

An All-Inclusive Approach towards Enhancing Maritime Visibility: Importance of Technology and Global Cooperation



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Maritime security has become a necessity in a global and interconnected world. New threats have emerged and threaten global peace and prosperity (terrorism, smuggling, illegal fishing, piracy, illegal traffics etc.). In this context, the first requirement to guide our action at sea is to know what goes on in the oceans, who are the actors involved and how they behave. The spaces to monitor are huge and the number of units able to work in high seas is limited. Resources must be optimized and allocated on priorities.

From a French perspective, priorities are:

- Ensuring our sovereignty, in accordance with international law. In the Indian Ocean, it means ensuring the safety of French territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zones in the South of the Indian ocean.
- Granting freedom and security of navigation within the strategic lanes of communication, mainly in and between the choke points (Suez, BAM, Strait of Hormuz, Malacca) and the narrow areas
- Preventing illegal activities at sea (terrorism, traffics, piracy)

The classical way to ensure security, orientated toward the protection around our base, around our coastline, or around our ships and HVUs must be overcome. It has proved costly and inefficient. Instead, the line of detection must be extended. A spider net has to be spin to ensure global coverage of the ocean (2/3 of the planet). All sources of information must be connected, allowing a classical work of intelligence gathering, selection and analysis, but on a larger scale.

On a national level, inter-agency cooperation must be promoted. France has developed a model organized around the institution of the Maritime Prefect, an admiral in charge of coordinating the action of all national administrations working at sea. Created in the 70ies, this model is now mature and showed its effectiveness.

Navies must strengthen their relationship with maritime merchant community. CEO of French maritime companies are annually invited by the French Chief of Navy Staff in Paris to share assessment and concerns. Civilian ships are a tremendous source of information. The information they provide is a very relevant addition to the intelligence gathered by Navy ships. This relationship should also be promoted on a

regional or local scale. A maritime security cell (MARSEC) has been created in my French JHQ to that end. It gathered a lot of precious information by discussing with captains.

Cooperation between Navies of the Indian Ocean should also be strengthened. France is particularly willing to go forward with the countries with which we have strategic partnerships.

Technology must be put at the service of maritime security. The latest technology is useful:

- for orienting our research. (environment data)
- for collecting data (high-performance sensors embarked on ships, aircrafts, satellites or coastal stations)
- for sorting out and analyzing the collected data. (technology to exploit short-time data but also long-term data such as big data).
- for sharing information provided by different sources (to implement in a system

run by an official agency a piece of information collected from a private company database for instance)

Regular meetings are also necessary to generate ideas and develop good practices. Various organizations and frameworks can be used to that end, from the global institutions (IMO) to regional fora (IORA, IONS, Manama and Shangri-La Dialogues) including military coalitions (CMF). All these frameworks have proved useful and can get credit for various initiatives: Best Management Practices catalogue, creation of Information Fusion Centers, White shipping agreements, etc.

Traffickers and terrorists exploit geographic extents, latest technologies and contingency alliances to their benefit. They must not be allowed any opportunity. Law and morality are from our side. By our joint endeavor and a strengthened relationship, we can, and we will, be more efficient and achieve our goal: safer seas for the good of world economies.

Thank you very much for your attention