



Maritime Commerce and Security in the Mediterranean and Adjacent Waters

SUMMARY REPORT

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Abstract

The unity of the Mediterranean Sea, and its centrality to developments taking place in the larger international context, can be best appreciated by conceptualizing it as a “transit space” at the intersection of several geopolitical and geo-economical regions. Mediterranean countries and a growing number of external actors in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, as well as Asia, intensively use this “inland sea” as a means of transport and communication and as an instrument of power projection. In this context, maritime commerce and maritime security have emerged as key issues in the Mediterranean policy and economic debates. They can be seen as two faces of a larger question: how to preserve access to Mediterranean routes and maximize their use as their value is increased by the Mediterranean basin’s growing interdependence with global economics and geopolitics.

Keywords: *Mediterranean region / Regional relations / Maritime trade / Infrastructures / Ports / Maritime highways / European Union / Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) / Euro-Mediterranean cooperation / Maritime security / NATO / Piracy*

Maritime Commerce and Security in the Mediterranean and Adjacent Waters Summary Report

by Emiliano Alessandri and Silvia Colombo*

The unity of the Mediterranean Sea, and its centrality to developments taking place in the larger international context, can be best appreciated by conceptualizing it as a “transit space” at the intersection of several geopolitical and geo-economical regions. Mediterranean countries and a growing number of external actors in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, as well as Asia, intensively use this “inland sea” as a means of transport and communication and as an instrument of power projection. They are “stakeholders” in the preservation of one of the oldest “strategic commons” on earth and at the same time players in an arena of intense economic and strategic competition. As trade and other flows across the Mediterranean basin are ever more closely connected to analogous flows in the Atlantic Ocean, the Black Sea, and the Indian Ocean through the Suez Canal, the Mediterranean’s geo-economic strategic importance is only becoming more apparent. In this context, maritime commerce and maritime security have emerged as key issues in the Mediterranean policy and economic debates. They can be seen as two faces of a larger question: how to preserve access to Mediterranean routes and maximize their use as their value is increased by the Mediterranean basin’s growing interdependence with global economics and geopolitics.

The fourth meeting of the Mediterranean Strategy Group, held in Genoa, on October 24-26, 2010 set out to address these issues. It gathered some 50 participants from the academic, business, and policy-making sectors. Discussion revolved around four main themes, each of which was the subject of a separate panel: “Rethinking the Geopolitics of the Middle Sea”; “Ports, Maritime Commerce and Regional Economic Development”; “Maritime Highways and Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation”; and “The Security Dimension.” A final panel discussed policy implications for public and private sector actors.

The conference was organized by the Mediterranean Program of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMFUS) in cooperation with the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) and in partnership with the Compagnia di San Paolo, ENEL, the OCP Group, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and the Luso-American Foundation.

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What follows is an analytical summary of the main issues and points debated during the conference. The conference agenda is available online¹.

Rethinking the Geopolitics of the Middle Sea

Some observers see a slow rebalancing between the eastern and the western part of the Mediterranean as a main feature of the region's new geopolitical context, with the latter gaining more prominence both in terms of trade flows, the geopolitics of energy, and security. The resurgence of piracy has caused significant difficulties to trade through the Gulf of Aden and the Bab el Mandeb Strait, with clearly negative implications for Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean more broadly. Mainly due to the deterioration of the security environment, transit costs through the Suez Canal have significantly increased in recent years. As a result, some companies have reoriented their traffic toward the Cape of Good Hope and the Atlantic Ocean, now accessing the Mediterranean through the Strait of Gibraltar. On a different level, energy discoveries are changing the geopolitics of the Mediterranean, modifying established balances. Recent discoveries of energy sources in the southern part of the Western Mediterranean, in West Africa, and in Brazil hold the potential to partly rebalance westwards the geopolitics of energy in the Mediterranean, which has been traditionally centered on the oil-rich Middle East.

From the viewpoint of security, the eastern and western parts of the Mediterranean present similarities but also important, and perhaps growing, differences. The former tends to be characterized by traditional, power-politics type of international dynamics: the rise of regional actors with new strategic aspirations such as Turkey, persistent inter-state rivalries (especially in the Middle East but to an extent also in the Aegean), regional instability (in the Middle East but also in the Balkans), and the presence of conflict or the risk of new conventional wars (such as one between Iran and Israel). Although still affected by traditional security dynamics such as inter-state rivalry (in the Maghreb) and unsettled border disputes (in the Western Sahara), the Western Mediterranean presents features that are typical of the larger globalizing international environment, characterized by growing interdependence as well as by the growing significance of transnational threats. These include, but are not limited to, drug-trafficking, human smuggling, and the proliferation of transnational criminal networks. Owing to the presence of these threats, the Western Mediterranean is directly connected to the Southern Atlantic from which a number of these flows originate.

While the Eastern Mediterranean seems increasingly characterized by the specific dynamics that set it apart from the Western Mediterranean, the latter seems increasingly subsumed by the adjacent and traffic-dense Atlantic area. The existence of a transatlantic drug route connecting Brazil to Europe through West Africa and the Maghreb is undisputed. The rise of West Africa as an energy field also makes the Western Mediterranean part of a larger transatlantic system within which Morocco plays a pivotal position. The tension-ridden geopolitical space of the Eastern Mediterranean, deeply affected by the instability of the Middle East, seems to support the rationale of the continuing presence of the U.S. Navy and to justify NATO's

¹ See http://www.iai.it/pdf/convegno/genoa_101024-26.pdf.

international engagement with South Mediterranean countries through its “Mediterranean dialogue” and other initiatives. As far as the Western Mediterranean is concerned, the European Union (EU), with its emphasis on soft-power means of power projection and on the comprehensive concept of “human security,” seems to have a larger role to play. U.S.-Brazil and NATO-Brazil cooperation in maritime issues is constrained by Brazil’s aspiration to a dominant role in the South Atlantic. Brazil’s Navy, however, seems unable at present to muster a true blue water capability.

The notion of an East-West divide in the Mediterranean can be challenged from many angles, and, in any case, it does not necessarily represent a recent feature of the geopolitics of the Mediterranean. It may be seen, rather, as a development that has been unfolding for decades, or longer. For instance, in 1992, on the verge of a possible solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, some foreign ministers almost simultaneously called for the institution of a framework of governance for the Western Mediterranean, thus emphasizing the specificity of this sub-region. The notion of conflict, moreover, could be interpreted in less traditional ways. A new development taking place in the Mediterranean, for instance, has to do with rising tensions among peoples rather than among states. These tensions span across the Mediterranean as a whole and at the same time have a marked North-South dimension. North Mediterranean countries are wealthier than their counterparts in the South. Their workforce is highly skilled but is aging. Europeans are developing defensive attitudes toward non-nationals, in particular low-skilled young immigrants from African, Arab, and Muslim-dominated countries. The rise of conservative and right-wing parties with xenophobic attitudes is now a consolidated trend all over Europe. Parties with anti-immigration agendas are widely represented in the European Parliament and EU national parliaments.

In the South, social developments have created a situation of strong contrasts. Societies as a whole seem to have become more conservative. Individuals, for their part, are often more prone than their respective societies to embrace modern habits, modern technology, and to more broadly accept the implications of globalization.

Political tension and obstacles to Mediterranean cooperation may in the future derive from identity conflicts - authentic or alleged - and from growing economic disparities between the northern and the southern parts of the Mediterranean. Because of this and other tensions between the North and the South, the identification of a common “Mediterranean identity” remains very problematic. Distinct actors, or blocs of actors, hold different views and approaches to critical issues such as migration, the role of religion, and demographic trends. The Arab League, Israel, Turkey, the EU (as a whole and as its individual members), and NATO do not approach the Mediterranean in the same way in strategic, political, economic, or cultural terms. The specific problem of NATO in the Southern Mediterranean is that, despite its partnerships in the region, it still lacks the trust of both the authorities and the people because of its links to what is perceived as U.S. “imperialism” and NATO allies’ ties with Israel. Differences between the geopolitical situation in the Eastern and Western Mediterranean make it difficult to embrace even the more limited notion of the Mediterranean as a unified geopolitical entity. Pan-Mediterranean initiatives, such as the EU-sponsored Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), are blocked by a lack of political will and shared objectives. The failure to overcome North-South and East-West divides revives the debate on whether

sub-regional frameworks of cooperation, such as the well-regarded “5+5” initiative, promise better results.

The geopolitics of the Mediterranean is further complicated by new dynamics, such as the rise of regional actors. The growing Mediterranean and Middle Eastern projection of Turkey is among the most interesting developments in this respect. The widespread opinion is that Turkey’s “rediscovery” of the Middle East after decades of self-imposed neglect is generally having a positive impact on the region itself and on the Mediterranean at large. Turkey is self-purportedly acting as a stabilizing force in the region, stepping in to fill power vacuums and to facilitate inter-state mediation to avoid new open conflicts. There is also the concern, however, that Turkey’s rise as a regional power, as with any such rise, will create new international rivalries and some degree of international instability in the Mediterranean. What is beyond doubt is that Turkey’s foreign policy requires adjustments on the part of other regional and external actors. Some of this change is already ongoing. Countries like the United States are particularly concerned that the evolution of Turkish foreign policy might lead to partial reshuffling of Turkey’s alliances in directions that might not always be compatible with U.S. and western interests in the region. Turkey’s traditionally constructive role in NATO will have to be reconfirmed since the Alliance has committed to new missions involving Turkey, such as the development of a common capability for missile defense covering all of NATO’s territory.

Another element worth highlighting is the challenge of integration in the western Mediterranean, which looks unpromising because of persistent tensions and very limited communication between bordering countries such as Algeria and Morocco. This is an area in which the EU invests massive funds, around 300 million euros per year, for development and stabilization goals. Overall, the Maghreb is the recipient of an average EU investment of 30 Euros per capita per year. Signs of intra-regional cooperation and integration are far from encouraging, trade among Maghreb countries remaining at extremely low levels. The strategic relevance of the Maghreb to Europe and the Mediterranean, however, has been further dramatized in recent years by closer inter-connection between the Maghreb, West Africa, and Latin America through the Atlantic. With energy flows and illicit trade routes expanding to and from the Maghreb, lack of intra-Maghreb cooperation is a source of growing concern in Europe and in the West as a whole. Lack of intra-regional cooperation in this area may also complicate international cooperation on counter-terrorism. It is no secret that Al Qaeda has especially active affiliates in the Maghreb.

The geopolitics of the Mediterranean should also contemplate the impact of possible shocks, of both a positive and negative nature, capable of rapidly and radically transforming regional dynamics at various levels. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) is one such possibility. A surge of Al Qaeda or other transnational terrorist groups in the North Africa region is another. A massive increase of migration flows, due to growing demographic asymmetries between Europe and North Africa, is to a large extent a foreseen development capable of producing short-term shocks. Among positive shocks, one can include a boom in renewable and clean energies, such as solar and wind energy in the MENA region at large, perhaps spurring new cooperation between the North and the South on a broader economic agenda.

Ports, Maritime Commerce, and Regional Economic Development

Ports and related infrastructure are critical factors of integration in the Mediterranean basin. They can be seen as “hubs” within the larger network of flows and interactions across the Mediterranean and between the Mediterranean and neighboring regions. Commercial ports highlight the Mediterranean’s role as a transit space. The challenges that ports have to face to become effective and profitable vectors of maritime trade are constantly discussed within relevant industries. Because of the spillover effects on development and regional economic integration, the “politics” of ports - not just their economics - plays a big role in the Mediterranean policy debate. The experience of three different ports in the Mediterranean region may highlight some of the challenges involved.

The new port of Tangier Med, located in Morocco only 13 km from Spain, is a good start for discussion. The project was approved in 2002; works started in 2003 and were completed in 2007. In terms of objectives, Tangier Med aims at creating a logistics and industrial platform for goods that are directed toward Africa (33 percent) and toward Europe (20 percent). Massive public investment in the port was justified by the expected contribution of this trans-shipping hub to the internal development of Morocco through the creation of new jobs and the channeling of investments. Reducing economic disparities between this area of Morocco and Europe, thus fostering stability across the sea, was also seen as a goal. The establishment of the port in Northern Morocco allows a rebalancing of the Moroccan economy between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Geopolitically, Tangier Med confirms that Morocco is an Atlantic actor as well as a major player in the Mediterranean. In terms of performance, the port saw some 2 million containers travelling through it in 2010, which broadly puts Tangier Med in the category of established Mediterranean ports such as Genoa and Le Havre, as well as oceanic ports such as Seattle in North America.

According to figures provided by the port authorities, the new infrastructure has contributed significantly to the economic development of Morocco with the creation of around 20,000 jobs. Estimates foresee the creation of over 80,000 port-related jobs by 2020. In 2015, the port is expected to figure among the top three in the whole Mediterranean basin. In terms of investments, Tangier Med could benefit from some 2 million euros of public investments. In addition, it also received 1.5 billion euros of private investments. No direct European investment supported this project as possible stakeholders in Europe were initially skeptical about its profitability. Europe has now become, however, one of the main beneficiaries in terms of market connections. The EU is also indirectly benefiting from an infrastructure that is fostering local development and stabilizing a region close to its coasts. The contribution of Tangier Med to the development of the local market will have to be confirmed in the years to come. It is not unusual in the history of ports for their impact on the local economy to significantly diminish when activities related to the construction phase cease. Compared to northern Mediterranean facilities, however, southern Mediterranean ports seem more critically connected to development, often providing the main source of economic activity in areas that are often underdeveloped.

Southern European, and in particular Italian, ports face a different set of challenges and problems. The main risk for established ports on the European rim is that of being

excluded or bypassed because of the lack of cost-effective connections to the northern European ports and to growing competition from the South. While the facilities and infrastructures to link the two shores of the Mediterranean are already available, the sluggishness in the process of decision-making - mainly blocked by northern European countries - regarding the completion of Corridor 24 (which is set to connect the North and the South of Europe along the trans-European railway axis running from Rotterdam to Genoa), is causing major problems to the economy of ports like Genoa, located on the north-western Italian coast. The private sector and local and national authorities are united in demanding that the EU fills this gap, pushing for an agreed solution at the European level. The present stalemate is preventing southern European ports coming from withstanding competition from rising North African ports and established hubs in Northern Europe. Southern European ports are increasingly competing with each other, with national governments lobbying for them at the European level. Some are demanding that EU authorities decide which ports are strategic in various regions. This decision, which cannot be left to individual national governments to negotiate without any overarching framework, could ultimately have a rationalizing effect on European port policy. Ports management is a high-cost activity, which requires strategic choices to be made at both the national and international levels. Port authorities and relevant industries want competition to be governed and limited by agreed rules and principles.

In the case of Greece, ports activities have historically played an important role in terms of the overall development of the country. Maritime activities were severely affected by the most recent economic crisis, but at the same time they are likely to be at the core of Greek economic recovery. The number of containers passing through the Port of Piraeus currently averages 700,000 - less than half the level of 2006 - although figures from 2010 seem more encouraging. Port authorities and relevant industries stress that public investment in port activities is of a strategic nature and may greatly contribute to Greek economy recovery in the long-run. In the current situation, however, Greek ports are competing with other national projects, including some that promise greater short-term gains.

What is increasingly clear is that Mediterranean ports have been put under growing pressure by international economic developments, fostering both integration and competition in the Mediterranean region. In this context, external actors are starting to play a prominent role. China's current and future role in the Mediterranean is hotly debated in political and economic circles. Some observers question the very possibility that China will be able to significantly expand its influence in the Mediterranean, especially the Southern Mediterranean, in the short run.

It is, however, recognized that its presence will likely be strengthened in five to ten years. Greece is already feeling the effect. China's growing investments in logistics and infrastructure in Greece - including Piraeus - seem to suggest that it will be in a position to compete with established European actors, possibly fueling a new dynamic of competition in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Chinese presence in Greece started well before the economic crisis, but it has grown since. At the same time, a large number of Chinese workers have migrated to Greece, raising concerns about the prospects for job creation and development for the indigenous Greek economy. Similar

developments have occurred in Sudan and Algeria, where the Chinese presence has had mixed effects on the local economies.

Although the rise of external actors adds to competition, much of the current competition has a clear North-South dimension within the Mediterranean. A striking feature of this relationship is that southern Mediterranean countries are making great efforts to open up commercial and economic relations with Europe, thanks in large measure to the activities of their ports, whereas European countries are increasingly on the defensive, and their port policies seem to reflect this general attitude.

The North-South competition among ports also highlights the contrast between dominant geopolitical and geo-economic trends in the Mediterranean. While the new geopolitics of the Mediterranean seems to have a clear East-West dimension, economic activities in the Mediterranean seem more clearly linked to the North-South equation. Some suggest that in order for Mediterranean ports to cope with the competition from external actors like China, southern European and North African ports should cooperate more closely, coordinating their respective development and commercial strategies.

But competition also has a South-South dimension. This is particularly true for the North African region. Tangier Med, for example, appears to be competing with other established ports on the southern coast of the Mediterranean basin and the Atlantic approaches. It seems possible that future developments will result in the creation of a single strategic hub around Gibraltar, but cooperation is not a foregone conclusion. As a potential source of large-scale investments, the EU can play a role in this game. For now, the EU has not invested directly in Tangier Med.

In principle, competition could help sustain current efforts to promote investments and develop state of the art transport infrastructures on both sides of the Mediterranean. However, some sort of “division of labor” between northern and southern ports should be envisaged so that competition in this sector does not thwart broader economic and political cooperation. The terms of this division of labor are currently not clear, but merit further exploration.

In terms of possible future shocks affecting port activities, some are concerned that the latest developments around the Panama Canal, which is benefiting from extensive improvements to accommodate larger vessels, ultimately could have negative consequences for Mediterranean ports as Europe-Asia trade flows are increasingly channeled across the American continent.

Maritime Highways and Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation

If ports represent a major factor of integration but also competition in the Mediterranean region, what is the role of “maritime highways”? The development of these maritime highways has been identified as a key project of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and a key tool to boost regional integration. The term “maritime highways” or “motorways of the sea” was introduced by the European Commission in 2000 to describe those transport corridors that ships are encouraged to use and that could

represent an alternative to land traffic. The two main goals of maritime highways are to provide for modal transfer from roads to the sea and to increase regional cohesion by linking up peripheral areas, including islands. In this sense, they differ from short sea shipping routes that more broadly provide means to transfer people and goods across the sea. Even before the launch of the UfM in July 2008, this project had attracted attention at the Euro-Mediterranean level as a means to foster trade, development, and integration. There is widespread consensus that maritime highways could help countries of the region and the EU achieve three important goals: a) recovery from the economic crisis of 2008-2009; b) enhanced food security; and c) cooperation on maritime climate change issues. More specifically, they could support economic recovery through expanding trade routes across the Mediterranean, link more closely food production areas with food consuming areas, and reduce the amount of CO₂ emissions through new Mediterranean-wide standards and rationalization of sea traffic. In terms of its implementation in the Mediterranean region, two corridors have been created: the East-Med and the West-Med. It is estimated that as a result over the past four years, 1 to 2 million trucks have been taken out of land routes.

However, a number of concrete steps are needed in order to reach the stated ambitious goals. Greater resources should be invested in increasing the security of the transportation system through the use of state-of-the-art technology — including satellites — and the international exchange of sensitive information. Another problem concerns the lack of a clear binding regulatory framework and uneven involvement on the part of European countries. An underlying problem seems to be limited ownership of these projects on the part of southern Mediterranean local and regional (mainly private) authorities. A general complaint is that southern Mediterranean authorities were not consulted when the projects were first laid out. This led to frustration as necessary adjustments regarding infrastructure upgrades, legislation, and parallel investments on land-sea connections and land motorways were largely left to local authorities in the South to complete on their own. In other words, southern Mediterranean states feel that decisions on maritime highways have been imposed on them without proper attention to their specific economic needs.

More broadly, potential beneficiaries of these projects tend to agree that results so far are ambiguous, worth very few success stories. The experience of Turkey and Italy, which are closely linked through maritime communication, shows that it is possible to reach high levels of interconnectedness via the sea. This was achieved, however, mainly at the bilateral rather than at the multilateral level. The EU seems to have overlooked some specificities of the Mediterranean transport context, among which the most important are: a) the investment constraints facing small shipping companies; b) the length of the connection required to be competitive in the market; c) the existence of subsidies provided by some countries such as Spain and France to land transportation; and d) the fact that motorways of the sea projects are rarely discussed in their larger context, such as European investments in port facilities. Some would argue that the ability of these projects to boost regional integration is inherently low, as they are not aimed at creating new flows but just at rationalizing existing ones.

The Security Dimension

Security is a common concern for political and commercial actors in the Mediterranean region. Threats to the security of the Mediterranean are multiple and diverse. The declining threat of conventional inter-state conflict is accompanied by rising threats such as international terrorism, risks connected to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, illegal migration, drug-trafficking and other illicit trade, piracy, and environmental risks. Some of these threats are clearly linked to Mediterranean's role as a transit space. When discussing Mediterranean security, the consensus is that it is impossible to address challenges with reference to the Mediterranean alone.

Although its hot spots are currently in the Gulf of Aden and in the Indian Ocean, piracy has clear consequences for Mediterranean trade and security. Piracy off the Somali coast and more broadly in the Horn of Africa is a real threat, accounting for over 40 percent of attacks worldwide. In 2010, there have been 20 successful attacks in the waters facing Somalia. The frequency of attacks has declined, but attacks have become more successful. Around 17 vessels are currently in the hands of pirates. This situation has a number of negative implications for Egypt as it discourages transits through the Suez Canal. Many ships now prefer the Cape route instead. This could ultimately lead to a marginalization of the Mediterranean as a whole if the security problem in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean intensifies. Another negative impact of piracy is the increase of the costs of transportation owing to security risks. Insurance rates have been going up since the re-emergence of sea piracy in the Gulf of Aden a few years ago. This translates into an increase of the price of raw materials as well as final goods.

The international response has been the deployment of multinational fleets under NATO and EU banners. The United States is involved both through NATO and through a U.S.-led international mission, the Combined Task Force (CTF) 151. The cost of these operations is estimated at over US\$1 billion per year, raising doubts about the sustainability of this effort in the long-run.

Piracy is also affecting the sub-Saharan region, with over 40 attacks along the Nigerian coast in 2010. Many of these are aimed at oil theft. Pirates are often members of larger networks of organized crime and directly or indirectly involved in other illicit activities, such as trafficking. One third of EU-bound cocaine travels through Western Africa. According to reliable estimates, in 2007, some \$2 billion worth of cocaine transited through Liberia, a figure that exceeds Liberian GDP. Revenues from piracy and other illegal activities on the sea generate corruption and further crime within coastal states.

Weapons of mass destruction will hardly be generated in Africa in the near future but they could be shipped through Africa because of the generally low level of security controls in African states.

On a different level, unregulated fishing, much of it done by commercial vessels from outside Africa, is a threat to African security, causing African states a loss of over \$2 billion of revenues, thus affecting their economic development in terms of jobs and food availability. Environmental dumping and other illegal uses of the sea are also a major threat to the development of African coastal states.

In order to tackle these problems, piracy in particular, navies are key, but not enough. There is widespread consensus that a holistic approach should be adopted whenever possible. This means addressing threats to maritime security in the larger context of economic, social, and political development. The holistic approach often involves the internationalization of specific maritime security issues and the participation of international organizations that can activate forms of cooperation with the local governments and channel resources to stabilization and development efforts. At the same time, it is worth keeping in mind that threats to maritime security are not necessarily a product of underdevelopment, but of unregulated development. Illegal activities, including illicit trafficking, are often complementary to economic activities in the legal market.

When it comes to piracy, an important element of the international response has to do with coastal security and coastal development. For example, increasing efforts could be channeled to create a maritime governance framework to increase the efficiency of port infrastructures and inter-port communication. The role of coast guards is key. Coast guards can be trained or even instituted with the support of foreign nations. Information-sharing among coast guards can be expanded. Coast guards can be involved in naval operations. The need to fight the problem of piracy through complementary means stems from the realization that military interventions alone may not succeed in controlling effectively a vast area of territorial and international waters. There is also the need to strike a balance between naval patrolling activities and the free flow of trade.

The relationship between piracy and maritime terrorism is still to be proved and the conflation of the piracy and terrorist threats in the public discourse is unjustified. The phenomena of piracy and terrorism are of a fundamentally different nature — the former having mainly economic, selfish motivations, while the latter being politically or ideologically driven. At the same time, it is pointed out that pirates and terrorists can be seen as belonging to the same diverse group of nonstate actors that has come to the forefront profiting from globalization. For both phenomena, eradicating efforts can be hardly confined to a one single territory.

The fight against piracy and other maritime security threats, such as illegal sea-born migration, involves the participation of multiple actors. Navies and the coastal guards of interested countries are taking part in this endeavor, both playing a fundamental role at sea. Much more can be done to streamline resources and rationalize multilateral efforts. The existence of an EU and NATO mission in the Gulf of Aden has spurred the debate on the costs of duplication. China and India are participating in anti-piracy activities. The former seems uninterested in joining larger multilateral efforts currently.

Some states such as Israel have equipped commercial vessels with armed personnel. Other countries could take similar decisions. However, it is hard to imagine how military personnel can be made available for all interested ships. Private contractors on board vessels present the usual costs and risks of privatization of security. These services are generally expensive, and the presence of arms onboard, moreover, would impede ships to enter some ports. The risk is that the presence of armed personnel on boats may trigger an escalation of violence.

Overall Observations

Looking over the range of issues raised in the debate, some broad points stand out:

- The strategic importance of the Mediterranean is increasing as a result of geopolitical and geo-economic trends, driven largely by developments outside the Mediterranean per se. Indeed, the strategic future of the Mediterranean is now firmly linked to development and security in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, as well as global trends.
- The role of the Mediterranean as a maritime “commons” and a critical transport corridor for north and south continues to be a central feature of the strategic environment, with stakeholders on both sides of the Atlantic, and beyond.
- External actors are playing an increasingly important role in the security and development of the Mediterranean basin. The United States is part of this equation. But new actors such as China, India, and Brazil are playing a more visible economic and political role. These dynamics are among the most important for the future of shipping, ports, and security from Gibraltar to Suez.
- As socio-economic and demographic imbalances between the North and the South are at the root of regional instability, development and security are fully intertwined in the Mediterranean context. Ports and related maritime infrastructure have a long history of contributing to the economic and social development of the region. This is likely to continue, and could acquire even greater significance as the southern Mediterranean seeks a greater role in maritime and coastal transport.
- As in other sectors, frustration with large, pan-Mediterranean frameworks is encouraging attention to more limited, sub-regional initiatives (e.g., the 5+5 in the western Mediterranean, and other mechanisms). This is likely to be a durable interest.

Some main trends can also be anticipated:

- China, in particular, is set to play a growing role in the Mediterranean in consideration of its weight in Africa’s development equation, its fast-growing presence in Mediterranean ports, and its quest for greater access to Middle-Eastern and Western African energy sources. The rise of China as an actor around the Mediterranean and its hinterlands will be controversial, especially under conditions of continued slow growth in European economies.
- Mediterranean stakeholders will grow in number as the Mediterranean is ever more closely connected with larger geopolitical and geo-economic trends in the Asia-Pacific and Atlantic spaces.
- Infrastructure developments far from the Mediterranean, such as the upgrading of the Panama Canal, will influence the future use of sea routes, with potentially negative consequences for the Mediterranean. The rise of insurance rates for transits through the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean are already affecting the use of the Suez Canal. Over the horizon, climate change could open new northern routes for transit between Asia and Europe, placing further pressure on traditional Mediterranean transport patterns.

Finally, our discussion pointed to some key areas for future dialogue, analysis and action, including:

- The role of business cooperation in Mediterranean relations, business-to-business contacts and the increased involvement of NGOs in Mediterranean initiatives. These aspects were meant to be at the heart of the projects promoted by the Union for the Mediterranean. But with the notable exception of the renewable energy area, regional initiatives remain mired in high-political disputes, while opportunities for concrete cooperative projects are neglected.
- Greater understanding of China's growing commercial and political role for Mediterranean development and security. Few if any Mediterranean debates include Chinese (or Russian or Indian) participants. This shortcoming will need to be addressed.
- Exploration of the links between infrastructure development on both sides of the Atlantic in the context of an increasingly competitive shipping and transshipment market around the Mediterranean should continue. What can and should be done to rationalize development and investment in this area?
- Given the current multinational attention to anti-piracy and interdiction operations, Mediterranean stakeholders will have an interest in exploring more sustainable and cost-effective means of safeguarding sea lanes and ports, and preventing the rise of zones of chaos in adjacent areas. It is by no means clear that standing deployments of blue water naval vessels are the most efficient approach to a problem rooted in instability and inadequate security capacity ashore.

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