

The European Security and Defence Union

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Europe must assume global responsibilities

Call for a European strategic revolution

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Will Europe's leaders finally wake up in 2024, a year that could well seal the continent's fate for a long time to come?

Their measured support for Ukraine shows that they have not grasped the full extent of the war that Putin has declared against them. When we look later at the attitude of the west, in addition to the revelations about the omnipresent pro-Russian fifth column in Europe, we will judge their almost criminal timidity.

When will we really react?

How many more thousands of deaths will it take before we really decide to thwart Russian aggression and definitively dissuade it from pursuing its revisionist expansionism, which is endangering the whole of Europe?

Europe need have no fear of the programmed break-up of Russia, which would probably be accompanied by its only possible redemption: the fall of the Chekists who have seized power there.

Increasingly autocratic but also increasingly poor, internal unrest is spreading. Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, Buryatia and

many of the 89 "subjects" of the Russian Federation are moving away from Moscow because they can no longer feed the fantasies and demands for cannon fodder of the criminals in power. The country is growing poorer; the population is suffering from privatisation; repression has become almost Stalinist. The end is nigh. There is no need to fear it. There is no point in trying to slow it down from the outside. The end of the Soviet Union has already been achieved. So will the completion of the process.

The resilience, prudence and patience of Europeans are certainly assets in the face of this impending cataclysm, but they will not be enough, here nor elsewhere.

How can we explain the fact that the threats to maritime traffic in the Red Sea have not prompted an immediate and strong reaction from the people who are primarily concerned, the Europeans? The European Union claims to protect the principle of freedom of navigation. But it is also the owner of the world's largest commercial fleet, with 70% of the world's freight transport capacity (and 60% of container ships), thanks in particular to its four carriers in the list of the world's five largest (MSC, Maersk, CMA-CGM, Hapag-Lloyd).

What use are the 400 European warships? Is the EU incapable of securing transit through the Bab al-Mandab strait? Why is it once again passing the buck to the United States? Will its geostrategic pretensions sink in the Red Sea? And what if, one day, the straits of Asia are blocked by Chinese military action? The welcome response of Europeans to the challenge posed by the Houthis with operation Aspides, albeit belated, reflects a positive change. Let's hope that it will lead to others.

The time has come to be geostrategic

Europe wants to be "geostrategic": the time has come! Europeans can no longer allow Ukrainian civilians to perish under Russian missiles and the conflict to drag on for fear of an escalation that will never happen. We cannot allow Iran and its stooges to hold world trade hostage, feed inflation and insecurity here at home, drain the resources of the Suez Canal, or risk seeing other straits – Hormuz, Malacca – subjected to the same blackmail.

Europe must assume global responsibilities to avoid the contagion of the Russian example, which has unleashed violence all over the planet and left thugs unfettered where they hope to exploit hitherto contained resentments. Only determina-

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tion, the threat of force and steadfastness can now guarantee European peace. Europeans must show their determination to wage war on those who publicly declare themselves to be their enemies if they are to have any chance of avoiding one. Weakness would mean inevitable conflict. They must bury once and for all the days of empires, in which only Russia still believes. They must be prepared to wage war in order not to have to go to war. From now on, as has unfortunately often been the case in our history, only the possibility of resorting to force can guarantee peace.

We need to call for a real revolution in Europe, which remains our best asset for peace, provided it wakes up.



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Launch of EUNAVFOR ASPIDES

(nc) On 19 February 2024, the Council of the European Union launched UNAVFOR ASPIDES, a defensive maritime security operation that will be active along the main sea lines of communication in the Bab al-Mandab and Hormuz straits, as well as international waters in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Oman, and the Gulf. The initial duration of the operation has been set to one year.

Cooperating with like-minded international partners, ASPIDES aims to contribute to the safeguarding of maritime security and ensure freedom of navigation, especially for merchant and commercial vessels. Within its defensive mandate, it will provide maritime situational awareness, accompany vessels, and protect them against multi-domain attacks at sea. Operation ASPIDES will closely coordinate with EUNAVFOR ATALANTA to contribute to maritime security in the West Indian Ocean and in the Red Sea.

The operation headquarters will be based in Larissa, Greece. Commodore Vasileios Gryparis (EL) was appointed Operation Commander, and Rear Admiral Stefano Costantino (IT) Force Commander.

Since October 2023, numerous Houthi attacks have targeted international commercial vessels in the region, breaching the freedom of the high seas and the right of transit passage in straits used for international navigation enshrined in the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea. On 10 January 2024, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2722 (2024), condemning the attacks in the strongest terms and noting the right of member states, in accordance with international law, to defend their vessels from attacks, including those that undermine navigational rights and freedoms. On 29 January 2024, the Council approved a Crisis Management Concept for a possible EU maritime security operation to safeguard freedom of navigation in relation to the Red Sea crisis. The operation was formally established on 8 February 2024.

Factsheet:

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