

Stepping up EU security cooperation with Asia: sailing into the wind²

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Abstract: Maritime cooperation in the Gulf of Aden is one of the few examples of direct security cooperation between the EU and emerging powers like China and India. Both Europe and other powers have significant strategic interests in the Indian Ocean region, related to trade and access to crucial sea lines of communication throughout the area. The expanding naval activities from an increasing number of countries meet in their counter-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden and the wider Indian Ocean, in which currently all major powers are present in naval missions. The EU has the largest naval presence, while the activities of China’s first long-distance maritime operation have attracted much attention. This paper argues that there are unprecedented opportunities to establish ad-hoc security governance structures that go beyond the traditional alliances, and strengthen multilateralism in maritime affairs, and with that further EU’s security cooperation with Asia. In a region where US hegemony in maritime security is challenged by emerging power China, the EU is well positioned in stimulating cooperation and mediating between the palette of countries present, in the Indian Ocean and beyond. Europe thus has an opportunity to work towards contributing to increased stability in power relations in the Indian Ocean Region, and regional security in Asia, and therewith strengthening its position of a political and strategic actor in the security sphere outside of its territory.

Introduction: setting the scene

Increased tensions over contested waters in the South and East China Sea have highlighted the importance of the maritime side to regional security in Asia. Next to longstanding discord over Taiwan and the Korean peninsula, recent incidents over territorial claims in these seas have pressured several bilateral relations in Asia, most notably those between China and Japan and China and Southeast Asian countries. India has also added spice to the debate by its encircling discourse vis-à-vis China. As the economic growth of emerging powers China and India in the region needs to be fuelled, and 90% of global trade and energy travels by sea, safe

¹ This paper is partly based on Susanne Kamerling and Frans-Paul van der Putten, Frans-Paul (2011) Enhancing Maritimes Security Governance: European and Asian Naval Missions against Somali Piracy, in: *The Asia-Europe Meeting: Contributing to a New Global Governance Architecture*, Bersick, S. and Van der Velde (eds.), Amsterdam University Press, and Susanne Kamerling and Frans-Paul van der Putten (2011), An overseas naval presence without overseas bases: China’s counter-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden, in: *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, vol. 40, no. 4.

² Perhaps redundantly: sailing into the wind is a sailing expression referring to a boat’s ability to move forward despite heading into the wind. This is possible not by sailing into the wind directly, but by choosing the right angle. This is exactly what the EU should do with regard to its position towards Asia.

passage over the oceans is of vital importance. Emerging powers China and India want to take up responsibility of securing the sea lines of communications through several narrow straits in their own neighbourhood, and do not want to be too much dependent on others, the U.S. first and foremost. The ambitions in developing the naval capacities of China and India and testing the waters have therefore increased significantly over the past decades. Both countries have been predominantly continental powers with corresponding military capabilities until fairly recently.

The much debated U.S. ‘pivot’, or rebalance towards Asia and the Pacific of the Obama administration, has stirred up excitement even more. Perceptions about U.S. intentions and the responses among Asian countries in the Pacific, Southeast and South-Asia have made clear that the regional balance is highly in flux and increasingly vulnerable. This same U.S. rebalance has also spurred the discussion in European capitals about what this means for the changing role of the U.S. towards Europe, as well as the EU stance towards Asia. U.S. and EU interests in Asia do not necessarily converge, and the EU should seek its own position in the rivalry between the U.S and China, rather than choose sides. China is challenging U.S. dominance in the region, and the U.S. seems to be seeking to strengthen its ties with regional allies like India and Southeast Asian countries in response. The EU runs the risk of being crushed in between, and should therefore be more active in, and vocal about its own role and interests in the region and towards Asian counterparts. The EU should not aspire to be a Pacific power, neither is it likely for the EU to become a dominant player in the security sphere in the region - notwithstanding naval enthusiasm in several European capitals.³ But the stakes are high, also for the EU. Europe is a maritime power, with 90% of its external trade transported over sea, of which EU’s trade with Asia accounts for 26% of the total global container traffic.⁴ The EU benefits from a stable regional constellation in the Western Indian Ocean and Asia Pacific. So even if the EU does not enter the regional power dynamics in Asia directly, the EU does have a role to play indirectly, as well as in its own direct neighbourhood: the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean. In particular now that the U.S. seems to be simultaneously cutting down on its military presence in Europe, the importance of the EU having its own act together is increasing. This should begin in its direct surroundings, but must also extend to Asia, as European economies are often largely dependent on their trade with Asian countries, and vice versa. Focussing only on economic relations is however not sustainable. Improving the regional stability in Asia is also crucial.⁵ This unfortunately comes at a time of European cuts in defence spending in most European countries, which calls for an even more effective and efficient use of resources. So what can Europe do to enhance the security cooperation with Asia, further its interests, and strengthen its own position? To answer this question this paper will dive into one of the few examples of direct security cooperation between the EU and the many Asian actors present in counter-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden. First, it will give an overview of these naval activities of the EU and EU-Asia cooperation in the Indian Ocean region. It outlines the maritime security governance structures that have been set up since 2008, when the EU started its counter-piracy missions. Consequently the paper will look into the influence that these activities have on EU’s role as a strategic actor. It will then look into the Asian views on the EU as a global and security actor. The paper will conclude by indicating the implications for EU’s external policies towards Asia, and the steps that can be taken by the EU to strengthen its security cooperation with emerging powers in this region.

³ Holslag, Jonathan (2012) Crowded, connected and contested; security and peace in the Eurasian sea and what it means for Europe, BICCS/ EU-Asia Centre, October 2012, p. 18.

⁴ Kamerling, Susanne and Frans-Paul van der Putten (2011), An overseas naval presence without overseas bases: China’s counter-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden, in: *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, vol. 40, no. 4, p. 134-135.

⁵ Putten, Frans-Paul van der (2013) *The European Union and decreasing regional stability in East and South-East Asia*, NOREF Policy Brief, March 2013.

Naval activities EU and emerging powers

The period between 2008 and 2012 saw a multitude of naval initiatives and mobilization to counter the exponential growth of piracy attacks in the Gulf of Aden (GoA) from 2008 onwards. The explosion in piracy activity severely affected not only the shipping industry itself, but with that also the wider flow of goods that cross the Suez Canal on its way to either the U.S., Europe, Middle East, or Asia. Almost every continent was affected by the effective, although surprisingly straightforward strategies of Somali pirates looking for gains in the Gulf of Aden in the beginning, and later on, also in the Somali Basin and Western Indian Ocean. The disruption of food aid to Somalia was the starting signal for the UN to call for action. Single European countries - France, the Netherlands and Denmark - started up naval missions to guide the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) ships through the risky area. Missions were consequently taken over in December 2008 by the EU in the context of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP); EU Naval Force Operation Atalanta being its first naval mission ever. Although a palette of countries have contributed to naval missions in the Gulf of Aden and Western Indian Ocean, the majority of these countries are European or Asian.⁶

European countries are active in several operations and naval alliances: a) EU operation Atalanta, b) NATO-missions Allied Protector and Ocean Shield of NATO Standing Maritime Groups (SNMG) 1 and 2, and c) the Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 of the U.S.-led Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).

EUNAVFOR mission Atalanta is currently in its fifth year of deployment, its mandate being extended until December 2014.⁷ In March 2012 this mandate was also broadened; from the protection of WFP and AMISOM shipping to Somalia, and preventing, deterring and repressing acts of piracy and armed robbery on commercial shipping off the coast of Somalia, to the Somali coastal territory and internal waters.⁸ This also entails that Atalanta's command is allowed to target pirate camps on land.

Non-EU countries also participate in Atalanta; Norway has sent a warship to the region in 2009, and countries like Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Ukraine has supported the mission by sending staff officers to either the Operational Headquarters in Northwood, UK or the Force Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.⁹ EUNAVFOR has the largest naval presence in the region with an average of 4-7 combat vessels and 2-4 patrol vessels being deployed, comprising of about 1200 personnel, depending on the monsoon season.¹⁰ The EU has been very active in the region in cooperating with other actors like China at the operational level.

The EU has set up several initiatives for capacity building in Somalia and the broader Horn of Africa to address the underlying causes of the security problems in the region, of which piracy is only one. The 'Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa' was adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council Meeting in November 2011 and identifies five priority areas for the EU in the region; 1) building robust and accountable political structures; 2) contributing to conflict resolution and prevention; 3) mitigating security threats emanating from the region; 4) promoting economic growth, and 5) supporting regional economic cooperation. Atalanta is part of the EU's comprehensive approach, but further CSDP missions include civilian mission EUCAP Nestor and military mission EU Training Mission to Somalia (EUTM), the latter two

⁶ Europe is defined here as EU member states as well as Western European countries that are not part of the EU. Asia in this context refers to East Asian, Southeast Asian and South Asian countries. See also: Kamerling, S. and Van der Putten, F.-P. (2011) Enhancing Maritime Security Governance: European and Asian Naval Missions against Somalia, in: *The Asia-Europe Meeting: Contributing to a new global governance architecture* (Bersick, S. and Van der Velde, P. eds.).

⁷ EUNAVFOR, Mission, <http://eunavfor.eu/mission>, accessed April 2013.

⁸ Ibidem. Area of operation: Southern Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Western Indian Ocean, including Somali territorial waters.

⁹ EUNAVFOR, Mission, <http://eunavfor.eu/mission>, accessed April 2013.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

being aimed at respectively supporting maritime capacity in the region and strengthening the Somali National Government (SNG), Somali National Armed Forces (SNAF) and other Somali institutions by providing training.¹¹

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has also started up counter-piracy missions in the waters off the Horn of Africa, although somewhat later than the EU. Currently Operation Ocean Shield is in its 10th rotation of SNMG 1 or 2, with a presence of between 2 and 6 combat vessels, excluding aircraft. The first rotations in 2008 and 2009 acted under the name of naval operation Allied Protector and Allied Provider. Like the EU, NATO's Ocean Shield has seen its mandate extended until December 2014. A mix of countries has taken part in these missions. Next to the U.S., Canada and Turkey, European countries like the Netherlands, Denmark, Italy, the UK, Greece, and Portugal have participated in NATO's maritime alliance to fight piracy. NATO, unlike the EU, neither has a mandate nor missions on land in Somalia.¹² They do conduct maritime intelligence and surveillance missions in the region, which they report to NATO's Shipping Centre and (partly) share with the commercial shipping industry. The alliance also cooperates with authorities on land to effectively execute their counter-piracy efforts.

The U.S.-led Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), which also operates in the area, consists of three Combined Task Forces (CTF): 150, 151 and 152. These were established at the start of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in 2001 as the maritime component of enhancing security in the region, with counter-terrorism as its main focus. While CTF 150 and CTF 152 target the broader security issues in the region, including the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea, CTF 151 solely addresses piracy activities since January 2009. It is a multinational task force, currently under the command of the Singapore Navy.¹³

Asian countries like Singapore, but also Pakistan, Thailand and South-Korea have worked together with European (and other) countries in multinational alliances like CTF151, and have taken a leading role in commanding this naval task force. Pakistan has used one of its main warships for this, South-Korea a destroyer, while Thailand has dispatched a patrol vessel and supply ship. Singapore already joined the CMF in 2004, and is currently in its third rotation of leading CTF 151, while having dispatched eight deployments before in the GoA since 2009.¹⁴ Other Asian countries have however executed naval missions unilaterally rather than acting under the multinational umbrella. Malaysia is also a member of CMF, but in the fight against piracy has deployed individual missions to the GoA. In 2008 and 2009 Malaysia has sent out missions because of hijackings of Malaysian vessels, one time deploying three vessels (one frigate and two supply ships) while using a commercial tanker in the second occasion because of the high costs of naval deployments.¹⁵ Japan supported Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) from 2001 to 2010 by sending out refuelling missions. In March 2009, Japan has launched its counter-piracy mission with two warships and maritime surveillance aircrafts

¹¹ EEAS, Common Security and Defence Policy, EUCAP Nestor, http://consilium.europa.eu/media/1617222/factsheet_eucap_nestor_en_.pdf, and EUTM Somalia, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eu-somalia-training-mission.aspx?lang=en>, both accessed April 2013. EUCAP Nestor is aimed at five countries in the region: Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti, the Seychelles, and Tanzania.

¹² Except for UNSC Resolution 1851, passed in December 2008, which allows all countries and multinational alliances hot pursuit of pirates on land. See: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sc9541.doc.htm>, accessed April 2013.

¹³ *SAF takes over command of multinational anti-piracy task force*, Strait Times, 7 March 2013, accessed April 2013, <http://www.asiaone.com/News/Latest%2BNews/Singapore/Story/A1Story20130307-407099.html> Countries commanding CTF 151 before are Denmark, South-Korea, Pakistan, Turkey, Thailand and the U.S.

¹⁴ *SAF takes over command of multinational anti-piracy task force*, Strait Times, 7 March 2013, accessed April 2013, <http://www.asiaone.com/News/Latest%2BNews/Singapore/Story/A1Story20130307-407099.html>

¹⁵ Kamerling, Susanne and Van der Putten, Frans-Paul (2011) Enhancing Maritimes Security Governance: European and Asian Naval Missions against Somali Piracy, in: *The Asia-Europe Meeting: Contributing to a New Global Governance Architecture*, Bersick, S. and Van der Velde (eds.), Amsterdam University Press, p. 149.

being present in the GoA.¹⁶ The Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force can even make use of naval and air facilities of a de-facto base in Djibouti, for which Japan and the East-African country have signed an agreement in 2010. This indicates a new international involvement of Japan in the security sphere, which was inconceivable a few decades ago.

Emerging powers China and India have also remarkably stepped up their counter-piracy efforts in the Western Indian Ocean since late 2008. Although this is a nearby area for India, China has clearly broken new ground with this initiative. For many of the Asian countries active in the Gulf of Aden and wider region, this is the first naval mission against piracy they have undertaken outside of their own region. This also holds true for China. The continental power of old catches the limelight of maritime development, and the counter-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden unambiguously illustrate this.

China is currently already in its 13th steady rotation of flotilla's since January 2009 consisting of two warships and one supply ship that head for the GoA every three months. The Chinese ships are equipped with helicopters as well as task forces with about 70 Special Force Commando's.¹⁷ An estimated 4700 ships, Chinese as well as foreign, have been escorted and about 50 hijacked or attacked vessels rescued.¹⁸ The deployment moreover includes several of China's most modern warships.¹⁹ China's involvement in counter-piracy activities near the coast of Somalia constitutes a major development for China's navy as well as the regional constellation in maritime security in the Western Indian Ocean. Before, China had little experience with sustaining and executing naval out-of-area operations and cooperating with other navies and established alliances in a multinational context. As China does not have military bases in the Indian Ocean Region, it is dependent on using port facilities of countries in the region through Memoranda of Understandings (MoU's) with partner countries as well as through its network of commercial shipping companies, COSCO being the largest.²⁰

India has also started counter-piracy activities to protect Indian vessels and seafarers, although closer to home than many other Asian countries. In October 2008 the Indian Navy dispatched one of its largest vessels in the Western Indian Ocean as well as Gulf of Aden.

Since 2008, India has maintained a system of individual and group transit escorts of Indian as well as other nation's vessels through the GoA. A total of between 20-24 Indian-flagged commercial vessels transit the GoA every month, accounting for 13% of India's trade.²¹ India's Navy has prevented about 40 piracy attacks during these deployments in its nearby region.²²

The activities of Russia, being one of the BRIC-countries, are also worth mentioning. Like many Asian countries, Russia joined international anti-piracy missions in the region in 2008. Since then, the country has also steadily escorted transits on an individual basis through the GoA, parallel to India and China. In 2013, at least three Russian task forces are scheduled to fight piracy off the coast of Somalia. In March 2013, after a previous port visit to Mumbai, Russia conducted joint anti-piracy drills with India on its way to the GoA.²³ In February, the Russian Navy had already executed an anti-piracy exercise with NATO in these waters.²⁴

¹⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁷ Kamerling, Susanne and Frans-Paul van der Putten (2011), An overseas naval presence without overseas bases: China's counter-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden, in: *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, vol. 40, no. 4, p. 122.

¹⁸ Pham, P.J. (forthcoming), Pirates and Dragon Boats: Assessing the Chinese Navy's Recent East African Deployments, in: *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, vol. 4, no. 1.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ Kamerling, Susanne and Frans-Paul van der Putten (2011), An overseas naval presence without overseas bases: China's counter-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden, in: *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, vol. 40, no. 4, p.132.

²¹ Official website Indian Navy, accessed April 2012, <http://www.indiannavy.nic.in/operations/anti-piracy-operations>

²² Ibidem.

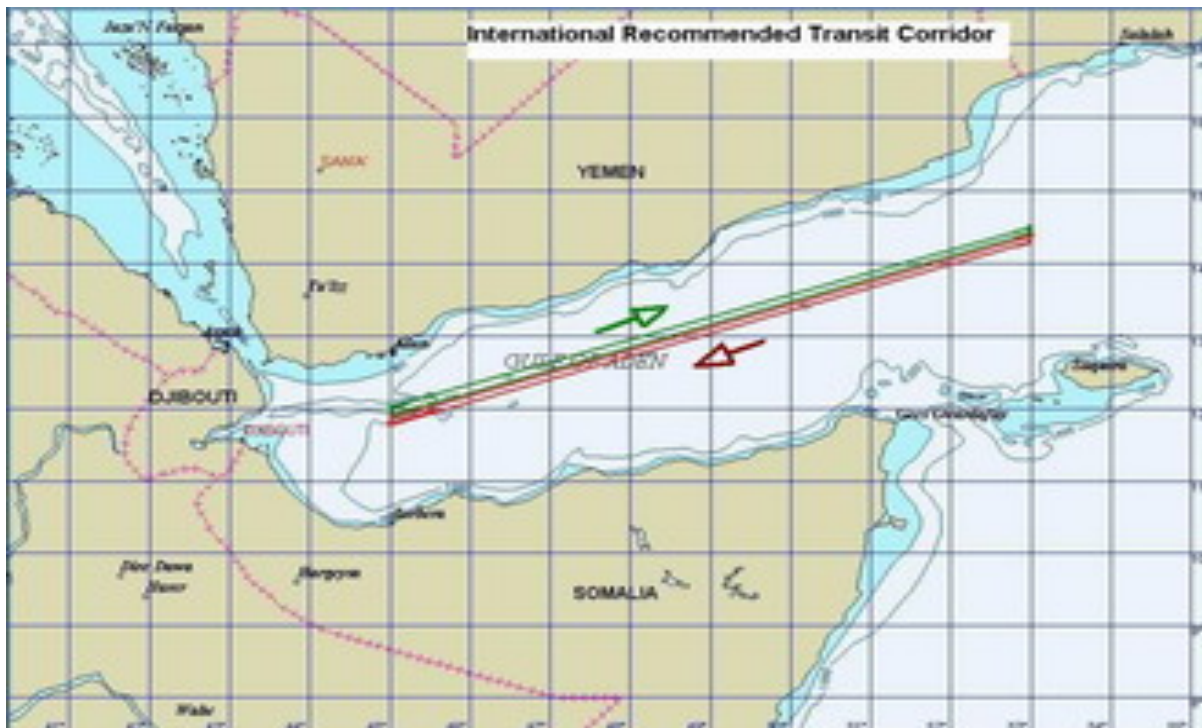
²³ Russian warships complete Gulf of Aden anti-piracy control, *Rianovosti*, 4 March 2013, accessed April 2013, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20130304/179807457.html>

²⁴ NATO and Russian Federation in counter-piracy exercise at sea, 26 February 2013, accessed April 2013, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_98853.htm

The fact that so many countries are present in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean indicates the importance of guaranteeing the security of the sea lines of communication in the region for a large range of countries. The presence of so many Asian countries in this region indicates a new development that is essential for the EU to take into account. It signals that many of the countries present see it in their interest to test the waters outside of their direct neighbourhood.

Maritime security cooperation and governance

With all this activity in the region in countering piracy, it might sound somewhat crowded, however the area of operation is about as large as Western Europe. The Gulf of Aden however is narrower and the need for the naval activities to be coordinated, and naval assets from the various countries to be efficiently used was clear from the start. To make sure the gate to the Suez Canal and Mediterranean Sea was well arranged in terms of protection of shipping passing through, the EU initiated the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) in February 2009. As a transit corridor for commercial shipping, the IRTC runs both ways in two shipping lanes throughout the northern part of the GoA, south of the Yemeni coast. The three multinational counter-piracy groupings of the EU, NATO and CTF151 guard the IRTC on a continuous basis. Countries like China, India and Russia conduct their individual and group transit escorts parallel to this IRTC. In the piracy attempts that did occur in or outside this corridor the countries and task forces present have combined their efforts and used the naval assets closest to the attack to divert actual hijacking. In practice, there are many examples of multinational cooperation outside of the formal arrangements in safeguarding ships, seafarers and sometimes fishermen alike.



Source: Maritime Liaison Office MARLO, see: <http://www.cusnc.navy.mil/marlo/Guidance/Corridor.htm>

To formally coordinate all the regional anti-piracy efforts however, the six-weekly Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) meetings were set up, which take place in Bahrain, the basis of the U.S. Fifth Fleet and CMF. This officer-level forum is meant to share and discuss tactical and operational information. If needed, members agree upon a certain division of tasks, use of available naval assets and presence in geographical areas of the Western Indian Ocean. Next to EUNAVFOR, NATO and CTF151, all other countries that operate in

the region, including China and India, take part in SHADE. Representatives of international organisations like INTERPOL and the shipping industry also have a seat at the table. Late 2009, China has proposed at a SHADE meeting to take up a leading role in co-chairing SHADE, together with rotating chairs EU and CMF, which was granted beginning of 2010, despite alleged objections by India.²⁵

The EU has also set up a web-based system for ships to apply for assistance and transit: the Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa (MSCHOA). This centre coordinates all transit requests for EUNAVFOR, NATO and CTF151 stemming from commercial shipping for passage through the Gulf of Aden. There are moreover military as well as civilian systems through which all naval authorities as well as commercial vessels communicate, and in which threat updates and other relevant information is reported and shared.

At the more strategic level the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) was set up in 2009 under the umbrella of the United Nations in New York. It is a voluntary international forum of countries, international organisations and industry groups that are in some way involved in counter-piracy initiatives near the Somali coast. This forum has brought together more than 60 countries and international organisations and nine large industry representations.²⁶ Five working groups are active that work on several issues related to Somali piracy:

- Working group 1 (chaired by the United Kingdom): works on military coordination and regional capacity building;
- Working group 2 (chaired by Denmark): provides support in legal issues and judicial activities;
- Working group 3 (chaired by South-Korea): strengthens commercial shipping's self-awareness and protection;
- Working group 4 (chaired by Egypt): works on public communication and diplomacy by raising awareness;
- Working group 5 (chaired by Italy): identifies and tries to disrupt financial networks behind piracy.²⁷

It operates with the help of its own trust fund established by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon in January 2010, contributors being governments, intergovernmental or non-governmental organisations, private sector organisations and the public at large. For 2013 and beyond, the CGPCS has identified four priorities: 1) communicate more effectively the multi-faceted work on going in the Contact Group to counter piracy emanating from Somalia; 2) better integrate the Contact Group's work with that of formal institutional actors through deliberate and purposeful collaboration; 3) strengthen and focus law enforcement efforts to disrupt pirate networks ashore, including by establishing effective information exchanges among prosecutors, investigators, and private industry; and 4) proactively address the complex policy issues associated with the use of armed security teams embarked for self-protection on commercial ships.²⁸

At a CGPCS plenary meeting end of 2009 China agreed to patrol a specific 'area of responsibility' in or near the IRTC through the Gulf of Aden, like EUNAVFOR, NATO and

²⁵ Pham, P.J. (forthcoming), *Pirates and Dragon Boats: Assessing the Chinese Navy's Recent East African Deployments*, in: *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, vol. 4, no. 1, and Frans-Paul van der Putten (2011), *Harmonious Ocean: China's Response to Somali Piracy as a Contribution to Maritime Security Governance*, Paper ISA Montreal, 17 March 2011, see: http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/5/0/0/7/2/pages500724/p500724-1.php, accessed April 2013.

²⁶ Official website CGPCS, accessed April 2013, <http://www.thecgpcs.org/about.do?sessionId=hRu51wqpDq8XGSggmk8Vn15MX0aQF8mPhx2UzyabgU8Lymy0XT33eiGa8ZJUEwRZ?action=background>

²⁷ Official website CGPCS, accessed April 2013, <http://www.thecgpcs.org/work.do?action=work>

²⁸ Ibidem, <http://www.thecgpcs.org/about.do?action=mission>

CTF151.²⁹ Both the mechanisms of SHADE and the CGPCS are good examples of informal security governance structures that can be labelled as ‘multilateralism light’, a concept aiming at pinpointing the trend of dealing with all kinds of political and security issues in informal institutions and arrangements.³⁰ This rise in more informal global governance is something that the EU must adapt its strategies to. The field of maritime security could be seen as a test case in this regard, from which lessons can be drawn for other political or security issues in which multinational cooperation is needed. Especially emerging powers seem to be very active within these kinds of governance structures, as they are still underrepresented in formal institutions of the international system. The EU can make use of this by strengthening its ties with emerging powers like China and India within these informal governance structures. Often non-governmental bodies are also represented in these forums, which would moreover fit the comprehensive approach to security that the EU often advocates.

A definition of security governance in the maritime sphere that could be useful in this regard is that of Torsten Geise.³¹ He has labelled maritime security governance as being “*a multi-faceted process in which nominally autonomous public and private actors, seen as bound by a commonly shared security goal or interest, coordinate their various means through binding policy decisions that allow for collectively managing the complexities of contemporary security risks*”.³² Maritime security governance is needed to efficiently make use of the fairly limited assets available, to maximise the results of the initiatives and to make a longer-term commitment more sustainable for governments.³³ The following elements need to be included in any system of maritime security governance: 1) a legal framework that defines options and responsibilities for actors engaged in counter-piracy; 2) a global coordinating mechanism that acts on behalf of all relevant national governments and that offers a central platform for communication and coordinates the execution of relevant initiatives; 3) a set of enforcement tools aimed at protecting potential victims, deterring and capturing pirates, and bringing piracy suspects to trial; and 4) a close aligning of the previous elements with on-land approaches to piracy and with business sector actors relevant to maritime piracy.³⁴ The EU can also play a role in further developing the elements of this mechanism.

The more crystallised these elements are, and the better they are interrelated, the more advanced the system of (maritime) security governance is. In light of counter-piracy missions in the GoA and Western Indian Ocean this type of governance does exist with all elements present. However, it is still relatively weakly developed and needs further improvement.

After a few years of counter-piracy missions, the main effect of the naval activities and maritime security governance of the initiatives was initially that the pirates expanded their area of operation to the Mozambique Channel or as far as the Arabian Sea. As the graph below shows, 2009-2011 were peak years for the pirates active in the Gulf of Aden and beyond. However, 2012 the numbers of pirate attacks as well as hijacks has dropped considerably, as is the table below illustrates. This trend seems to continue throughout the first months of 2013. Although it is not sure whether this trend is the sole result of the array of counter-piracy missions active in the region and the advancement of the maritime security governance, it seems likely that it has positively contributed to this shift in success of pirate’s

²⁹ Pham, P.J. (forthcoming), *Pirates and Dragon Boats: Assessing the Chinese Navy’s Recent East African Deployments*, in: *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, vol. 4, no. 1

³⁰ This term was first coined by Risto Penttila in a paper called ‘Multilateralism light; the rise of informal international governance’, CER EU2020 Essay, Centre for European Reform, July 2009.

³¹ Geise, Torsten (2010) *Power in Security Governance Formation: East Asia and the case of maritime trade*, paper presented at SGIR 7th Pan-European International Relations Conference, Stockholm, 9-11 September 2010.

³² *Ibidem*, p.18.

³³ Kamerling, Susanne and Van der Putten, Frans-Paul (2011) *Enhancing Maritimes Security Governance: European and Asian Naval Missions against Somali Piracy*, in: *The Asia-Europe Meeting: Contributing to a New Global Governance Architecture*, Bersick, S. and Van der Velde (eds.), Amsterdam University Press, p. 144.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p.144-145.

activities. The increased presence of private security companies (PSC's) and vessel protection detachment (VPD's) teams on board of commercial vessels and the better implementation of protection measures by the shipping industry like described in the Best Management Practices (BMPs) has also been mentioned as a reason for the decrease.³⁵

Piracy activities		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Somali Basin	Hijacks	8	26	26	4	2
	Attacks	11	58	68	52	7
	Disruptions	N/A	15	88	52	19
Gulf of Aden (incl. IRTC)	Hijacks	33	18	12	1	1
	Attacks	42	67	33	29	6
	Disruptions	N/A	47	56	21	6
Arabian Sea	Hijacks	N/A	1	7	19	5
	Attacks	N/A	5	31	48	10
	Disruptions	N/A	N/A	3	23	15

Source: NATO website, 2013. See: <http://www.mc.nato.int/about/Pages/Operation%20Ocean%20Shield.aspx>

In the context of the cooperation between the EU and emerging powers however, it is important to enhance the security cooperation between the EU and China and India. The counter-piracy initiatives present - which will at least be prolonged until the end of 2014 - are a good instrument for doing this, as they are one of the few examples of direct security cooperation between these actors. The EU should however be more aware of the broader meaning and opportunities that lie within the scope of maritime security cooperation and take a more systematic approach in this matter. This could reap results in cooperation also outside of GoA and the Western Indian Ocean in the security sphere and beyond. The EU could also stimulate regional forms of security governance in other areas. Before turning to more concrete suggestions however, the implications of the naval missions for the EU as a security actor will first be briefly looked into, as well as Asian views on the EU as a global and security actor.

European and Asian views on the EU as a security actor

EU's identity as a foreign and security actor has in general strengthened since the advancement of the Common Foreign and Security Policy launched by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993. The European Security Strategy document of 2003, and its implementation review document of 2008 has actively stimulated internal discussions and awareness about the role the EU should or could play as a global security actor. Promoting effective multilateralism and a rule-based international order were - and still are - seen as

³⁵ Van Ginkel, Bibi Frans-Paul van der Putten and Willem Molenaar (2013) *State or Private Protection Against Maritime Piracy: A Dutch Perspective*, Clingendael Report, February 2013.

being of primary security interest to the EU and its Member States.³⁶ The concept of ‘Strategic Partnerships’ that the EU has developed also aims at furthering these interests and strengthening the visibility of the EU as a foreign and security actor through partnerships.³⁷ These partnerships are especially targeted at emerging BRIC powers, China and India being among the happy few on the Asian side. Although within these strategic partnerships, security issues are not as high on the agenda as economy and trade issues are, they always form a part - although a somewhat artificial one - of summits and declarations that are held in this context. Counter-piracy for example, was mentioned as one of the three areas in which the EU and India could strengthen security cooperation at the EU-India Summit in Delhi in 2012.³⁸ However, concrete action and follow-up unfortunately lags behind. The maritime security governance in place in the GoA and Western Indian Ocean - and at the strategic level in New York - could be a suitable mechanism to take concrete steps and make a serious effort in enhancing cooperation between the EU and emerging powers India and China. Also, it could be a means by which the EU can further its interests of effective multilateralism and a rule-based international order. By not sufficiently approaching this cooperation in a systematic way, the EU runs the risk that initiatives in working together with emerging powers are being taken over by EU Member States unilaterally, thereby weakening the EU’s visibility as a security actor and possible partner in future cooperation.

The EUNAVFOR Atalanta mission, as the first naval mission under the Common Security and Defence Policy, has surely made the EU visible as one of the players in maritime security, at least in its direct neighbourhood. Exactly because the EU is not seen as a big contender in the security sphere by emerging powers - unlike the U.S., it is an acceptable partner for many countries, including China and India. It’s role in the security sphere is however not very known in these two countries, which see the EU predominantly as an economic power house.³⁹ If nothing else, this could be seen as an advantage, because it is an image that can still be built up from nearly scratch.

Apart from the EU’s self-perception as a security actor, it is good to also take into account the views in Asia, specifically emerging powers China and India, on the EU. These European and Asian views do not necessarily converge, and the EU, like any other actor on the international stage, should be aware of how it is viewed by others. It is also necessary to keep in mind that there are diverging views between the EU and China and India on the concept of ‘security’ itself, as the Asian countries often have a more traditional view on security. This results in the perception that the EU is often not delivering.⁴⁰ Recent research of the NFG Research Group ‘*Asian views on the EU*’ of the Free University in Berlin have preliminary identified the dominant perceptions in India and China on the EU’s global role. Although Chinese and Indian views diverge somewhat, the common denominators are:⁴¹

- First, the EU as a trading bloc or economic superpower, damaged somewhat by the Eurocrisis;
- Second, the EU as *not* being a serious geopolitical player, and divided on foreign policy issues;
- Thirdly, the EU as a major actor in norm setting in International Relations;

³⁶ Council of the European Union (2003) *A Secure Europe in a Better World – The European Security Strategy*, 12 December 2003, Brussels, p. 9.

³⁷ Stumbaum, May-Britt (2012) *How does Asia View the EU; Security in an Interpolar World*, NFG Working Paper, No. 1, p. 5-9.

³⁸ Declaration EU-India Summit, Delhi, 2012.

³⁹ Freie Universität Berlin, NFG Research Group (2012) *Asian Views of the European Union as a Security Actor*, Report Annual Conference and Academic Meeting, 20-21 September 2012, Peking, China.

⁴⁰ Freie Universität Berlin, NFG Research Group (2012) *Asian Views of the European Union as a Security Actor*, Report Annual Conference and Academic Meeting, 20-21 September 2012, Peking, China, p. 7.

⁴¹ Stumbaum, May-Britt (2012) *How does Asia View the EU; Security in an Interpolar World*, NFG Working Paper, No. 1, p. 5-9.

- And fourth, the EU as a contributor to models of governance, most notably in regional cooperation and integration.

It can be insightful to be aware of these views of these Asian emerging powers, when further discussing the role of the EU in security issues like maritime security and looking at possibilities in cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region. Notwithstanding the somewhat modest views on EU's global role, there is however some room for manoeuvre for the EU as far as these Asian actors are concerned. With regard to EU cooperation with Asia, more specific in the security field, China and India do see some potential in this regard according to the preliminary findings of the NFG research group. Three areas are mentioned. The first is conflict regulation and post-conflict reconstruction. The second is peacekeeping, and the third is promotion of regional and multilateral governance.⁴² Especially the latter is interesting in light of the topic of this paper; maritime security governance and EU-Asia cooperation. In terms of multilateral governance, both the EU and China and India seem to acknowledge that there is room for the EU to play a role in this regard.

However, there is a lack of visibility of what the EU does in terms of security in India and China as well as a misunderstanding in terms of performance because of differences in the understanding of the concept of security. Both issues need to be addressed. Better PR, public diplomacy and 'brand management' of the EU in India and China is seen as essential in this regard.⁴³ Now what are the implications of all this for the EU and its policy towards Asia, in specific emerging powers China and India?

Implications EU's stance towards Asia

Taking into account the naval activities of Europe and Asia near the Somali coast, the importance of the Indian Ocean Region, and the possibilities for cooperation with emerging powers, the EU should be more aware about its opportunities in furthering maritime security governance in the Gulf of Aden and Western Indian Ocean as well as its role as a security actor in this context. Never before were so many actors involved in fighting maritime piracy in a single region. Moreover, never before were so many Asian actors, most notably China and India, active in maritime security in out-of-area operations. The Asian actors in question previously had little experience with multinational naval cooperation and conducting and sustaining long-distance naval missions. Until now, powers like China, India but also Russia tend to operate individually. The EU is well positioned to stimulate further incorporation of these actors in maritime security governance structures as well as improving the quality of these structures. This would fit well in EU's interests of furthering multilateralism and a rule based international order. The EU moreover has the opportunity to launch new initiatives and platforms for interaction and cooperation with these emerging powers. It can also try to expand current mechanisms of the IRTC to include non-Western powers and strengthen the cooperation with emerging powers within SHADE.⁴⁴ Perhaps exactly because the EU is not a dominant security actor, the EU is welcome to play that role.

The EU's Atalanta mission and other activities in maritime security governance mechanisms have enhanced EU's role and visibility as a security actor, at least in maritime sphere. The EU has also been active in cooperating with China, India and other new actors in the previously unexplored field of naval military-to-military contact. Its role in maritime security is evolving, although logically more so in its direct neighbourhood than further away. The US pivot towards Asia also means a more independent and different role for the EU in security matters

⁴² Universität Berlin, NFG Research Group (2012) *Asian Views of the European Union as a Security Actor*, Report Annual Conference and Academic Meeting, 20-21 September 2012, Peking, China, p. 8.

⁴³ Ibidem.

⁴⁴ Kamerling, Susanne and Van der Putten, Frans-Paul (2011) Enhancing Maritimes Security Governance: European and Asian Naval Missions against Somali Piracy, in: *The Asia-Europe Meeting: Contributing to a New Global Governance Architecture*, Bersick, S. and Van der Velde (eds.), Amsterdam University Press, p. 153.

close to home. Securing stability in the EU's neighbouring regions is not only in EU's own interest, but matters to the U.S and Asian countries as well because of their economic interests in the region. For the EU it is most sensible to focus on the regions in its direct neighbourhood - the Mediterranean, Gulf of Aden and Western Indian Ocean - and to stay out of the current tensions in the Pacific and South and East China Seas.⁴⁵ Indirectly however, the EU can also contribute to stability further from home, by strengthening cooperation and (military) dialogue, stimulating the effectiveness of (maritime) security governance as well as stressing the importance of international law, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) being the foundation of this. The four elements previously mentioned - the legal framework, the global coordinating mechanism, the set of enforcement tools and strengthening the link with on-land-focused initiatives - could be instrumental for enhancing maritime security governance. The EU's voice in this is more credible than that of the U.S., as the latter does not formally recognise UNCLOS.⁴⁶

The EU must also be more vocal about its own interests and stance towards Asia, which would also reaffirm its role as a security actor in the region. Informal mechanisms outside the direct sphere of maritime security can contribute to this. The EU should be more active and effective in regional security forums in Asia like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).⁴⁷ The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) would also be an appropriate forum for acting upon shared security issues in this respect. EU support for regional forums like the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Plus Defence Ministerial Meeting (ADMM+) could be constructive in enhancing regional stability. Increasing effective participation in and support for these forums can stimulate EU's image as a strategic player, which enables the EU to contribute to regional stability according to its own values and interests.⁴⁸

Especially in the Indian Ocean, emerging powers China and India would be promising partners to enhance cooperation with. In preventing the Indian Ocean Region becoming an arena for rivalry and military contest, the EU can step up security cooperation and strengthening maritime security governance in this region. There are several mechanisms already in place for that, at the operational as well as the strategic level, but these are still relatively weak. More capacity is needed on the EU-side however, in Brussels as well as other European capitals, to make more effort in this regard. One of the concrete steps for the EU to take would be to set up its own comprehensive maritime strategy, which lays out the priorities in its direct neighbourhood as well as towards cooperation with Asia and other regions. Moreover, the EU could take a more systematic approach in setting up military-to-military contact for example in regular dialogues, exchanges and joint military counter-piracy exercises, in which the EU Military Staff (EUMS) can take a more leading role. The U.S. has conducted a joint training in 2012 with China for the first time ever.⁴⁹ The EU could follow this example. A more systematic approach in Brussels to security cooperation with Asia is however needed to take it a step further.

⁴⁵ Holslag, J. (2012) *Crowded, connected and contested; security and Peace in the Eurasian Sea and what it means for Europe*, BICCS/ EU-Asia Centre, October 2012.

⁴⁶ Grare, Frederic (2012) *Europe and Security in Asia*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 2012. See: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/10/11/europe-and-security-in-asia/eare>, accessed February 2013.

⁴⁷ Khandekar, Gauri (2012) *Maritime security in Asia: what the EU can do*, Agora Asia-Europe, FRIDE, no. 5, March 2012.

⁴⁸ Ibidem.

⁴⁹ Official Website US Navy, *US and China team up for counter-piracy exercise*, 18 September 2012. See: http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=69643, accessed October 2012.