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All at sea? Maritime dimensions of Europe's relations with Africa [1]

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Abstract: The text examines three dimensions of Europe's maritime relations with Africa: firstly the notion that Europe's strategic maritime frontiers are linked to Africa; secondly the coherence of the EU's anti-piracy force operating off the Horn of Africa, and thirdly the relationship between the EU's own military and naval objectives and its wider regional policies in Africa.

While the EU adopted a maritime security strategy in 2014, the article notes that in practice the EU's strategy at sea has focussed on two groups of 'non-state actors'; the Africans who are 'pirates', and the migrants crossing the Mediterranean, who are the object of the EU's Frontex patrols. As such, the article charts the somewhat fluid notion of the sea as a *maritime frontier*. It asks*;* where do Europe's strategic interests in terms of its maritime frontiers lie? Is the EU's anti-piracy mission defending them? Finally, is this first ever maritime mission a more tangible manifestation of the EU's

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common foreign and defence policy than some of the other shorter and smaller military and policing missions in Africa?

Introduction

This article examines one aspect of inter-regional relations between Europeans and Africans viewed from the perspective of the sea. What is meant here by 'Europe' is the European Union's strategies, policies and missions which concern African citizens and states. In a tangible sense, as Frederica Mogherini took office as head of The European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy (C.S.D.P.) in late 2014, how much of her portfolio was naval, and which of those elements concerned Africa? As we shall see, formulating and implementing the EU's new maritime policy involves a redefinition of Europe's global interests, including towards Africa.

Why tackle this question at all? Perhaps in part because, in the age of aviation and the internet, we have lost sight of the sea; despite Africa being an island, the sea is invariably absent in contemporary discourses about the continent. Yet the vast majority of Africa's economies depend on maritime links for survival; only 11 economies are landlocked; six are themselves islands. Yet it is striking that European discourse on inter-regional maritime issues tends not to be about maritime links *with or between* African states, but rather focus primarily on trade routes *around* Africa. It is precisely the ability of a few hundred Somalis to threaten such trade routes in the past decade which lie at the heart of Europe's main maritime initiative off the coasts of Africa, and thus this article. Indeed the bulk of the EU's practical strategy at sea appears focussed on two groups of 'non-state actors'; the Africans who are 'pirates', and the migrants crossing the Mediterranean, policed by the EU's Frontex patrols.

In terms of contemporary policy, as European powers have edged towards common security and defence policies over the past decade, naval strategy has grown in significance. Indeed

there *is* now a naval dimension to Europe's nascent C.S.D.P., in the shape of an EU maritime security strategy (M.S.S.). This has both internal and external dimensions.

In analytical terms, this article examines three distinct issues; i) the notion of Europe's strategic maritime frontiers; ii) the 'actorness' of the EU's navy, and; iii) the relationship between the EU's military and naval objectives and the EU's wider regional policies in Africa. As such, the initial question examined charts the somewhat fluid notion of the sea as a *maritime frontier;* where do Europe's strategic interests in terms of its maritime frontiers lie? Is the EU's anti-piracy mission defending them? If C.S.D.P. is about strategic interests, they need first defining and then defending. Indeed to some scholars the innovative nature of Europe's anti-piracy force is precisely this; via the EU's naval force, formally known as 'European Union Naval Force (Eunavfor) *Atalanta*', Brussels is explicitly defining and defending its core interests militarily. This is quite distinct from pursuing 'humanitarian' or other normative objectives (the so-called Petersberg tasks), which are the primary rationale of other EU C.S.D.P. missions in Africa (Gemond & Smith 2009, Riddervold 2011). Thus the Eunavfor mission, while it maintains a relatively low-profile, is arguably of far greater significance than its modalities suggest. This is also true of Eunavfor's principal host, the state of Djibouti.[i] [not v clear…]

In terms of both Europe's maritime strategy towards Africa and this article, the primary focus is the EU's first naval mission, Eunavfor *Atalanta* (after the Greek goddess and huntress). This has been in continuous operation since late 2008, with its current mandate running to 2016 [ii]. As such, it is by far the largest and longest C.S.D.P. mission related to Africa. As explained in detail below, it is tasked with both anti-piracy operations and the security of World Food Programme food aid deliveries to Somalia.

A second key issue examined here, one that is prominent in academic debates over both EU foreign policy in general and Eunavfor, is the so-called 'actorness' of the EU. This concerns the coherence and credibility of a combined EU force, as distinct from the interests and

forces of its national components. Is this first ever maritime mission a more tangible manifestation of the EU's *common* foreign and defence policy than some of the other shorter and smaller military and policing missions? There is now a significant literature on diverse aspects of *Atalanta*, including the actor-ness question - on which this paper draws selectively [iii]. In practice, 'force generation', the recruitment and rotation of EU flagged ships and planes, as well as the functioning of joint-command structures all appear – at least from the outside – to have been more straightforward for Eunavfor than comparable terrestrial C.S.D.P. missions. (A partial reason may be functional, that pooling naval resources - essentially ships, crews and intelligence – is more straightforward at sea?)

A subsidiary concern is that if the EU is itself acting as a unitary actor, how does it interact and integrate with *other* global maritime actors? These include N.A.T.O. and the International Maritime Organisation (I.M.O.) as well as private shipping companies and the significant number of multilateral anti-piracy arrangements, both standing and ad-hoc, which operate alongside Eunavfor in the Indian Ocean. As we note below and elsewhere (Styan 2013, 12), these interactions are extensive, involving regular exchanges between EU-flagged vessels of Atalanta and ships from a wide variety of individual nation-states, as well as multi-national forces.

The third and final principal question is to what degree are the EU's *military* missions integrated with wider EU regional objectives in Africa? This question can be posed for any of the missions, be it in Congo, Chad, RCA or Mali, but is particularly intriguing for Eunavfor as a maritime mission which is solely addressing the side effects – combatting piracy and securing food deliveries - of a land-based problem, the collapse of the Somali state. Violence in Somalia in turn has severe implications for the Horn of Africa as a whole, where the EU itself, as well as several of its larger members, have significant stakes. As explained in the article, the EU now has a complex and ambitious regional plan for the Horn of Africa. To what degree does Eunavfor contribute to this? This in turn raises the question of policy coherence. While Eunavfor continues to be extended, a civilian sister mission, baptised

EUCAP Nestor was launched in 2012. A third C.S.D.P. mission, the EU Training Mission in Somalia provides support for both African Union (A.M.I.S.O.M.) and Somali forces. How does this security sector support fit with the EU's broader developmental goals, both in Somalia and the wider Horn?

The structure of the article is as follows; section one examines the genesis of the European Union's emerging naval strategy. After many years of gestation, this was formally adopted by European ministers in July-2014 in the form of a 16 page 'Maritime Security Strategy' (EU M.S.S.) (Germond 2014). This MSS provides us with some insight as to a) how Africa is viewed by both European powers and the EU in terms of high strategy, and b) how maritime power fits within EU foreign and security policy as a whole.

Section two explores the principal practical form which strategy has taken to date. As already noted, this is the EU naval force (Eunavfor) *Atalanta* mission patrolling the waters of the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden. In terms of longevity and firepower, it is arguably the most substantive C.S.D.P. operation to date. The section examines the politics and rationale which prompted the creation of the mission. It then examines the degree to which the EU's naval mission has enhanced the legitimacy of the EU as a unified security actor. Have coordinated, unified EU naval activities in the Indian Ocean given it credibility vis-à-vis other multilateral (N.A.T.O., I.M.O. & U.N. agencies etc.) and bilateral anti-piracy initiatives (such as those undertaken by the US, Chinese, Japanese and many other navies)? As such, this naval dimension is arguably the most tangible manifestation of C.S.D.P. to date.

Section three then examines a separate academic debate surrounding Atalanta; the degree to which the unified EU naval operation has in turn prompted broader EU civilian and foreign policy 'deepening', in terms of strategic reach and legal innovation. This is particularly the case in terms of dealing with pirates through African judicial systems (Smith 2012). Although little explored in the article, this in turn links to the broader question of civil:military balance with C.S.D.P. operations. This has two facets; in principle (i.e. does the EU see itself

primarily as a 'soft' or 'ethical' power, wielding influence through normative, essentially civilian based agencies?) and in practical operational terms.

The fourth and final section then examines how Eunavfor's work fits within the EU's regional strategies and policies in the Horn of Africa. Given its maritime and security terms of reference, Eunavfor can be seen as a success. Yet when we place it within a broader perspective of integrated European policy towards Somalia and the Horn of Africa as a whole, the picture is less clear-cut.

Section 1: The EU at sea.

The gestation of a common naval strategy

As Germond (2011) highlights, it is hardly surprising that, once the EU decided to adopt an overarching security strategy, in the form of the European Security Strategy document of 2003, it would then elaborate a naval strategy. Around 90% of the EU's external trade and 40% of its domestic trade travels by sea. Since the 2007 enlargement the EU has had a coastline of 70,000 km, over three times longer than that of the USA. The EU's collective maritime exclusive economic zone is the largest such maritime territory in the world. The EU is also the third largest importer and the fifth global producer of fisheries and aquaculture. It is also heavily dependent on sea routes for security of energy supplies. The opening paragraph of the new strategy states*; '[F]ailing to protect against a wide array of maritime threats and risks may result in the seas and oceans becoming arenas for international conflicts, terrorism or organised crime.'* (EC, 2014b, 1). Notwithstanding recent budget cuts in the UK and elsewhere, EU navies still retain considerable tonnage and firepower; collectively, their *combined* naval strength remains very similar (in terms of total number of vessels, tonnage and type) to that of the US navy. What Europe's diverse navies lack is strategic cohesion and standing coordination mechanisms (beyond N.A.T.O. inter-operability), and it is this that the EU's M.S.S. seeks to address.

The genesis and the modalities of the Strategy need not detain us unduly here; ample detail is provided by Germond's overview of the *EU's security and the sea; defining a maritime strategy* (2011) and in his joint paper with Michael Smith (2009). The strategy is broad in scope with much of it concerning the management of Europe's own resources, both fishing and environmental. Germond details how 2006 and 2007 EC papers provide a framework for analysis and policy towards the sea. Of relevance to section four below, he notes that core aspects of EU maritime strategy are well established, yet are '*often obscured by the complicated institutional structure of the Union'* (2011, 563)

Maritime power and the projection of naval power were clearly included in the Common Security and Defence Policy, as well as via other specialized agencies. The 1999 Helsinki summit had commissioned a 'EU Maritime Dimension Study' in 2006-06, which suggested the creation of a Maritime Rapid Response Mechanism. It considered wider policy objectives, encompassing not only threats at sea from pirates or terrorism, but environmental pollution, preservation of fish stocks, controlling illegal migration and maritime smuggling, as well as protecting oil and gas supplies from within European waters. Such concerns highlighted that maritime policy would not be restricted to C.S.D.P. (Germond 2011, 568.)

It is worth noting that there are both precedents for, and additional forms of naval cooperation alongside that of , the C.S.D.P.. These include both EUROMARFOR (the naval cooperation mechanism launched in 1995 by France, Italy & Spain, later joined by Portugal) and the *Force Navale Franco-Allemande* (F.N.F.A.), a framework for bi-lateral cooperation between Paris and Berlin. In addition there have been a series of ad-hoc anti-terrorist monitoring operations at sea such as Active Endeavour (in the Mediterranean) and Enduring Freedom in Horn, in which European navies have played a key role, under N.A.T.O. or other multilateral auspices. Although rarely mentioned in the EU/C.S.D.P. literature, it is worth noting that there is another precedent for such pan-European naval cooperation, during escorts prior to 1988 in the Gulf War. In terms of Africa, evidently three EU powers also

retain significant naval bases adjacent to the continent; the UK (Gibraltar); Spain (Canaries, as well as the two costal enclaves, Ceuta and Melilla); and France (La Réunion, Mayotte).

Initial, post-2003 European C.S.D.P. operations in Africa and the Balkans did not require significant naval support (Germond and Smith 2009, 576), but since agreement on the 2010 'Headline Goals', the significance of strategic sea transport and amphibious operations have attracted increased attention. Nevertheless, during the 2011 invasion of Libya, it was still NATO who provided naval logistical support, as it had done in Kosovo and Afghanistan.

In very broad terms, who are the actors within the EU's maritime policy domain, now encompassed within the MSS? In terms of the Commission's Directorates: Development, Home, and External affairs are clearly involved (see section 4). There are then six specialised and decentralised EU agencies that assume some authority in the sphere of maritime affairs: the Community Fisheries Control Agency; the European Maritime Safety Agency (established in the wake of tanker disasters on European coasts in 1999 and 2002); plus the three separate European Defence, Environmental and Space Agencies. Finally there is Frontex, which has been operational since 2005.

Formally known as the 'European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the EU', Frontex '*is clearly the most visible of all the EU agencies that deal with maritime affairs*' (Germond 2011, 571). It has the highest profile among maritime agencies, not least because of its Mediterranean European Patrols Network, joint-patrol operations. These were launched in 2006 to police illegal migration in the Mediterranean routes, and in 2008 were extended to the Canary Isles' coasts.Such patrols have continued on a regular basis over the past five years (Rijpma 2010). In August 2014, the Commission launched the latest such mission, dubbed 'Frontex-plus' in the media, as a parallel mission to Italy's bilateral 'Mare Nostrum' initiative launched in October 2013 in response to the loss of illegal migrants' lives - primarily sub-Saharan Africans [iv] - crossing from Libya and Tunisia. (IPS 2014).

In terms of Africa and the concerns of this article, what is important to stress is the degree to which the practicalities and modalities of the extra-European dimensions of such a strategy have in large part been shaped by the Eunavfor experience. Paragraph two of the EU M.S.S. states; *'The European Union Naval Force Somalia (EUNAVFOR) — Operation Atalanta combined with the EU's substantial cooperation assistance has shown the effectiveness of a joined-up approach.'* (EC 2014b, 1).

This in turn links to the elaboration of what might be termed a geo-political vision. As Germond states; '*The EU's own security now strongly depends on the security (or securing) of others and the securing of areas where threats originate and where the EU's interests are threatened'* (2011, 573; he elaborates this analysis in 'Boundaries and Frontiers', 2010~~a~~) The implication is that the EU's first line of defence is often extra-European, thus the security implications of the EU's maritime borders are exceedingly elastic; '*The maritime margins represent an ideal opportunity to extend the EU's competences and power, because no direct interference with another sovereign state's territory or its politics and policies is required.'* (2011, 574).

Section 2: Eunavfor *Atalanta* in perspective

The EU's naval force (Eunavfor) has since 2008 patrolled the waters of the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden. The section outlines aspects of the literature on its modalities and on the politics and rationale which prompted its creation.

It is striking quite how central Eunavfor, as the sole practical example of EU's maritime cooperation to date, became to the evolving perception of the maritime potential of combined EU naval actions. The 2014 MSS strategy document states: '*The Gulf of Aden has become an important area for cooperation, due to the presence of international partners protecting vulnerable shipping and fighting piracy. The EU's presence in the Gulf of Aden through EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta, combined with the extensive support provided by other EU cooperation instruments, has a positive effect on other policy areas and fosters better civil-*

military cooperation. The success of Operation Atalanta combined with the longer-term cooperation actions should be preserved to ensure that any future resurgence of piracy is avoided.' (EC 2014b, 6)

In terms of basic facts: formally the *Atalanta* mission's objectives are: i) the protection of World Food Programme (WFP) vessels delivering food aid Somalia (in an associated role, it is protects the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) shipping); ii) the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast; iii) the protection of vulnerable shipping off Somalia; and, iv) the monitoring of fishing activities off the coast of Somalia. Its ships operate in a maritime area roughly the size of the European Union, comprising the southern Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and western Indian Ocean, including the Seychelles (E.A.A.S. 2013).

In operational terms, staff and assets are provided by the EU Member States. Its H.Q. is based in the UK's naval command at Norwood, north-west London. *Atalanta* has common budget of €8 million per year. At any one time, the mission has an average of five surface combat ships, one or two support vessels and several patrol and reconnaissance aircraft. These are periodically rotated, with different European navies providing vessels and maritime surveillance aircraft. Since 2014 the latter have been supplemented by a Djibouti-based drone unit. It is worthy of note that non-EU member vessels have also participated in Eunavfor; with both Ukrainian and Serbian navies serving on recent tours, and both Norway and Montenegro providing personnel and resources. An often overlooked aspect of the mission is that it does not appear to have suffered from the 'force generation' problems that have bedevilled other C.S.D.P. operations, notably in Africa. So unlike the terrestrial missions, Eunavfor has not faced a shortage of states willing to contribute ships and crews to the mission's patrols.

Eunavfor is in practice just one of two elements in the EU's anti-piracy programme. The other, somewhat neglected by scholars, but far more widely used by both commercial and

leisure shipping interests, is a web-based platform called the 'Maritime Security Centre: Horn of Africa' (MSCHOA). This effectively acts as an information clearing hub for all maritime users of Indian Ocean waters. It consists of both publically accessible information and separate, password-protected, piracy activity reports and communication channels for subscribing vessels traversing the region itself. Kaunert & Zwolski (2012, 6) provide a clear summary of the role and modalities of both the Maritime Security Centre, and of M.A.R.S.I.C., a similar initiative linked to the Djibouti Code of Conduct.

Academic approaches to Eunavfor have firstly assessed the degree to which the EU's naval mission has enhanced the legitimacy of the EU as a unified security actor; in academic terms the debate known as the degree of 'actorness'. Germond and Smith (2009) and Smith (2012) both examine this in some detail; concluding broadly that Eunavfor has significantly advanced intra-EU coordination under a genuinely unified military command and thus has contributed pan-EU defence cohesion and capability. Thus, not only has internal cohesion been significantly greater for Eunavfor than for other ESDP missions, but also coordinated, unified naval activities in the Indian Ocean have provided the EU with considerable cohesion and credibility vis-à-vis other multilateral agencies and initiatives (N.A.T.O., U.N. etc.), as well as bilaterally vis-à-vis other major naval powers. These include the navies of the USA, China and Japan as, from 2007 onwards, these and other major trading nations increasingly sought to protect their nations' shipping companies' vessels from piracy in a coordinated manner. Since Smith's analysis of 2012, these facets of Eunavfor's internal cohesion and 'actorness' have been further enhanced, a fact underscored by the growing number of nations contributing vessels, and the renewal of the mandate for a further two years in December 2014.

Section 3: *Atalanta* and civil-military cooperation

A second theme in the academic literature has been the manner in which the mission has prompted wider civil-military cooperation, in large part via the need for EU judicial cooperation with selected African states in order to try pirates captured by Eunavfor vessels.

The background to the mission is relatively straightforward. Faced with an upsurge in piracy against commercial vessels in an expanding area of the Indian Ocean, in late 2008 the EU launched its first ever naval mission under C.S.D.P. auspices. As Smith (2012,1) notes, it was unprecedented in three ways:

i) as the EU's first joint-maritime mission;

ii) its broader significance lay in the fact it was also the first such mission which *directly* protected EU security interests (i.e. the shipping lanes and the vessels in them), rather than those of third parties (i.e. under 'humanitarian' impulse, as in the Balkans or central African missions, for example.);

iii) it also prompted a higher degree of civilian-military coordination than in other missions due to the need to get third states (essentially Kenya and The Seychelles) to prosecute pirates captured by Eunavfor. Smith argues that overall the mission thus *'suggests an increasing tendency towards coherent, and even strategic, thinking regarding the EU's global interests, which now includes a clear security dimension along with economic and ethical interests'* (2012, 2, 24).

Eunavfor both reconfigured and replaced ad-hoc individual states' contributions to multilateral naval patrols undertaken under US auspices as part of the 'War on Terror' after 2001. Thus individual EU navies had participated in US-led operation *Enduring Freedom* both in the Gulf (Combined Task Force, CTF-150) and around the Horn of Africa (CTF-151). Such joint-patrols were revived and re-orientated following an increase in piracy around Somalia in 2007-08. The UN passed resolutions 1816 and 1846 in 2008 authorizing the use of force against piracy in the region. NATO's Standing Maritime Group (SMG) provided

cover for ships conveying aid to Somalia. By September 2008 the piracy issues had moved up the EU's agenda, when it established a team in Brussels to coordinate and support the actions of member states' navies in counter-piracy operations in the region via EU NAVCO. While France, holding the rotating presidency in the second half of 2008, pushed hard for a C.S.D.P. joint-EU mission, Germany and the UK each also had their own reasons for supporting the initiative. As a major naval power and home to both the IMO and much of the world's maritime insurance industry, the UK had clear concerns over piracy. By both hosting the Operational HQ and providing overall command, it not only ensured UK control, but also offset French criticisms of its reluctance to join land-missions in Africa, for example the 2008-09 Eufor-Chad/RCA operation (Styan 2012). In addition, with piracy in the headlines across Europe – MEPs also threw their weight behind an initiative which they felt would clearly enhance the EU's profile as an autonomous actor on an issue of global importance. These motivating factors are outlined clearly by Germond and Smith (2009, 583, 587). As France's defence minister stated, such an operation was '*a 'marvellous symbol' of moves towards greater Euro-military and defence policy'* (ibid, 584). So, in terms of the first theme, that of EU 'actorness', overall in operational terms it appears that Eunavfor's Atalanta has enhanced the EU's status as an autonomous, unified military actor. This is true both in terms of the perceptions of European politicians, as well as the navies who have participated and pooled their command structures.

In terms of the second theme, that of enhanced civil-military relations, it is argued that Eunavfor has enhanced civilian-military coordination by fostering judicial cooperation to end impunity via the prosecution, trial and detention of piracy suspects. Improved civilian-military coordination is in part *within* EU administrations – via the mechanisms explored in section 4 below, and in part between the Commission staff and third party African states. Smith (2012) highlights that such judicial cooperation was a largely unanticipated but necessary offshoot of the mission, while Riddervold (2011, 399) evaluates this aspect of Eunavfor's work within a wider framework of analysis assessing the EU's motivations.

Judicial cooperation has involved primarily Kenyan and the Seychelles' administrations who have since 2009 have provided courts and prisons to try and detain pirates captured by Eunavfor. Here the EU works in tandem with the Nairobi-based United Nations Development Programme (U.N.D.P.) and the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (U.N.O.D.C.). Such work involves their programmes to support the re-establishment of a working judicial system in Somalia itself, and the analysis of piracy (U.N.O.D.C. 2013).

In the meantime the EU agreed transfer agreements with Kenya and the Seychelles in 2009, and Mauritius in 2011. The US signed a similar agreement with Kenya in 2010. Riddervold argues that this 'rule of law' dimension of Eunavfor was crucial in encouraging some EU states to back a pan-EU anti-piracy force, as opposed to a further N.A.T.O. operation, which (as a purely military alliance) would have lacked both the mandate and the mechanisms to ensure suspects were tried in civil courts (2011, 399).

Although these programmes are entirely separate from the EUCAP Nestor initiative outlined below, it is clearly of policy significance that they involved both the same states (Kenya and the Seychelles) and an overlapping and essentially civilian set of principles.

The African Union's Maritime Strategy

Most EU policy initiatives towards Africa mentioned in the article have within them the notion of 'partnership'. Having presented the evolution of the EU's Maritime Security Strategy earlier, it is of at least passing interest to note the African Union does itself also have a maritime strategy, at least on paper. This little known initiative is known as 'A.I.M.', the African Integrated Maritime Strategy. Secondary literature on the strategy is negligible; in some sources it is referred to as 'AIM 2050'. It had its origins in the launch of the A.U. in Sirte in 2009. The earliest full strategy document appears to be from 2012. Its 32 pages are

long on aspiration and grandiose sentiment, but short on practical policy. Typical of its tone and level of abstraction is the claim that; [t]he *'vision of the 2050 AIM Strategy is to foster increased wealth creation from Africa's oceans and seas by developing a sustainable thriving blue economy in a secure and environmentally sustainable manner.'* (African Union 2012). It does note the need to coordinate several functional initiatives, such as the African Maritime Transport Charter (A.M.T.C.) of 2010. AIM personnel, whom we presume are based in the African Union in Addis Ababa, have attended those few African gatherings on maritime issues, such as the June 2013 meeting prompted by an upsurge of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, but their interaction with EU actors appears minimal [v]. The EU's MSS does note that '*The EU supports the development of the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy and stands ready to cooperate with the African Union and its Member States on maritime matters.'* (EC 2014b, 6). However, despite the liberal use of the notion of 'partnership', in reality the AU has no purchase on Eunavfor or the other EU maritime initiatives discussed in this article.

Section 4: Broader regional coordination: EU actions in Somalia, the Horn and EUCAP Nestor

In terms of its purely maritime and security dimensions, Eunavfor can justifiably be seen as a success; its structures have worked relatively smoothly over six years; coordination with other powers' anti-piracy efforts have flourished and the incidence of piracy reduced significantly. At the time or writing, its mission has now been extended to December 2016 and in late 2014 new H.Q. and field commanders were appointed and a new roster of ship rotations begun[vi].

However, in terms of *inter-regional* concerns, Eunavfor has to be placed within a broader perspective of integrated European policy towards Somalia and the Horn of Africa. Viewing the anti-piracy mission as one element of a European regional policy towards the Horn of

Africa as a whole, one which presumably aspires to the smooth coordination and coherence of all EU actions in the region, the picture is far less clear-cut.

In order to evaluate this, we need to examine how Eunavfor's coastal security work fits within the EU's broader regional strategies and policies towards the Horn of Africa as a whole. The following is a snapshot of the broader C.S.D.P. operations in the Horn, which have three primary elements; two maritime, one terrestrial.

Eunavfor is one part of what the EU terms a 'Comprehensive Approach**',** operating within an overarching 'Strategic Framework' **(**EU 2012). This aims to tackle both current symptoms and root causes of problems in the Horn. To that end, the other two main C.S.D.P. missions in region are EUCAP Nestor and the EU Training Mission Somalia (E.U.T.M.). However, the framework and the Special Representative have a far broader remit than just the two maritime and one training mission noted here (i.e. Eunavfor, Nestor and the land-based E.U.T.M). They aim to improve liaison and coordination between not only these three C.S.D.P. missions, but also the far broader EU aid and associated programmes in the Horn, as well as coordination with the myriad of other leading multilateral actors implementing aid and other programmes in the Horn of Africa [vii].

All three missions are ostensibly coordinated within the Strategic Framework, the whole overseen since 2012 by a Special Representative to the Horn of Africa, in 2014 Greece's Alex Rondos [viii]. Initially his principal brief was policy towards Somalia, having an overview of the regional dimensions of Somalia's conflict, including the issues which spawned and sustained piracy. His brief was expanded to also cover Sudan earlier in 2014, although doubts remain as to the precise scope and lines of accountability (i.e. does the SR report primarily to the Council or is he, as a diplomat, accountable to the E.A.A.S. and its High Representative?) – a point noted in UK scrutiny of the extension of his mandate [ix].

From the outset, this post-2012 'coordinated' approach was the subject of considerable study and criticism. An internal audit commissioned by the European Parliament from

London's Royal Institute for International Affairs (Chatham House) examines some of the complexity and ambition of coordination (Soliman et al. 2012, 40-41). It notes that in the Horn until 2012 '*There had been little complementarity between C.S.D.P. activities'*, (p.43). Yet three factors; firstly the launch of Nestor, secondly the creation of an EU Operations Centre for the Horn of Africa (within the E.A.A.S. in Brussels, examined below) and then finally appointment of the Special Representative, were clearly all designed to bolster coherence.

Policy coordination and coherence issues are even more complex when we turn to the broader EU presence in the Horn of Africa; which in financial terms is far larger than the C.S.D.P. programmes [x]. On the aid front, also in 2012 the Commission floated a new 'Action Plan for the Horn of Africa', dubbed 'Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience' (SHARE). SHARE envisaged that the Strategic Framework's would shape policy coordination between ECHO and DEVCO, linking short term humanitarian aid with longer-term development agencies. Highlighting the EU's operational organisational complexity further, this in turn built upon the 'Instrument for Stability', a coordination and finance structure dating from 2007, which aimed to harmonise the Commission's work on conflict prevention, crisis management and peace-building more broadly.

Evidently specific details go far beyond the scope of this article and our argument. Yet they beg the question of how *maritime policy* dovetails with the EU's overall external power projection – in which we include all aid policies. The following considerations will be limited to just some of the coordination issues around Somalia, Eunavfor and Nestor. In the C.S.D.P.'s own, summary terms, what is the division of labour between the three programmes? Formally speaking, EUCAP NESTOR [xi] is '*a European regional capacity building mission aimed at enhancing the maritime capacities of initially three to five countries in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean*.' This is examined in more depth below. The EU Training Mission Somalia (E.U.T.M. Somalia) [xii] *'is an EU military training mission*

which aims to strengthen the Somali National Government (S.N.G.) and the Institutions of Somalia, by providing military training to members of the Somali National Armed Force (SNAF). Together, EU NAVFOR, EUCAP NESTOR and EUTM form a coherent, integrated C.S.D.P. package supporting the EU's Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa.'

The 'Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa' (within which the programmes sit) in turn '*defines five priorities for EU action: i) building robust and accountable political structures; ii) contributing to conflict resolution and prevention; iii) mitigating security threats emanating from the region; iv) promoting economic growth, and v) supporting regional economic cooperation.*'

EUCAP Nestor

Formally known as the 'EU Regional Maritime Capacity Building Mission in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean', EUCAP Nestor seeks to improve maritime security across the East African region. It aims to do this by bolstering coastguard and marine security of five African states: Djibouti, the Seychelles, Kenya, Somalia and Tanzania. It was agreed by the EU Council in July 2012. Two-years on, it was only partly operational. Tejpar and Zetterlund (2013) provide a clear overview of the practical and procedural obstacles which it has faced. Nestor has as its objective what in the jargon is called 'security sector capacity building'; in this case primarily training coastguard and maritime forces.

As such Nestor is a complementary 'little sister' to Eunavfor. Yet it could also be tentatively viewed as a civilian successor mission to the 'big brother' military naval force, particularly if the threat form piracy itself is eventually quelled, almost certainly ultimately due to changes *within* Somalia itself. What does need stressing, is that in many respects Nestor is innovative; it is the first *civilian* C.S.D.P. mission to work on a *regional* basis.

So, has Nestor worked? And, from the analytical point of view, does it enhance the notion of a coherent inter-regional programme? Writing in mid-2013, following extensive interviews

with Commission and C.S.D.P. staff, the best we can say from Tejpar's and Zetterlund's (2013) analysis, is that it is too early to tell. By mid-2014, Nestor itself had established working relations with, and offices in, the two smallest states in the region; Djibouti and the Seychelles. The fact that Djibouti already hosted the regional training centre of MARSIC, and had already received maritime capacity building support from a range of bi-lateral donors, helped. Seychelles also proved receptive to support for similar reasons.

However, establishing Nestor in Kenya proved problematic due to incompatible maritime structures, existing US naval support programmes, and political resistance, from Nairobi. Even more resistant was Tanzania. Having already benefitted from more substantial MARSIC funding, it was less concerned with piracy, and had closer relations with China, than its neighbours (Tejpar and Zetterlund 2013, 18-23).

In Somalia itself, the picture appears equally problematic. This is due to ongoing conflicts, but also struggles for donor resources between rival Somali administrations, i.e. mistrust and friction between the putative federal authorities in Mogadishu and leaders in Puntland and Somaliland. Both of these state-lets have extensive coastlines, control of which is crucial for maritime security.

In terms of internal liaison and coordination within the EU policy process and its multiple actors, even a cursory look at coordination problems in Brussels illustrates the magnitude of the bureaucratic issues around maritime cooperation. As we saw in section one when initially examining the elaboration of an overarching EU marine strategy, within the Commission at least four separate Directorates are likely to have a stake in such policies: Development and Cooperation (Devco); Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (E.C.H.O.); Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (M.A.R.E.) and Home Affairs. And that is before we consider the E.A.A.S. and C.S.D.P.

Yet there are also cross-cutting programmes which have a direct impact on the dossiers relating to maritime security in the Horn. These include the MARSIC information and

capacity agency (as we noted above, which is linked closely to Eunavfor) and the European Development Fund's 'Programme to Promote Regional Maritime Security' (M.A.S.E.), yet another EU budget line in this domain.

Clearly this takes us back to the broader question flagged in section one of how to formulate and implement a coherent maritime strategy within EU institutions and among EU members. The shift from the Commission's individual directorates' prerogatives to a more 'joined-up' approach, spearheaded by the E.A.A.S., invariably causes bureaucratic friction and turf wars. The fact that Commission funded programmes tend to be implemented by local partners further complicates the picture. However such problems of coherence are not unique to maritime affairs or the Horn, and in part reflect the embryonic nature of E.A.A.S..

Planning, financial instruments and personnel all also generate problems. Tejpar and Zetterlunds' informants also highlighted the problems associated with coordination of Nestor programs on the ground via the European Delegations' personnel and facilities, as well as the complexities surrounding the - unprecedented - activation of the EU Operations Centre for Nestor's Horn of Africa mission (2013, 33-34). The fact that this centre (known as 'OPCEN') is *not* part of the mission's Operational Headquarters, apparently reflects two UK sensitivities. The first of these concerns UK leadership of the Eunavfor mission in Norwood. The second reflects long-standing resistance from London to the development of an *independent* EU operational capacity for such missions, although if true this appears somewhat paradoxical, given that Nestor is a civilian, not military mission. It also begs broader questions, beyond the scope of this article, about information flows and the role of OPCEN's 16 staff, and how intelligence and strategy reflections can be simultaneously coordinated across both maritime and terrestrial aspects of national states' and the EU's, work.

Section 4: Concluding observations

This article has attempted to examine three issues: firstly the notion of Europe's maritime strategic frontier; secondly the cohesion (or 'actorness') of a unified EU naval command during anti-piracy operations, and thirdly the relationship between the EU's military objectives and the EU's wider regional policies in Africa.

In terms of the initial question of redefining EU strategic interests in defending Europe's oceanic frontiers, analysis suggests that Eunavfor *has* reconfigured EU strategy as a global player. It has, de-facto, reinterpreted and extended the defence of Europe's frontiers in a broader geo-strategic sense. Patrols and anti-piracy actions in the Red Sea, Bab al-Mandeb and Indian Ocean beyond the Somali coast are seen by Brussels as a strategic *military* priority. As such, underlying strategy and justification of C.S.D.P. actions here appears fundamentally different from the declared objectives of other C.S.D.P. missions in Africa. As Germond asserts; *'[T]o fight transnational threats and to obtain security inside, the EU projects security outside and exercises its power beyond its external boundaries and even beyond its direct neighbourhood*' (2011, 573)**.**

Regarding the second issue, of actorness and EU's maritime strategy, Eunavfor's significance goes well beyond its 'C.S.D.P. in Africa' dimension. As we stressed in section one, it is by far the most tangible example of EU navies closely cooperating together over a sustained period of time under a unified command. Evidence suggests that both cohesion of command and force generation and has been more straightforward within the *external* anti-piracy mission than for terrestrial C.S.D.P. missions (for example in Chad, RCA or D.R.Congo). Eunavfor has lasted far longer than any other C.S.D.P. mission, and appears to enjoy considerable support among both national and Brussels-based politicians as well as Europe's navies. As noted earlier, clearly one dimension of this may be functional, in that, being self-contained units, it is relatively easier for naval vessels to interact, but this does not of itself negate the fact of unified command and 'actorness'. As we saw, this aspect is enhanced by the manner in which the arrest of pirates has spurred military-civilian

cooperation; EU civilian employees elaborating the mechanisms of juridical cooperation with African states for this purpose.

Interestingly, this issue of cohesion of command and force generation appears to have been easier in C.S.D.P. naval than terrestrial missions. This also seems to have been true when you compare the anti-piracy mission with the EU's *domestic* naval policing of frontiers; i.e. operations conducted under the EU's (Home Affairs) Frontex patrols – at least until the latest phasie of migration 'crises' of 2015. These to date the latter have been punctual and of shorter duration than Eunavfor, involving different sets of actors, largely drawn from civil, Home Affairs agencies, who then call upon ad-hoc naval support. However, many of the burden-sharing issues around both naval resources and financing are identical for both the C.S.D.P. and Frontex maritime missions [xiii].

While it appears clear that Eunavfor has boosted the EU's 'actorness' in the realm of foreign naval policy, Eunavfor itself is equally clear that its anti-piracy mandate is tackling the symptoms, not the root causes, of Somalia's problems. Piracy occurred due to the collapse of the state, and as such only state-reconstruction will eventually end piracy. This links to this article's third and final concern, that of the relationship between the EU's military objectives and the EU's wider regional policies in the Horn of Africa. Kaunert & Zwolski (2012) provide the clearest overview of the tensions between Eunavfor's immediate goals and longer-term EU engagement in Somalia. On the surface, the launch of EUCAP Nestor in 2012 (as we saw, a C.S.D.P. *civilian* mission bolstering coastal surveillance in five African states) reflects European's notions of providing a longer-term solution to marine security in the Indian Ocean. However, it remains at an embryonic stage and there is insufficient evidence to clarify whether even Nestor itself reflects cohesion over EU maritime policy in the region. More broadly, section four of the article highlighted how, since 2012, the EU has elaborated complex coordination mechanisms across the diverse C.S.D.P. and other programmes through which it is present in the Horn of Africa. Despite the elaborate Strategic

Framework and appointment of the Special Representative, in the Horn it is not clear whether there is an effective, clear sub-regional strategy. For this to be the case, maritime and terrestrial elements would have to work together and be integrated in both a strategic and operational sense.

Acronyms:

AIMS - Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy

Contact Group - Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia [xiv]

C.S.D.P. - Common Security and Defence Policy

DG DEVCO - Directorate General Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid

DG ECHO - Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection

DG MARE - Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

DG HOME - Directorate General for Home Affairs

DG MOVE - Directorate General for Mobility and Transport

EEAS - European External Actions Services

EU NAVFOR *Atalanta* - European Union Naval Force

EU OPCEN - The EU Operations Centre

EUTM - European Union Training Mission in Somalia

EUCAP Nestor - EU Regional Maritime Capacity Building Mission in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean

EUMSS - European Union Maritime Security Strategy (adopted 24.06.14)

EUROMARFOR - European Marine Force; initiated in 1995 to enhance naval cooperation between 4 states

ESS - European Security Strategy (2003)

FNFA - *Force Navale Franco-Allemande*

IGAD - Inter-Governmental Authority on Development; Horn's regional integration body

IMP - integrated maritime policy

DCoC - Djibouti Code of Conduct, (IMO) anti-piracy agreement, 2009 agreement by African states

IMO – International Maritime Organisation

IfS – 'Instrument for Stability', EU policy coordination and finance structure

MARSIC - A €6 million IfS-funded project (2010-14) to increase security on critical maritime routes. MARSIC supports the implementation of the 2009 Djibouti Code of Conduct.

MASE - Programme to promote Regional Maritime Security

MSCHOA - The Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa [xv]

OPCEN - EU Operations Centre for Nestor's Horn of Africa mission; distinct from the Operational Headquarters (OHQ),

RMCB - Regional Maritime Capacity Building – i.e. Nestor.

SHARE - Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience, coordination mechanism mooted by the Commission in 2012.

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[i] Notwithstanding its diminutive size, Djibouti is both the logistical and diplomatic fulcrum of the Horn of Africa. In maritime terms the micro-state is the *de-facto* anti-piracy capital of the Horn and Indian Ocean. It hosted talks which formulated International Maritime Organisation's 2009 *Djibouti Code of Conduct* and is the HQ or operations hub for many other anti-piracy initiatives. Evidently Djibouti also hosts USA's AFRICOM facility, at the heart of regional aerial and maritime surveillance. Technology and information sharing between EU and other forces in the regional is beyond the scope of this paper. However, in September 2014 Eunavfor flew Predator drones from Djibouti, which in recent years has become a fulcrum for regional military cooperation (Styan 2013). It also hosts the secretariat of the Horn of Africa's regional body, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

[ii] EUNAVFOR; formally this takes upper-case (as a contraction of EU Naval Force), but is conventionally used as a noun. The relationship between Eunavfor, MARSIC and other elements is complex, in large part due to the multiple actors (Shippers, national navies and numerous multilateral missions) and initiatives involved. In practice, this complex, flexible 'multi-variant multilateralism' appears to work. For clarity, see the guide to acronyms below.

[iii] See in particular: Germond & Smith 2009; Helly 2009; Kaunert & Zwolski 2012; Riddervold 2011. For an insight into vast and varied nature of the literature the Somali pirates have spawned see http://piracy-studies.org/piracy-bibliography.pdf.

[iv] The largest number dead being Eritreans who transited via Libya.

[v] See African Union, Gulf of Guinea maritime meeting press release, June 2013: http://pages.au.int/maritime/events/summit-heads-state-and-government-maritime-safety-and-security-gulf-guinea-yaounde-cameroon

[vi] Major General Martin Smith MBE took over operational command from the Norwood HQ on August 2014. Current Force Commander is Rear Admiral Guido Rando. Eunavfor: http://eunavfor.eu/ Eunavfor's profile on CSDP: http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eu-navfor-somalia/index_en.htm

[vii] Including the substantive US military presence; both AFRICOM's Djiboutian base and its extensive outreach activities.

[viii] Alex Rondos, who's second mandate ended in February 2015.

[ix] Houses of Parliament (UK). 2014. European Scrutiny Committee, Documents considered by the Committee on 9 July 2014.
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmeuleg/219-vi/21911.htm

[x] Tejpar and Zetterlund usefully remind us that the CSDP's budget is under 5% of total EU external relations' expenditure. This in turn is barely 0.2% of total EU expenditure (2013: 31). Data providing a similar breakdown of CSDP vs total external expenditure for the Horn of Africa region would throw useful light on this section.

[xi] EUCAP Nestor website: http://www.eucap-nestor.eu/

[xii] EUTM website: http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eutm-somalia/

[xiii] Unsurprisingly, there is also overlap in terms of naval personnel. Rear Admiral Guido Rando, who became Eunavfor's Force Commander in 2014, came directly from serving in the Italian Navy's (2013-14) Operation Mare Nostrum.

[xiv] The Group was created in 2009 following UN Security Council Resolution 1851. During 2014 Maciej Popowski, Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service (EEAS) held the (rotating) chairperson of the Group for the EU. http://www.thecgpcs.org/main.do?action=main

[xv] Service to mariners in the Gulf of Aden, the Somali Basin and off the Horn of Africa. / The Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) situated in the OHQ is an initiative established by EU NAVFOR with close co-operation from the shipping industry. The MSCHOA provides 24-hour manned monitoring of vessels transiting through the Gulf of Aden.