater cooperation. When coupled with the strong desire of the USN to reinforce existing partnerships and foster new ones, this creates a significant opportunity and leads to the conclusion that a lot more could potentially be done to foster and develop cooperation and dialogue between European Navies and the USN.

Consequently, CHENS and USN representatives noted the advantage to further analyze naval strategy and opportunities for CHENS – USN cooperation. Both parties observed that the dynamics triggered by the MSD working group could be capitalized upon by continuing their dialogue through the established channels. This would require the continuation of the MSD WG dedicated to the strategic dialogue and analysis.