



IGAD MARITIME AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER

Editorial

Yemen and Somalia : Between Instability and Global Maritime Geopolitics

The news of June 2018 once again reminds us of the strategic importance of maritime areas bordering the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. Yemen and Somalia are a perfect illustration of the strong presence of regional and international actors in search of establishing an optimal security in the maritime areas of these two countries.

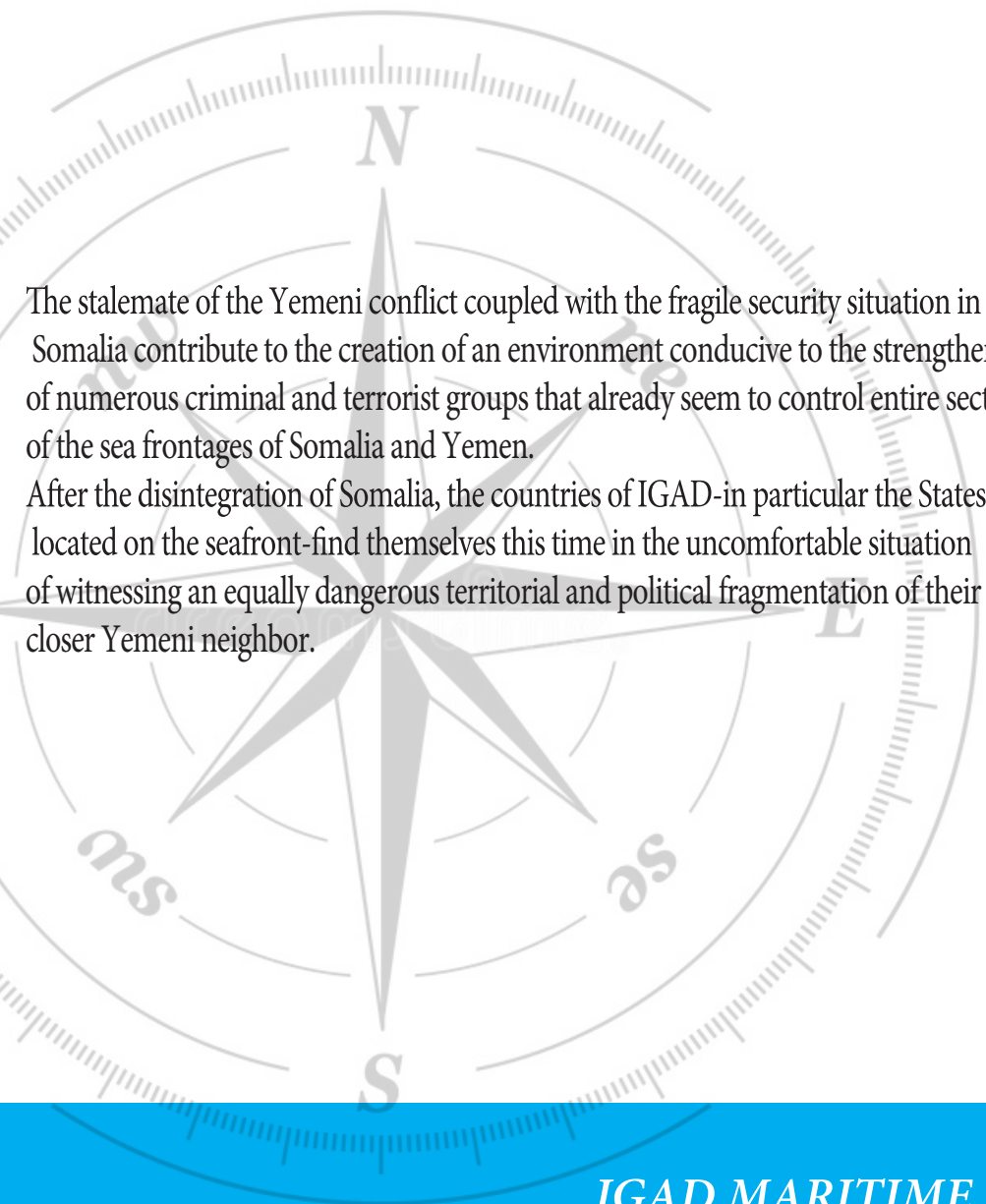
The battle around the Hodeida Harbor on the Red Sea led by the Arab-Muslim coalition under the leadership of Saudi Arabia would represent a turning point in the war in Yemen and deprive the Houthi rebellion of any access to the sea.

The loss of the port of Hodeida by the Houthis could quickly lead to a total maritime, land and air blockade of the northern part of Yemen and Sana'a the capital considered as the bastion of the rebels.

This evolution of the armed conflict would be the prelude to a new partition of this country, along the old border separating the two former Yemeni states of the South and the North before their reunification of 1994.

The internationalization of the war in Yemen through Iran allied with the Houthi rebellion and through the intervention of the military coalition led by Saudi Arabia in support of the legal government of Yemen, has a direct impact on the security situation of countries of the Horn of Africa.





The stalemate of the Yemeni conflict coupled with the fragile security situation in Somalia contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to the strengthening of numerous criminal and terrorist groups that already seem to control entire sections of the sea frontages of Somalia and Yemen.

After the disintegration of Somalia, the countries of IGAD-in particular the States located on the seafront-find themselves this time in the uncomfortable situation of witnessing an equally dangerous territorial and political fragmentation of their very closer Yemeni neighbor.

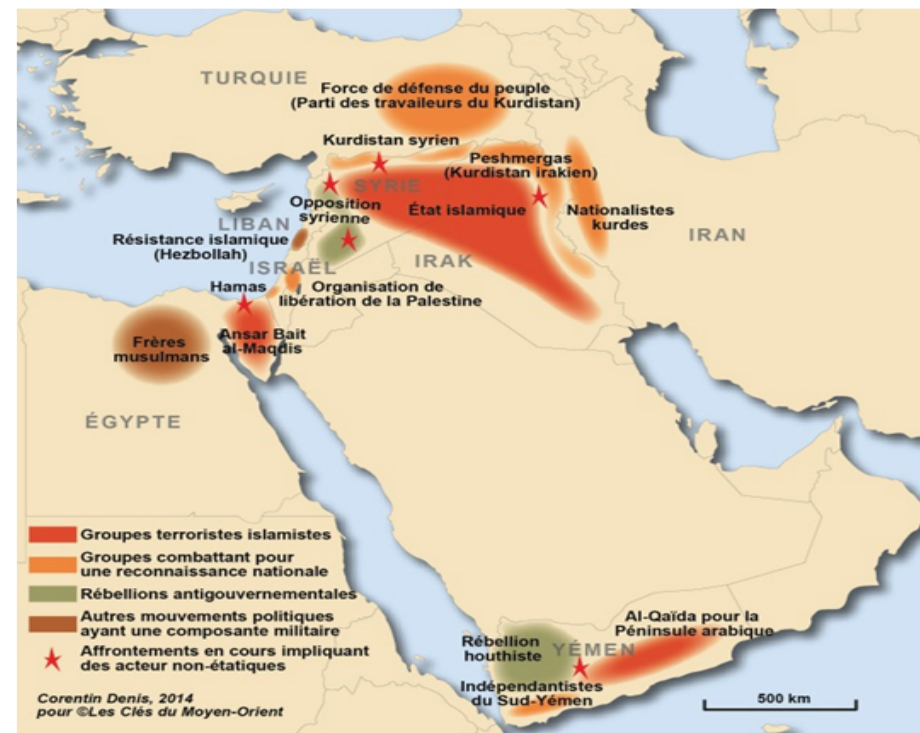




Both Yemen and Somalia share disturbing similarities, such as the weakness of the state, the uncontrolled circulation of huge stocks of weapons and ammunition, the presence of numerous terrorist groups and acute poverty. These negative factors jeopardize the efforts of the international community to restore credible states able to fully control their territorial, maritime and air domains.

The political status quo and the deterioration of the security situation in both Yemen and Somalia remain a threat to regional and global peace and security and could soon lead to an upsurge in maritime piracy that the international community has successfully eradicated in 2012.

Therefore, there is the need for IGAD Member States, in collaboration with the Arab Peninsula States with whom they share common maritime borders to jointly and quickly put in place, a body entirely dedicated to the political dialogue and the coordination of every initiative aimed at strengthening the security and safety of this regional and international maritime area.





THE CASE FOR A WHOLE-OF-AFRICA MARITIME DIALOGUE BY DR. IAN RALBY

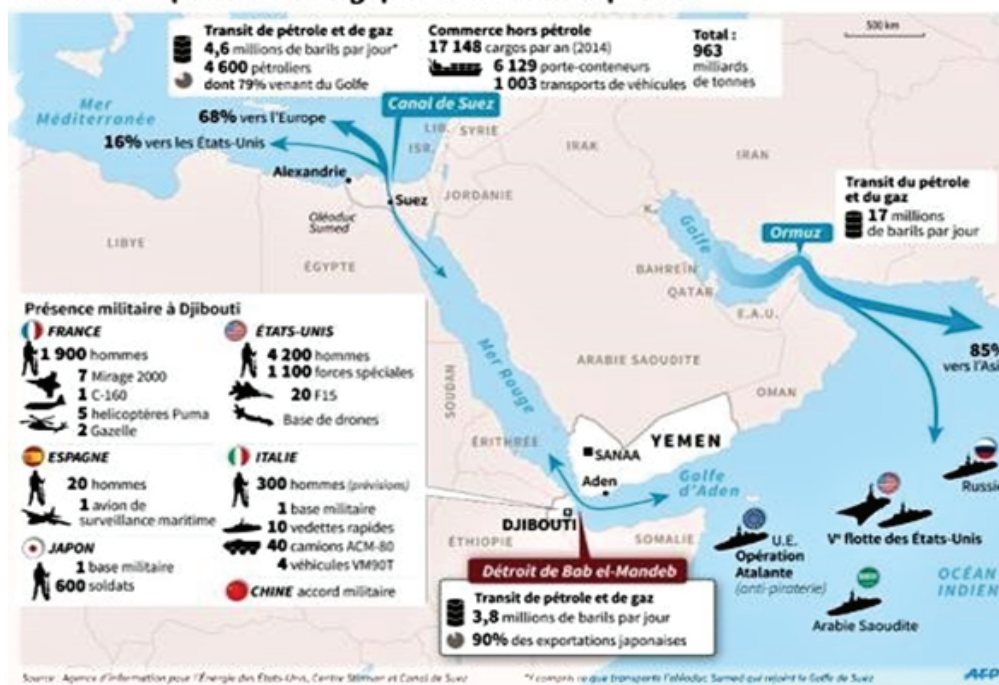


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The African maritime domain is one of the most dynamic in the world, in terms of both the existing and emerging threats, and the innovative responses to them.

Yémen : une position stratégique sur la route du pétrole





While the archetypes of piracy, oil and fuel theft, and mass maritime migration are all closely associated with various regions of Africa, more needs to be done to communicate the successful approaches African states and regions are taking to countering maritime, governing the maritime domain and developing the blue economy. That process of communication starts with African states and regions sharing their insights, lessons and experiences with each other. To help facilitate such interaction, the United States' Africa Center for Strategic Studies launched a "Whole-of-Africa Maritime Dialogue" in Victoria, Seychelles in March 2018 – an initiative that will continue in perpetuity.

While the specific maritime security challenges faced by the states of IGAD, ECOWAS, SADC, EAC, ECCAS, IOC, AMU, or COMESA are perhaps different, evidence suggests that criminals around the continent and around the world are taking inspiration from each other in their approach to pursuing illicit rewards. It stands to reason, therefore, that even though the responses of the different states and regions in Africa may be governed by local dynamics, they can all similarly take inspiration from each other. The following are examples of the sorts of lessons that are beginning to be shared through the Whole-of-Africa Maritime Dialogue

Operational Cooperation on the Water

One of the most interesting and important examples of maritime security cooperation in Africa, and indeed in the world, is ECCAS Zone D. The four states of Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and São Tomé & Príncipe, since 2009, have made operational cooperation a reality, engaging in daily combined operations at sea. Driven by the operators, the states recognized an urgent need to come together to confront maritime threats they could not manage individually.

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Overcoming Differences through Shared Maritime Interests

It is a fundamental reality that states do not always get along. Historical disputes, differences in language, contested borders, and other divisive factors can cause the relationship between states, even neighboring states, to sour to the point of complete cessation of communication.

Maritime criminals, however, are unencumbered by borders, bureaucracy or diplomatic tensions. Responding to them, therefore, often requires overcoming differences by recognizing shared maritime interests. Morocco and Algeria, for example, have had a closed border for years, and communication between the states on many matters remains limited or nonexistent.

Through the mechanism of the 5+5 Defense Initiative, however, Morocco and Algeria are able to share information and coordinate action out of the common need to address transnational maritime insecurity.

Similar examples exist around the continent and should be drawn upon for helping address any instances in which cooperation is hindered by inter-state tensions.



Establishing Internal Cooperation through Whole-of-Government Processes

When a state cannot cooperate between its own maritime agencies, it is hard to imagine how it could effectively cooperate with other states on maritime matters. Consequently, many states are beginning to pursue internal cooperation through “Whole-of-Government Processes” in which the various ministries, agencies and departments with maritime responsibilities work together in a repeatable, documentable fashion that provides timely information to senior decision makers. Such processes enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and integrity of all entities involved.

Even as it continues to improve, Cameroon is recognized as having one of the best models for such cooperation, and has shown a remarkable willingness to share its insights with other states. In fact, when discussing such processes globally, the “Cameroonian model” stands alongside such other examples as the “American model,” and the “Australian model.”

Innovative Approaches to Harnessing the Blue Economy

The “blue economy” – the sustainable, inclusive subset of the wider maritime economy – is elusive for many states.

Yet Seychelles has become a world-leader in engaging in innovative approaches to securing, harnessing and enhancing its blue economic potential. Fish traceability increases the value of its fish by providing customers with visibility of the supply chain, sophisticated surveillance systems allow for efficient interdiction, and the “debt for dolphins” financing scheme has made marine conservation a valuable asset to the national economy by helping pay off sovereign debt. Such innovation is available to all coastal and archipelagic states, so there is a lot of inspiration to draw from this example.

Implementing National Maritime Strategies

Africa has seen a proliferation of maritime-focused strategies over the last decade, but writing them is the easy part.

Actually adopting and implementing them in a meaningful way is the challenge.

And even when regional bodies adopt strategies, their member states, as the building blocks of security, still have to bear the responsibility of incorporating multistate initiatives into national efforts.

As a growing number of states adopt national maritime strategies (whether a national maritime security strategy with the singular pillar of security, a state action at sea strategy with the dual pillars of security and governance, or an integrated maritime strategy with the three pillars of security, governance and the maritime economy), the question of implementation looms. To that end, Côte d’Ivoire offers inspiration to states working to make that transition from adoption to implementation, or even to those who are debating the merits of pursuing a maritime strategy in the first place. Since engaging in strategy development and implementation, Côte d’Ivoire has seen tremendous improvement in its maritime security and governance – a message it is happy to share with others.

Updating Legislation and Penalties

Outdated legislation plagues maritime law enforcement agencies around the world. While many states continue to grapple with passing maritime crime legislation that adequately address issues like piracy and trafficking, others are beginning to find immediate benefit in updating fisheries laws and regulations. Senegal is a great example. After ensuring its regulations meet the realities of both its marine environment and the criminal threat, the government has successfully interdicted and collected huge penalties on illegal fishing vessels. With a maximum fine of US\$1.8 million – roughly nine times the maximum of most other states – Senegal has had the chance to effectively expel certain illegal fishing operations while also collecting fines that will pay for new vessels.





Sharing for the Greater Good

Increasingly, Africa is replete with examples of generosity in pursuit of collective maritime security.

The limited sampling listed here is only the tip of the iceberg, as there are many more that indicate the sorts of success that states are having in improving maritime security, governance and development.

Virtually every coastal, island or archipelagic state in Africa presents an example of something worth emulating. It is for this reason, therefore, that the Africa Center has launched the Whole-of-Africa Maritime Dialogue as a new model of assistance in which international partners help facilitate the exchange of ideas, lessons, cautionary tales, experiences and models of success.

Modern Port of Tadjourah (Djibouti) which will ease access to the Northern Part of Ethiopia through a brand new asphalted road.



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