MARITIME SECURITY OPERATIONS (MSO)

ABSTRACT

Fear of terrorist interruptions has already affected the marketplace. Before 9/11, inventory had consistently trended downward as technology enabled just-in-time manufacturing and delivery of products. A significant breakdown in the maritime transport system would send shockwaves throughout the world economy. In fact, under the worst-case scenario, a large attack could cause the entire global trading system to halt as governments scramble to recover. Drastic and inefficient solutions may be put in place, such as the complete closure of some ports and duplicative and lengthy cargo checks in both originating and receiving ports.

The size of the maritime security challenge is as daunting as the terrible consequences of a serious attack. Maritime security involves hundreds of ports, thousands of miles of coastline, tens of thousands of commercial and private crafts, and millions of shipping containers. The maritime domain is truly global in nature, encompassing every ocean and the peoples and property of many nations.

This paper presents the idea of Maritime Security Operations (MSO) as an European inter-agency latest response on maritime threat seen from wider perspective. Six strategic actions MSO requires to achieve synergy of civilian and military maritime security activities to address all maritime threats are pointed as well as four related Lines of Development (LoDs) to be taken forward by a partnership of European military and civilian authorities in order to create MSO Standard Operational Procedures.

INTRODUCTION

Maritime Security Operations (MSO) are defined as those measures performed by the appropriate civilian or military authorities and multinational agencies to counter the threat and mitigate the risks of illegal or threatening activities in
the maritime domain. They may be acted upon in order to enforce law, protect citizens and safeguard national and international interests

Developing these operations will focus on terrorism, proliferation, narcotic trafficking, illegal migration, piracy and armed robbery. They might also include smuggling, the protection of national resources, energy security, the prevention of environmental impact and safeguarding sovereignty. In defining these activities, it is to be understood that the lead in the majority of issues is not a military remit but that a successful strategy for an increasingly secure maritime domain lies in a coherent civilian and military partnership.

THE THREAT

The sea has already been used for terror attacks by boats armed with rockets, machine guns and other small arms, water borne improvised explosive devices and as an enabler for terrorist attacks. It is conceivable that a renegade ship such as an LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) carrier could even be employed as a weapon near the centre of population. Continued use of the sea for logistic support to terrorism through the movement of arms, personnel or funds is substantiated by evidence. The maritime environment provides a potential conduit for CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear) material, both for the small high technology items, but also for larger items associated with weapon delivery. Other threats include cross-border illegal migration, which is forecast to increase significantly, and criminal activity including narcotics, human trafficking and piracy, all of which is increasing in sophistication and volume. These factors impact Europe’s physical and economic security either directly or indirectly.

In the European theatre of operations, nations are conducting MSO today as part of routine, peacetime duties in response to the threats mentioned above. Traditionally referred to as ‘Constabulary’ tasks, these operations are generally either conducted independently by member states’ navies and/or civilian maritime agencies in order to enforce legal powers and safeguard sovereignty or as part of multi-national military operations, which aim to safeguard common defence and security interests. In addition, there are a plethora of military and civilian initiatives at various stages of maturity which are seeking to enhance maritime domain awareness in parts of Europe\(^5\).

A European inter-agency approach to MSO would better safeguard common prosperity and security interests by protecting and supporting legitimate activities while countering the threat of current and emerging terrorist, hostile, illegal or dangerous acts within the maritime domain. By ensuring freedom of navigation and commerce, it would also promote regional, and contribute to global, economic stability and protect maritime trade as the heart of the regional and global economy\(^6\).

**ACTIONS REQUIRED**

MSO requires at least six strategic actions to achieve synergy of civilian and military maritime security activities in a co-ordinated effort to address all maritime threats:

1. Political willingness at the national and international levels to develop an inter-agency approach to MSO. Given the civilian/military nature of this work, it will need to be taken forward outside a single institutional structure with the broad political backing of nations, international organisations and multinational agencies.
   
   It will be necessary to invigorate existing national and multi-national governance...
mechanisms to ensure that the real and potential benefits of MSO to European nations are fully understood.  

2. International and Inter-Agency Cooperation. The benefits or the necessity of an international, inter-agency approach have been demonstrated over the world. The co-ordination of an inter-agency approach requires detailed work but it would need to involve international actors such as the EU (and its constituent agencies), NATO, United Nations International Maritime Organisation (IMO) as well as law enforcement authorities, in line with their responsibilities. The commercial sector would also need to be involved.

3. The need to maximize maritime domain awareness. There are numerous ongoing initiatives within Europe, both civilian and military, which aim to create a comprehensive maritime surveillance capability and to share information. A strongly favoured near term approach for multinational co-operation on maritime domain awareness is to create a simple, unclassified picture of maritime activity based on information easily accessible and disseminated through IMO standards such as among others, the Automatic Identification System (AIS).

4. The deployment of layered maritime security from the high seas to territorial waters, including littoral areas and port facilities. Nations currently monitor and act primarily within their territorial waters. Yet many of the threats originate in international waters where surveillance and powers to act are more limited. Effective MSO relies on the co-ordinated ability to maintain a comprehensive picture of maritime activity which encompasses territorial and international waters, and to act accordingly.

5. The need to embed security into commercial practices. With most of world trade travelling by sea, the maritime environment delivers many goods and services that are essential for society’s needs. As the need for hydrocarbon-based energy grows, the need to safeguard maritime-related traffic will become more acute. Co-operation and partnership with commercial shipping agencies will be vital in order to progress a holistic approach to MSO which meets mutually agreed aims.

6. The need to promote the necessary jurisdictional arrangements for effective MSO. National responsibilities extend from coastlines to the outer edge of territorial waters.

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waters with another nation’s unit unable to enter territorial waters without obtaining permission. Outside territorial waters, UNCLOS⁹ allows nations’ military and law enforcement vessels powers to act in specific instances (e.g. to board vessels suspected of piracy). The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is an example of how nations, through Ship Boarding Agreements, permit the interdiction of Flag State ships in prescribed circumstances. While there is welcome progress in providing greater maritime enforcement powers as part of amendments to the IMO SUA¹⁰, the ability of ill-disposed elements to exploit weaknesses in the system remains.

THE STRATEGY

The proposed approach for implementing a European, inter-agency strategy to MSO envisages four related Lines of Development (LoDs) to be taken forward by a partnership of European military and civilian authorities. LoDs respectively address inter-government, inter-ministry and multinational co-operation including as follow:

— Legal issues — Diplomatic and Co-operation LoD;
— Information exchange and maritime picture sharing — Information LoD;
— the operational contribution — Operational LoD;
— the participation of the commercial shipping sector - Economic LoD¹¹.

The aims of mentioned above LoDs are:

1. **Diplomatic and Co-operation LoD** — to promote national inter-ministry, inter-governmental and multinational co-operation for MSO in support and in the remit of UN, EU and NATO endeavours along with other actors involved — taking full advantage of existing frameworks.

2. **Information LoD** — to ensure that existing maritime-related information exchange initiatives, both national and organisational, and at all levels, are examined to explore how networks might be linked, relevant information

¹⁰ Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts at Sea
exchanged, and maritime pictures improved through a more coherent and efficient approach.

3. **Operational LoD** — to contribute towards existing Security Strategies, encouraging maritime domain awareness, mutual understanding and the capability development required within nations in order to deliver an optimised operational contribution to MSO.

4. **Economic LoD** — to encourage a better mutual awareness and understanding of how the commercial shipping sector might contribute to and benefit from MSO, most notably in the energy sector.

And the objectives for the aims are:

1. **Diplomatic and Co-operation LoD** — to create the appropriate environment to promote the civilian-military aspects of co-operation, information sharing and maritime surveillance and to co-ordinate the participation and actions of all organisations and member states.

2. **Information LoD** — to transform live data into an information-led approach facilitating decision-making by appropriate national authorities responsible for and directing MSO.

3. **Operational LoD** — to achieve a common concept of use of military assets in MSO amongst European maritime nations.

4. **Economic LoD** — to embed necessary enabling elements of MSO within commercial practices.

**CONCLUSIONS**

To meet the threats of the global security environment it needs a strong and enduring partnership between civilian and military authorities. This approach would build on separate initiatives already in place and the respective strengths of countries, NATO and the EU as well as any other relevant body such as the IMO.

Of course, there are numerous hurdles to overcome in bringing such an approach to fruition such as gaining agreement on the perception of the threat, the scope of MSO activities, the willingness to share information and the international jurisdictional arrangements required for effective action.

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However, the timely fusing of maritime information, much of which is unclassified, would be the initial priority. Incremental gains in information sharing could allow operational co-operation to develop in slower time as mutual confidence builds. For an inter-agency approach to work it must draw together the strengths of the numerous organisations involved in addressing maritime security. The output would need to be seen as a valuable data to Governments, the commercial sector and the public. It must enable better use of limited resources to address the omnipresent, multi-national threat in the maritime domain.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


**STRESZCZENIE**

Strach przed zagrożeniem terrorystycznym sięgnął już globalnego rynku. Przed 11 września doskonale zorganizowana logistycznie produkcja pozwalała na obniżenie kosztów i napędzała światową koniunkturę. Wobec rosnącego zagrożenia należy podjąć radykalne kroki w celu ochrony interesów gospodarczych. Poważne zakłócenie procesów logistycznych może nieść za sobą ogromne i trudne do naprawienia skutki ekonomiczne (do zamknięcia portów morskich i drastycznego wydłużenia procedur odprawowych włącznie). Stąd też wyzwanie dla globalnej ekonomii w zakresie uzyskania bezpieczeństwa handlu i transportu na morzu jest wspólne do zagrożenia i potencjalnych skutków.
Niniejszy artykuł przedstawia ideę interesseuropejskiego podejścia do problematyki operacji zapewnienia bezpieczeństwa na morzu. Po raz pierwszy istotny nacisk został położony na współpracę cywilno-wojskową w tym zakresie, wskazano sześć strategicznych płaszczyzn wspólnego działania oraz cztery kompleksowe kierunki działań mające zapewnić efekt synergii oraz wypracowanie standardowych procedur operacyjnych.

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