

**INTRODUCTORY SPEECH BY NATO DEPUTY SECRETARY  
GENERAL  
CLAUDIO BISOGNIERO AT THE CONFERENCE ON  
'THE RESURGENCE OF SEA PIRACY: LEGAL, POLITICAL &  
SECURITY ASPECTS'**

**ROME, 16 JUNE 2009**

Undersecretary Scotti,  
Admiral Trevisani,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by commending the “Istituto Affari Internazionali” and the “International Institute of Humanitarian Law” – and their Presidents Professor Silvestri and Ambassador Maurizio Moreno -- for their initiative in convening today’s important conference here at CASD. It is a fact that piracy has very quickly re-emerged as a major concern for all our nations. Meeting this challenge will require fresh thinking, concerted action and a long-term commitment. And today’s conference will, I am sure, help us all to move in that direction.

A wide range of eminent speakers will be taking the floor today to address various legal, political and security aspects of counter piracy. What I want to do is to help set the scene for your deliberations – including by saying a few words on NATO’s contribution to the international community’s response to piracy, and our latest decisions in this area.

In today’s global environment, trans-national security threats pose increasingly complex challenges to national and international stability. The maritime context is especially conducive to these challenges, given its vast and largely unregulated nature. And two issues have taken on particular importance in this area – namely maritime terrorism and piracy.

The beginning of this century was marked by two bold maritime terrorist attacks. In October 2000, almost a year before 9/11, Al Qaeda’s assault on the “USS Cole” killed 17 sailors and injured 29 others. Two years later, the attack by the same terrorist network on the French tanker “Limburg”, not only killed 1 crewman – it also spilled 90,000 barrels of oil onto the coast of Yemen, which tripled insurance premiums for Yemeni ports almost overnight, and led to a 90 per cent drop in

container traffic with Yemen. And this shows clearly the economic repercussions of attacks against trade sea lanes.

Thankfully, in the years that followed, we have seen no similar, ruthless and devastating terrorist attacks at sea. But a new, parallel threat to maritime security has been on the rise, and that is piracy. Indeed, the focus of pirate activity has increasingly shifted from South-East Asian waters to the seas surrounding Africa. Last year alone, there were over 100 attacks, including over 40 successful seizures. And I am sure that, like me, you have all been disturbed by the apparent ease with which huge tankers, freight ships and ocean liners can be attacked, and sometimes boarded and diverted from their intended routes. Typically, these are criminal acts undertaken for financial gain. But we must also remain vigilant that ships could also be commandeered quite easily for use in a terrorist attack, with more serious political, economic and environmental consequences.

What has been our reaction? For the time being, the international community has taken what can only be described as interim solutions, to the rising violence and lawlessness plaguing African waters. Since 2002, operations by Combined Task Forces 150 and 151 – multinational coalition naval forces headquartered at Djibouti – have helped to suppress terrorist activity in the Red and Arabian Seas. And in October of last year, at the specific request of UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, NATO was the first international organisation to step in, to protect World Food Programme vessels carrying humanitarian goods to Somalia, and to patrol the waters around that country. Since the beginning of this year, another NATO operation, “Operation Allied Protector”, composed of ships from five NATO Allies, has helped to deter, defend against, and disrupt piracy, in particular along the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor in the Gulf of Aden.

Moreover, as we all know, since the end of last year, the European Union’s maritime operation “Atalanta” has also been active, and successfully so, off the Horn of Africa. And let me say that we have established a very effective practical cooperation with Atalanta, along appropriate procedures, and we’ll continue to do so in the future. Je vois Claude France Arnould parmi nous : je suis certain qu’elle va vous parler en détail de la mission de l’UE dans l’après-midi. And several other nations (Russia, China, India, Korea and others) have sent their military vessels in the area, to join counter piracy operations.

It goes without saying that, with so many different international actors involved, coordination is a key concern. NATO, for its part, sees the “Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia” as the key forum for political and strategic consultation and coordination among all interested nations and organisations. We

play -- and we are determined to continue to play -- an active role in that coordination framework.

Let me add that this year, in 2009, the number of piracy attacks has increased, compared to 2008; but their success rate has declined, which confirms the effectiveness of the international military presence.

Having said this, deciding which security measures to adopt to repel or respond to piracy has been complicated by a number of factors. Key among these are legal restrictions and uncertainties -- which I am sure will be debated at some length during your first session this morning, devoted to legal aspects. The highly multinational character of ocean shipping -- where a single ship is often owned, flagged, chartered, and crewed by different nationalities -- has diluted the international response. But there has also been a degree of reluctance on the part of the commercial maritime industry, not least for economic reasons, to adopt proposed security initiatives and communication technologies.

In any case, and as I have already noted, security-based measures can really only be labelled as interim steps. Because it has become increasingly clear that the real source of piracy lies ashore. Studies consistently show that the combined effects of underdevelopment and poverty on the one hand, and inadequate legal and security systems on the other, act as a major incentive for piracy. To put it more bluntly: in any country where the average salary is 50 US Dollars, and where the rule of law simply does not apply, some people will always be tempted to risk their life if they can make millions by resorting to piracy. So let me express our appreciation for the meeting of the "International Contact Group" on Somalia that was held in Rome last week at the Italian Foreign Ministry.

What the situation points to, is the urgent need for a holistic strategy to address piracy -- an approach which combines both political, economic, security and other measures, and which involves a variety of international actors able and willing to complement each other. And it is in that sense that piracy is comparable to many other 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges -- from fighting terrorism, through countering the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, all the way to tackling cyber attacks or security implications of climate change.

NATO has been advocating a Comprehensive Approach by the international community to all these multifaceted challenges -- and it has been busy adapting itself, its command structures, its military forces, its procedures to be better able to play its own part in such a concerted effort. So, we need what we call a Comprehensive Approach. What is a Comprehensive Approach? It stems from the realisation that

most contemporary security crises – and Afghanistan is a case in point – cannot be solved by military means only. They require a combination of military/security efforts, with civilian, economic, development, institution building, law and order efforts. And NATO cannot do it all. We need an enhanced cooperation between NATO, the UN, the EU, the OSCE and other international actors, including NGOs and the private sector, to tackle, together, current security challenges. And let me add that NATO has no ambition to coordinate others in this effort: we believe the primary responsibility to coordinate rests with the United Nations.

I mentioned that our engagement in Afghanistan has been a major driver for our closer cooperation with the UN, the EU and other civilian organisations. But NATO has also reached out to interested regional organisations such as the African Union – providing logistical support, with a major airlift effort, for the AU’s peacekeeping efforts in Sudan and Somalia, and helping the AU to strengthen its ability to take on such multinational military operations in the future.

One may argue that, by assisting the African Union’s efforts to promote stability on land in the Horn of Africa, NATO is already helping to tackle the root cause of piracy. But it is clear that NATO’s main, longer-term potential in the struggle against piracy lies in acting as a security force for stability out at sea. And there is a broad realisation among our 28 NATO Allies – both at the military and at the political level – that, in order to play that role successfully, maritime security will need to be given greater emphasis within the Alliance. Certainly more emphasis than we have done in the past few years. And we have taken a number of steps to do just that: to strengthen our role in maritime security.

We are working hard at NATO Headquarters at the moment to develop an “Alliance Maritime Strategy”, as well as a “Maritime Security Operations Concept”, to give greater substance and direction to NATO’s maritime dimension. These two initiatives should both be agreed by next year, in time to feed into the review of NATO’s overall Strategic Concept, which our Heads of State and Government set in train at the Alliance’s recent 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Summit in Strasbourg/Kehl, last April. And I have no doubt that maritime security will feature prominently in that new NATO Strategic Concept.

We are also busy implementing a new project called “Maritime Situational Awareness”. Once this is fully operational, an extensive maritime information and sensor network should allow us to monitor what goes on at sea in much the same way as air traffic controllers monitor the skies. And we may even be able to share that information with the International Maritime Organisation, to help us all in getting a

better, real-time picture of the maritime domain – which is vital if we want to be better able to control it.

Finally, as promised, let me update you on the very latest developments on counter-piracy at NATO, with some additional good news.

Last Thursday and Friday, at their meeting in Brussels, NATO Defence Ministers agreed to take forward NATO's longer-term role in the fight against piracy. They agreed, in particular, that the Alliance will continue its counter-piracy naval patrols in the Gulf of Aden and off the Horn of Africa, which were originally due to end on the 28<sup>th</sup> of this month. In order to do so, the Allied Defence Ministers agreed to deploy the NATO Standing Maritime Group 2 off the coast of Africa, in July. And they discussed the reinforcement of this NATO operation, of SNMG2, by possible additional assets, such as maritime patrol aircraft and other surface ships by individual Allies. We will also continue to actively work on the legal aspects, particularly with third countries on issues of detention and prosecution. And of course, given the international relevance of the threat posed by piracy, we look forward to collaborating with non-NATO Partner nations, as well as to their possible contributions to our mission with naval assets.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When it comes to dealing with piracy, NATO and the international community have a lot of work to do. This is, very clearly, a complex, global, multifaceted challenge – a challenge that we will only be able to meet and to defeat through a concerted and comprehensive response. NATO is playing its part in the response which the international community has been able to muster so far – but that concerted effort does not seem nearly enough. We have to do more. We all have to do much better in grasping the problem, setting out a clear course of action, and seeing it through.

I am confident that your deliberations here today will help us to move in that direction and I wish you a very successful and productive meeting.

Thank you for your attention.