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Europe, Power and the Sea

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Abstract :

Globalisation is leading to ever greater interdependence between populations and zones in the use or transformation of resources. Formerly these zones lay close together and concentrated around populations whose activities *in situ* covered overall requirements. The rarefaction of some resources and the significant growth of consumption, as well as the low cost of maritime transport and major price differences in labour have changed the old autarkic balance. Trade and flows are now factors of wealth[1] [2].

In this development the sea has taken on increasing importance (facility of trade thanks to ships, coastal populations). The population is still growing significantly whilst land resources are running out or are close to their limits in terms of sustainable development. Alternative raw materials and energy sources are vital to feed the population and to cover its needs. Where can they be if not at sea? The United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is not mistaken when it recommends stepping up the development of *offshore* proteins from the sea, with an imperative placed on industrial manufacture by 2025. In fact we can already gauge the extraordinary reservoir that the ocean holds if we look at the present development of *offshore* activities. We have probably only discovered 10% of the animal and plant species that lie beneath the surface of the oceans, the depths of which we still largely ignore[3].

In the quest for vital resources at sea the emerging countries are not amongst the last to be actively developing extremely dynamic, if not to say offensive, maritime strategies. Under the surface, at the bottom of the sea vast networks of cables and optic fibres have been deployed, a true backbone for the internet network, by which nearly all world communications now pass. The world is therefore completely cabled and all countries have access to the sea via these submarine cables.

AN ECONOMIC SECTOR IN FULL EXPANSION

Maritime transport, *offshore* industries, fishing and aquaculture, tourism, port services, shipyards, maritime defence and security, scientific research,

various services; all of these areas have been identified and accounted for in the world's economy[4]. For example *offshore* oil and gas exploration represented 700 billion € in 2010, fishery resources 122, ship-building 120, total transport and services at sea total around 400, classification society activity around 3.5 etc. If we add all of this up the total is around 1,500 billion €, and growing fast, which makes it the world's second biggest economic sector after agro-food. In 2025, and according to forecasts, the world's maritime economy will have doubled.

Growth will mainly be carried along as new obstacles at sea are overcome (technological, legal, regulatory), notably via the development of ultra-deep *offshore* activities which globally match areas which are further and further from the coasts and subject to extreme conditions (very deep seabeds, Arctic, etc.). The stakes associated with the phenomena of climate change and sustainable development, the diversification of activities at sea, as well as the gathering pace of world trade via sea routes are also issues that are driving the development of areas in the maritime economy along – since they have been identified as promising on the horizon of 2020-2030.

More often than not the marine environment is considered to be hostile for man and every significant form of progress in the conquest of the seas has required both strong will and the mastery of the most sophisticated sciences and techniques[5]. The key to the conquest of the oceans has always been of a scientific nature and about mastering technology. In turn total maritime investments required are still significant, thereby justifying cooperation projects which are very often international as well as the vital conjugation of public and private contributions long term.

1. This text is an abstract of the "Shuman Report, State of the Union 2014" published by Lignes de Repères, Paris, March 2014, 267 p.

2. To this idea of "movable" wealth that is historically linked to maritime people, traders, or nomads who circulate in borderless areas we might oppose the principle of "immovable" wealth of sedentary populations.

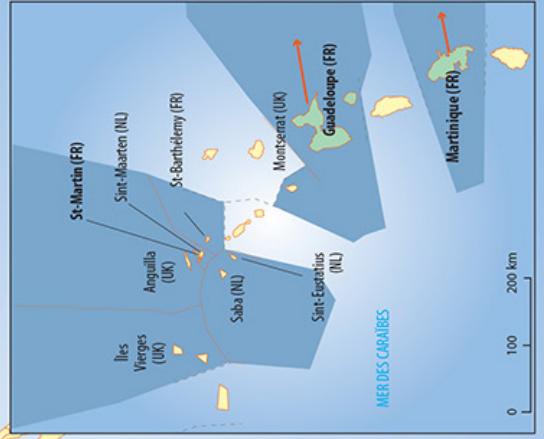
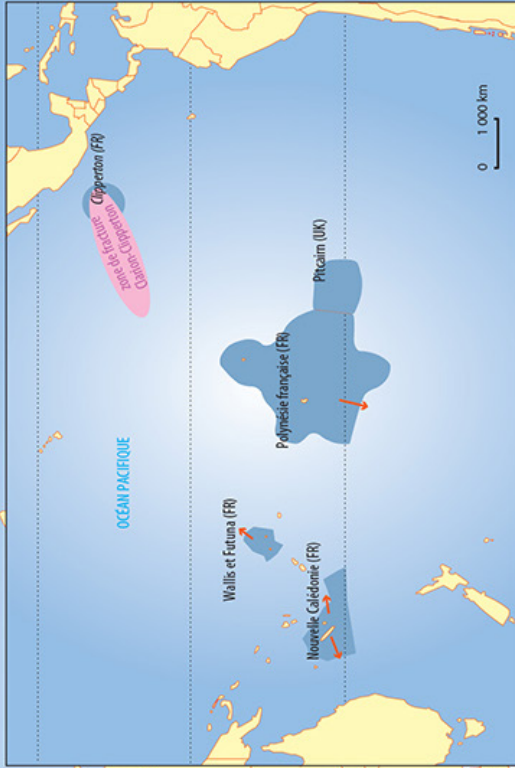
3. We know more about the surface of the moon than the seabed. In this regard the billions invested in space would probably be more useful and more productive at sea. The oceans hold 90% of hydrocarbon reserves and 84% of rare metals, microalgae apart which not only promise food, fertiliser and medicines but also third generation fuels and new materials, such as "bio" plastics which will replace those which are dangerously polluting our oceans.

4. Data are taken from the special issue "Les enjeux maritimes 2012" by Le Marin, de l'Atlas géopolitique des espaces maritimes, Éditions Technip, as well as the OECD's, IFP EN and the OMI's publications.

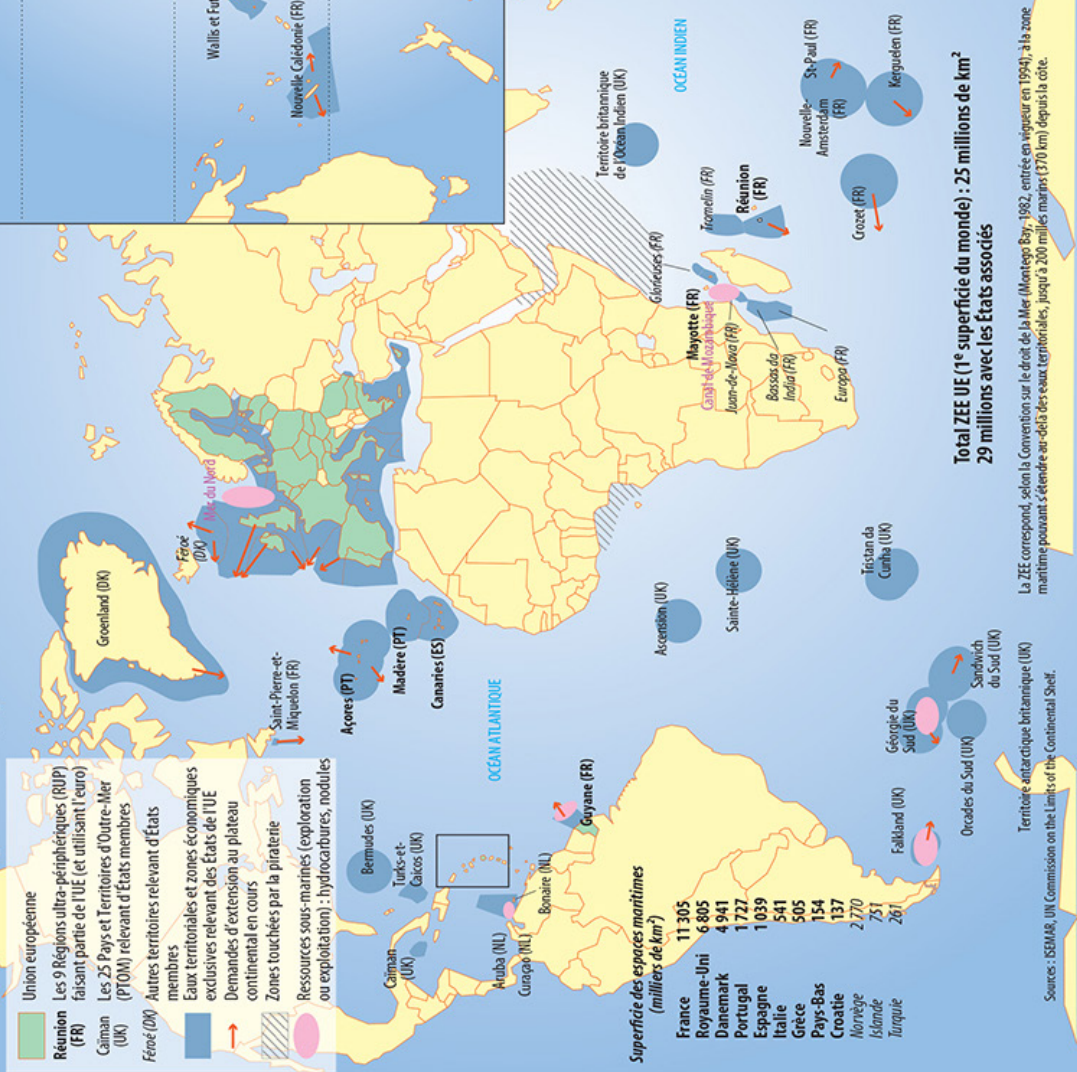
5. In this regard it is fascinating to read the report by the Chinese Academy of Science entitled: "Marine Science & Technology in China: A Roadmap to 2050", Science Press, Beijing.

L'Union européenne, présences maritimes

- Union européenne**
- Réunion (FR)** Les 9 Régions ultra-périphériques (RUP) faisant partie de l'UE (et utilisant l'euro)
- Caiwan (UK)** Les 25 Pays et Territoires d'Outre-Mer (PTOM) relevant d'États membres
- Féroé (DK)** Autres territoires relevant d'États membres
- Eaux territoriales et zones économiques exclusives relevant des États de l'UE**
- Demandes d'extension au plateau continental en cours**
- Zones touchées par la piraterie**
- Ressources sous-marines (exploration ou exploitation) : hydrocarbures, nodules**



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Superficie des espaces maritimes (milliers de km²)

France	11 305
Royaume-Uni	6 805
Danemark	4 941
Portugal	1 727
Espagne	1 039
Italie	541
Grèce	505
Pays-Bas	154
Croatie	137
Norvège	2 770
Islande	751
Turquie	261

Total ZEE UE (1^{er} superficie du monde) : 25 millions de km²
29 millions avec les États associés

La ZEE correspond, selon la Convention sur le droit de la Mer (Montego Bay, 1982, entrée en vigueur en 1994), à la zone maritime pouvant s'étendre au-delà des eaux territoriales, jusqu'à 200 milles marins (370 km) depuis la côte.

Sources : ESDMAR, UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

The sea, a wealthy but complex environment, which is only accessible thanks to high technology and therefore constant innovation that requires heavy often risky laden financing: will not be conquered easily by economic action and media soundbites. This supposes however stable, constant, long term policies as well as an environment that fosters innovation.

Globalisation quite precisely highlights these “common, fluid, unmanaged spaces”, which escape the direct sovereignty of any State and comprise both a stake and an area of confrontation. This is the case with geographic exo-atmospheric, maritime (including seabeds) and also electromagnetic areas (internet, cyberspace), and even other “borderless” fields such as finance, the media, NGO’s and knowledge generally. These spaces are all organised in a non-hierarchical manner around a series of networks that depend on nodal points comprising various populated areas, industrial use, and transformation of resources or immaterial data, knowledge hubs and decision making centres. Globalisation as a phenomenon is of an historically maritime nature.

RESULTING VULNERABILITY

The importance of maritime issues in globalisation is not therefore a new phenomenon. Diversification of maritime routes, a sharp rise in the tonnage transported, extension of the areas used for the extraction of resources from the sea, development of recreational boating and cruising, the creation of managed maritime areas: the world that is emerging before our very eyes is increasingly “marine”. Its spectacular development may however cause a certain number of risks of which we should be aware.

Only one third of the planet’s surface is subject to the rule of the States. In other words, two thirds are in fact under the international legal regime of the High Seas and because of this they belong to no one (Res nullius). The legal framework became clearer with the UN’s Convention on the Law of the Sea (Montego Bay, 1982), (the concept of the EEZ –Exclusive Economic Zone, International Seabed Authority etc.). But this leaves a wide margin for contest and various interpretations. The first danger would be to allow these vast and

largely virgin areas to be “territorialised”. Another danger would be to consider the opposite, that this area belongs to no one and that it belongs to everyone. International rules for sustainable use have to be defined regarding the enormous reservoir of resources to be found at high sea.

The growing race for maritime resources is already a source of competition and therefore increasing tension, notably in areas where the division of EEZ’s are the subject of dispute. More and more frequently maritime routes are the venue of tension. Straits, tight passages, coastal areas, are all privileged areas for the deployment of asymmetrical means of action. The same applies to *offshore* installations which are mushrooming and increasingly the ships which work on them are being attacked.

Maritime power will remain the focus of debate, both now and in the future. The example of piracy – endemic and reoccurring in many places – illustrates the limits of the idea of Res Nullius when the means of supervision and action are reduced. State measures to control activities at sea are being introduced, including on a European level, via networks of captors correlated to databases and steered by information management systems. But the oceans are vast, and it is impossible to imagine them being remote controlled. Radars and surveillance cameras have never been able to physically replace armed police forces.

Although the appropriation of fluid areas cannot be the final focus of a policy their control is a condition *sine qua non* of power. Today, as before, the obvious deployment of naval forces off the territorial waters of a country, in a zone of tension or along a maritime route, has is of extreme political significance. Everyone shows his strength so that he does not have to use it. In this regard the Chinese “Whitepaper” is extremely clear[6].

The emerging countries have all understood the importance of a powerful navy to defend their interests. Just as the Europeans are reducing their network and are struggling to define an ambitious maritime policy these countries and those surrounding them are committing to major programmes to extend or renew their naval capabilities. Aware of the resources contained in the oceans which lie on their shores some are even undertaking intimidation strategies – and even denying

6. “China’s development of an aircraft carrier has a profound impact on building a strong People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) and safeguarding maritime security”.

access – so that they can carve out the lions share of the wealth, the owner of which is still uncertain. “We can be nothing but impressed by the conjunction of the maritime ambitions declared and formalised by the emerging countries and the means they are investing to continue with these “naval” budgets that are due to rise between 2011 and 2016, in Russia by 35% and China by 57%, Brazil by 65% and in India by 69%[7].” But the high seas are also the privileged area of manoeuvres for air-maritime, submarine and nuclear forces: firstly those of the historic naval powers including France and the UK in Europe of course, and also, and increasingly the navies of major emerging countries whose ambitions are clearly not just restricted to patrolling in their exclusive economic zones. Navies have always been the preferred instruments of power, major attributes of a State’s international status, and part of long term geo-strategies[8]. As Dilma Rousseff, the Brazilian president quite clearly declared on March 1st 2013 during the inauguration of a shipyard devoted to submarines in Itaguaí: “Here a major project for Brazil has been launched. This has taken us into the extremely exclusive group of countries of the Security Council, the only nations which have access to nuclear submarine technology: the US, China, France, UK and Russia.”

Strategists are increasingly turning to air-to-land actions because of the facility maritime paths and the status of the high sea provide in terms of entering a theatre of crisis; this promotes joint air and naval forces working under international mandate thereby giving a new meaning to the idea of pre-positioning. For the US pressure placed on intercontinental maritime flows provides amphibian operations with renewed importance. We also see Russia, China and Japan developing major amphibian fleet programmes.

THE SEA, A PARADIGM REBORN – WILL THERE BE A NEW MARITIME DEAL IN EUROPE?

In 1414 the Portuguese prince Henry the Navigator already made a wager that the future of his country without resource would be played out at sea.

Before any other European he saw an economic “Renaissance” and formidable development thanks to the seas. In this period of major turbulence he showed exemplary courage and perseverance. After him other Western States set out to sea to conquer the world. They led Europe to trade, industrial and cultural supremacy which it has enjoyed until modern times.

We know that demography is the driving principal of economic growth. In this regard Europe seems to be highly disadvantaged in the international race. Crippling in the long term, if seen from an exclusively terrestrial standpoint, this major handicap might only be overcome at sea, in a geopolitical, dynamic, transversal view, employing in support the decisive competitive advantage to which our exhausted maritime powers still hold the key. The countries of Europe indeed still hold the advantages of maritime power which enabled them to develop to their present point[9]. The tools and competences exist in Europe, and are held by the main players in the maritime world. More than 5% of Europe’s GDP, excluding raw materials like hydrocarbons and fish, are ensured by industries and services linked to the sea. According to the “Blue Growth” report by the European Commission this generates 500 billion € in turnover and involves more than 5.4 million people (7 in 2020). “The justification for this approach is also confirmed by the observation that nearly all of the major problems facing Europe ie energy, climate change, conservation and protection of the environment, research and innovation, competitiveness and the creation of jobs, international trade, transport and logistics all include a major maritime dimension.”[10]

From all points of view the maritime issue is significant worldwide. To a certain extent understanding the sea means understanding an increasingly global, interconnected world. Not only is the sea the new area of development for the planet but it is also key to a common future for all human beings. Beyond the blue economy, the global idea of the “Blue Society” is now emerging.

The European Union is the world’s leading economic and maritime power. The sea can offer Europeans a new horizon providing new impetus to their ambitions,

7. Report 674/2012 by the Senate

8. One might think that China, just like Brazil, India or Russia are counting heavily on all registers of naval power.

9. There is an historic correlation between naval power and economic power. The project Océanides aims to show this via an exhaustive scientific study of the world’s maritime history cover five thousand years and the whole planet. For the first time the history of humanity will be examined through the maritime prism.

10. European Commission Communication, “Guidelines for an integrated approach to maritime policy”, 2008

stimulate their creativeness and take advantage both of their audacious past and the opportunities offered by the present and their future successes. The peaceful and logical conquest of the oceans' vast resources is a major political, economic, social and security stake commensurate with the challenges presented by globalisation. The race has started and we cannot ignore it nor can we remain on the side-lines. Inestimable development perspectives at sea are opening up before our very eyes; this is an exceptional chance to take up because we have all of the competences to rise to the challenges with our partners, notably those in Europe^[11]. In this morose economic era, of continued fear, of defensive withdrawal and suicidal wait-and-see, we have a unique opportunity to prepare our children's future by emerging from the present crisis with dignity, with an innovative, open, dynamic vision of which many approve.

CONCLUSION

If we do not want to be the timid spectators on the side-lines of historic developments the time has come to define some courageous strategic plans; to concentrate our energies and competitive advantages; to set in place tailor-made means of governance and project steering, in which Europe can play its role as strategist and coordinator in partnership with competent public and private players.

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11. José Manuel Barroso, "The past, the present and the future of Europe are anchored in the oceans and the seas," March 2 2005.

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