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# MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY AND THE EU GLOBAL STRATEGY: THINKING GLOBALLY?

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**Abstract:** Today, as before, the maritime domain is vital to keep our economy going. Recently, however, old and new threats have challenged the security of the European Union (EU): increased tensions between great powers; piracy in Somalia and West Africa; illegal immigration issues in the Mediterranean area; refugee crisis; terrorism and the illegal trafficking of drugs, arms and humans into Europe are setting the tone for this debate.

In order to cope with this issue in June 2014 the European Union adopted its own Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS). Ever since, the EU has loudly proclaimed itself to be a global player in maritime security, but the reality is fairly different. Indeed, a unified maritime strategy for the global maritime domain is still far off.

With this background in mind, the years to come will be crucial regarding the definition of the role of the EU as a global actor, or global player, if you will. The US-dominated post-1945 liberal world order will probably come to end and thus it is imperative for the EU to establish not only a Global Strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but also to build a specific grand strategy that can, among another things, put forward a maritime strategy anchored on a sense of collective political approach.

To follow up on this debate we will try to scrutinize, as the paper's title suggests, on two important questions: does the EU have a global dimension in what concerns its maritime strategy? More important, is the EU a global power?

**Keywords:** European Union, Global strategy, Maritime security, Grand strategy.

**Resumo:** Hoje, como no passado, o domínio marítimo é de vital importância para a economia da União Europeia (UE). Todavia, recentemente, a segurança da UE tem vindo a ser assolada por um conjunto de novas ameaças, como por exemplo: tensões entre as grandes potências; a pirataria no Corno de África; a ameaça terrorista; questões relacionadas com a segurança no Mediterrâneo; a crise de refugiados e o tráfico ilegal de drogas, armas e seres humanos, entre outras. É em torno desta conjuntura que o debate tem evoluído.

Para lidar com esta questão, em Junho de 2014, a União Europeia adoptou a sua própria Estratégia de Segurança Marítima (EUMSS). Desde então, a UE tem vindo a autoproclamar-se como um *player* global no âmbito da segurança

marítima. Contudo, o actual contexto diz-nos que este pressuposto encontra-se desfasado da realidade porquanto a existência de uma estratégia global no domínio marítimo ainda está longe de ser alcançada.

Sendo assim, e tendo este cenário como pano de fundo, os próximos anos serão cruciais para a ordem sistémica, particularmente, no que concerne à definição do papel da UE como actor global, ou *player* global. A ordem mundial liberal, construída pelos Estados Unidos após 1945, chegará provavelmente ao seu fim e é imperativo que a UE estabeleça não só uma Estratégia Global para o século XXI, mas também que tenha a capacidade para desenvolver uma *grande estratégia* que possa, entre outras coisas, apresentar uma estratégia marítima ancorada numa abordagem política colectiva.

Neste sentido, procuraremos responder a duas questões: a UE tem uma dimensão global no que diz respeito à sua estratégia marítima? Mais importante, a UE é, ou não, um actor global?

**Palavras-chave:** União Europeia, Estratégia global, Segurança marítima, Grande estratégia.

## Introduction

In the early fifteenth century, under the lead of Henry the Navigator, the Portuguese became – to paraphrase the title of Jorge Nascimento Rodrigues and Tessaleno Devezas's book (2007) –, “The Pioneers of Globalization”. Through maritime exploration the Prince would go down in history as the main responsible for what became known as the Age of Discovery from the end of the 15th century to the 18th century. In fact, extensive European overseas exploration emerged as a powerful factor in European culture and led to the rise of global trade and the European colonial empires, with the contact between the Old World and the New World. Since then, the maritime sphere has been a pillar of European livelihoods and prosperity precisely – but not limited to – by way of global trade.

Today, as before, the maritime domain is vital to keep our economy going. Recently, however, old and new threats have challenged the security of the European Union (EU): increased tensions between great powers; piracy in Somalia and West Africa; illegal immigration issues in the Mediterranean area; refugee crisis; terrorism and the illegal trafficking of drugs, arms and humans into Europe are setting the tone for this debate. Furthermore, these direct risks and threats are aggravated by pollution, illegal fishing and the destruction of livelihoods overseas.

One cannot help but remind that of the EU's 28 member states – soon to be 27 with Brexit – 22 have a combined coastline that extends 65,993 km encompassing the Mediterranean Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean. The length and breadth of this dynamic maritime environment, when coupled with the competing priorities of member states and coordination with non-member states, makes the maritime security challenges (and opportunities) very important for the future of the EU.

In order to cope with this issue the European Union made progress towards an integrated response to maritime security challenges by adopting the EU Maritime Security Strategy (2004). Ever since, the EU has loudly proclaimed itself to be a global player in maritime security, but the reality is fairly different. This becomes clearer when, for instance, the EU has to struggle to balance the myriad regional maritime issues with international maritime issues, showing that a unified maritime strategy for the global maritime domain is still far off. To follow up on this debate we will try to scrutinize, as the paper's title suggests, on a few

important questions: does the EU have a global dimension in what concerns its maritime strategy? Is it really “connected by sea”? More important, is the EU a global power?

The argument put forward in this paper will be that we are facing one of the most challenging times in years for world order – and for the EU in particular. As a matter of fact, from our point of view, the years to come will be crucial regarding the definition of the role of the EU as a global actor, or *global player*, if you will. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 set the tone for a transition period as regards to world order, which most likely will become multipolar. The US-dominated post-1945 liberal world order will probably come to end and thus it is imperative for the EU to establish not only a Global Strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century that will be coherent enough with its long term strategic interests and objectives whilst preserving its values and identities, but also to build a specific *grand strategy* that can, among another things, put forward a maritime strategy anchored on a sense of collective political approach.

This will be the central part of the argument explained here. We will present it in three main steps. First, the paper will briefly analyse the EU Maritime Security Strategy. Secondly, it will focus on the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), specifically in its maritime dimension. Finally, we will elaborate on the concept “*grand strategy*”, while focusing on the EU Global Strategy on maritime security.

## European Union Maritime Security Strategy

In a way, the EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) is intended to be the most comprehensive and integrated EU security strategy to date, building on existing strategies such as the European Security Strategy (2003)<sup>1</sup> and the 2010 Internal Security Strategy. Generally speaking, the EUMSS recognizes the importance of protecting maritime interests worldwide while simultaneously distinguishing that success depends on the ability to collaborate across regional and national levels. This strategy also identifies the different security interests and threats, and provides a comprehensive approach to deal within interests ranging from freedom of navigation and economic interests to border security and conservation of biodiversity. Finally, it lists direct threats such as conventional military challenges, piracy and terrorism, as well as indirect threats stemming

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<sup>1</sup> European Security Strategy (2003) was adopted by the European Council on 12-13 December 2003, and it provided the conceptual framework for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), including what would later become the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Titled ‘A Secure Europe in a Better World’, the ESS analysed and defined for the first time the EU’s security environment, identifying key security challenges and subsequent political implications for the EU.

from illegal fishing and climate change.

Most of the core ideas are explained on the opening statement of the Strategy: “the sea is a valuable source of growth and prosperity for the European Union and its citizens” and therefore the EU and its Member States have “strategic interests, across the global maritime domain” namely “in identifying and addressing security challenges linked to the sea and sea borders management” (p.2). Also, it clearly states that the Strategy is based on “EU’s founding values of human rights, freedom and democracy” and that the purpose “is to secure the maritime security interests of the EU and its Member States against a plethora of risks and threats in the global maritime domain” (p.3).

Essentially, The EUMSS has four guiding principles: 1. A cross-sectoral approach, aimed at coordination and cooperation among civilian, military, research and industry actors, as well as EU agencies; 2. Maintaining the functional integrity by making use of existing structures, instruments, policies, mandates and competences at the national and EU levels; 3. Respect for human rights, democracy and international law; and, 4. Adherence to maritime multilateralism by cooperating with international partners and organizations – in particular the United Nations (UN) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) – and by coordinating with international and regional maritime forums (pp.4-5).

With the aim of effectively dealing with the broad range of challenges, risks and threats, the strategy also proposes strengthening the EU’s response in five areas:

1. Mainstreaming maritime security in external action, relying on multilateralism, the comprehensive approach and regional capacity-building. The goal is to strengthen its role as “a strategic global actor”;
2. Creating a common ‘maritime picture’ by combining the various existing surveillance and information systems;
3. Improving capabilities, using pooling and sharing, dual-use initiatives and standardization;
4. Enhancing the capacity for crisis prevention and crisis response through common risk analysis and cooperation in planning;
5. Bringing together various civilian–military and public–private training programs and research entities and promoting inter-agency exercises (p.8-14).

In short, the EU Maritime Security Strategy seeks to generate cost and efficiency benefits by increasing comprehensiveness, coordination and coherence across the many sectors and actors dealing with a wide variety of security-related issues in the maritime domain. As the Strategy aims to accomplish this without changing or creating new budgets, mandates, policies or structures that would otherwise incentivize or force actors to cooperate, successful implementation of

the strategy is more dependent on the will of actors to heed the call for cooperation. As we shall discuss further on, this point is of the utmost importance to the argument advanced in this paper.

From a theoretical point of view, the Strategy has been successfully structured to achieve its objectives. The unfortunate reality, however, tells us that this isn't quite so. As a matter of fact, as a document, the EUMSS can be described as somewhat rambling that does not offer straightforward clear strategic choices.

It purports to identify common maritime security interests for the EU, but these are widely pitched. For example, they include: "the protection of economic interests, including the safeguarding of maritime energy resources" alongside "the protection of the environment and the management of the impact of climate change in maritime areas and coastal regions, as well as the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to avoid future security risks" (p.7). The fact that extracting oil at sea may be in profound conflict with climate change concerns is entirely glossed over. Succinctly, paraphrasing Brendan Flynn (2016) "it is a rather typical 'curate's egg' of an EU document-by-committee".

Also, it fails to put forward a clearer "hard power" naval strategy. It is, to use other words, a rather "smooth" approach to the threat of hostile states or terrorists: "in order to prevent and counter cross-border illegal activities" (p.7), is the closest reference to any clear danger. On the other hand, the text states that EU maritime actions are to be based on the "EU's founding values" and that "maritime security is understood as a state of affairs of the global maritime domain" upholding "international law and national law" guaranteeing a secure and free maritime world" (p.3). This might work in theory, but it definitely sounds too liberal.

Somewhat confusingly, the document shortly afterwards shifts to language closer to hard security. It states the EU must attend to "threats to the security of European citizens and to economic interests at sea following acts of external aggression including those related to maritime disputes, threats to Member States' sovereign rights or armed conflicts" (p.7). In fact, they're only vague references to "hard power": "Member States' Armed Forces should play a strategic role at sea and from the sea and provide global reach, flexibility and access that enable the EU and its Member States to contribute to the full spectrum of maritime responsibilities. Their sustained presence needs to support freedom of navigation and contributes to good governance by deterring, preventing and countering unlawful and illicit activities within the global maritime domain" (p.10). Ultimately, this doesn't tell us much.

The same ambiguity applies to the EU-NATO cooperation: "the EU should act autonomously and with international partners. Special attention should be given to the development of partnerships with international organisations [...]. In the context of crisis management, EU and NATO engagement in the maritime

domain should remain complementary and coordinated, in accordance with the agreed framework of the partnership between the two organisations” (p.10). Hence, this text is clear in what it doesn't say. It is not stating that there will be an EU maritime security capability developed apart from NATO. Nonetheless, a capability to act autonomously is implied by textual references to “full spectrum” or “armed forces”, which suggests the possibility of the use of force at sea in the EU's name. But, in reality, continues to be ambiguous.

### **The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and the Maritime Security Strategy**

The European Security and Defence Policy – ESDP, now changed into the CSDP since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty – has been designed on the basis of the security needs of the 1990s. The conflicts in the Balkans triggered the Franco-British St. Malo agreement of December 1998. It launched defence cooperation in the EU context with a focus on external crisis management, while retaining collective territorial defence as a core task of NATO. The so-called Petersberg tasks, originating from the Western European Union in the early nineties, had already been incorporated in the 1997 Amsterdam EU Treaty.

As follows, ESDP would focus on peacekeeping, peace building and peace enforcing tasks and on supporting humanitarian missions. The new maritime security environment already had its impact on CSDP operations. Operation Sophia (2005) involving European navies in the Mediterranean is in direct support of the EU'S border security activities. According to the EU: “The mission core mandate is to undertake systematic efforts to identify, capture and dispose of vessels and enabling assets used or suspected of being used by migrant smugglers or traffickers, in order to contribute to wider EU efforts to disrupt the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean and prevent the further loss of life at sea”<sup>2</sup>. The launching of a European Border Security and Coast Guard organization to replace the existing Frontex agency<sup>3</sup> is also proof of a quickly changing reality.

The EUMSS potentially forms a platform for the further development of the maritime dimension of the CSDP and generates effects that are beneficial to the CSDP and defence cooperation in general. How? Primarily, by way of three main pillars.

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<sup>2</sup> See Operation Sophia main guidelines at: [https://eeas.europa.eu/csdp-missions-operations/eunavfor-med/36/about-eunavfor-med-operation-sophia\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/csdp-missions-operations/eunavfor-med/36/about-eunavfor-med-operation-sophia_en).

<sup>3</sup> The mission of Frontex - the European Border and Coast Guard Agency - is to promote, coordinate and develop European border management in line with the EU fundamental rights charter and the concept of Integrated Border Management.

First, the strategy provides an opportunity to implement the agenda of the European Council and the Commission on dual-use research and capability development. Dual-use initiatives can reduce costs, enhance civil-military interoperability and improve the competitiveness of Europe's defence industry. They also provide opportunities for defence-related projects to receive common funding through the European Structural and Investment Funds.

Second, by strengthen international cooperation. Maritime security efforts stimulate cooperation and coordination among European and non-European defence actors, as shown by EU counter-piracy efforts around the Horn of Africa since 2008. The experiences from the Horn are reflected in the Maritime Security Strategy, and the strategy in turn provides opportunities for solidifying some of the ad-hoc arrangements that emerged from the counter-piracy efforts. For example, in the context of EU operation Atalanta (2008)<sup>4</sup>, flexible arrangements were made for information-sharing between the EU and NATO (a long-time hurdle in EU-NATO cooperation)<sup>5</sup>, which can now be expanded. Information-sharing and coordination efforts by the EU also include the merchant shipping sector and national operations with Chinese, Indian, Iranian and other non-European navies. In this context, lessons have been learned about maritime situational awareness, information-sharing, coordination among various stakeholders by a variety of entities, and friendly exchanges with foreign navies. Facilitating (informal) international cooperative frameworks and exchanging with major players are a boon to the EU's credibility as an international security actor.

Thirdly, fostering a comprehensive approach. The experience in the Horn of Africa region provided a test case for the EU's comprehensive approach. A sustainable solution to piracy required comprehensive action on land as well as on sea. The EU launched the Training Mission Somalia to train Somali security forces (2010)<sup>6</sup>, and EUCAP Nestor, which focuses on regional maritime capacity-building (2012)<sup>7</sup>. Atalanta's mandate has been expanded to allow for

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<sup>4</sup> The European Union Naval Force (Op Atalanta) Somalia - Operation Atalanta was launched on 8 December 2008 and is conducted in accordance with United Nations Security Council's resolutions. The Operation has been extended by the European Council until December 2018 and has the following objectives: 1) Protects vessels of the World Food Programme (WFP) and other vulnerable shipping; 2) Deters and disrupts piracy and armed robbery at sea; 3) Monitors fishing activities off the coast of Somalia and 4) Supports other EU missions and international organizations working to strengthen maritime security and capacity in the region.

<sup>5</sup> See the Joint Declaration on EU-NATO cooperation at: [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu\\_nato\\_factsheet-final.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_nato_factsheet-final.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> On 10 April 2010, the European Union launched a military training mission in Somalia (EUTM Somalia) in order to contribute to strengthening the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the institutions of Somalia. This support is part of the EU's comprehensive engagement in Somalia, which aims to support stabilising the country and to respond to the needs of the Somali people.

<sup>7</sup> In July 2012, the EU launched EUCAP Nestor, a civilian mission which assists host countries develop self-sustaining capacity for enhancement of maritime security. At its launch, EUCAP Nestor was mandated to work across the Horn of Africa (HoA) and Western Indian Ocean (WIO). As of the end

military action on shore. The Strategic Framework for the Horn brought together Commission and CSDP actors who need to work together in an operational setting. In addition, the Operations Centre within the EU Military Staff was activated for the first time, although on an ad-hoc basis, to coordinate and find synergies for CSDP efforts in the region. As a result, the EUMSS calls for enhancing the EU's role as a global actor and security provider, in particular through its efforts in the so-called European Neighbourhood.

According to Daniele Keohane (2016), after more than thirty operations through the CSDP, political interest in national capitals in acting through the EU's CSDP has been declining. Accordingly, from our point of view, it is important to point out the reasons member states should have high political interest in acting through the CSDP. They have been analyzed, for instance, by authors like Evmorfia-Chrysovalantou Seiti (2017).

First, continued fiscal austerity could possibly impact the already limited defense expenditures in Southern Europe and give rise to new security concerns. Having an integrated approach can prevent and efficiently manage the existing threats in the Mediterranean which became even more challenging and complicated after the outbreak of the Arab Spring. The percentage of refugees and migrants who are trying to reach Europe by crossing Mediterranean increases every day. Also, the incidents of terrorist activities in Mediterranean coasts, the threat of piracy attacks, as well as the fact that the Mediterranean has become a route of trafficking, drugs, arms, people, and money. This logic applies to other strategic regions, such as the Horn of Africa.

Secondly, another important factor which should increase efforts for further cooperation within the CSDP is the circulation of foreign fighters from Europe and elsewhere to the battlefields of the Levant and back. This phenomenon is not new, although the sheer size and widespread nature of the problem has given it a totally new dimension. Terrorist attacks and counterterrorism operations in France, Belgium, Denmark and Germany, highlight the nature of the threat.

Thirdly, related to the external actors in the region, European Union member states should enhance their cooperation within the CSDP due to the declining interest of the United States in maintaining a strong presence in the Mediterranean due to competing priorities elsewhere. Washington has always put pressure on Europe to do more for its own security, and will likely increase this pressure in the future.

Oppositely, in June 2013, Russia announced that it would permanently maintain about a dozen warships in the Mediterranean for its national security. After a period of weakness and instability during the 1990s, the rise of this "neopatrimonial state",

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of 2015, following a strategic review of the Mission, activities focus solely on Somalia (including Somaliland). The Mission Headquarters is currently located in Mogadishu. Since 2003, NATO has also operated its own counter-piracy mission off of the Horn of Africa as well.

as Francis Fukuyama (2015) likes to call the Russian Federation is reappearing on the international scene as a major security player, claiming the status of a great power. In some way, as Seiti (2017) underlines “is affirming its global role and its activities in the Mediterranean as a part of a wider strategy shaped by a flowing interplay of internal and external influences”. These are all valid reasons to pursue cooperation through CSDP. But the challenges are evident.

For example, the CSDP has to deal with a notorious lack of common commitment of the EU Member States regarding defence and security issues. Intergovernmentalism is not a top priority when sovereignty is put to test and post-World War II military organizations (like NATO) or *special relationships* are questioned. Although the EU Member States share the same core values, defence procurement has for a long time suffered from national interests overriding the need for pooling of resources. While Member States are able to recognize common values, common interests seem less obvious and lack coherent expression.

### **Maritime Security Strategy and the EU Global Strategy: thinking globally?**

At its summit in June 2015, the European Council tasked the head of European diplomacy, Federica Mogherini, to draw up a Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy for the EU by June 2016. This request followed on from the strategic assessment of the key changes and challenges in the global environment presented by the High Representative in 2015. This assessment, entitled «The European Union in a changing environment», described the challenges created by today’s more connected, more contested, and more complex world, and concluded that the ESS needed to be revised in order to provide EU guidance in the form of a common, comprehensive and consistent EU global strategy. The strategic assessment explored the implications of the changed environment and highlighted the issue of European defence. In a way, Mogherini recognized the need to define strong political criteria that could underpin a (real) EU Grand Strategy. Allow me to elaborate on the concept.

### **Grand Strategy**

Since the Peace of Westphalia, several states have tried at one time or another to assume a hegemonic position in the international system. This is what happened with Charles V and the Habsburg Empire, with the France of Louis XIV and Napoleon, with the Victorian British Empire and with Hitler’s Germany. Within varying contexts, we can say that each of these states tried to achieve specific political goals. In other words, taking into consideration several criteria, their

conduct was guided by a strategy. But what is a strategy? Given the numerous inaccuracies, it is necessary to conceptually break down the sense of this term.

From an elementary perspective, the term strategy is invariably associated to a military component intended to achieve a certain objective. In practical terms, for Paul Kennedy (1991, p.1), it is a means to achieve a particular end. However, this classical association between war and strategy has been recently enriched. Indeed, some authors, like Christopher Layne (1998, p.8), consider that we are talking about a “process by which a state finds a balance between means and ends in the pursuit of its security”.

Others, like Andrew Bacevich (1998, pp.87-98), argue that any strategy worthy of that designation aims to ultimately protect “interests” and “important goals” of the state by promoting the enhancement of its power not only with regard to its rivals, but to its allies as well. Any type of strategy will have to take into account not only the political and security needs, but also the economic reality. In this context, the highest strategy developed by a state is, according to Kennedy (1991, p.2), a *grand strategy*.

To Bacevich (1998, p.98), a grand strategy implies the existence of a coherent vision “regarding the organization and employability of power” in what are the most important interests of the state. Peter Feaver (2009) defines grand strategy as “the collection of plans and policies that comprise the state’s deliberate effort to harness political, military, diplomatic, and economic tools together to advance that state’s national interest. Grand strategy is the art of reconciling ends and means. It involves purposive action – what leaders think and want”. Thus it’s clear that a grand strategy requires some sort of straightforward connexion between aims and goals, the ability to have the right means to achieve the desired ends, and, most important, the political commitment to stand up to a similar task.

But its scope goes beyond. Therefore, in some cases, a grand strategy is interpreted as a reactive element to the various threats with which states are confronted, which thus determines ways of coping with those threats, be it by political, economic or military means (Posen, 1993, and Mearsheimer, 1998 ). It is also seen as a prime objective of the state, covering extremely vast concerns that go far beyond mere security considerations (Art, 1991, p.1). Again, to Robert J. Art (2009, p.1), a *grand strategy*, specifically the US grand strategy, refers to how a state “uses its military power in support of its national interests”. The author emphasizes that this grand strategy differs from foreign policy because the latter defines national interests that a state must achieve and then looks for the best way to integrate all the factors of power – economic, political, military, diplomatic, and others – in order to ensure and protect those same interests. Also, Art underlines that a grand strategy has a more narrow focus since it analyses how the military instrument can be maximized as concerns supporting foreign policy objectives “dealing with all objectives but only with one instrument”. In

short, as John Lewis Gaddis (2009) puts it, a grand strategy is “the calculated relationship of means to large ends. It’s about how one uses whatever one has to get to wherever it is one wants to go”.

The expression “calculated relationship of means to large ends” is not particularly appealing to who – like the Europeans – has to deal with other important issues, such as the current economic crisis; mass migration; social and political turmoil; democratic deficits; terrorist attacks; national strategies and interests of the Member States, only to name a few. Nevertheless, we do need “means” (able to support a grand strategy) to achieve “large ends” (i.e. to transform the EU into a global player).

Focusing on this debate, only recently, by way of Pascal Vennesson’s argument (2007, pp.12-20), the concept *grand strategy* has been used in a European context in order to describe the goals of the EU. Some of the advocates of an EU Grand Strategy emphasize the need to draft a new approach: more resources and more political will are necessary to boost the EUGS – enabling in the process the empowerment of CSDP. Overall the argument is that the EU is struggling to reach this goal and as a result is drifting away from its alleged role as a global player. The outcome has been the resurgence of a discourse focusing on the need for an EU Grand Strategy. Let me be perfectly clear. I don’t consider that the EUGS is anywhere near its potential, primarily because it lacks a full throttle grand strategy. This has to be overturned, immediately.

One cannot help but remind that in a world that is far from being a unipolar one, and is not truly multipolar either, the EU needs to find its own way to discover the means to exercise strategic influence in order to meet the threats identified in the ESS. The result is an increased ability to influence the international system in ways consistent with the “powerful idea” that the Union purports to uphold.

While the CSDP has no doubt come a long way since its inception in 2000, the review pointed to the many limitations to CSDP missions, to the non-deployment of the Battle groups, to the non-activation of permanent structured cooperation and of Article 44 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) on the implementation of a task by a group of Member States, and to the ever-decreasing national defence budgets, with Research and Technology (R&T) taking the greatest hit. To sum up, the EU could no longer afford to ignore its defence policy.

## **The EU Global Strategy**

The purpose of the Global Strategy, presented to EU leaders at the European Council meeting of 28 June 2016 under the title «Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe», was to give the EU the broad strategic framework needed to face today’s international challenges in a strong and coherent manner, drawing

from the wide range of tools at its disposal. Overall, the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) stressed five major priorities (central role for CSDP; new level of ambition; new tools; reinforcement of EU-NATO cooperation and implementation of a White Book on European defense).

It was clear from the June 2015 assessment that the EUGS had to make the necessary room for European defence cooperation. Following years of shrinking defence budgets, appeals were made by a wide range of stakeholders for a strong security and defence dimension in the upcoming Global Strategy. Some also pleaded for an effective and concrete follow-up to the new Strategy, for example with the already mentioned White Book on security and defence.

In terms of security and defence, the new EUGS was drafted to be a turning point for European external action, “our partners expect the European Union to play a major role, including as a global security provider” (p.1), says Ms Mogherini in the introduction. The relevance of this objective is underlined further on:

*The EU will be a responsible global stakeholder, but responsibility must be shared and requires investing in our partnerships. Co-responsibility will be our guiding principle in advancing a rules-based global order (p.18).*

While CSDP is not given a pivotal role, the strong emphasis in the EUGS on assuring the Union’s security through CSDP as one of the Union’s five broad priorities, reflects a clear and major shift in foreign policy thinking. “The idea that Europe is an exclusively civilian power”, according to Ms Mogherini “does not do justice to an evolving reality [...] For Europe, soft and hard power go hand in hand” (p.4). More, it clearly states its ambition regarding maritime security: “CSDP missions and operations can work alongside the European Border and Coast Guard and EU specialised agencies to enhance border protection and maritime security in order to save more lives, fight cross-border crime and disrupt smuggling networks” (p.20).

The Global Strategy’s list of five priorities, security and defence is thus ranked alongside an increased resilience in Europe’s neighbourhood; an integrated approach to conflicts and crises; cooperative regional orders; and a commitment to global governance. In the past, the lack of political will has been a key hindrance to further EU defence cooperation.

The document is ambitious in calling for increased political will and more strategic autonomy and is not afraid to raise the bar for future EU defence cooperation. Importantly, the Global Strategy not only identifies the European Defence Agency (EDA) as a key player (p.46) but also clearly highlights the maritime dimension. The main goal is to increase synergies between CSDP operations and missions, the European Border and Coast Guard, and EU

agencies, working alongside each other to enhance border protection and maritime security.

Furthermore, EU-NATO cooperation is given an important role in the Global Strategy, which sees the two as complementing each other rather than as rivals (p. 4; 20; 36). In fact, on November 14, 2016, ministers agreed on a new level of ambition in security and defense. 16 days later, on November 30, 2016, the European Commission adopted the European Defense Action Plan

Facing common challenges, the cooperation between European Union and NATO is more important than ever. In particular, in December of 2016, the European Union and NATO agreed to enhance the cooperation and coordination between Operation Sea Guardian, a flexible maritime operation created by NATO that can perform a wide range of maritime security tasks,<sup>8</sup> and EU NAVFOR MED Sophia, which started on June 22, 2015 and will be operational until July 27, 2017 and was formed to disrupt the business of human smuggling and trafficking in the Mediterranean and prevent loss of life at sea. The EU and NATO agreed to enhance the cooperation of these operations through information sharing, logistical support, and practical interaction. Moreover, they agreed to build upon synergies between the EU operation and NATO in the Aegean. In support of the above goals, the EU and NATO will continue to make full use of the mechanism of Shared Awareness and Deconfliction in the Mediterranean (SHADE MED)<sup>9</sup>.

Some Member States had feared that a stronger and more autonomous EU would harm the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), of which 22 EU countries are members, and called for a strong role for NATO in the Strategy. These concerns are addressed, as NATO features strongly in the Global Strategy. The Strategy sees no inevitable conflict between the interests of the EU and NATO. Rather, it shares the European Parliament's view that CSDP should reinforce the European pillar of NATO.

While acknowledging that "NATO remains the primary framework for most Member States", the EUGS states that "a more credible European defence is essential also for the sake of a healthy transatlantic partnership with the United States" (2016, p.20.). This view is compelling and is clearly in line with the increased EU-NATO cooperation seen over the past few years, of which the signing of the EU-NATO Joint Declaration at the Warsaw Summit was the most recent and perhaps the strongest proof.

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<sup>8</sup> See the main goals of this operation on NATO's webpage. Retrieved April 4, 2017, from [http://www.nato.int/cps/eu/natohq/topics\\_136233.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/eu/natohq/topics_136233.htm)

<sup>9</sup> SHADE MED is a forum where stakeholders, nations, or organizations that are affected by migratory phenomenon in the Mediterranean can meet, de-conflict, and coordinate their maritime security operations. This can be achieved by sharing situational awareness as well as assessing the evolution of trends and best practices. Furthermore, cooperation has been built on experiences from the fight against piracy in the Indian Ocean and on interactions in the Mediterranean.

With the EUGS, the EU thus confirms once again that it has chosen a path towards a future where NATO and a stronger EU complement one another rather than competing against each other. However it may be, it seems that at the core of the EUGS the grand strategy concept is not yet embodied. And that is deeply worrying.

## Conclusion

We've come a long way since Javier Solana's 2003 European Security Strategy. Solana's strategy had, to say the least, an overly positive view of world affairs:

*Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free. The violence of the first half of the 20th Century has given way to a period of peace and stability unprecedented in European history ( 2003,p.1).*

We may start by the obvious, since then, Europe's approach to World affairs changed, evolved, and it became more realistic in a way that it was able to adapt itself to the new challenges. One might say that the EU Maritime Security Strategy is a fair example of this evolution.

But the real questions are: does the EU have a global dimension in what concerns its maritime strategy? Is the EU a (real) global actor? Can we affirm that the EUGS is efficient?

With the EUMS the European Union strengthened its response to maritime security challenges recognizing the importance of protecting maritime interests worldwide. It is true that there's a lot of ambiguities in this Strategy, namely regarding the incapacity to define a clearer "hard power" naval strategy and also that, realistically, it needs NATO'S security blanket since its military capability is not (yet) up to the challenge. But there's also positive aspects.

First, the EU has now a real maritime security strategy. This is important since it defines priorities; threats; approaches; military challenges; cooperation procedures and so on and so forth. Second, as we had the opportunity to mention before, the EUMSS potentially forms a platform for the further development of the maritime dimension of the CSDP and generates effects that are beneficial to the CSDP and defence cooperation in general. For instance, the strategy provides an opportunity to implement the agenda of the European Council and strengthen international cooperation as shown by EU counter-piracy efforts around the Horn of Africa since 2008. And this is very important since, from our point of view, this "sectorial strategies", are without doubt at the core of "wider strategies", such as the EUGS.

Not surprisingly, that's why the EU global strategy recognizes the EU maritime dimension. Overall, the document is ambitious in calling for increased political will and more strategic autonomy and is not afraid to raise the bar for future EU defence cooperation. Consequently, it clearly states its ambition regarding maritime security. For instance, EU-NATO cooperation is given an important role in the Global Strategy, which sees the two as complementing each other rather than as rivals. Thus, from our point of view the EU has the potential to be a global actor and to, consequently, have a global maritime dimension. However, there's a bumpy road ahead.

We may start by the obvious. Europe neither is as prosperous as that, nor security on its borders (and, which is most disturbing, within) is guaranteed. The problem is that the recent Mediterranean migrant crisis, the Ukraine crisis, the financial crisis, global warming and energy dependence crisis, the terrorist attacks on European soil and the threat posed by the Islamic State, to name a few, have raised serious questions about the ability of the EUGS to deal with Europe's contemporary security challenges. With this in mind, from our point of view, it is evident by now that the EU needs to adapt swiftly in order to respond to these challenges. However, we do believe that this will only be possible if the EU defines a Grand Strategy (the EUGS is a good starting point) the way we interpreted it: one that is built upon a "large end" shared by all Member States (or at least the most of them) on the horizon, and not the other way round. Basically this means that the Member States have to share the same perceptions of threats and the same means with which to respond to such threats. National strategic interests have to be put aside.

Generally speaking, it is necessary to stress that the EU Member States can't protect their interests on their own, but only in cooperation with other members. This approach has to work for countries such as Germany, the UK, France, as well as for Greece or Portugal. But there needs to be common ground. The way forward is cooperation, coordination of national defence policies, rational management and sharing of resources at the European level, as well as in investment into research and technology that solidify the industrial and technological base of European defence. And yes, shocking enough, this means that Europe has to have a future agenda that focuses on military integration.

The European Defence Action Plan is important since it marks the first steps towards better defence spending for the EU at 27. Both the Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence and the White Paper on the Future of Europe are also good indicators. But until 2025 we need to be more assertive in this Global Strategy in order to cope with serious challenges from the Asia-Pacific region and North America. We are just a few months from 2018 and the EUGS isn't performing as it should, precisely because it lacks a grand strategy view.

Having said that, there is another big problem for the EU, and subsequently for the CSDP, namely the economic problems that we are currently facing. Just as Bill Clinton once laid it down – “It’s the economy, stupid” – it seems that the EU financial and economic crisis has made foreign affairs and security issues even more secondary on the political agenda of national governments. As a result, CSDP is not popular among the public worried about more important matters such as unemployment. Furthermore this doesn’t mean – as the EDA’s concept of *pooling and sharing* intended – more commitment from all Member States. All of this leads us to an obvious conclusion: a Grand Strategy can’t be built without defence spending. Yes, *pooling and sharing* is better than nothing, but we need more if we want to become a global player.

Finally, one of the biggest problems of the CSDP is the CSDP itself. The EU will not be able to pursue a Grand Strategy if the current bureaucratic ways of making politics remain the same. Most foreign and security policy decisions require the agreement of all EU countries. To me this seems outdated. In fact, and again, EU foreign and security policy depends on the will of Member States that might simply choose to diverge from the common path leading towards a common Grand Strategy and privilege their national interests. The CSDP wrongly continues to focus on conflict prevention; civilian crisis management; military advice; humanitarian issues and joint disarmament operations, instead of taking a leap forward to peacemaking. In short, a civilian structure is incapable to understand what is needed to pursue a more effective CSDP.

Second, as I had the opportunity to explain, the world today is (more) unstable. The EU is facing enormous economic and financial difficulties (for example, look at the problems related with energy dependency, demographic decline, the scarcity of natural resources and lack of military power). If we add to this the complexity of relationships between Member States with the ultimate outcome of political divisions, it becomes clear that the EU needs strong political commitments capable to bring about a common world view.

Thirdly, specific and individual strategic interests of the Member States are not compatible with the notion of the EU as a global player. What does this mean? It means that the EU needs to define its Global Strategy in order to set up its “large ends”. What’s the first problem? Europe’s competitors on the international arena (Brazil, China, US, Russia, or even emerging powers like South Africa, India or Indonesia) have some sort of clear-cut strategic objectives and thus are in advantage. To be a “player” and to be “global” it is also necessary to have only one (preferably strong) political voice. Most probably, France, Germany, Poland, Italy and Spain will continue to prioritize their national strategies and interests, and that is a big concern for the EU as a whole. Why? Because, whether we like it or not, size matters in International Relations. The second problem is that the EU is not a unitary nation state, which only makes things worse.

Fourthly, the old question concerning Europe's security. We can't ignore the fact that we are witnessing a smooth military disengagement of the U.S. from what is called the European strategic space – that's one of the reasons why we are debating a multipolar order in the first place – which means that Europeans have to become more and more autonomous. In other words, the EU has to be able to act as a regional stabilizer and to be a part of the global governance equation in order to stay strong in world affairs. Yes, we can do this with NATO in the background. Yes, although the US is the most important strategic partner of the EU, there will be clashes. However, Europeans need to build their own identities and define their own strategic interests. That is to say, the transatlantic relationship should not affect the EU's ability to follow its own course. Again, this will only be possible if there is a collective approach. We do consider that the recent events in the Mediterranean Sea and across Europe with the numerous terrorist attacks only undermined the EUGS, thus making it urgent to push forward new synergies, new dynamics, that can uphold the true meaning of a grand strategy.

Finally, let us make perfectly clear that the EU Member States don't share the same vision in this respect. There are those who regard the EU as a political process with clear-cut strategic objectives and there are others who simply regard the EU as part of an economic process and thus consider it apolitical. Different interests probably will have to be reconciled through a greater amount of "flexibility" in the EU's political and institutional procedures for it to become an important international actor (to let go of the principle of unanimity might be a solution). As Jolyon Howorth (2009) argues, if not with all Member States, at least taking aboard those who are politically committed.

In conclusion, we have a long way to go to achieve the status of a real power. Although diplomatic negotiations are important, their outcome often reflects the balance existing between material capabilities and immaterial capabilities. Generally speaking, a State has what is called a power base, i.e., a set of resources that enable it to transform potential power into real power. The existence of such kind of power means that a state may exert control or pressure on the conduct of other countries (Mandelbaum, 1998, pp.134-135). Unfortunately, the EU hasn't (yet) reached this balance, particularly in terms of defence and security. Maybe it is time to look across the Atlantic Ocean and pay attention to what Joseph S. Nye Jr. suggests. It is a strategy that combines "soft power" and "hard power" (Nye Jr., 1990, p.20), transforming it into an important European "smart power" (Nye Jr., 2009).

To be a *global actor* or *global power*, the European Union needs to push forward its Maritime Strategy and, consequently, its Global Strategy (wrapped up in a grand strategy view) in a way that can deliver upon promoting greater institutional and political integration, greater military and civilian capability, greater maximization of its resources and better working relations with key

partners, especially around the European Neighbourhood. In the process, Member States have to gather around a common vision of the CSDP and put aside national strategic interests.

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