

ONE TEAM, ONE PLAYGROUND, VARIOUS PLAYERS MARITIME SECURITY APPROACHES OF EUROPEAN NATO MEMBERS



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Authors:
ANTONI PIEŃKOS & JULIAN PAWLAK

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Introduction

NATO was founded as an organisation bringing together twelve countries, eleven of which had direct access to the sea, most of which being strongly sea-oriented. This maritime orientation is, with the North Atlantic as its geographical centre, also reflected in the alliance's name (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation). However, over time (mainly after the end of the Cold War), its structure has changed significantly with the welcoming of numerous countries from Central and Eastern Europe. Still, not least due to its transatlantic nature, large parts of the Alliance's activities remain focused on the maritime domain. In the operational dimension, despite all the transitions and changes of the recent decades, as, e.g., during the peace dividend and the return to great-power competition, the sea has remained a crucial focal point of NATO. Nevertheless, it is no secret that the perception of maritime affairs among the member states differs significantly, often leading to difficulties in establishing a common denominator for maritime approaches. This is hardly surprising, given the fact that the current thirty alliance members are spread over thousands of kilometres, and their view on security issues also revolves around very different challenges and threats.¹

The motivation standing behind this study is to demonstrate how diverse the NATO landscape is in regard of the maritime issues and, with that, to underline why decision-makers should always consider this domain very carefully. As part of the report, six NATO member countries are analysed in the context of their maritime footprint: Poland, Portugal, Greece, Germany, Norway, and France. Each of them was examined throughout its maritime legacy and orientation, strategic and operational context, threats and maritime interests, as well as the duties of their naval forces. This structure was designed to make these very distinct (in the context of geography, mindset, means, ways and ends) cases comparable and facilitate a comparative study of the analysed matter.²

The authors faced the challenge of choosing a representative number of countries to best show the differences in views on the maritime domain. Hence, the selected countries differ in

geographical conditions, historical heritage, as well as economic and political aspects. They are oriented in very different geographical directions (i.a. Baltic, North Sea, Norwegian Sea, Aegean and Mediterranean seas or Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic oceans). Additionally, they also reflect a position of a wider group of member states. Poland represents a group of Baltic and Black Sea states that are primarily interested in NATO's Eastern Flank security (together with Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Romania and to a lesser extent Bulgaria). Greece represents a group of countries concerned with activities in the Mediterranean region, like Italy or Spain. Portugal is interested in securing sea lines of communication (SLOCs) in the areas like Gulf of Guinea or Horn of Africa, as well as in protecting very extensive exclusive economic zones (EEZ) and in humanitarian and crisis response operations in the Portuguese speaking community. To a large extent, the Netherlands and Denmark have a very similar approach. Germany is part of more continentally focused European security actors, but due to its global economic and political relevance the country complements this with increasing activities of its naval forces beyond European waters. The case of Norway represents a Scandinavian country on the one hand, but on the other, contrary to its formally non-aligned partners in the region, is a NATO Northern Flank representative. Finally, France continues to be one of the most important European maritime actors. This is related to its large maritime liabilities, e.g. in the Pacific, to its numerous overseas territories, the linked population of around one million French citizens, and its naval power. At the end of the document, as part of the study's conclusion, the authors summarise briefly the mentioned case studies, present the most important consequences of all the differences between them, the ways to mitigate them, and the implications of these findings on NATO's maritime policy.

¹ An attempt to reconcile these different attitudes and perceptions is the "NATO 360-degree" concept adopted by the Alliance at the 2016 NATO summit in Warsaw. It does not signify an intention to unify these differences, but rather an attempt to adequately address them by the very complex community of states – which NATO definitely constitutes.

² This article does not intend to draw the "complete" maritime history of each of the selected cases. Rather, it attempts to draw a differentiation of the individual approaches and maritime dependencies with their various roots and approaches. Therefore, the study does not represent an exhaustive historical register of the nations' maritime histories.

Chapter I

Poland – not much beyond coastal defence

1.1. Maritime legacy and orientation

From the beginning of its statehood in the 10th century, Poland secured its access to the Baltic Sea, with only one period without it, during the partitions period in the 17th-19th centuries. During the First Polish Republic Poland, despite its wide access to the sea, did not show any aspirations to pursue an independent, consistent and coordinated maritime policy. However it is clear it has understood the importance of an independent access to the sea. At that time, the country's naval forces relied mainly on private vessels and ad hoc ship formations. An attempt was made to change this situation during the reign of Sigismund II Augustus – it was then, that the Maritime Commission was established. It was the first naval command of its kind in Poland, but this initiative ended along with the death of the king.³

After regaining independence in the interwar period, Poland, despite a short, less than 150 km long shoreline (hard-won during the Versailles Peace Conference), turned strongly towards a comprehensive maritime policy, which was begun with the construction of a seaport in Gdynia and a significant development of Polish naval forces.⁴ Unfortunately, as a result of the defeat in the September campaign of 1939 (withdrawal of most ships to Great Britain to avoid destruction or takeover), as well as a result of depriving Poland of the possibility of conducting an independent maritime policy during the Cold War, the country lost its determination to comprehensively secure its maritime interests.

This policy did not change after 1990. After regaining political independence there was no vision for the development of comprehensive maritime policies and naval forces. This was accompanied by a general lack of debate on the importance of the sea for the economy and national security. As a result of all these events, Poland is currently characterised by a strong focus on land dimension, deeply rooted in the historical heritage of the country. The coastal location does not attract much attention in the public debate – maybe apart from the sporadic occasion like news about increase ports turnovers or plans of gaining energy supply independence.⁵



Oliver Hazard Perry Class Guided Missile Frigate ORP gen. Kazimierz Pułaski. Aut. Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej.

³ Henryk Mąka, *Admirałowie Polskiej Floty: od Mieszka I do admirałów XXI wieku*, wydawnictwo Bellona, Warszawa 2015, 55-76.

⁴ Grzegorz Piwnicki, Bogdan Zalewski, *Polska wojskowa polityka morska od X do XX wieku*, Dowództwo Marynarki Wojennej, Gdynia 2002, 93-111.

⁵ Maciej Janiak, *Gdzie poszukiwać strategiczno-politycznych przyczyn upadku MW RP?* [Analiza], Portal Stoczniowy.pl, <https://portalstoczniowy.pl/wiadomosci/gdzie-poszukiwac-strategiczno-politycznych-przyczyn-upadku-mw-rp-analiza-2/>.

1.2. Strategic and operational context

After Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2014 and its annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, the Baltic security environment changed significantly. In response to these events, NATO launched numerous counteractivities, including the deployment of enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) Battle Groups to the Poland and the Baltic States. This, alongside with growing US military capacities and the rising tempo and scale of Alliance's military exercises, constitutes the very core of NATO's Eastern Flank security.⁶ In this context it is very important to understand the importance of SLOCs for sustaining the Battle Groups potential in case of military conflict – without sufficient support, they do not poses enough capabilities to prevent aggression towards Allied countries. At the same time, the Baltic Sea region is a witness to Russian continued improvement of Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) capabilities (among others Iskander-M ballistic missiles, S-400 air and missile defence systems, Bastion anti-ship missile systems etc.) to suppress NATO activities in this area during a potential conflict.⁷ This, along with Russian information warfare, creates the impression of invincible power, seemingly capable of shattering NATO naval and air assets. As a result, a widespread perception persists, proclaiming that the Baltic Sea is a no-go zone for Western naval assets – or for both sides in some cases.

Apart from the more strategic security context of the Baltic Sea region and NATO's Eastern Flank, Poland's maritime economy, especially in terms of energy security, should also be considered. The Polish coast is 440 km long (on the border of the territorial sea) and there are four large seaports located there: two in the west (Szczecin and Świnoujście) and two in the east (Gdańsk and Gdynia). At the same time, Gdańsk is one of the five largest Baltic ports. In 2019, the total turnover on the Polish seaports

was recorded at over 93 million tons and amounted to about half of the non-EU trade. Currently, Poland is able to import 5 billion m³ of LNG annually through the gas terminal in Świnoujście, but in the next few years this capacity is to increase to about 22-23 billion m³ (i.a. due to Baltic Pipe and gas terminal upgrade). It will significantly exceed the current consumption of the whole country, which amounted to approximately 19 billion m³ per year in 2019. This will allow Poland to become completely independent from gas supplies originating from Russia in the upcoming years. Similar actions are taken with regards to crude oil supplies, where, thanks to the enlargement of the oil port in Gdańsk and oil storage facilities, the supplies of crude oil from destinations other than Russia are also to increase significantly – such a trend has been observed for several years now and is expected to stay rising. On the other hand, Polish plans to build offshore wind farms in the Baltic Sea indicate that ultimately, approximately 15-20% of the Polish energy mix (at least in terms of installed power) may come from this source in future.⁸ This short overview shows the importance of the maritime economy for Poland's energy and economic security.

Finally, it is necessary to focus on the potential of the Polish naval forces. In 2020, the average age of Polish Navy (PN) ships was well over 30 years. The situation is even worse considering combat ships alone. In a few years, without launching acquisition processes of new ships, there will be no multi-role surface combatants and submarines available to use by the PN. The two ex-US Navy Oliver Hazard Perry frigates have very limited potential and should be withdrawn from service within the next few years. All remaining Polish submarines (one Russian build Kilo-class and two soon-to-be decommissioned ex-Norwegian Kobben-class submarines) are non-combat ready, making Poland incapable of planning any military operations using the national submarine force.

⁶ Ben Hodges, Janusz Bugajski, Ray Wojcik, Carsten Schmiedl, *One Flank, One Threat, One Presence: A Strategy for NATO's Eastern Flank*, Center for European Policy Analysis, Washington DC 2020.

⁷ Robert Dalsjö, Christofer Berglund, Michael Jonsson, *Bursting the Bubble – Russian A2/AD in the Baltic Sea Region: Capabilities, Countermeasures, and Implications*, Swedish Defence Research Agency, Stockholm 2019.

⁸ *Ryzyko załamania branży morskiej jest bardzo prawdopodobne, a skutki mogą być bardzo dotkliwe dla całego kraju – ciąg dalszy*, PortalStocznioowy.pl, <https://portalstocznioowy.pl/wiadomosci/ryzyko-zalamania-branzny-morskiej-jest-bardzo-prawdopodobne-a-skutki-moga-byc-bardzo-dotkliwe-dla-calego-kraju-ciag-dalszy/>.

This will leave the PN striking forces with only one offshore patrol vessel and a group of three small fast missile boats that require urgent modernisation (although, equipped with modern RBS 15 Mk3 anti-ship missiles). The situation may be improved only by acquiring a bridging capacity in the field of submarines (talks were underway with Sweden regarding the acquisition of two used A 17 submarines but these have since been put on indefinite hold) and new frigates. Regarding the latter, the Polish MoD signed a contract for 3 new frigates (MIECZNIK programme) on July 2021 with the first ships entering service in 2028.

In addition, the PN will soon have three new minehunters and a proven mine countermeasure command ship. The rest of the numerous naval forces are the heritage of the Cold War and the auxiliary role that the Polish Navy had as part of the Warsaw Pact naval forces. Most of the said ships being either very old (such as two Project 874 hydrographic ships) or barely useful in the current conditions (like the now-obsolete Project 207 minesweepers).⁹ Contrary to the Cold War period, the PN does not currently have a significant air component, with only a few Anti-Submarine Warfare helicopters (8 x ageing Mi-14 PŁ) and the same number of Search and Rescue helicopters (8 x W-3WARM Anakonda and 2 ageing Mi-14 PŁ/R). The Polish Navy also operates 8 Bryza MPAs, that are based on the Russian An-28 design planes. The potential of navy air component will be upgraded in the upcoming years with four state of the art AW-101 helicopters and an unspecified number of new frigate-based ASW helicopters to replace the ageing SH-2G Kamans. The modest combat potential of the Polish Navy is significantly complemented by coastal artillery in the strength of two anti-ship missile squadrons with state-of-the-art Naval Strike Missiles.¹⁰ Looking at the current level of capabilities, the PN is configured for operations in the Southern Baltic and has very limited blue-water potential.

1.3. Maritime security interests

The main document defining threats and security interests, making up the Polish national security system is the National Security Strategy. The document is approved by the President of the Republic of Poland at the request of the Prime Minister, and is prepared by an inter-ministerial team, operating under the supervision of the Ministry of National Defence. The latest version of the document was approved on May 12, 2020 and, unlike its predecessor from 2014 (in which the only sea mentioned is the Caspian Sea – in the context of energy supplies), it refers, at least to a small extent, to the state's maritime security. Nevertheless, the main conclusion coming from the National Security Strategy 2020 is that the Baltic sea and the maritime domain as a whole is still marginalised. It contains only two guidelines for assessing what interests Poland has in the maritime domain:

- taking advantage of the geographic location to boost the development of the country (with reference to the transport potential of the Baltic Sea and the need to develop main sea ports);
- increasing diversification of oil and gas supply sources by expanding the existing natural gas import capacities (inter alia increasing reception capacity of the LNG terminal in Świnoujście);
- building new entry points to the Polish transmission system (construction of the Baltic Pipe, construction of the LNG terminal in the Gdańsk Bay).¹¹

⁹ Tomasz Dmitruk on Twitter, <https://twitter.com/goltarr/status/1327948928634019841>.

¹⁰ Marynarka Wojenna, Polish Armed Forces official website, <https://www.wojsko-polskie.pl/marynarka-wojenna/>.

¹¹ *National Security Strategy of The Republic of Poland*, National Security Bureau, Warsaw 2020, 34.

However, in the context of security threats, we can only find one remark claiming that: *“the Russian Federation is intensively developing its offensive military capabilities (including in the Western strategic direction), extending Anti-Access/Area Denial systems inter alia in the Baltic Sea region, including the Kaliningrad Oblast, and conducting large-scale military exercises, based on scenarios assuming a conflict with NATO member states, a rapid deployment of large military formations, and even the use of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the Russian Federation carries out activities below the threshold of war (of hybrid nature), which pose the risk of a conflict outbreak”*.¹² Therefore, it is hard to find in this document a reference, for example, the threat to Polish maritime communication or the threat of weaponising energy security. This is important especially having in mind that Poland is becoming increasingly dependent on the supply by sea (and this trend will continue in the upcoming years).

This increase in mentions regarding the maritime security of Poland in relation to the previous strategy shows, however, that thanks to the work of the Presidential National Security Bureau (pol. *Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego*, BBN), the need to protect Polish sea lines of communication and trade as a key security interest became more visible in the public debate.

The National Security Strategy is also the basis for the development of further strategic preparatory documents (including the Technical Modernisation Plan of the Polish Armed Forces) and operational documents (including the doctrine and country defence concept).¹³ 2017 saw the publishing of, two other, equally important documents of a strategic nature not formally anchored in the system of acts of this type. These included Poland’s Strategic Concept for Maritime Security and the Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland. However, due to their significant influence on the actions of several key public institutions, it is worth discussing both of them.

The first of these documents was developed by the Presidential National Security Bureau. The BBN is known for its support for naval forces development and is one of the few governmental institutions that push for the need to secure Polish maritime interests outside the Baltic Sea and to use PN for duties outside the defence of the Polish coast in a full-scale conflict. In this document, the Polish maritime interests are listed as follows: securing territorial integrity and sovereignty of Poland (in case of war); the maintenance of the maritime security of Poland and its citizens through involvement in international activities; the possession of deterrence capabilities, protective actions and recovery procedures and the maintenance of appropriate conditions for the development of the society and economy of the country.¹⁴ The document identifies specific maritime security threats that already are affecting, or may soon affect Poland and even Europe as a whole. They include: *“questioning or selective recognition of international laws which results in limiting trade routes; terrorism, piracy, and other unlawful acts at sea and in harbours; transborder and organised crime: including maritime theft, human trafficking, smuggling, organised crime connected with illegal immigration, gun and drug smuggling, contraband; spread of weapons of mass destruction; weakening the control systems of conventional armed forces and undermining the development of trust in Europe which in turn creates conditions for the militarisation of its coastal regions and an increase in military and non-military incidents facilitating threats to sea trade (e.g. episodes of hybrid and asymmetrical warfare, information warfare, and cyber warfare)”*. In a particular Baltic context, they also include: *“the development of Russia’s military power, in particular Anti Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) capabilities; Baltic Sea water pollution or unlawful or excessive exploitation of sea resources”*.¹⁵

¹² Ibid, 6-10.

¹³ Ustawa z dnia 21 listopada 1967 r. o powszechnym obowiązku obrony Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej.

¹⁴ *Poland’s Strategic Concept for Maritime Security*, National Security Bureau, Warsaw–Gdynia 2017, 39.

¹⁵ Ibid, 11-12.



The Polish Navy maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft PZL M28B Bryza. CC BY-SA 3.0

In the same year, the Ministry of National Defence published the Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland, which was the result of the Strategic Defence Review conducted by the Ministry in 2016. The main paradigm adopted in this document is the need to consider the interests of state security mainly in the context of the threat of a conventional armed conflict in the CEE region, including the form of direct aggression on and against the territory of the Republic of Poland. This largely reflects the view of the Polish Armed Forces (PAF). The document did not articulate any significant maritime security interests, although it was noted that diversification of the energy supplies constitutes an important factor in strengthening the position of Poland on the international arena (but without any reference to need for securing that area). However, the analysis did mention the unstable neighbourhood of NATO's Southern Flank. In this context *"Poland will be obliged to support Allies in various endeavours, including stabilisation, humanitarian and military operations. Unlike in the past, we want Polish contributions to be significant, but with no enduring negative effects to our national defence capabilities"*.¹⁶ We can expect that the usage of naval assets will be corresponding with that statement, especially that this should not jeopardise the defence of territorial integrity.

To sum up, there is a well-established perception that the main threat to Polish security is a territorial aggression (including actions from the sea), an attack on the so-called Suwalki Corridor (the narrow land connection between Poland and the Baltic states) and the belief that the responsibility for safeguarding of shipping routes beyond Southern Baltic area may be transferred to NATO and EU partners. Just alike, little attention is paid to asymmetric threats at sea (such as piracy, terrorism or hybrid activities).

1.4. Duties of the naval force

The duties of the PN both during peace and wartime can be defined based on operational and doctrinal documents as well as based on observations of its training activities. During peacetime, the PN puts at the core the participation in international cooperation and exercises, mainly within NATO, as well as in bilateral cooperation (most common partners being Germany and the United States). Polish activity within NATO most often includes the participation in mine countermeasure operations, including SNMCMG (Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group) 1 and 2, and much less often involvement in SNMG (Standing NATO Maritime Group) 1 and 2.¹⁷ Participation in those is sporadic (3 times since 2014 conducted by OHP frigates) and its scale is likely to continue to decrease if no new surface combat vessels are acquired for the Polish Navy. The participation of the PN ships as part of EU operations has not happened so far, but since 2018, the M28 Bryza maritime patrol aircraft and "Formoza" naval special forces unit have participated in the EU Operations SOPHIA and IRINI.¹⁸

¹⁶ *The Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland*, Ministry of National Defence, Warsaw 2017, 27-28.

¹⁷ Antoni Pieńkos, *Czym się pływa w Stalych Zespołach Sił Morskich NATO (SNMG 1 i 2)? [ANALIZA]*, Portal Stocznioowy.pl, <https://portalstocznioowy.pl/wiadomosci/czym-sie-plywa-w-stalych-zespolach-sil-morskich-nato-snmg-1-i-2-analiza/>.

¹⁸ *Koniec SOPHIA, początek IRINI*, Wojsko-Polskie.pl, <https://www.wojsko-polskie.pl/blmw/articles/aktualnosci-w/2020-04-03y-koniec-sophi-poczatek-irini/>.

During a potential armed conflict, the Polish naval forces would carry out tasks as part of a joint operation of the entire Polish Armed Forces, as well as combined in the international dimension alongside NATO forces. As per the Polish defence doctrine, the PN's duties will probably be limited to hindering enemy transport on the Baltic SLOCs and counteracting any hostile activities aimed directly at the Polish coast (supporting joint PAF efforts in the Northern direction and preventing the opponent from gaining control of the southern Baltic). This can be achieved largely by conducting precision strikes from the shore (land based anti-ship missiles – like the Naval Strike Missile as a part of *Morska Jednostka Rakietowa*). On the other hand, it may be difficult to secure sea transports in Baltic area using only limited national capabilities. Moreover, given the current PN potential, there is rather no room for active participation in combined NATO operations at the Northern Sea or Atlantic Ocean, what may change when PN will acquire new frigates capabilities.

As one can see, the Polish Navy, due to the general approach to maritime affairs in Poland, the perception of threats, security interests and the means it has, has limited duties (especially in the context of classic understanding of maritime warfare, such as ship escorts or sea control). It seems that the national naval force has a purely auxiliary role in relation to other services of the armed forces, as per the current military doctrines.



ORP Orzeł (291) - a Polish Navy 'Project 877E' (Kilo-class) submarine.
Aut. Łukasz Golowanow & Maciek Hupś

Chapter II

Portugal – rooted in the Atlantic dimension

2.1 Maritime legacy and orientation

Despite its geographic location, characterised by wide access to the sea, the territories of today's Portugal did not have significant "ties" with the sea in either ancient period (Celtic, Carthaginian and Roman times) or even in the early Middle Ages (under the rule of Germanic and then Arabic peoples). In the latter, its seashore developed as a natural stopover in the middle of the Northern Europe-Mediterranean trade route that became the arena of Arabs-Christians contest. Middle Ages were also a time when first trips down to the African coast took place from Portugal. A rapid change of Portuguese sea aspirations could have been observed in the first half of the fifteenth century, during the activity of Prince Henry the Navigator. He was considered the initiator of Portuguese seaborne exploratory expeditions, and therefore also the father of the Portuguese colonial imperium. The sudden change of approach to the sea was possible thanks to the unique political and strategic situation of the kingdom of Portugal, formed at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries.¹⁹ After the Arabic peoples were exiled from the Iberian Peninsula, the country was left with only one direct neighbour, whose policy, was characterised by a non-aggressive approach towards Lisbon. The influence of this factor on the development of Portugal in the following centuries can be considered as crucial, because Spain naturally shielded its neighbour from most of the major European conflicts that in the end only slightly affected Portugal.

As noted above, the basis of Portugal's relationship with the sea was the country's achievements in great geographical discoveries, mainly in the 15th and 16th centuries and its colonial empire built from the beginning of the 15th century, mainly in South America, Africa, India and, to a lesser extent, Southeast Asia and Oceania. Mentioning only some of the most notable seamen of Portugal include famous names such as Vasco da Gama, Bartolomeu Dias, or Ferdinand Magellan (the latter served the Spanish rulers but was Portuguese) allows understanding the importance of this country in the process of great geographical discoveries. Moreover, the sailing school and astronomical observatory that was founded in Sagres in 1416 by Henry the Navigator were the first places in Europe to prepare sailors for long ocean voyages. Due to its modest demographic and economic potential, Portugal based its colonial empire by relying on a network of fortified trading factories, rather than building complete administrative structures. Eventually however, the empire started collapsing. The process decolonisation in Portugal began early, as the largest Portuguese colony, Brazil, declared independence as early as 1822. However the process did not end until the 1970s, when its last colonies in Africa, such as Mozambique and Angola, gained independence.²⁰ This phenomenon has certainly had a huge impact on the Portuguese approach to foreign policy, including its maritime operations. Portugal joining NATO in 1949 has been yet another factor that significantly affected Portugal's approach to the maritime domain. Since then, Portugal has become one of the most important links in securing transatlantic communication routes (especially bearing in mind the location of Azores islands), establishing very close relations with the US Navy in this area.²¹

¹⁹ David Abulafia, *The Boundless Sea – a Human History of the Oceans*, Penguin Books, London 2019, 465-480.

²⁰ Portugal, Britannica.com, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Portugal>.

²¹ Portugal and NATO, NATO official website, nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_162352.htm.



NRP Sagres - training ship of the Portuguese Navy. CC BY 2.5

2.2 Strategic and operational context

The strong connection between the security of Portugal and its ability to pursue its strategic interests across the Atlantic Ocean and, more broadly, the maritime space, is indisputable. This is well illustrated by the devotion to maintain strong ties with Portuguese-speaking countries and economic issues (including energy supply security). This entire landscape is further complimented by membership in NATO and EU as well as the fact of having only one neighbour (Spain). In the land domain, Portugal is very far from any threat of territorial aggression.

The Portuguese maritime areas, which include the territorial sea, the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf, are corresponding to 42 times its land territory (almost 4 million km²) – EEZ is about 1,7 million km² (3rd in EU and 20th in the World). It is one of the largest maritime areas in the world. Moreover, one should also consider that the respective national search and rescue (SAR) responsibility zone is about 6 million

km². This corresponds to 63 times the national territory, giving a better view on how close Portugal is tied with the maritime domain.²² Moreover, Portugal has two overseas territories: the Madeira Island and the Azores archipelagos. The first one is located less than 1000 km southwest of the coast of the Iberian Peninsula. The second is located 1,400 km west of the Portuguese coast (about one third of the way to North America) which gives the archipelago a special strategic importance in terms of maintaining transatlantic sea and air communication (which was of particularly valuable during the Cold War times). Both territories have significant economy (tourism industry, but also sugar and wine cultivations), demographic (a total of about 500,000 inhabitants) and political value for Portugal.²³

Another important factor is closely associated with the Portuguese idea to consolidate (not to be confused with integration) the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Saint Thomas and Prince, East Timor and Equatorial Guinea) as an area of cooperation among its member states. This implies the necessity to conduct naval activities in support of those countries (among others: naval diplomacy, training assistance, humanitarian aid and crisis response). This approach is considered important to both Portuguese security and political interests.²⁴ On the other hand, it also implies the need to upkeep an adequate naval forces (with proper blue water potential and range) and to look at its maritime interests much more broadly than only the Central Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea.

²² A Defesa de Portugal 2015, Defesa Nacional official website, https://www.defesa.gov.pt/pt/comunicacao/documentos/Lists/PDEFINTER_DocumentoLookupList/70_A-Defesa-de-Portugal-2015.pdf, 56.

²³ Madeira-Web, <https://www.madeira-web.com/en/madeira/facts.html>.

²⁴ Jaime Ferreira da Silva, *Portugal's Interest in The Context of Security and Defence Policy and Maritime Affairs. Some Theoretical Considerations as part of The Relationship Between Portugal and The European Union*, "e-journal of International Relations" 6(1)/2015, <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=4135/413541154004>.

Portugal, like the vast majority of EU countries, is heavily dependent on the supply of energy resources (mainly oil and gas, which account for almost 65% of the energy mix – 25% comes from renewable energy sources) from outside of the European continent, delivered largely by sea. Portugal is one of EU countries with the highest Energy Dependency Rate, which was 75% in 2018, according to Eurostat data placing the country sixth in this respect in the entire EU.²⁵ All of the natural gas consumed in Portugal is imported, originating from two sources: Algeria (via a gas pipeline under the Mediterranean Sea to Spain) and from Nigeria. The importance of natural gas in Portugal's energy mix is expected to increase even further at the expense of oil and coal, since so far, no gas or oil deposits have been found on the Portuguese continental shelf.²⁶ As a result, in addition to the great interest in maintaining stability in source regions, it is also very important for to secure shipping routes, including combating all forms of crime at sea (piracy, terrorism and other forms of organised crime). At the same time, Portugal pays a lot of attention to the issue of encouraging its citizens and business to use the sea, in accordance with the ideas of sustainable development of the maritime economy. Portugal is also strongly in favour of international cooperation, including within the institutional and technical framework of the European Union.²⁷

In response to the above-described maritime security environment, Portugal maintains a modest but comprehensive naval force. Due to the country's geography, the navy seems to be the best way to safeguard a big share of the country's security, political and economic interests. The core of the Portuguese naval forces are frigates (2 of the Dutch Karel Doorman type, known in Portugal as the Bartolomeu Dias type, and 3 Vasco da Gama type ships based on the popular German MEKO 200 project) as well as submarines (2 modern Trident submarines based on the German Type 214). Most of the surface ships are around 30 years old

and will need to be replaced by the end of this decade. The submarines on the other hand are still relatively young and have many years of service ahead of them. In addition, the last (out of 4) Baptista de Andrade corvettes of the Spanish NRP João Roby class, is still in service, but its withdrawal can be expected soon due to its age (45 years). Moreover, the Portuguese navy has a fleet of several (over 20) patrol ships of various sizes, incl. 4 (10 in total on order) Viana do Castelo OPVs of domestic production and 3 (out of 5 originally purchased) smaller Tejo patrols of Danish design Standard Flex 300. As one can see, this segment of the Portuguese Navy is currently undergoing dynamic modernisation.

In addition, the Portuguese Navy has 4 research (hydrographic) ships and 2 sailing training vessels. What is striking is the lack of two types of vessels, which may severely limit the independence of the operation of other ships. Firstly, Portuguese Navy lacks any mine countermeasure vessels. However, in theory, after installing the appropriate module, the ability to identify and neutralise mine threats could lay with the Standard Flex 300 patrol vessels. The second missing ship type is the supply vessels. After the withdrawal of NRP Bérrio (an ex-British Rover-type tanker) in 2020, the ability of the Portuguese Navy to conduct long-range, independent operations has been severely limited. There is also a striking lack of an organic aviation component, except from the 5 Westland Lynx Mk95 helicopters operating from frigate decks.²⁹ The Portuguese Air Force operates however two types of maritime patrol aircrafts: 5 smaller and newer CASA C-295 MPA and 4 older (although modernised) and larger P-3 Orion purchased from the Netherlands in 2004 (with deliveries from 2010) – the latter is slowly going out of service in most Western countries, being replaced by new, larger and jet-powered MPAs like the P-8 Poseidon.³⁰ It remains unclear what will be the future large MPA in the Portuguese service, as no public debate about future purchases took place.

²⁵ What Energy is Available in The EU?, Eurostat, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/energy/bloc-2.html>.

²⁶ Fossil Fuel Support Country Note, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development official website, <http://stats.oecd.org/wbos/fileview2.aspx?IDFile=643a5968-666f-41e3-a29e-ba54c114bbc3>.

²⁷ National Ocean Strategy 2013–2020, Direção-Geral de Política do Mar official website, https://96594c97-1436-40ba-b257-d6d0d780b25f.filesusr.com/ugd/eb00d2_e92a7c20b2154b39a8fe1ff2b8e7af15.pdf, 11–14.

²⁸ Os Meios, Marinha official website, https://www.marinha.pt/pt/os_meios/Paginas/default.aspx.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Lockheed Martin P-3 Orion Operators, P-3 Orion Research Group, <https://www.p3orion.nl/operators.html>.

2.3 Maritime security interests

The most important strategic document defining Portugal's security interests is the Strategic Concept of National Defence, the last edition of which was published in 2013 (replacing its predecessor from 2003). This document sets out various aspects of the Portuguese security strategy, forming the basis of the state's defence and security policy. This document is complemented by two other documents, i.e. Defesa 2020 and Defesa de Portugal 2015, which focus more on the transformation of defence capabilities to adapt them to the Strategy adopted in 2013. Both of these two documents are particularly useful for defining tasks for the Portuguese naval forces and their composition. Since the Portuguese maritime strategy dates back to 2013, the European security environment has undergone significant changes related to the war in Eastern Ukraine and the migration crisis in the Mediterranean Sea. Its next adaptation (expected in 2023) should attempt to respond to those new emerging threats.

The first important element of the Strategic Concept of National Defence from 2013 is the analysis of risks and threats in the international environment. The list includes the following items:

- international terrorism along with other forms of extremism;
- piracy;
- organised transnational crime;
- proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
- multiplication of fragile states and civil wars;
- regional conflicts;
- cybercrimes;
- competition for the natural resources;
- natural disasters and climate change.

As clearly visible on the list, there is no reference to the threat of a conventional conflict on a larger scale, which would soon (counting from 2014) become the main source of potential threat to the countries of the Alliance's Eastern Flank. Among the listed risks, which are mainly found in the group of asymmetric or non-military threats, with piracy in the second place (although the list is not officially organised in the order of relevance). Out of the above-mentioned list, Portugal identified the following as real risks: terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organised transnational crime, cybercrime and piracy.³¹ It is worth noting here that in Defesa de Portugal 2015 document, the war in Eastern Ukraine was noted as a factor disturbing the current order in Europe and causing concern among the countries of the CEE region, but understandably more focus was devoted to the threat from the so-called Islamic State.³²



Portuguese Vasco da Gama-class frigate NRP Corte Real (F 332).
Public Domain

³¹ Strategic Concept of National Defence, Defesa Nacional official website, https://www.defesa.gov.pt/pt/comunicacao/documentos/Lists/PDEFINTER_DocumentoLookupList/20_Strategic-Concept-of-National-Defence.pdf, 21-22.

³² A Defesa de Portugal 2015, Defesa Nacional official website, https://www.defesa.gov.pt/pt/comunicacao/documentos/Lists/PDEFINTER_DocumentoLookupList/70_A-Defesa-de-Portugal-2015.pdf, 11-13.

As part of the analysis of the security environment in the Strategic Concept of National Defence, one can also find brief characteristics of the main areas of interest to Lisbon. First of all, the Atlantic Ocean is described as a stable and well-protected area that is the centre of the Western political and economic community. At the same time, the need to provide a large amount of energy, production, and food resources for countries on both shores of the North Atlantic is highlighted. Additionally, due to the Portuguese geographical location and the location of Portuguese-speaking countries (still related to the former colonial empire), Africa and South America are key regions of interest (apart from Europe). The MENA region was also indicated as an important area of interest. Despite the events of the Arab Spring Portugal sees MENA as a region with broad opportunity for cooperation (including the possibility of obtaining energy resources) rather than a potential risk or threat, although there is a statement there about growing demographic pressure from this direction. In the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, the challenge of political and social instability resulting in the emergence of a terrorist and pirate threat was identified.

The document also discusses the goals that Portugal should pursue in its planning of activities related to national security. The permanent and most important goals of the security policy include: preservation of sovereignty, independence, constitutional order and territorial integrity; safety and freedom of people and property; protection of national heritage; maintaining and restoring peace in line with international law, as well as strengthening internal cohesion in order to increase the country's resilience to external threats. Bearing in mind the security environment and the ambitions of Portugal in the international arena, the current key strategic goals were:

- improving the stability and economic balance of the country;
- reducing unemployment and increasing human potential;

- reducing dependence and sensitivity to the actions of other international actors;
- promotion of Portugal's Atlanticism;
- strengthening alliances and partnerships (including the EU and NATO);
- supporting the Community of Portuguese Language Countries;
- developing and strengthening the capacity to respond to the challenges and threats described above, including the continued participation of the Portuguese armed forces in international peacekeeping missions and operations; efficient use of resources;
- developing innovation and technology base in the country and protecting Portuguese prestige in the international arena.

Another objective of Portuguese security policy is undoubtedly to increase the level of security of energy supplies, which is largely achieved through the actions and policies of the state at sea (which largely explains the importance Lisbon attributes to the piracy threat). Finally, the document also mentions the opportunities offered by marine and mineral resources on the Portuguese continental shelf.³³

2.4 Duties of the naval force

The main duties of the Portuguese Navy described in Defesa de Portugal 2015 include: guarantying freedom of sea communication lines between the various parts of the national territory (and international ones in the area of Portuguese maritime interests); participating in defence operations on Portuguese territory; evacuating Portuguese from crisis areas; operating anywhere in the strategic area of interest; monitoring, controlling and intervening in areas under national jurisdiction, including maritime surveillance; search and rescue operations; EU, UN and NATO crisis response operations.

³³ Strategic Concept of National Defence, Defesa Nacional official website, https://www.defesa.gov.pt/pt/comunicacao/documentos/Lists/PDEFINTER_DocumentoLookupList/20_Strategic-Concept-of-National-Defence.pdf.

In peacetime and in a practical dimension, there are two main groups of activities: participation in crisis response operations as well as training and evacuation activities. The main areas where these actions and training take place are the former Portuguese colonies, and participation in NATO and EU missions and operations elsewhere. The first group included in the past, among others: the evacuation of national citizens from the Democratic Republic Congo and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau few times between 1997-2014, humanitarian assistance in Mozambique after disastrous floods in 2000 or the participation of Portuguese naval forces in the UN peace enforcement mission in Timor-Leste from 1999 to 2004. The latter group includes activities such as the participation of Portuguese ships in operations in the Western Balkans in the 1990s (IFOR and SFOR) and Active Endeavour since 2003 (several times the command part of these operations was passed to Portugal). In the context of protecting the European Union's borders, and in collaboration with FRONTEX, Portuguese ships have been involved in missions counteracting illegal immigration from North Africa, both in the Atlantic Ocean as in the Mediterranean Sea. From 2009 to 2013, in response to the sudden increase in piracy in the Indian Ocean, and especially in the Gulf of Aden, navy vessels and aircraft were engaged in various NATO and European Union missions to combat illegal activities (operations Ocean Shield 2010-2011 and Atalanta).³⁴ The EU operation Atlanta has been commanded by a Portuguese officer since December 2020, which also depicts the scale of Portuguese engagement.³⁵

To conclude, Portugal has a clear commitment to supporting crisis response and humanitarian activities in its former colonies, and supports broad activities of the EU and NATO operations aimed at fighting crime at sea, especially piracy, which clearly fits into the outlines of Portuguese general security strategy. Generally, the

Portuguese Navy is an important tool for the country's foreign policy and the most important of its armed forces services.

For all the reasons described above, the Defesa de Portugal 2015 document states, that the navy should have capabilities to prepare and sustain, simultaneously, two frigates for participation in NATO's collective defence. Furthermore, the navy should also pose amphibious and submarine capabilities, blue water and coastal patrol vessels and oceanographic ships to guarantee the simultaneous and continuous control and surveillance of maritime space under its jurisdiction, support the well-being of the population (by safeguarding maritime activities), and participation in Portugal's general defence.³⁶ Participation in SNMG 1 and 2 has always been an accurate barometer for the activities of NATO member countries in the maritime doctrine. Portugal, considering the size of its fleet, is one of the most active members of the programmes. Since 2014, the Portuguese frigates have performed a total of 10 shifts in SNMG 1 (its main areas of responsibility are the Atlantic, North and Baltic Seas), of which seven have been fulfilled by NRP Francisco de Almeida (F334), Karel Doorman class frigate. In 2015 on the mast of this ship the SNMG 1 flag was raised.³⁷



Portuguese submarine NRP Tridente (docked) and Greek submarine S-120 Papanikolis (in the water) at HDW, Kiel, Germany. CC BY-SA 3.0

³⁴ A Defesa de Portugal 2015, Defesa Nacional official website, https://www.defesa.gov.pt/pt/comunicacao/documentos/Lists/PDEFINTER_DocumentoLookupList/70_A-Defesa-de-Portugal-2015.pdf, 76.

³⁵ Portugal Takes over Command of 36th Rotation of Operation Atalanta, EUNAVFOR official website, <https://eunavfor.eu/portugal-takes-over-command-of-36th-rotation-of-operation-atalanta/>.

³⁶ A Defesa de Portugal 2015, Defesa Nacional official website, https://www.defesa.gov.pt/pt/comunicacao/documentos/Lists/PDEFINTER_DocumentoLookupList/70_A-Defesa-de-Portugal-2015.pdf, 53-82.

³⁷ Antoni Pieńkos, *Czym się pływa w Stałych Zespołach Sił Morskich NATO (SNMG 1 i 2)?* [ANALIZA], Portal Stoczniowy.pl, <https://portalstoczniowy.pl/wiadomosci/czym-sie-plywa-w-stalych-zespolach-sil-morskich-nato-snmg-1-i-2-analiza/>.

Chapter III

Greece – migration crisis and frictions with Turkey

3.1 Maritime legacy and orientation

Due to its limited ability to feed its population in an autarkic manner during ancient times, Greece has conducted an active policy aimed at the maritime development. Although the sailing Greek tribes date back to the 20th century BCE, a strong turn in the maritime direction was observed around the 8th century BCE. It was the result of the rapid development of Greek civilisation, population growth, the desire for wealth, and the availability of new solutions in the field of shipbuilding.³⁸ The development of Greek naval capabilities was confirmed by events such as the victory over the great Persian fleet at Salamis in 480 BC, or the course of the Peloponnesian Wars (including the operations of the Delian League). Perhaps most of all, it was influenced by the Greek colonisation efforts in the Mediterranean, in places such as Asia Minor, Southern Italy and Sicily, the Southern shores of France, Egypt, and also within the Black Sea. With the end of the Greek prosperity in the ancient world and with the occupation of the Greek territory by Rome, the era of great Greek maritime activities ended. Although the Greek population remained very active in the sphere of maritime trade since the 13th-14th centuries, this prosperity was reduced through the development of trade in mainland Italian cities (inter alia Genoa and Venice) and the fall of the Byzantine Empire.

Since regaining its independent statehood in the 19th century, Greece has naturally continued its dependency on the sea thanks to its insular (currently almost 2,500 islands and islets) and sea-oriented geography. Merchant shipping has become a renewed link with the sea, the

heritage of the former commercial and naval power of the ancient empire. The size of the Greek merchant fleet has been growing consistently since the end of World War II, based on a set of favourable factors, such as a strong shipbuilding industry, favourable economic policies, and large resources of manpower seeking new job opportunities. Finally, the Greek maritime orientations were also influenced by a historically established rivalry with Turkey, which is one of the reasons for, among others, the need to maintain strong armed forces, including naval forces (disproportionate to average European countries).³⁹ Despite numerous economic difficulties, the animosities with Turkey had a significant impact on the position of the armed forces in the Greek political and social system (especially among right wing party supporters).⁴⁰



Hellenic Navy's Hydra-class frigate HS Psara during Operation Enduring Freedom. Public Domain

³⁸ Tadeusz Łoposzko, *Tajemnice starożytnej żeglugi*, Wydawnictwo Morskie, Gdańsk 1977.

³⁹ Christoforos Kalloniatis, Christos Kollias, *Greece*, in *The Economics of the Global Defence Industry*, ed. Keith Hartley, Jean Belin, Routledge, London 2019, 233-234.

⁴⁰ Krzysztof Wojczal, *Grecka tragikomedja: koniec kryzysu czy greckiej gospodarki? Grecja* [ANALIZA iPL], <https://www.krzysztofwojczal.pl/geopolityka/europa-centralna/grecja/grecka-tragikomedja-koniec-kryzysu-czy-greckiej-gospodarki-grecja-analiza-ipl/>.

3.2 Strategic and operational context

Following the end of the Cold War, during which the Mediterranean basin was marginalised, the region regained its key role in European and global politics. This was mainly due to the conflicts in the Balkans, followed by an increase in illegal maritime activities in this area, as smuggling of people, weapons and drugs as well as the threat of terrorism, and, eventually, the events of the Arab Spring as well as, subsequently, the migration crisis. For the countries of Mediterranean Europe, these developments were both advantageous and disadvantageous at one time. On the one hand, they posed a significant threat and require costly reactions. On the other hand, they also increased the importance of the Mediterranean countries in the international arena and allow it to more effectively pursue its own strategic interests by involving allies in securing them – as Greece nowadays effectively does regarding the migration crisis.

As mentioned above, one of the main factors shaping the Greek security environment is its competition with Turkey. Despite both countries' memberships in NATO dating back to 1952, the situation between both has repeatedly found itself on the brink of an armed conflict. For example, in 1973-1974 during the Turkish intervention in Cyprus (resulting in the creation of non-recognised Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) or during the 1990s in the dispute over two uninhabited islets of Imia (gr.) / Kardak (tr.), which are part of the Dodecanese archipelago. This diplomatic and political conflict continues to this day, and in mid-2020 it had turned even "hotter" after several standoff situations involving vessels and aircraft from both countries. As of today the main challenge to the peace in the region is the lack of mutually accepted international sea border agreement between Turkey

and Greece (the status of the numerous small islands in the Aegean Sea and the EEZ shape remains an issue). The above-mentioned occupation of the northern part of Cyprus by Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is the second greatest obstacle. Additionally, there are claims regarding the undersea resources (mainly oil and gas) in both of these areas, with very oil-rich deposits expected within these shelves.⁴¹

Undoubtedly, the difficult relations with Turkey lead Greece to be the forefront of European countries when it comes to defence spending calculated as a percentage of GDP (despite – or due to – the Greece long-term economic crisis, in 2020 it amounted to 2.58% of GDP, i.e. the second position in NATO after the US). Turkey, in turn, spends 1.91% of its GDP on defence, but 36.9% of this amount is dedicated to equipment expenditures, which places it in second place in NATO after Luxembourg (Greece for comparison only 12.1%).⁴² The Turkish-Greek rivalry, combined with the recent crisis in Ankara's relations with Washington, brought a significant development of relations between Greece and the US, which resulted greater openness of American defence industry with regards to equipment offers for the Hellenic Armed Forces (e.g. to buy ships based on one of the new US frigates baseline projects).⁴³

For Greece, its NATO membership currently has two key dimensions: the easing of tensions between Greece and Turkey (in which NATO already has significant experience, dating back to the very beginning of their presence in the Alliance) and the support of allies in operations aimed at controlling migration in the Mediterranean.

⁴¹ Jeremy Stöhs, *The Decline of European Naval Forces: Challenges to Sea Power in an Age of Fiscal Austerity and Political Uncertainty*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis 2018.

⁴² *Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2013-2020)*, NATO Public Diplomacy Division Press Release, Brussels 2020, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/10/pdf/pr-2020-104-en.pdf.

⁴³ Łukasz Pacholski, *Amerykańskie fregaty dla Grecji?*, ZBiAM.pl, <https://zbiam.pl/amerykanskie-fregaty-dla-grecji/>.

In the latter aspect, it is worth mentioning that the activities carried out by members of the Alliance in the waters of the Aegean Sea include supporting both the Greek and Turkish naval forces counteracting illegal migration.⁴⁴ The main burden of this involvement was borne by the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 at the height of the migration crisis in 2016. The SNMG 2 then patrolled the waters of the Aegean Sea. As a result, the Greek ships also became involved in SNMG 2 activities in the area, performing duties five times since its formation in 2014. Four of these engagements were carried out by ex-Dutch Kortenaer frigates (two by HS Elli F450, one by HS Aigaion F460 and one by HS Kountouriotis F462) and once by the MEKO-200 type frigate (HS Salamis F455).

In addition to the activities of SNMGs, it is also worth mentioning the Sea Guardian operation in the waters of the Eastern Mediterranean, launched in 2016 on the basis of the previous Operation Active Endeavor. Its purpose is to counteract terrorist activity and build maritime awareness in this area. Greece is actively participating in this operation, delegating surface ships and submarines, as well as patrol and reconnaissance aircraft.⁴⁵ This clearly shows that the activity of the Greek naval forces within NATO is focused on operations in the immediate vicinity of its own territory. In addition, Greece has recently started to strengthen its cooperation efforts related to maritime security, including the protection of offshore energy infrastructure with Egypt and Israel, which share a common strategic interests and approach to Turkey's regional ambitions.⁴⁶

In 2015 alone, more than 800,000 migrants arrived to Greece by sea, out of a total of more than one million people who arrived that year via the Mediterranean to EU countries.⁴⁷ In 2016, this number was 150,000, and in 2017 it fell to just over 10,000. In the following year, there was a slight increase, reaching a top level of just over 15,000 coming to Greece migrants throughout

2019. In 2020, according to the EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), only 13,896 migrants arrived in Greece (of which only a few by sea). This confirms a strong downward trend compared to previous years (thanks to the EU-Turkey agreement on irregular migration since 2016), although the COVID-19 pandemic probably had an impact on the small scale of the migration in 2020 as well.⁴⁸ It can be assumed that in the near future, the balance between these two challenges (i.e. tensions with Turkey and migration) will be more in the direction of competition with Turkey, and the impact of the migration inflow will continue to decrease due to strong and consequent decrease in numbers.

Greece – as a longstanding sea-oriented country, not only politically but also militarily, and economically – has a very strong maritime industry sector, i.e. merchant shipping, fishing, and a recently strongly shrunken shipbuilding sector (as in most European countries). In addition, tourism, which is the largest generator of Greek GDP, benefits from the incredibly long seacoast, including numerous islands. Importantly, however, merchant shipping is the second largest component of the Greek economy (6.6% of GDP and 3% of employment in 2019). The Greek merchant fleet has consistently been the largest in the world for many years, accounting for over 20% of the world tonnage and almost 55% of the EU tonnage.



Podpis: An S-70B-6 Aegean Hawk of the Hellenic Navy, carrying an AGM-119 Penguin anti-ship missile. Aut. Georgios Pazios

⁴⁴ Due to the subject matter and the length of the text, the authors intentionally do not enter into the political complexities related to Turkey's attitude in this regard. Thanos P. Dokos, *Greece*, in *Strategic Autonomy and the Defence of Europe*, ed. Hans-Peter Bartels, Anna Maria Kellner, Uwe Optenhogel, Dietz, Bonn 2017.

⁴⁵ MARCOM official website, <https://mc.nato.int/missions>.

⁴⁶ Thanos P. Dokos, *Greece*, at: Hans-Peter Bartels, Anna Maria Kellner, Uwe Optenhogel, *Strategic Autonomy and the Defence of Europe*.

⁴⁷ A million refugees and migrants flee to Europe in 2015, UNHCR, <https://www.unhcr.org/567918556.html>.

⁴⁸ Arrivals of refugees and migrants to Europe in 2020, Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), DG ECHO Daily Map, 05/01/2021, <https://>

Despite the difficult economic situation, the size of this fleet has more than doubled since 2007, which was not matched by the equally intense growth of other countries in the top 10 of this ranking. Greece has the largest share in the world tanker fleet, almost 33% of all world's tankers are registered in Athens, which shows the importance of Greece when it comes to supplying oil to the EU, which remains heavily dependent on maritime transport.⁴⁹

In response to the above-described maritime security environment, Greece is developing a strong and comprehensive naval force. Due to the country's geography, the navy seems to be the best armed service to safeguard the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. At the core of the Greek naval forces are two classes of ships: frigates (4 newer MEKO 200 types commissioned in 1992-1998 and 9 older ones built in the Netherlands, Standard ex-Kortenaer type commissioned into Royal Netherlands Navy in 1980-1981) and submarines (7 older type 209 from 1970s and 4 newer type 214 commissioned in 2010-2016 – all German made).⁵⁰ Four significant ship acquisition programs are currently underway, with varying degrees of advancement: modernisation of the MEKO 200 frigates, acquisition of new multi-role frigates (4 planned, although budgetary constraints may limit these plans), purchase of the 7 Israeli Sa'arr 72 corvettes and, in the longer term, the purchase of unspecified number of European Patrol Corvettes.⁵¹ The modernisation of the submarine forces will be an especially big challenge, as the type 209 subs are already over 40 years old. The above described backbone of the Greek naval force is complemented by numerous smaller ships (including a large group of fast missile boats well adapted to operate in the "shadow" of the skerry Aegean Sea coast). These ships are still well regarded in the Hellenic Navy, despite their less-than-popular position in other NATO navies, a big change from the times of the Cold War. In total, the Greek navy has about 100 vessels, making it one of the

largest naval forces in Europe not only due to the number of units and tonnage, but also its potential. However, a significant part of these ships require modernisation.

In addition, the Greek Navy has a small anti-submarine and SAR aviation component. Interestingly, due to its competition with Turkey, Greece, unlike most Western countries in the post-Cold War period, did not change the structure of its fleet to adapt it to the expeditionary operations (e.g. by acquiring multirole frigates or amphibious / logistic support ships), while maintaining the core ASW and ASuW (anti-surface warfare) capabilities (including numerous fast missile boats).⁵²

3.3 Maritime security interests

The most important documents that define Greek threats and security interests are the White Papers for the Armed Forces. The latest two editions of this document are from 1997 and 2014, and the main conclusions in regard to maritime threats are presented below. As noted in the first of these documents, the strategic situation of Greece is shaped by its unique geopolitical location "*at a crossroads between East and West, North and South, in the Eastern Mediterranean, a sea area of enormous strategic and economic importance, occupies a critical geographic position, as it is surrounded by hot spots of tension and conflicts*".⁵³ The document emphasises the importance of the geographic location, highlighting the strategic depth and an integrated defence area. Additionally, a big challenge is that of the Aegean Sea waters, treated by Greece as its territorial waters that are a part of the international High Seas.

⁴⁹ *Greek Shipping and economy 2020: The Strategic And Economic Role Of Greek Shipping*, Hellenic Shipping News, <https://www.hellenicshippingnews.com/greek-shipping-and-economy-2020-the-strategic-and-economic-role-of-greek-shipping/>.

⁵⁰ Hellenic Navy official website, <https://www.hellenicnavy.gr/en/fleet.html%7C>.

⁵¹ Antoni Pieńkos, *Przyszłość programu europejskiej korwety patrolowej*, "Nowa Technika Wojskowa" 9/2020, Warszawa 2020.

⁵² Jeremy Stöhs, *The Decline of European Naval Forces: Challenges to Sea Power in an Age of Fiscal Austerity and Political Uncertainty*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis 2018.

⁵³ *White Paper for the Armed Forces*, Hellenic Ministry of National Defence, Athens 1997.

Greece's goals of defence policy are, according to the 1997 White Paper, among others:

- maintaining peace, territorial integrity, national independence, sovereignty and security of Greek people from any attack or threat from abroad;
- securing the Cypriot Hellenisms and the Hellenic minorities abroad;
- acquiring, the necessary means for national defence on land, sea and air and ensuring the capability to perform all these ways transportation;
- securing the stability in the region, resolution of peripheral conflicts and preservation of military balance;
- maximisation of the advantages from Greece's participation in alliances and collective security organisations (NATO, WEU, OSCE, EU) for the protection of its national interests, honouring at the same time, the country's obligations towards them.⁵⁴

In the Defence White Paper of 2014, this catalogue has been extended with the following statement: "**contributing to the integrity of the sovereignty, independence and security of the Republic of Cyprus, in the context of the strategic cooperation between the two countries in the common geographical area of the Eastern Mediterranean**". One can identify this as a further strengthening of Greek support for Cypriot sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In the 2014 edition of the Defence White Book, the changing geopolitical situation, among others the growing role of Russia as a competitor of the US and Europe, and Turkey, as an important regional force, have been strongly highlighted. It is also noted that a new group of entities is gaining relevance in the international politics. It includes, amongst others, big multi-national corporations and financial institutions as well as a number of international non-governmental organisations (NGO). The document emphasises that in the years leading up to its publication, the security environment of the South-eastern Europe is going to shift towards greater instability, and also that the MENA region will be dealing with a deep crisis as a consequence of the Arab Spring. At the same time, it was indicated that a large part of the global transportation of energy resources will still be moved through this region,

which is a significant security and logistical challenge, but at the same time shows the importance of Greece in the global economy.

The document therefore reiterates the importance of Greece's geographical location along the North-South axis, and the possibility of using this position to become a facilitator of EU's relations with the Middle East and North Africa. This is further supplemented by the statement that "**the special importance attributed to Greece is further enhanced by the fact that it is the sole country in the region participating actively as a full member in all international and regional security organisations such as the UN, NATO, the EU and OSCE. At the same time, the country has invested, politically and from an infrastructure and assets point of view, in its capability to provide reliable security to international trade routes between Europe and the Asian and Middle Eastern international markets that cross Hellenic territories and areas of Hellenic strategic interest**".⁵⁵

Moreover, the international community needs states like Greece to support stability in the less-stable regions of the World such as North Africa, the Middle East, the Black Sea region and the Caucasus. Greece is able offer a lot in that domain (geographically and politically). In this context, the key importance of Crete as a key naval and air force base for Greece is also highlighted.

It is also emphasised, inter alia, that Greece aims to exploit marine and mineral resources in accordance with the principles of international law. It is worth noting that, following the discovery of significant resources in the Aegean Sea, the interest in exploiting these resources (by various actors) is increasing. Due to their potentially significant size, Greece may expect increasing pressure on those areas from other actors and will therefore need to secure a more comprehensive protection plan. The document also noted, that: "**the geographic location of our (ed. Greece) country renders it extremely exposed to the waves of immigrants and refugees provoked by the generalised instability in the region. At the same time, the peculiarity of the area (extended sea borders and a vast number of islands, islets and rock-islets) facilitates the conduct of illegal activities (...)**".⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ *White Paper on Defence 2014*, Hellenic Ministry of National Defence, Athens 2014, 21.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 25.

To conclude, the Greek security strategy is based on defending its territorial integrity and sovereignty, withstanding the wide spectrum of challenges posed by uneasy relations with Turkey and working together within NATO and the EU to ensure regional stability. In addition, the strategic challenge is to deal with the migration crisis (despite the current calming of the situation there, the Greek migration direction will remain alive and will probably gain strength in line with global trends) and to secure the extraction of energy resources in the Greek EEZ (which is inherently connected with the issue of dispute mitigation in Greek-Turkey relation). Most of these challenges require the use of naval forces (very complex in terms of low/high end capabilities compositions) as the most suitable, and sometimes the only possible tool to approach them. Moreover, it seems that this composition of challenges in the maritime domain will remain the determinants of Greek security policy in the coming years, thus placing the country's naval forces at the centre of the interest of Greek decision-makers and public opinion.

3.4 Duties of the naval force

As per the White Paper for the Armed Forces from 1997, *"the Hellenic Navy is assigned to carry out the necessary missions and tasks in order to contribute to the deterrence of any external threat, preserve the territorial integrity of the country, protect Greece's sovereign rights and national interests and fulfil the objectives of the national defence policy."* What is more interesting: *"in order to achieve those tasks, Greece must project the maximum of its naval power. Greece with its 3000 islands, the connecting link between the Black Sea, the Straits and the southeast Mediterranean, Cyprus and the Middle East, constitutes a region with significant geopolitical and geoeconomic importance for the West, and as a result, the development of the naval power is a principal defence objective"*.⁵⁷

Although the Hellenic Navy's tasks were not so precisely defined in the following edition of the document from 2014, it can be assumed, that they are very similar to

those from 1997. However, in the 2014 White Paper, one can read that it is desired to enhance *"Hellenic Navy capabilities in terms of ships with strike capabilities, area air defence capabilities, maritime cooperation aircraft and modern submarines"* which sheds some light on Greece navy priorities. *"The Hellenic Navy, in order to maintain its deterrence capability in the future, will put forward the acquisition of new, multipurpose frigates, and the enhancing of the maritime surveillance capability in sea areas of interest."*⁵⁸

Considering the duties performed by the Hellenic Navy during peacetime, it can be summarised that the most of these activities will be conducted within its home waters, especially in the Aegean Sea. These are mainly patrol and SAR operations, which in the case of Greece, are very different from those of most European countries. These differences results from the specific local conditions, i.e. migration flows via the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas in particular, as well as Turkish activities in disputed maritime areas. Therefore, both, the intensity and nature of the tasks carried out by the Hellenic Navy exceed a typical peaceful state, requiring special caution, professionalism and procedures. In addition to these types of actions, it is also necessary to point out the Greek Navy's activities within international cooperation, i.e. in Operation Sea Guardian (NATO) and previously in the anti-piracy Atalanta operation (EU), as well as within SNMG 2 (mainly in Aegean Sea).⁵⁹ A wide range of vessels, including frigates, submarines and sea patrol planes were used for these activities.



View of the Greek Salmis Naval Base in 1979. Visible the five former U.S. Navy tank landing ships, HS Ikaria, HS Kriti, HS Lesbos, HS Rhodos, HS Syros, and three LSMs. Public Domain

⁵⁷ White Paper for the Armed Forces, Hellenic Ministry of National Defence, Athens 1997.

⁵⁸ White Paper on Defence 2014, Hellenic Ministry of National Defence, Athens 2014, 42.

⁵⁹ Thanos P. Dokos, Greece, in *Strategic Autonomy and the Defence of Europe*, ed. Hans-Peter Bartels, Anna Maria Kellner, Uwe Optenhogel, Dietz, Bonn 2017.

Chapter IV

Germany – the reluctant ally?

4.1. Maritime legacy and orientation

German military culture is a continental one for most of its time. While different naval fleets and flotillas are to be found much earlier in the German history, the German Navy's roots are officially identified in the year 1848. Following the constitution of the German Reich, the Frankfurt Parliament decided to create the first pan-German navy – the Reichsflotte – to defend German trade, serve as a fighting navy against Denmark, and sail under the black-red-gold flag. After only a brief operational history, the first German fleet was already disbanded in 1853. What followed, were different eras of German maritime and naval history. Due to the limited scope of this article, they shall be mentioned only briefly. The main focus remains on the modern developments of the Bundesmarine and the Deutsche Marine, respectively. Secondly, this analysis concentrates on the current state of the navy such as its main missions and tasks. From the Prussian Navy of the 1860s, the first elements of the later Imperial Navy were born. Even though it developed slowly, the Imperial Navy was a substantial part of German colonial efforts in, e.g., in Africa. The first considerable steps as a viable naval force were made by Wilhelm II and Alfred von Tirpitz; the latter notably led the strategically orientated construction of a powerful blue water navy in the beginning of the 20th century. In 1918, numerous significant events happened – namely the German November revolution, the Matrosenaufstand, and the end of the First World War.⁶⁰

During the period that followed, the Treaty of Versailles limited the German Reichsmarine to no more than 15.000 men, and with strict limits to its vessels in numbers and size. For instance, it was not allowed to operate

submarines. The political takeover of the NSDAP, however, marked an important turning point in the development of a potent navy. Following its re-naming into Kriegsmarine, the German navy played an relevant part at the beginning of the Second World War: on September 1st, 1939, at 4.45, the SMS Schleswig-Holstein vessel opened fire on the Westerplatte in Gdansk, thus marking the outbreak of World War II. The post-war German Navy's development is affiliated with the German rearmament under the allied auspice from 1956 onwards. The German Bundesmarine, as part of the new Bundeswehr, was compiled notably as a novel military organisation. The purpose of the restructuring was to make a clear cut from the Third Reich and to create a military force with its own, 'de-nazified' identity. Nevertheless, particularly in the beginning, the majority of its appointed personnel emerged from the Wehrmacht or the Kriegsmarine.

Yet, the post-war German Armed Forces were a newly assembled military organisation. With its establishment in 1955, the same year West-Germany joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the structures and ends orientated fundamentally at the Western alliance. This incorporation followed also the purpose of 'retaining control' of post-war Germany and its armed forces. NATO's first secretary general, Lord Hastings Lionel Ismay, summed the allied idea up with the goal to "keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down."⁶¹ Due to that special relationship, the Bundesmarine became an allied navy from its first day on.

As Germany remained separated into the West and East occupation zones, the territory of the entire country became the main area of any potential military escalation scenario between Soviet Union and NATO during the duration of the Cold War. Since land and air forces would play the main part during such scenarios, the Bundesmarine was to concentrate its tasks on the Baltic and North Sea.

⁶⁰ And, eventually, the transition from the monarchy to the Weimar republic.

⁶¹ NATO official website, https://www.nato.int/cps/us/natohq/declassified_137930.htm.

In particular, its main duty was to defend the entrance to the Baltic Sea against any Soviet breakthrough in the case of a high-intensity conflict scenario. Additionally, the Bundesmarine, together with its allied navies from Denmark, Norway, and Great Britain, had to make sure that the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) in the North Sea would remain open. The East-German Volksmarine, however, was almost completely tasked with protecting the DDR's (sea) border and, together with other Warsaw Pact navies, in the case of conflict, planned to attack the Danish and West German coasts.⁶²



A German Navy Baden-Württemberg-class frigate (F 222) before commissioning. CC BY-SA 4.0

4.2. Strategic and operational context

In the past 30 years following the end of the Cold War, the German Navy, like most of its European counterparts, moved from its animosities with the Warsaw Pact through the so-called peace dividend and towards the tasks of Out-Of-Area-Operations towards today, the need for national and allied defence. As Jeremy Stöhs wrote, "*since the end of the Cold War, the German armed forces have undergone one of the most drastic changes of all European states.*"⁶³ The fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent

re-unification of Germany led to the dissolution of the Volksarmee and Volksmarine. They soon merged into the German armed and naval forces. The consolidation of both German navies after the re-unification meant that there were over 100 naval vessels in German service, including three highly capable Lütjens-class destroyers (Class 103B), more than 50 mine warfare units and 24 submarines (18 of which were state of the art Type 206 boats).⁶⁴

While most of the former East-German vessels have been sold or scrapped shortly after the reunion, the new Deutsche Marine continued to follow its tradition as an allied navy. Since its former purpose – to fight at Europe's northern shores – was now obsolete, the navy began to dispatch vessels for expeditionary missions in the warmer waters of the Mediterranean and beyond. Such deployments included the first considerable operation of the Deutsche Marine, Operation Southern Flank ('Südflanke'), in the Persian Gulf – a mine clearing mission to assist the US Navy following the end of the First Gulf War. Further cornerstones, leading to new quality of operations, were laid by Operation Sharp Guard, run by NATO and the Western European Union (WEU) in the Adriatic Sea to fulfil several UN resolutions against Yugoslavia. The German Navy also took part in Operation Southern Cross, a huge logistical challenge to return deployed Bundeswehr soldiers from the first major foreign mission of the German army in Somalia. This was possible thanks to the remarkable decision of the Federal Constitutional Court (Bundesverfassungsgericht) to allow the Bundeswehr to deploy to Out-Of-Area-Operations as subject to the parliamentary approval.⁶⁵

⁶² For details on the Volksmarine and its transition, see Henrik Born, *Es kommt alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen eines Zeitzeugen an die Volksmarine der DDR und das Leben danach*. E.S. Mittler & Sohn: Hamburg 2018.

⁶³ Jeremy Stöhs, *The Decline of European Naval Forces*, 125.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 127.

⁶⁵ The Federal Constitutional Court official website, <https://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/EN/1994/bvg94-029.html>.

Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the first time invocation of NATO's article five, the German navy continued its "allied tradition" within the Federal Republic's military contributing to support the United States as part of the then beginning American War on Terror. To this end, the German Navy participated in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) off the Horn of Africa, as well as in Operation Active Endeavour (OAE). OAE started in October 2001 and was ended in July 2016, to then be continued by the still ongoing NATO maritime security operation codenamed Sea Guardian.⁶⁶

However, the German Navy's operational history is not only that of working within NATO's framework. Germany also takes part in naval operations led by the European Union (EU), mainly the EUNAVFOR operations. The missions include anti-piracy operations at the Horn of Africa (EUNAVFOR Atalanta, from 2008 to 2021), or the fight against human smuggling, illegal human trafficking, as well as the implementation of embargoes against Libya in the Mediterranean (within EUNAVFOR MED Operation SOPHIA from 2015 to 2020 and Operation IRINI which started in 2020). As a third framework for operations, the German Navy took part in the first naval mission of the United Nations: the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The German navy participated in the mission since its very implementation in 2006.⁶⁷ This deployment represented the remarkable change to the German naval forces, and the German armed forces overall. Exactly 70 years after the SMS Schleswig-Holstein's shelled the Polish military base at Westerplatte thus starting the Second World War, on 1 September 2009, the Schleswig-Holstein of the Deutsche Marine (F 216) took over the role as the flagship of UNIFIL.⁶⁸

4.3. Maritime security interests

Since there is no official German national security strategy available to public, Germany's main strategic document with regards to security and defence policies is the Whitebook (Weißbuch) from 2016.⁶⁹ Neither the German Ministry of Defence, nor the Bundeswehr or the German navy itself officially publish any maritime or naval strategy for the public to see.⁷⁰ For that reason, the Whitebook, together with the "Konzeption der Bundeswehr" (Concept of the Bundeswehr) and the internal "Fähigkeitsprofil der Bundeswehr" (Profile of Capabilities), both written in 2018⁷¹, form the "conceptual triangle" of strategic guidelines for German security and defence policy.⁷²

The maritime domain as such is recalled only twice in all of Germany's key security policy documents. The relevance of safe and secure SLOCs and free and open High Seas are described as key for an export orientated nation like Germany, which is highly dependent on free trade via the seas.⁷³ The increasing importance of secure SLOCs and maritime security is further emphasised in the context of German's membership in NATO.⁷⁴ Since the welcoming of new NATO member states from Eastern Europe in 1999 and 2004, respectively, the contemporary allied SLOCs do not end at the coast of West Germany, but instead reach Riga, and Klaipeda. This is important for German politics and the deployment of its armed forces, because solidarity with NATO is defined as part of Germany's reason of state (Staatsräson).⁷⁵

⁶⁶ NATO official website, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_136233.htm.

⁶⁷ *Einsatzführungskommando der Bundeswehr*. Presse- und Informationszentrum (2020): Der Einsatz im Libanon. UNIFIL.

⁶⁸ A suitable overview on „Major German naval operations, 1989.2019“ is provided in Sebastian Bruns, *Conceptualizing and Writing German Naval Strategy*, in *Conceptualizing Maritime & Naval Strategy. Festschrift for Captain Peter M. Swartz United States Navy (ret.)*, ed. Sebastian Bruns, Sarandis Papadopoulos, ISPK Seapower Series (3), Nomos, Baden-Baden 2020, 136

⁶⁹ Ten years after its predecessor document.

⁷⁰ Although, efforts have been writing the never published „Dachdokument Marine“. See, Bruns 2020, 129-154.

⁷¹ The latter has received an (classified) update in the end of 2020.

⁷² Mathias Intrau, *Fähigkeitslage 2.0*, in *cpm forum für Rüstung, Streitkräfte und Sicherheit*, (5) 2018, 87-88.

⁷³ Bundesregierung, 2016: Weißbuch, 50.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.



Planet-class research ship of the German Navy, used by the defence technical office 'WTD 71'. CC BY-SA 2.0 de

The Konzeption of the Bundeswehr is the highest conceptual document of the Bundeswehr released to the public. It concentrates on the essentials of German military defence and the sea domain represents one of the crucial roles in the entire process.⁷⁶ It includes safeguarding Germany's own territorial waters, their neighbouring seas (the Baltic and North Seas, as well as the "Northern Flank"), and the international SCOCs. The defence of national and allied territories – and territorial waters – is highlighted several times.⁷⁷ These declarations are further supported by the institutional frameworks that Germany is a part of: NATO, EU, and the United Nations. All three provide relevant documents for maritime strategies, such as NATO's collective defence and its Alliance Maritime Strategy (2011), the European Union maritime security strategy (EUMSS, 2014), or the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).⁷⁸

Despite a lack of a publicly available official defence strategy, the then Chief of the German Navy Vice Admiral Andreas Krause delivered a remarkable speech in the

context of the (West) German Navy's 60th anniversary, celebrated in 2016. It was called the "Wilhelmshaven Declaration on the future of the German Navy". It included several cornerstones that the Deutsche Marine has to consider in its role within the renewed great-power competition of the 21st century, such as the demands of the contemporary high-intensity warfare, but also increasing needs for the lower level of operations. Furthermore, Krause underlined the main operational areas for the German Navy: the Northern Flank, the Mediterranean, and, interestingly, the Indian Ocean.⁷⁹ In a more contemporary German paper on foreign policy, the latter plays a notable role. The "Guidelines to the Indo-Pacific" (2020) represent a document drafted for the German government and include a pledge, to help shape the international world order of tomorrow.⁸⁰ It also highlights the rise of the People's Republic of China as an economic and military power. Although this document is a foreign policy guideline rather than an accepted battle-plan, it was published at the same time that the German Navy announced its deployment to the Indo-Pacific region. The frigate Bayern is currently deployed to support Germany's allies, to make the case for freedom of the seas and safe and secure SLOCs, and to send a clear a signal regarding Germany's foreign policy ambitions.⁸¹



The Boeing P-8 Poseidon.

⁷⁶ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 2018: 52-54.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 57.

⁷⁸ With German participation in UNCLOS since 1994.

⁷⁹ Andreas Krause, *Wilhelmshavener Erklärung zur Zukunft der Deutschen Marine. Ansprache des Inspektors der Marine Vizeadmiral Andreas Krause anlässlich des Zeitzeugensymposiums 60 Jahre Marine am 12. February 2016 in Wilhelmshaven*. See also: Bruns 2020, 144.

⁸⁰ Auswärtiges Amt, *Leitlinien zum Indo-Pazifik. Deutschland – Europa – Asien. Das 21. Jahrhundert gemeinsam gestalten*, Berlin 2020.

⁸¹ It is debatable if the latter will be achieved, since, at the time of writing, it is not planned to send the BAYERN into the Taiwan strait. See: Hans Uwe Mergener, *Zwischen schönen Worten und Staatsräson: eine deutsche Fregatte im Indopazifik*, Europäische Sicherheit & Technik, 09. April 2021.

4.4. Duties of the naval force

Since the 2014 turn in the approach to defence, following the Russian aggression in Ukraine, the German Navy re-focused more on its home waters and Europe's Northern Flank: the North Atlantic, the North Sea, and the Baltic. However, the navy retained most of its pre-2014 tasks such as international crises management, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, as well as homeland security. The key priorities also remained unchanged – it is the defence of SLOCs, and providing the security of German territorial waters.⁸²

The current deployments of the German Navy include the already mentioned operations IRINI and UNIFIL, as well as the continuous involvement in NATO's Standing Maritime Groups (SNMG) 1 and 2 and Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Maritime Groups (SNMCMG) 1 and 2. As mentioned above, with its latest deployment, the German Navy deployed its frigate BAYERN into the Indo-Pacific region in the second half of 2021. Furthermore, the German Navy frequently participates in exercises with its allies; these include deployments such as BALTOPS or DYNAMIC MONGOOSE, as well as other routine operations in its maritime neighbourhood and beyond.⁸³

The strategic competition with Russia led to a change in the Alliance's posture and a change of focus towards the challenges of the higher end of the escalation ladder – especially, high intensity warfighting capabilities. In that regard, the solidarity and defence commitments of NATO address mainly the Eastern European member states. Having to operate within such framework, the German Navy is aware of its key role as the biggest allied navy in the Baltic Sea and an important player for the security of the entire Northern Flank. This becomes clear when looking at the actions undertaken by the German Navy in recent years. These include the development of the Baltic Commanders Conference (BCC) in 2015 as well as the institutionalisation of the German Maritime Forces

Staff (DEU MARFOR) and the Baltic Maritime Component Command (BMCC), a naval headquarters similar to already existing institutions as STRIKEFORNATO, with a main focus on the Northern European waters. The main issue that currently limits the ambitions of the German Navy and the Federal Republic alike, is the limited number of resources. These include but are not limited to material (particularly platforms), personnel, and funding deficiency.⁸⁴ This becomes evident considering the inflow of German Navy's new tasks without commissioning more vessels or recruiting significantly more personnel. In contrary, since its peak performance in the beginning of the 1990 with around 30.000 enlisted soldiers and more than 200 ships, the German navy shrank almost to its half of around 16.000 active personnel as well as 47 naval vessels in 2021. They include currently eleven frigates (three F125 Baden-Württemberg-class (one more incoming), three F124 Sachsen-class, four F123 Brandenburg-class, one F122 Bremen-class), five Braunschweig-class K130 corvettes (with five more currently build), six 212A submarines, ten Frankenthal-class MJ332B/C/CL mine countermeasure vessels, five supply vessels (three Berlin-class and two class 704 tankers), six type 404 tenders, and 3 Oste-class reconnaissance vessels. Additionally, several air assets, as the P-3C Orion, the NH90 Sea Lion, the Sea King Mk41, or the Sea Lynx Mk88A.⁸⁵

Moreover, a variety of unsolved procurement challenges and problems still exists. The question of new maritime patrol aircrafts (MPA) was just recently solved with a temporary solution of acquiring five P-8 Poseidon MPAs. Question marks remain behind new mine countermeasure vessels, or the lengthy development of amphibious units and platforms and the corresponding collaboration with the Netherlands. In other words, the contemporary German Navy remains the smallest one in numbers in years, but with the biggest number of tasks in its history. The German Navy is deployed as a modern, multi-faceted foreign policy tool, but does not receive the appropriate support and funding to fulfil its tasks, missions, and duties.

⁸² The German Armed Forces official website, <https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/organisation/marine/auftrag-deutsche-marine>.

⁸³ A great overview on the German Navy's deployments is available in the German Navy Fleet tracker. See: Henrik Schilling (2021): https://www.kielseapowerseries.com/files/ispk/content/Fleet%20tracking/Fleet%20Tracker%202021/Jahresbericht_final_interaktiv.pdf.

⁸⁴ Even though the German economy seems to pass the COVID-19 pandemic relatively stable compared to its European partner nations, the impact on the defence budget remains to be seen.

⁸⁵ Based on the German Armed Forces official website, <https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/ausrustung-technik-bundeswehr>.

Chapter V

Norway – strategic relevance in the North

5.1 Maritime legacy and orientation

The Norwegian maritime legacy dates back to a period of its cultural heritage – the Viking period that began in the 8th century and was well known for its numerous seafaring and trading tribes. The maritime aspect of Nordic tribes later continued throughout the centuries despite the ever-changing national and political environments. Due to that continuous relationship with the sea, at the beginning of the 20th century the maritime domain evolved enough that Norway was able to call itself the fourth largest merchant shipping fleet in the world.⁸⁶

Such rapid growth was possible thanks to Norway's unique geographical location. With more than 100,000 km of coastline along with over 200,000 islands, the water areas outgo the Norwegian land territory by far (the land mass of around 385,000 km² compares to more than 2 million km² of sea). With the in-land parts of Norway offering harsh conditions for living, trade, and travel, the Norwegian population used to concentrate on the coastline, as illustrated by the contemporary major population centres of Oslo, Bergen, or Stavanger. The country is shaped by its maritime geography and, with its traditional maritime bound economy, it is ultimately dependent on the access to the seas and free SLOCs for its survival.

Besides small and unconfirmed traces to the year 955, the Norwegian Navy finds its origins back in 1509, with the founding of the Danish-Norwegian common fleet which existed over 300 years, all the way up to 1814. The official founding of the Royal Norwegian Navy (RNoN) is dated

to 12 of April 1814, when the RNoN began operations as an individual, independent navy, without the Danes. During the recent history of the 20th century, most of the Royal Norwegian Navy retreated to Great Britain in 1940, following the Norwegian King Haakon VII. This happened right after the German invasion of Norway, the so-called "Operation Weserübung" in the same year. Doing so, the RNoN fought in World War II while being temporarily based in the UK. Eventually it also participated in the allied recapture of Normandy from the Nazi Germany.

Following the end of World War II, the Kingdom of Norway became one of the founding members of NATO with signing the Washington Treaty in 1949. The political and military orientation of Norway therefore focuses largely on the actions of its Western allies. Throughout the Cold War it was particularly dependent on allied support, for example, in rebuilding a sufficient naval force. NATO was happy to support the Norwegian navy as it had concerns about the Northern European waters in light of a perceived Soviet threat. Neighbouring the Soviet Union, the Norwegian armed forces first and foremost shared the Western alliance's defence posture of concentrating on territorial defence in the case of an all-out war and a possible amphibious assault from the Warsaw Pact countries. During the Cold War Norway's geographical location was referred to as a "watchtower in the north".⁸⁷ With a main conflict scenario focussing on military escalation in central Europe, NATO forces would have relied heavily on reinforcements via the SLOCs towards the North Atlantic and the North Sea. Allied planners expected Soviet naval vessels and submarines to move through the Norwegian Sea and the GIUK-Gap, into the North Atlantic, to then charge American forces and convoys which were heading towards the European mainland.

⁸⁶ Stig Tenold, *Norwegian Shipping in the 20th Century. Norway's Successful Navigation of the World's Most Global Industry*. Palgrave Studies of Maritime Economics. Palgrave Macmillan: Cham, 2019, 21.

⁸⁷ Nina Graeger, *Norway between NATO, the EU, and the US: A Case Study of Post-Cold War Security and Defence Discourse*, "Cambridge Review of International Affairs" 18:1, April 2005, 89.

For that reason, NATO plans intended to push the “red vessels” further north from the GIUK-Gap, mostly in the Norwegian Sea – right in front of the Norwegian mainland. Therefore, the defence of Norwegian territory was identified as crucial for allied military operations in that period.⁸⁸

Yet, despite its relevant strategic role in the former East-West conflict, Norway acted with certain restraints when dealing with its Western allies and the Soviet Union. Wanting to keep tensions and potential escalation risks in the region on a low level, Oslo blocked any attempts of stationing nuclear weapons on its soil, or the establishment of permanent NATO bases on its territory. Instead, to further develop relations, it expanded limited ties with the Soviet Union, through collaboration efforts in the fields of fishery or cross-border relations.⁸⁹ Attempts to maintain good relations with its Russian neighbour are made to this day: bilateral agreements encompass SAR collaboration in the Arctic and the Barents Sea, as well as “*mutual notification, exercises and assistance in the event of oil spills in the Barents Sea*”.⁹⁰ By doing that, Oslo continues its historical policy of upkeeping relations with Russia via a number of dual balancing acts of reassurance and deterrence.⁹¹



The Ula-class submarine of the Norwegian Navy. CC BY 2.0

5.2 Strategic and operational context

Norway is one of the founding members of NATO and therefore maintains its national security from the alliance members’ defence commitments. During the Cold War as well as today, following the need for NATO to return to its posture of deterrence and collective defence, securing Norway is also heavily dependent on North American (US and Canadian) reinforcements in the long term. This is why, the role of safe waters and secure sea lines of communication from the American East coast to the European mainland are still of utmost value to the European NATO members. From the Norwegian perspective, defending its own territorial waters, as well as taking care of the Norwegian Sea and the “Northern Flank” means that securing the SLOCs via the North Atlantic and the North Sea should be one of its key objectives. Such contingency was tested during NATO’s TRIDENT JUNCTURE exercises in 2018. With around 50.000 participating troops from partner nations, it was one of the biggest military exercises following the end of the Cold War and the largest in Norway since 1980. It aimed at defending Norwegian territory as well as the whole Nordic-Baltic region in the case of an NATO’s Article Five triggering and a call for collective defence.

Whilst NATO is Norway’s most important alliance, it is, on top of that, actively participating in several other multilateral agreements. Such arrangements include the Nordic Defence Cooperation, (NORDEF) with its fellow Northern countries of Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland. Also, the Northern Group, a “political forum for defence cooperation”⁹², that includes further neighbors like the United Kingdom or the Netherlands.

⁸⁸ Stöhs 2018, 169.

⁸⁹ Piotr Szymański, *High North, high priority – Norway and the defence of NATO’s northern flank*, “OSW Commentary” Number 393, 12 May 2021, 2.

⁹⁰ *Blue Opportunities. The Norwegian Government’s updated ocean strategy*, Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries, 2019, 33.

⁹¹ Tor Ivar Strømme, *Bulwark and balancing act. The strategic role of the Royal Norwegian Navy, in Europe, Small Navies, and Maritime Security. Balancing Traditional Roles and Emergent Threats in the 21st Century*, ed. Robert McCabe, Deborah Sanders, Ian Speller, Routledge, Oxon and New York 2020, 135.

⁹² Lange et. Al., 2019, 2.

Other formats also include the Nordic Baltic Six (NB6, with Denmark, Iceland, and the three Baltic countries) or the Nordic Baltic Eight (NB8, the afore-mentioned plus Sweden and Finland). Norway also takes part in the UK-led, Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), an initiative based on the UK's role as a framework nation following the 2014 Wales summit.⁹³ Furthermore, Norway sustains relevant bilateral cooperation with individual partner nations. Those are, for example, the United States, underlining their presence with the Marine Corps Prepositioning Program-Norway (MCPN) and the revised defence cooperation pact. It allows the U.S. to deploy troops to three air and naval bases on Norwegian territory, including the stationing of maritime patrol aircraft.⁹⁴ The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway Ine Eriksen Sørreide called Germany "Norway's most important partner in Europe"⁹⁵, quoting the Norwegian "Germany strategy 2019" (an official foreign policy strategy regarding Germany).⁹⁶ In terms of security and defence, the Norwegian-German cooperation is best shown by the final agreement on the collective development of 6 new submarines (type 212CB -- common design, four will be built for Norway, two for Germany) as well as the joint development of a new maritime missile based on the Naval Strike Missile.⁹⁷ All those security and defence arrangements are no coincidence, but instead are in place to meet the „new era of Russian Realpolitik“⁹⁸ Norway and its partners are facing in the High North.

5.3 Maritime security interests

As many of its neighbors, following the 1990s, the Kingdom of Norway has undergone a shift from the "one-sided focus on the conventional defence of Norwegian territory"⁹⁹ and more into international crisis management and peace-keeping missions abroad.¹⁰⁰ These activities included, for example, operations in Afghanistan, Kosovo, or Sudan as well as routine participation in NATO's standing maritime forces" as SNMG1, and the participation in the alliance's anti-piracy operation at the Horn of Africa.¹⁰¹

With the growing frequency of actions that may be considered hostile by the Russian Armed Forces and the Russian Navy in the Nordic-Baltic region in particular, happening mostly after the rapprochement in the beginning of the 2000s, Oslo was early to acknowledge the need for tighter regional security and defence measures. Today, "The Armed Forces are Norway's primary instrument of power to protect and defend Norwegian sovereignty, territorial integrity, democratic standards and freedom of action."¹⁰² The assignments of the armed forces are described in trilateral relation: national defence, NATO's collective security and defence, and bilateral support and reinforcement.¹⁰³

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ *U.S.-Norway Supplementary Defense Cooperation Agreement (SDCA)*, U.S. Department of State, 16 April 2021, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-norway-supplementary-defense-cooperation-agreement-sdca/>.

⁹⁵ Ina Eriksen Sørreide, Statement at the Conference of the Heads of German Missions, 07 June 2021, <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/innlegg-pa-tysklands-stasjonssjefsmote/id2857532/>.

⁹⁶ *Die Deutschland-Strategie der norwegischen Regierung 2019*, Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 14 June 2019, https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/dokumenter/planer/tysklandstrategi_ty2019_neues.pdf.

⁹⁷ *Future acquisitions for the Norwegian Defence Sector 2019-2026*, Norwegian Ministry of Defence, March 2019, 16.

⁹⁸ Daniel Thomassen, *Norway Faces a New Era of Russian Realpolitik in the Arctic*, Center for International Maritime Security, 5 July 2016, <https://cimsec.org/norway-faces-new-era-russian-realpolitik-arctic/>.

⁹⁹ *Strategic Concept for the Norwegian Armed Forces*, Norwegian Ministry of Defence, 11 October 2004, Oslo, 7.

¹⁰⁰ Stöhs 2018, 176.

¹⁰¹ *Norwegian Defence 2013. Facts and Figures*, Norwegian Ministry of Defence, 34.

¹⁰² *The Defence of Norway. Capability and Readiness. Long Term Defence Plan 2020*, Norwegian Ministry of Defence, 4.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 6-7.

Given that, the need of maintaining control over Norwegian home waters and keeping safe passage through SLOCs towards the North Atlantic and the Arctic, all branches of the Norwegian Forces are needed. Defeat in the maritime domain would be significant not only militarily, but also economically.¹⁰⁴ In light of such scenarios, Norway follows the strategy of “an overall defensive or status-quo approach”¹⁰⁵, as Tor Ivar Strømme points out. Due to its geographical nature, potential conflicts on or next to Norwegian soil would to a large degree depend on maritime and naval assets: “*Norwegian maritime strategy is thus not subordinated to national military strategy as it, rather than merely complementing it, is a constant, central component within it. Consequently, Norwegian military strategy is maritime strategy.*”¹⁰⁶



The KNM Fridtjof Nansen frigate of the Norwegian Navy at port in Oslo. CC BY 2.5

5.4 Duties of the naval force

To fulfil those goals, robust naval forces are needed by Norway. Today, the RNoN encompasses four Fridtjof-Nansen-class frigates, six Skjold-class corvettes, three minehunters and three minesweepers, six Ula-class submarines, and several auxiliary and coast guard vessels. Yet, analysts doubt that Norway possesses the adequate capabilities to defend and delay a potential Russian attack long enough until sufficient NATO forces arrive in Norway.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, modernisation processes, reforms, and new acquisitions have been made or initiated in the recent years. They include the purchase of the F-35 multirole fighter aircraft, the above-mentioned replacement of the Ula-class submarines with the 212CD with Germany, new P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, new missiles as well as anti-aircraft capabilities.¹⁰⁸ The limited number of platforms proves to be a challenge for performing the various tasks that are expected by the RNoN Navy. Beyond the aspect of national defence, the RNoN still frequently participates in NATO's Standing Maritime Forces (SNMGs and SNMCMGs) and selected UN peacekeeping operations. Following a critical human mistake, the sinking of the KNM Helge Ingstad (F313) in 2018, a highly sophisticated AEGIS Fridtjof-Nansen-class frigate, was a significant backlash for the Norwegian Navy and its overall security policy. While the investments in submarines and MPA are of huge relevance for the Norwegian territory and its extensions via Bear Island and Svalbard, the other side of the coin shows the painful reductions of surface patrol units and potential further limitations and budget cuts put on the RNoN Navy following the purchase of expensive F-35 aircraft, Steve Wills underlines.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Strømme 2020, 140.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 135.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 133.

¹⁰⁷ Thomassen 2016.

¹⁰⁸ See for example: Ole Marius Tørrisplass, *Deterrence and Crisis Stability – The F-35 and Joint Strike Missile's Effect on the Norwegian Security Policy Towards Russia*, “Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies,” 1(1). DOI: <http://doi.org/10.31374/sjms.10>.

¹⁰⁹ Steve Wills, *A New Gap in the High North and Forward Defense against Russian Naval Power*, Center for International Maritime Security, 17 July 2018, <https://cimsec.org/a-new-gap-in-the-high-north-and-forward-defense-against-russian-naval-power/>.

On the day-to-day basis, the RNoN Navy receives additional support in its daily missions within the Norwegian territorial waters from the Norwegian Coast Guard. It “secures Norwegian sovereignty and controls fishery and maritime activity in Norwegian waters and economic zones.”¹¹⁰ Whilst playing an important role for patrols and policing in the Northern waters, its vessels are only armed with light weapons and have been reduced significantly in the recent decades (only three new vessels are expected to be commissioned up to 2025)¹¹¹. Considering the current force structure of the RNoN and the commissioning of the first 212CD submarine in 2029 at the earliest, the Fridtjof-Nansen-class frigates will remain the most important vessels in RNoN arsenal. With their capabilities as multipurpose surface combatants, including the NH90 helicopters, they prove invaluable in the challenging waters surrounding the Kingdom of Norway. However, it is important to remember that only a joint approach, close cooperation and coordination with its NATO partners would allow Norway to successfully defend its SLOCs through the Norwegian Sea in case of a full scale conflict with the Russian Federation.¹¹²



FS Marjata - a Norwegian purpose-built electronic intelligence collection vessel (ELINT). The ship is manned by crew from the Norwegian Intelligence Service. CC BY-SA 4.0

¹¹⁰ Forsvaret, The Royal Norwegian Navy official website, <https://www.forsvaret.no/en/organisation/navy>.

¹¹¹ Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2020.

¹¹² Wills 2018.

Chapter VI

France – Europe’s maritime heavy weight

6.1 Maritime legacy and orientation

Europe’s “maritime heavy weight” developed from a need to supply and operate a large number of French maritime interdependencies centuries ago. The age-long struggle for maritime dominance between France, the UK and other European states, shaped the French maritime approach for decades to come. In 1805, the Battle of Trafalgar saw a momentous defeat of the French fleet as well as its Spanish allies against their British counterpart, the Royal Navy, headed by Admiral Horatio Nelson, who himself perished in the battle. Thus, the Royal Navy suppressed the French Navy and secured its cutting-edge dominance as the leading sea power for the upcoming century.

The second pillar of France’s maritime legacy is made up by its colonial history. Broadly speaking, the colonisation efforts of Paris can be divided into two main periods. The first colonial empire being established in the year 1534 and the second colonial empire in 1830. The first approach was oriented mostly in the (North) American continent, underlined by events as de Champlain’s landing in what is today known as Canada in 1604 and the associated French settling in Québec and further in large parts of North America. The second colonial empire concentrated on other areas of the world, such as the African continent or in the Pacific and then-Indochina. Those efforts have not only been led by the compulsion of a global power, but also the bitter idea of a need for “civilising” non-European parts of the globe with its influence, thus by military means and missionaries. This colonisation period has reached its peak around 1920, after the First World War.

Decolonisation efforts and liberation movements in many French colonial territories in the first half of the 20th century convened with the outbreak of the Second World War. The latter was already leading towards the loss of many territories to other nations, as for example to Japan in Indochina.

Although it participated in several naval operations in the beginning of the Second World War, as a result of the “Fall of France” in 1940, the Navy of Vichy France has eventually been obliged to stay neutral. With the German invasion of 1942 and aim of taking the French naval vessels to later include them in the German Kriegsmarine, French Admirals ordered the sinking of most parts of its fleet at Toulon for the sake of not leaving the vessels to the German occupying forces. Doing so resulted in the end of French naval power in the first half of the 20th century. Remnants organized themselves into the so-called Free French Naval Forces, the naval arm of the Free French Forces of Charles de Gaulle, and fought during D-Day as part of the invasion of Normandy, and in the Pacific.

Almost immediately after the end of the Second World War, the French Armed Forces and therewith its Navy have been involved in numerous conflicts and confrontations of maritime nature. Those included the Indochina war (1946-1954), the conflict at the Suez Canal in 1956, or the War in Algeria (1954-1962). The re-commissioning of several vessels which were lost to its opponents in the Second World War, as well as the commissioning of additional major platforms of Allied origin such as the carriers *Arromanches* (prior: HMS *Colossus* – R15), *Dixmude* (HMS *Biter* – D97)), and *La Fayette* (USS *Langley* – CVL-27), saw particular use during the above-mentioned post-war confrontations. The *Marine Nationale* regained a status of a considerable naval force as quickly as in the second half of the 20th century. Above all, it was necessary for managing the remaining overseas territories, *le France d’outre-mer*.



Computer-generated image of the French Navy as planned for the late 2030s: a Bâtiment ravitailleur de forces conducts simultaneous underway replenishment with the Future French aircraft carrier and a Frégate de défense et d'intervention. CC BY-SA 3.0 fr

6.2 Strategic and operational context

Today, France, including its overseas territories and departments, encompasses a coastline of around 19.000 km making it the second largest EEZ in the world (almost 11 million km²) after the United States.¹¹³ The territories include, for instance, Mayotte and Reunion in the Indian Ocean¹¹⁴, as well as “maritime naval zones”¹¹⁵ of New Caledonia and French Polynesia in the Pacific, which host

an extensive military presence.¹¹⁶ The French territories in the Indian Ocean alone represent around a quarter of the country’s EEZ.¹¹⁷ Territories in the Pacific encompass around 40% of it.¹¹⁸ With France, an EU member state, considering those areas as integral parts of its territory and seeing itself in a role of “a bridge between Europe and the Indo-Pacific”¹¹⁹, they should be considered as parts of the European Union. That in mind, one should be aware of the fact that incidents in those areas could fall under the EU’s mutual defence clause.¹²⁰

France maintains strong relations with the European Union, particularly in the areas of foreign and security policy Paris is often associated with pushing towards a stronger European military force and, eventually, “European autonomy”. A prominent example of such approach is France’s 2018 European Intervention Initiative (EI2). This operations orientated initiative “aims at facilitating the emergence of a European strategic culture and at creating the pre-conditions to conduct coordinated and jointly prepared future commitments, on the whole spectrum of possible crises.”¹²¹ While aiming at complementing both main frameworks France is part of the EU and NATO, the EI2 plans for “various military intervention scenarios, over the whole range of potential crises affecting Europe’s security”¹²²; therefore also the maritime domain.

¹¹³ France, *A Maritime Player in the 21st Century*, French Directorate for Maritime Affairs, https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/brochure_france-acteur-monde-maritime_en_final_cle4d5a1d.pdf, 6-7.

¹¹⁴ Further naval bases in the region are to be found in Djibouti (since its independence; as Armed Forces in Djibouti (FFDJ)) or Abu Dhabi (Armed Forces in the United Arab Emirates (FFEAU) in Camp de la Paix).

¹¹⁵ David Scott, *French Maritime Strategic Thought on the Indo-Pacific*, Center for International Maritime Security, 31 March 2017, <https://cimsec.org/french-maritime-strategic-thought-on-the-indo-pacific/>.

¹¹⁶ Considering the military aspect, those territories are divided in different Permanent Areas of Responsibility: COMSUP FAPF (Armed Forces in French Polynesia), COMSUP FANC (Armed Forces in New Caledonia), and COMSUP FAZSOI (Armed Forces in the South Indian Ocean Zone). See: Pierre Morcos, *France: A Bridge between Europe and the Indo-Pacific?*, “CSIS Commentary,” 01 April 2021, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/france-bridge-between-europe-and-indo-pacific>.

¹¹⁷ Alix Valenti, *The Relentless Hazard: Allied Maritime Strategy and Climate Change*, in *From the North Atlantic to the South China Sea. Allied Maritime Strategy in the 21st Century*, ed. Julian Pawlak and Johannes Peters, Nomos, Baden-Baden 2021, 122.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 124.

¹¹⁹ Morcos 2021.

¹²⁰ The clause, article 42 (7) of the Treaty of Lisbon, states “that if an EU country is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other EU countries have an obligation to aid and assist it by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.”

¹²¹ European intervention initiative, Ministère des Armées, 22 June 2021, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/dgris/international-action/l-iei/l-initiative-europeenne-d-intervention>.

¹²² Ibid.

Nowadays, France is NATO's third largest naval force considering its tonnage, right after the British Royal Navy and the United States Navy.¹²³ Such rapid and major development occurred not least due to the French maritime legacy, but also due to its own recognised need for strategic autonomy. French defence was always underlined by a strong maritime and naval fundament with a nuclear deterrent core and "a powerful national defence industry that is interlinked with the government and military [as] the recipes behind France's military prowess and success"¹²⁴. As such, the French Navy engaged in several missions and operations following the end of the Cold War. They included Opération Artimon (as Part of Opération Daguet, the French involvement in the 1991 Gulf War), the 1999 Kosovo War, the US led "War on Terror" in the beginning of the 2000s, as well as the 2011 intervention in Libya also known as Opération Harmattan. As Camille Grand points out, the latter represented the "largest engagement for the French Air Forces and Navy at least since Kosovo"¹²⁵ with 27 different vessels engaging in about seven months.¹²⁶

6.3 Maritime security interests

*"French maritime strategy is two-fold. Firstly, locally-based naval ships patrol in the Indian and Pacific oceans. Secondly, regular deployments from metropolitan waters of the Jeanne d'Arc Group; the battle group centered around the aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle and amphibious helicopter carrier Mistral, along with supporting destroyers, frigates, nuclear attack submarines, and air surveillance."*¹²⁷

This twofold division, outlined by David Scott, paints a clear picture of maritime strategy of the Marine Nationale. It is based on several documents such as the national strategy for the sea and for the oceans (2008), Maritimisation: La France face à la nouvelle géopolitique des océans (2012), Defence and national security (2013), the National strategy for security of maritime areas (2015), and the National Strategy for the Sea and Coast (2017).¹²⁸ As per these strategic documents outlining France's defence policies and current threats, the so-called hard power related to high-end warfighting capabilities, ASW, nuclear deterrence, and carrier operations, continue to be a relevant part of French naval doctrine. For the other part, the Navy is needed for pursuing the duties of a „constabulary navy“, protecting France's vast areas within the world's oceans.¹²⁹

This "expeditionary tradition" to operate far away from France métropolitaine makes France "**the main European defence and security player in the Indo-Pacific**"¹³⁰ and puts significant amounts of responsibility on the national naval forces. Summarized, the goals of the French Navy include the already mentioned duty of protecting and defending the dispersed (maritime) territories, its allocated natural resources, safe and secure SLOCs to and from those territories, as well as the preparation for potential disaster relief or humanitarian assistance operations.¹³¹

¹²³ Jeremy Stöhs, *How High? The Future of European naval Power and the High-End Challenge*, Djøf Publishing 2021, 31.

¹²⁴ Jeremy Stöhs, *The Evolution of European Naval Power 1989-2019. Strategy – Force Structure – Operations. Dissertation*, Faculty of Philosophy at Kiel University, 2019, 325.

¹²⁵ Camille Grand, *The French Experience: Sarkozy's War?* in *Precision and Purpose: Airpower in the Libyan Civil War*, ed. Karl P. Mueller, RAND Corporation 2015, 190.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 191.

¹²⁷ Scott 2017.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Stöhs 2019, 174

¹³⁰ Ben Barry, *Posturing and presence: the United Kingdom and France in the Indo-Pacific*, IISS Military Balance Blog, 11 June 2021, <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/military-balance/2021/06/france-uk-indo-pacific>.

¹³¹ Valenti 2021, 121-124.



An EDA-R landing craft from the French amphibious assault ship FS Mistral (L9013) comes ashore during the amphibious assault phase of Bold Alligator 2012. Public Domain

6.4 Duties of the naval forces

To achieve those ends, the Marine Nationale is orientated around its five strategic functions¹³²:

- **Protection:** protecting of the population and French interests;¹³³
- **Prevention:** to act early to avoid the appearance or worsening of a crisis likely to affect [French] security;¹³⁴
- **Knowledge and anticipation:** intelligence;¹³⁵
- **Intervention:** the ability to operate globally with its combat forces to secure its strategic interests, protect French nationals and fully assume its international responsibilities;¹³⁶
- **Deterrence:** the exclusively defensive approach [as] the nation's life insurance policy.¹³⁷

Considering its force structure, the French Navy differentiates between individual operational branches.

Within these, the surface fleet, called Naval Action Force (Force d'Action Naval), is considered the main element of the French Navy. It operates most surface and combat vessels (Bâtiments de combat), as well as the carrier and amphibious battle groups with the nuclear-powered Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier and the three Mistral-class LHD. Amongst others, the Force d'Action Naval also incorporates two Horizon class air-defence destroyers, which, following Stöhs, *"can be considered among the most powerful surface combatants in the world."*¹³⁸

The second operational branch of the French Navy is the submarine forces (Forces Sous-marines) that includes the nuclear attack submarines (SSNs) of the Rubis and Barracuda-class, with the latter steadily replacing the former. It also consists of four Triomphant-class SSBNs, France's main nuclear deterrence pillar.¹³⁹ As further elements, the naval air wing (Aviation Navale), with its ground and sea-based assets, and the naval riflemen (Fusiliers Marins and Commandos Marine as the SOF) compliment to the force structure.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, the Marine Gendarmerie supports the protection of French sovereignty with its general police powers at sea.¹⁴¹

¹³² Marine nationale. Missions, Ministère des Armées, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/marine/missions2>.

¹³³ Marine nationale. Protection, Ministère des Armées, 18 July 2011, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/marine/missions2/protection>.

¹³⁴ Marine nationale. Prevention, Ministère des Armées, 18 July 2011, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/marine/missions2/prevention>.

¹³⁵ Marine nationale. Knowledge and anticipation, Ministère des Armées, 18 July 2011, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/marine/missions2/knowledge-and-anticipation>.

¹³⁶ Marine nationale. Intervention, Ministère des Armées, 18 July 2011, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/marine/missions2/intervention>.

¹³⁷ Marine nationale. Deterrence, Ministère des Armées, 18 July 2011, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/marine/missions2/deterrence>.

¹³⁸ Stöhs 2019, 327.

¹³⁹ It should be pointed out that the aspect of nuclear deterrence is also, to a minor part, pointed out by the naval air wing from the Charles de Gaulle.

¹⁴⁰ Whilst the Troupes de Marine, the Marines, are a traditional part of the French Army.

¹⁴¹ Marine nationale. Marine Gendarmerie, Ministère des Armées, 18 July 2011, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/marine/forces/marine-gendarmerie>.

All in all, the French Navy continues its traditions and remains a capable and globally active fleet. With its aging, but potent SSNs, its amphibious warfare capabilities, and the major surface vessels, it represents a true blue water navy. It is accompanied by several patrol and mine countermeasure vessels, as well as numerous auxiliary units, including intelligence, support, and training vessels. The French naval force has several distinguishable characteristics that differentiate it from its European counterparts. For example, besides its SSBNs and nuclear-powered carrier, the Marine Nationale is, as well as the Royal Navy, capable of deploying sea-launched long-range cruise missiles from its vessels.¹⁴² However, it still remains to be seen if the ambitious development plans of the French government will be fulfilled. Considering the building schedule for the major vessels in order, the 2030s should see the change of several platforms within the Marine Nationale: the full commissioning of all six Barracuda-class SSNs by 2030, the start of a new era for the SSBNs with the SNLE-3G project beginning to replace the Triomphant-class, and eventually, the new generation French aircraft carrier PANG (Porte-avions de nouvelle generation) to be operated with the European Future Combat Aircraft System (FCAS) (a wide range of unmanned and manned aircraft systems, including the new deck fighter aircraft), scheduled to replace the Charles de Gaulle and start sea trials in 2036.¹⁴³ In any case, France intends to keep its Marine Nationale on a high technical and readiness levels and to bring a capable fleet onto the world's oceans for decades to come.



The French Navy's Landing Helicopter Dock (Mistral-class) FS Dixmude (L9015) in Jounieh Bay, Lebanon. CC BY-SA 3.0

¹⁴² Stöhs 2021, 39.

¹⁴³ Martin Manaranche, *Naval Group Signs First Industrial Orders For the New Generation Of French Navy SSBN*, Naval News, 30 June 2021, <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2021/06/naval-group-signs-first-industrial-orders-for-future-french-navys-third-generation-ssbns/>. Hugo Decis and Nick Childs, *France's future aircraft carrier: nuclear power, conventional approach?*, IISS Military Balance Blog, 21 December 2020, <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/military-balance/2020/12/frances-future-aircraft-carrier>.

Conclusion/key findings

Within the transatlantic alliance, no one nation's maritime approach is like the other. On the one hand, every country has a different history with diverging relations towards "the maritime", leading to an individual maritime "legacy" as stated in the study. On the other, the conglomerate of an accumulated "legacy", geography, unique tradition and strategic culture, as well as political orientation influence maritime security interests and duties of each country's naval forces.

To conclude those observations, key findings are presented below:

- One of the main issues NATO has to deal with since the end of the Cold War and the resulting lack of a distinct opponent is the difference in its member states' threat perceptions, mainly between NATO members at its Northern and Southern Flanks;
- NATO is a community of 30 countries (of which five are landlocked) with very different approaches to maritime issues – the six presented in this study are an attempt to illustrate this complicated puzzle, showing how different views on sea matters exist among the member states, even taking into consideration only those in Europe;
- Poland represents NATO's Eastern flank and does not treat maritime security as a key area, but rather focuses on including this domain as an element of comprehensive territorial defence;
- Polish naval forces require complex technical modernisation, although they currently have a strong component designed to defend Polish home waters

and approaches to the coast, which is partly the result of the adopted doctrinal solutions (although there are symptoms of expanding Polish maritime ambitions);

- Greece is another example of a country strongly oriented on regional issues focused towards the challenges anchored in their home waters – although these challenges are diametrically (in terms of direction and type) different than on the Eastern Flank;
- Greece has one of the strongest naval potentials in NATO's European part. It will require significant modernisation investments in the coming years, which will certainly be influenced by the country's financial standing;
- Portugal finds the maritime domain more as a global common, not limiting itself strongly to the waters surrounding its territory, but still with an emphasis on the South Atlantic;
- Portugal has, however, relatively little (bearing in mind the above mentioned interests) naval forces, which moreover require modernisation investments in surface combatants as well as auxiliary vessels;
- Germany recognized the maritime domain for a long time as a driving factor for its economy, without realising it has to take more responsibility within the field of security policy and the maritime domain. This approach is about to alter, with the German government's 'Indo-Pacific guidelines' representing a change of course.

- The German Navy for its part acknowledged its position to become a relevant, leading actor at Europe's Northern Flank. With several initiatives introduced, it intends to take the lead, but stresses to not be reduced as a 'Baltic Navy' at all.

- Norway represents deep roots with the maritime domain, economically, geographically, and through its population. It was and remains a maritime country.

- In terms of security and defence, it is tightly integrated in NATO structures, as well as with its Northern neighbours. This is represented also in the maritime domain, which is key for defending Scandinavia.

- French follows its tradition as a global maritime player. This heritage is still represented through numerous territories and a broad population overseas, underlined by the responsibility to protect and defend those liabilities.

- France tries to fulfil those tasks with one of the largest European naval forces, the Marine Nationale. Yet, it has to choose wisely how to develop and prepare its naval posture for the upcoming decades together with its partner nations.

- As presented above, the different approaches of European navies and their way of operating are also reflected in terms of their naval capabilities;

- Allies operate a huge number of different naval assets and platforms, differing inter alia in terms of age, types, characteristics, scope of application, and also technically, as with different communication data links;

- Difference of opinions and assessments makes it difficult for NATO to draft operational plans in such manner that all member states will be satisfied with the way of securing their security interests;

- The alliance's 360-degree approach should not be understood as only regarding external threats, but also the challenge to compromise the numerous member states' approaches and expectations;

- NATO's Standing Maritime Groups and big on-the-ground multinational naval exercises allow to achieve manifold effects: the participating navies are operating together, learning from each other, and getting used to various procedures. In addition, with those multinational deployments, crews and navies have the ability to operate away from their own home waters, thus enabling them to learn other operating theatres.

- Reflection on the meaning and importance of NATO's 360-degree approach and active participation in the alliance's multinational activities is the crucial means to mitigate risks connected with member states' various interests in maritime security.

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