

**NATO'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHAPTER ON MARITIME SECURITY AND SAFETY  
OF THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL'S ANNUAL REPORT ON OCEANS AND THE  
LAW OF THE SEA**

***i. Comprehensive information regarding the activities currently undertaken related to maritime security and safety***

1. NATO is an Alliance composed mainly of maritime nations, whose security and prosperity are highly dependent on the security and safety of the high seas. Recently, as in other areas, NATO has transformed its maritime dimension. Recent NATO maritime operations carried out by the Alliance in the 1990s included Operations "Maritime Monitor" and "Sharp Fence", the latter in co-operation with the Western European Union, and "Sharp Guard".

2. After 11 September 2001, NATO launched its first operation, carried out under the provisions of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, NATO's collective defence clause. NATO launched a maritime operation (26 October 2001), Operation Active Endeavour (OAE), with the aim of demonstrating NATO's solidarity and resolve in the fight against terrorism, and to help detect and deter terrorist activity in the Mediterranean. Operation Active Endeavour continues to provide a NATO presence and demonstrates the Alliance's resolve in the fight against terrorism, and specifically to help ensure that the sea lanes of the Mediterranean will not be used for terrorist purposes. NATO ships and aircraft taking part in the operation closely follow the activities of suspicious vessels. On the basis of available intelligence, OAE ships hail suspected vessels and, as appropriate, conduct compliant boarding operations (since April 2003) with the consent of both the master of the ship and its flag state. NATO regularly informs the UNSC and the Chairperson of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee about the developments with regard to OAE, and the last letter to this effect was sent by the NATO Secretary General on 18 April 2007.

3. Most recently, NATO has been addressing Maritime Situational Awareness (MSA), which is the evolution of a long-standing concept of the Alliance aimed at further improving the NATO Maritime Commanders' situational awareness at sea. NATO has been enhancing its recognised maritime picture, drawing on contributions of both NATO and national assets and capabilities, in order to get a more comprehensive understanding of activities in the wider maritime domain. Lately, the dramatic changes of the security environment, and the new threats the Alliance has to counter, have generated a new requirement to acquire the ability to track non-military activities at sea more closely. The requirements stemming from OAE have accelerated progress in this field, and throughout the last five years, the physical presence and patrolling of the Mediterranean by maritime units have evolved into a network; more specifically, into an information-based and intelligence-led operation encompassing more than the solely military domain. At present, the OAE is benefiting from an initial operational Maritime Situational Awareness capability,

a combination of several national and NATO maritime surveillance assets fed by military and civil sources, and continues to provide a testbed for further MSA concept development and experimentation.

4. MSA is a tool to enhance the understanding of the maritime environment and to achieve a clear picture of all relevant information necessary to support maritime operational decision-making. It capitalises on existing systems and on new technology, and responds to new areas of operational urgency, such as defence against terrorism and countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Following a tasking by Heads of State and Government at the Riga Summit in November 2006, the Alliance has increasingly been paying attention to the enhancement of situational awareness in the Euro-Atlantic area, with several NATO bodies (North Atlantic Council, Military Committee, Conference of National Armaments Directors, Allied Command Transformation, NATO C3O, Component Command Maritime Naples) contributing to this effort.

5. NATO Maritime forces face a wide range of challenges in peacetime and in periods of crisis and conflict, or to combat terrorism (Operation ACTIVE ENDEAVOUR as an example). Recently, Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1) was authorised by the North Atlantic Council for a two-month circumnavigation of Africa deployment (Aug-Sep), as this would improve the Alliance's ability to respond effectively to conducting and supporting operations far from NATO territory and in demanding geographical and climatic conditions. Additionally, a new framework for close military co-operation with Partners is being developed, especially with regard to Partner support to Operation ACTIVE ENDEAVOUR, both in terms of sharing of unclassified information, and the provision of assets. Increased Partner support increases the assessed safe passage of shipping, and has a deterrent effect on illegal activities. SNMG 1, during its passage through the Red Sea, as part of its circumnavigation, also provided Search and Rescue assistance to Yemeni authorities off the coast of Yemen following a volcano eruption on 30 September. Standing NATO Mine Counter Measure Groups (SNMCMGs) conduct regular exercises to detect and destroy old WW2 munitions/mines around the North European coast.

6. At NATO, the Planning Board for Ocean Shipping (PBOS) provides an interface between NATO and the civil commercial shipping industry sector. It is responsible for developing and maintaining plans for civil shipping support to the Alliance in crisis and war. PBOS planning takes into account the international character of merchant shipping and seeks to facilitate access to worldwide shipping. PBOS remains concerned about the great challenges posed by terrorist acts and others, against shipping and related transportation infrastructure and its possible consequences on the civil population, national economies, and NATO's ability to execute critical missions. It serves as the NATO focal point for advice and assistance on the protection of civilian maritime assets against acts of terrorism. This work consists mainly of monitoring developments in the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and other international bodies, and facilitating the exchange of information among nations and NATO. PBOS maintains a pool of international experts familiar with all aspects of commercial shipping, be it legal maritime environment, insurance, planning and operational aspects.

7. At NATO, there is also the NATO Shipping Centre (NSC) at Northwood in the United Kingdom, which supports information exchange between the military and commercial shipping communities and supports military commanders. The NSC will collect

and process merchant shipping, factual and movement data, and develop an accurate shipping plot of relevant merchant ships. It will also advise merchant shipping of potential risks and identify possible interference with maritime operations. NATO is committed to continued collaboration with the United Nations through the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) within our means, and in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Law of the Sea, both customary international law and the UN Law of the Sea Convention, to ensure maritime security and safety. In this context, the NSC co-operates with the IMO on building a maritime picture of merchant traffic and provides the IMO with a medium to report suspicious activity. PBOS supports Operation Active Endeavour and the NATO Shipping Centre. PBOS Delegations and their shipping companies, continue to support the NATO Shipping Center on a voluntary basis by providing information on their flag ships transiting the Suez Canal, the Straits of Gibraltar, and the Mediterranean.

***ii. Matters which may require further action and any suggested recommendations, with an emphasis on areas where co-ordination and co-operation at the inter-governmental and inter-agency levels could be enhanced.***

1. The Alliance is investigating ways to improve practical co-operation at all levels with Partners, the UN and other relevant international organisations, non-governmental organisations and local actors in the planning and conduct of ongoing and future operations, wherever appropriate. This takes into account emerging lessons learned, and considers flexible options for the adjustment of NATO military and political planning procedures with a view to enhancing civil-military interface.