



LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE GULF OF ADEN OPERATIONS



Spring 2014

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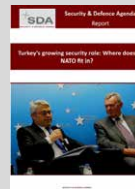
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The SDA recently welcomed

General Philip M. Breedlove
NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe
and *(right)*

General Jean-Paul Paloméros
NATO Supreme Allied Commander Transformation



They are the latest in the long line of distinguished leaders who have spoken at our debates



LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE GULF OF ADEN OPERATIONS

Report of the evening debate

co-organised by the Security & Defence Agenda,

the United States Mission to the European Union and
the US Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

with media partner Europe's World

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This report reflects the conference rapporteur's understanding of the views expressed by participants. Moreover, these views are not necessarily those of the organisations that participants represent, nor of the Security & Defence Agenda, its Advisory Board, members or partners.

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Introduction

After a peak of incidents in the Gulf of Aden in 2010, piracy is now almost non-existent in the Gulf of Aden. The mandates for two of the key missions instrumental to this success, the EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta and NATO's Operation Ocean Shield, are set to expire this year. This event, hosted by the Security & Defence Agenda, convened a panel of experts to discuss lessons learned from these operations and to explore the way forward.

The speakers listed a number of lessons learned from the missions and all of the speakers emphasized the importance of continuing operations in the region. However, the challenges posed by the current era of budget austerity were also discussed. There was consensus among the speakers that a comprehensive approach is needed to address the issues underlying piracy activities in the long-term. A comprehensive approach is complex and includes establishing a rule of law, capacity building, combating organized crime, gaining the participation of local elites and development. Finally, the panelists spoke about the successful formats of cooperation that had taken place among the missions, and cited one in particular, SHADE, as a new paradigm that could serve as a model for future international security cooperation.

Successes of counter-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden

Maritime piracy off the coast of Somalia in the Gulf of Aden began on a large scale in 2000. International naval patrols were dispatched in response to disrupt and deter these activities. The three principal missions were NATO's Operation Ocean Shield; European Union Naval Force - EU NAVFOR's Operation Atalanta; and the Combined Task Force 151, a multinational naval partnership of 30 nations. After a peak of 176 incidents in 2010, the number was dramatically lowered to just two in 2014. With the mandates for Operations Ocean Shield and Atalanta to expire at the end of 2014, moderator **Giles Merritt**, Chairman of the Security and Defence Agenda asked whether the expense of continuing these missions could be justified and what were the important lessons learned from these operations.

Extend the missions

Speakers agreed that there was important value in the immediate continuation of the naval operations. There is a real danger that piracy incidents will rise again as soon as it is perceived that there will be no adequate response. **Rear Admiral Giorgio Lazio**, Chief of Staff of NATO's Maritime Command, announced that NATO had recently decided to extend Ocean Shield for two years and pointed out that "piracy at the moment is not an issue in the Gulf of Aden not because the pirates are gone. There are too many ships patrolling and too much security." He pointed out that many of those involved in piracy are now engaged in other illegal maritime activities such as smuggling, and cautioned that although pirate camps had been destroyed, they could easily be rebuilt. **Anja Shortland**, Director of Postgraduate Research in Economy at King's College London, agreed, pointing to a World Bank estimate that once the success rate for piracy attempts goes above 5%, attacks will start again.

“Piracy at the moment is not an issue in the Gulf of Aden not because the pirates are gone. There are too many ships patrolling and too much security.”

Rear Admiral Giorgio Lazio, Chief of Staff of NATO's Maritime Command



Continuing the operations is important but has to be reconciled with current defence budget considerations. **Robert G. Bell**, Senior Civilian Representative of the Secretary of Defense in Europe and Defense Advisor to the U.S. Ambassador to NATO, pointed out that nations can only afford a limited number of steaming hours, and that therefore “a ship has to get maximum value in return for time and money invested. Sending out a multi-capable ship with crew to wait for pirates is not optimal use of resources in times of austerity.” As a result, navies are looking for ways to contribute to counter-piracy while combining this with other missions or training efforts. Lazio explained that NATO would only patrol in certain seasons, with high-level security training and coordination with partners taking place the rest of the year.

“Sending out a multi-capable ship with crew to wait for pirates is not optimal use of resources in times of austerity.”



Robert G. Bell, Senior Civilian Representative of the Secretary of Defense in Europe and Defense Advisor to the U.S. Ambassador to NATO

New technologies such as drones could be employed for counter-piracy but constrained defence budgets limit the viability of these options. Bell emphasized that the U.S. faces global requirements and other theatres require these expensive assets. This is the reason, the U.S. continues to press its European NATO allies to increase their defence spending.

Comprehensive approach required

Military operations are crucial to continue to suppress piracy in the short-term. However, a much more comprehensive approach which addresses the root causes of piracy and involves complex elements such as establishing the rule of law, capacity building, gaining the cooperation of local elites, and development, is vital to ensure security in the long term. As European External Action Service (EEAS) Director for the Horn of Africa **Koen Vervaeke** explained, “The permanent solution is capacity building on land, and the sea must be secured while this is being worked on.”

“The permanent solution is capacity building on land. Maritime crime has not been cured; we have only suppressed piracy.”

Koen Vervaeke, European External Action Service (EEAS) Director for the Horn of Africa



The lack of rule of law in Somalia is a key hurdle to eradicating piracy and other maritime crime in the long-term. Although piracy rates have plummeted, other forms of maritime crime are flourishing, including human trafficking, drug and gun smuggling, organised crime and illegal fishing. According to Anja Shortland, “Maritime crime has not been cured; we have only suppressed piracy. The political lesson is that we need to stay, but we need to get traction on the ground, making sure that Somalis are enforcing the law on their coastline.”

“Maritime crime has not been cured; we have only suppressed piracy.”



Anja Shortland, Director of Postgraduate Research in Economy at King's College London

Shortland questioned whether the military approach is the most effective way to address the underlying roots of the problem. She cited estimates by the World Bank of the high costs of combating piracy through military measures, and argued that it may be more effective to invest in development. In the absence of an established rule of law by the Somali government, Shortland identified local elites as crucial stakeholders. These provide the pirates with anchorages and hiding for the multi-billion dollar assets (ships) until a ransom is negotiated - which can take years. Should these local elites refuse pirates access to these anchorages and deny them protection during protracted ransom demands, the business model for piracy breaks down. “Very conditional development is needed to make sure that local elites must have better things to do than maritime crime,” she said.

Vervaeke cited important work and resources that the European Union is devoting in the area: “You cannot combat piracy just at sea. Tackling piracy requires different kinds of intervention: military, legal, development, capacity building on social economic environment, and finally, a political effort.”

“You cannot combat piracy just at sea. Tackling piracy requires different kinds of intervention: military, legal, development, capacity building on social economic environment, and finally, a political effort.”

Koen Vervaeke, European External Action Service (EEAS)
Director for the Horn of Africa



Merritt echoed the importance of the EU's actions both in the fields of development and security. “The Gulf of Aden is a bit of a microcosm of the EU's future security responsibilities in parts of Africa. We have to get used to the idea that development and security need to be much more on the same page. They are aware of each other, but not really working together yet,” he said. Merritt also emphasized that Operation Atalanta has made an important contribution to the idea of EU military cooperation. Because the operation was visible, understandable and successful, it has had a positive impact.

“Development and security need to be much more on the same page. They are aware of each other, but not really working together yet.”

Giles Merritt, Chairman of the Security and Defence Agenda





Lessons for future international cooperation

The successful cooperation of multiple actors and missions during the counter-piracy efforts was praised and pointed to as a model for future international cooperation. “Multiple actors are not just welcome, they are complementary. Coordination mechanisms have paid dividends, and the sum of the whole became more than the sum of individual parts,” Bell said. He also welcomed the decision to co-locate the joint commands of all three missions (Atalanta, Ocean Shield and CTF-151) in the same HQ as a concrete example of promoting communication and coordination among the missions.

“Coordination mechanisms have paid dividends, and the sum of the whole became more than the sum of individual parts.”

Robert G. Bell, Senior Civilian Representative of the Secretary of Defense in Europe and Defense Advisor to the U.S. Ambassador to NATO



Lazio and Bell identified SHADE¹ as one exemplary achievement of international cooperation in the Gulf of Aden, and encouraged looking to it as a model for multiple international actors to cooperate in the future. Although the various operations were not integrated into one chain of command, they coordinated closely and transparently on all levels using the SHADE format. “It is a new paradigm that works. We could not achieve a unity of command but we have established unity of effect, and that is what SHADE is. It might come in handy as a lesson learned for the international community in other security fields,” explained Lazio.

“We could not achieve a unity of command but we have established unity of effect, and that is what SHADE is.”

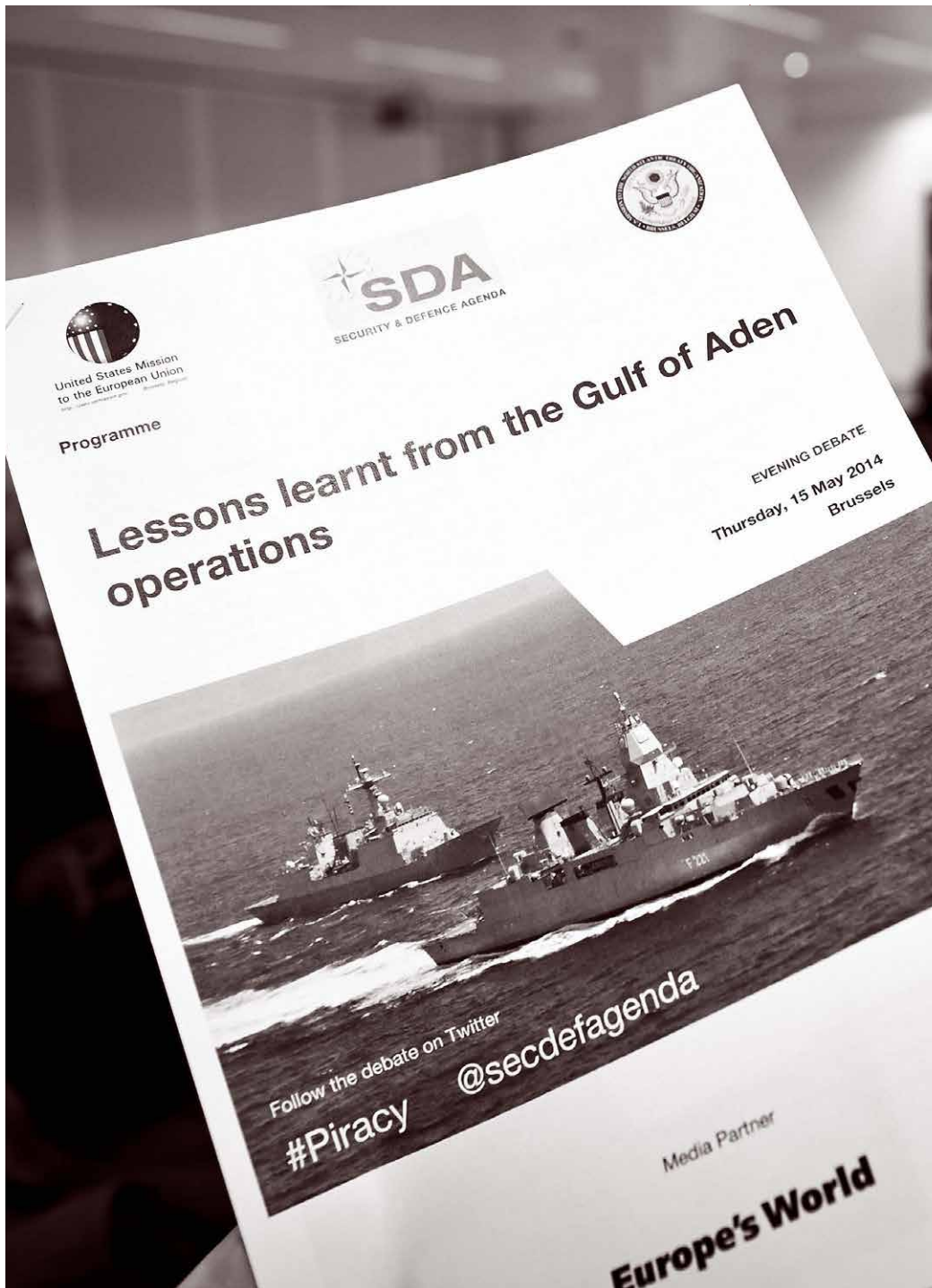
Rear Admiral Giorgio Lazio, Chief of Staff of NATO's Maritime Command



While Vervaeke praised the commitments of all the countries involved, citing their ownership of the outcome in the region, Bell underlined the commitment of actors involved. He described a recent NATO meeting with the 28+n format which brought together all NATO members as well as all other countries involved in the Gulf of Aden endeavors including Russia and China. All of the nations involved in this format openly explored solutions to the multidimensional problems in the region together.

Bell, Lazio and Vervaeke all emphasized the high level of complementarity between the EU and NATO operations. They stressed that rather than competition between the missions, there was important and effective cooperation.

¹ SHADE- Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) was established in December 2008 to coordinate counter-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden. Meetings are convened regularly in Bahrain and are co-chaired alternatively by NATO, EU NAVFOR, and the Coalition Maritime Forces (CMF). In addition to military and government representatives, there are also representatives from 14 international organisations and the maritime industry.



ANNEX I – Programme

LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE GULF OF ADEN OPERATIONS

Maritime security is crucially important for growth and stability in developed and developing nations alike. In the period since 2009, over 250 World Food Programme vessels and 127 of the African Union's Mission in Somalia received protection in the Gulf of Aden alone, with almost 900,000 tonnes of food and aid safely delivered to people in need in the countries bordering the Gulf of Aden. These are among the achievements of EUNAVOR Somalia – Operation Atalanta with the support of NATO's Operation Ocean Shield and the Combined Maritime Forces. Since the piracy attacks peak of 2010, attacks, disruptions and suspicious incidents have dropped dramatically from 176 in 2010 to just two so far in 2014. To what should this successful reduction of attacks be attributed?

With the mandates of both Operation Atalanta and Ocean Shield coming to an end later this year, it is urgent to identify the lessons to be learned from those six years of international cooperation. Can these lessons be applied to other areas of maritime insecurity, and what implications for international cooperation at large? Could the operations in the Gulf of Aden pave the way to renewed cooperation with third countries such as China?

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Robert G. Bell | Senior Civilian Representative of the Secretary of Defense in Europe & Defense Advisor, U.S. Mission to NATO |
| Rear Admiral Giorgio Lazio | Chief of Staff, NATO Maritime Command (MARCOM) |
| Anja Shortland | Director of Postgraduate Research - Department of Political Economy, King's College London |
| Koen Vervaeke | Director for the Horn of Africa, East and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean & Senior Coordinator for the Great Lakes Region, European External Action Service (EEAS) |

Moderated by **Giles Merritt**, Chairman of the Security & Defence Agenda



ANNEX II – List of participants

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Axel Beims, Managing Director, IT.Niedersachsen

Robert G. Bell, Senior Civilian Representative of the Secretary of Defense in Europe and Defense Advisor to the U.S. Ambassador to NATO

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Irina Bratosin D'Almeida, Programme Manager, Security & Defence Agenda (SDA)

Stefanie Breinesberger, Policy Officer, Mission of Austria to NATO

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Olivier Bulto, Analyst, Brussels Diplomatic

Myriam Buyse, Former Official, European Commission

Fabio Casula, Human Factor Analyst, Ministry of Defence, Belgium

Alexander Chuprina, Counsellor, Mission of the Russian Federation to the EU

Jurate Cizauskaite, Contracting specialist, NATO, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE)

Mariette Colinet, Retired Official, European Commission

Ethan Corbin, Director Defence and Security Committee (DSC), NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA)

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Chiara Landolfo, Officer, European Parliament, Directorate General for Communication

Mirela Andreea Lascu, Case handler, European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)

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Tobias Metzger, Project Assistant, Security & Defence Agenda (SDA)

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Rosdiana Murtiningsih, Second Secretary, Mission of Indonesia to the EU

Arihiro Okamoto, First Secretary, Embassy of Japan to Belgium

Yan Olmechenko, Minister Counselor, Embassy of Ukraine to Belgium

Ekaterini Pallis, Retired Official, European Commission

Cdr. Sg. Thierry Paris, Operations, National Plans, Ministry of Defence, Belgium

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Dinos Stasinopoulos, Former Official, European Commission

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Nagayo Taniguchi, Journalist, Japanese Magazine Associates

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Loek van den Hamer, Director, International, Belhance

Lt. Gen. Ton van Osch, Former Director General of EUMS, Formers

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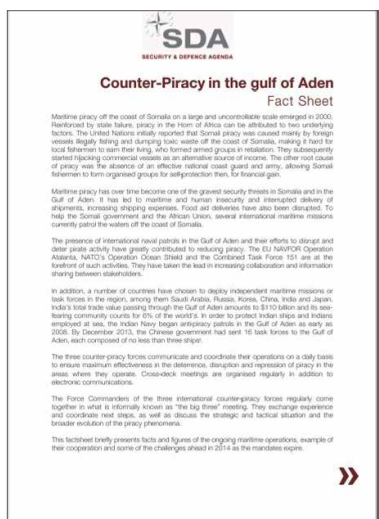
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Jaroslav Zbytniewski, Deputy Liaison Officer to the EU, EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR)

COUNTER-PIRACY IN THE GULF OF ADEN

The SDA is the only think-tank in Brussels focusing exclusively on defence and security issues. It ensures the voices of all stakeholders are heard by gathering representatives from NATO and the EU, national governments and parliaments, industry, academia, think-tanks, NGOs and the media. The SDA places emphasis on topical, lively and innovative debates and publications, giving all stakeholders an opportunity to voice their opinions.



Maritime piracy has over time become one of the gravest security threats in Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. It has led to maritime and human insecurity and interrupted delivery of shipments, increasing shipping expenses. Food aid deliveries have also been disrupted. To help the Somali government and the African Union, several international maritime missions currently patrol the waters off the coast of Somalia.

This factsheet briefly presents facts and figures of the ongoing maritime operations, example of their cooperation and some of the challenges ahead in 2014 as the mandates expire.



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