

NATO in EU cooperation in the field of illegal migration

AGENDA:

- ✓ NATO & illegal migration
- ✓ NATO and EU
- ✓ The HUB

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The current refugee and migrant crisis, caused by conflict and instability on NATO's southern borders, is being fuelled by human trafficking and criminal networks.

NATO is contributing to international efforts to stem illegal trafficking and illegal migration in the Aegean Sea, through intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance in the Aegean Sea and at the Turkish-Syrian border.

To this end, NATO is cooperating with the European Union's border management agency Frontex, in full compliance with international law and the law of the sea.



NATO's role and contribution

NATO maritime forces are deployed in the Aegean Sea to contribute critical, real-time information to Greece and Turkey, as well as to Frontex, in light of the ongoing humanitarian crisis.

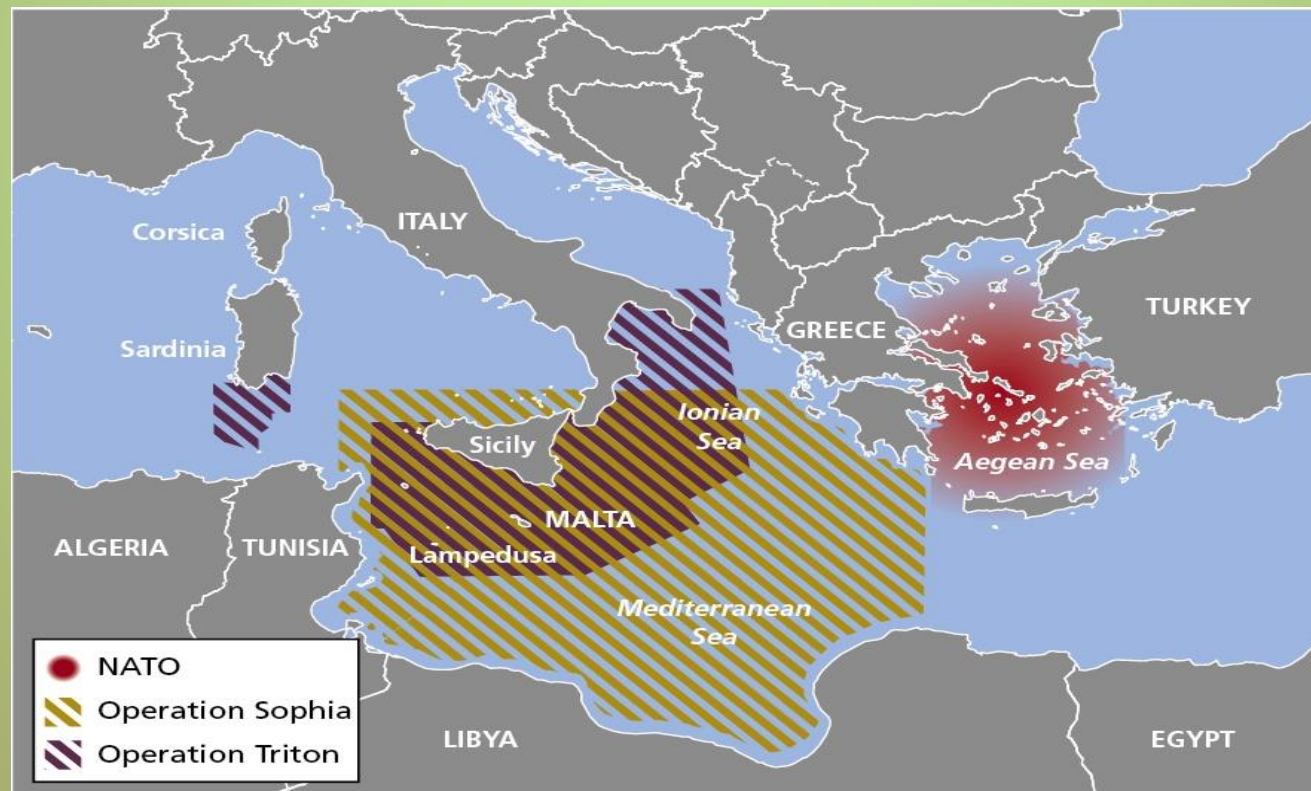
NATO's Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) is conducting reconnaissance, monitoring and surveillance of illegal crossings in the territorial waters of Greece and Turkey, as well as in international waters with its maritime and air assets



NATO's role and contribution

NATO is also sharing this information in real-time with Frontex so that it can take even more effective action. Since NATO's ships are larger than Frontex vessels, NATO sensors and radars have a broader reach and complement Frontex assets.

The purpose of NATO's deployment is to assist Allies and Frontex in carrying out their duties in the face of the crisis. In accordance with international law, all ships that sail, including NATO ships, have to rescue people in distress at sea. Allied vessels will live up to their national responsibility to assist



Composition and command of the deployments

SNMG2 is currently led by a German flagship and is composed of just over half a dozen vessels. Reinforcing this Group so the mission and its configuration is reviewed on a regular basis.

SNMG2 is one of two Standing NATO Maritime Groups – SNMG1 and SNMG2. SNMGs fall under the authority of Allied Maritime Command (MARCOM).



NATO-EU cooperation

The refugee and migrant crisis is the worst humanitarian crisis Europe has witnessed since 1945. NATO has established arrangements enabling direct links with Frontex at the operational and tactical levels

Since February 2016, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has held discussions on the refugee and migrant crisis with several EU counterparts including the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, the EU High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission, Federica Mogherini, and the European Commissioner for Migration, Dimitris Avramopoulos



NATO Summit.... «the Trump factor....» Will NATO become a transatlantic Frontex?

During his speech, President Trump commented that "the NATO of the future must include a great focus on terrorism and immigration".

He said this after talking about how thousands of people are "pouring into" NATO countries without being properly identified.

The statement came in the context of a hard-line domestic narrative on migration in the US, and can hardly be seen as an isolated remark.

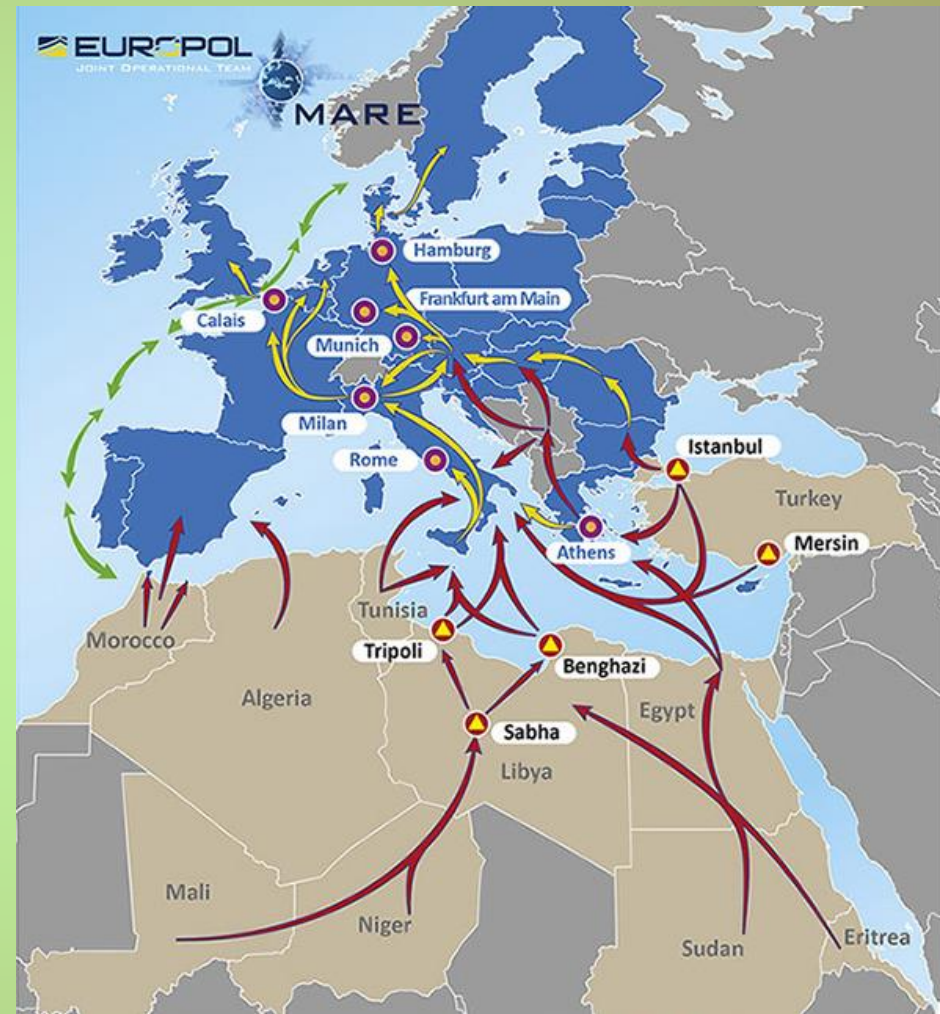


Will NATO become a transatlantic Frontex?

Trump's statement called for much greater engagement, and perhaps even a central role for the alliance in countering irregular migration to Europe and North America.

By establishing a clear link between terrorism and migration in his speech, Trump qualified migration as a major security threat that requires joint military action in order to be mitigated.

Many European governments, which are keen to reduce migratory flows to the EU, may quietly welcome such an approach, as they themselves have not only agreed to NATO's operation in the Aegean Sea, but also deployed a EU-led counter-smuggling mission in the Central Mediterranean (EUNavfor Med Operation Sophia).



Quiet acceptance

Trump's insistence on allies to "pay their fair share" may lead to uncomfortable deals in which the US makes its support for migration-related efforts conditional upon the receipt of some sort of compensation. ·

It would also give the US a strong voice in how the operations are conducted, and what objectives they seek to address.





Quiet acceptance

Trump's call for a refocused transatlantic alliance may thus result in diplomatic pressure for a NATO mission to intercept and screen asylum seekers before granting them entry.

This would represent a clear break with the current practices – not only in terms of the actors concerned but also the procedure.

The involvement of non-EU military personnel in determining the admissibility of asylum seekers would raise several legal questions, not least regarding the principle of non-refoulement enshrined in 1951 Refugee Convention. This provision forbids the forcible expulsion or return of an asylum seeker to a territory in which their life or freedom are in danger.

Of course, NATO member states would need to agree on any joint migration-related action. But given the disproportionate weight that the US holds in NATO, the Trump administration's priorities would likely dominate the agenda.



US dominance

If NATO does take on a larger role in policing migratory routes, the US would have a much greater influence on EU migration policy, which would complicate an already deeply divided political map on this issue.

Member states seeking more solidarity-based solutions would be even more isolated than is already the case.

The G7 summit in Taormina, Italy, that immediately followed Trump's NATO debut, provided a stark example of how the Trump administration's priorities can effect multilateral discussions.

Italy attempted to draw attention to the high number of irregular arrivals it receives by symbolically hosting the gathering in Sicily, and tried to convince attending leaders to open more legal channels for migration such as refugee resettlement. Yet these efforts fell flat. The G7 leaders' statement focused mainly on border control and returns, without even mentioning resettlement



EU border security and control.

NATO support for EU border security operations can be valuable, for example when it comes to the exchange of background information for the purpose of security screening asylum seekers. Nevertheless, European policymakers should be wary of any shift in NATO's focus towards collective border control.

Although migration is a challenge that can partially be addressed with the support of military assets, it is not a battle than can be only “won” with military might.

Only long-term approaches to the root causes of migration and smart legal channels that acknowledge the inevitability of human mobility will succeed in reducing irregular flows.



NATO new step...the HUB

A new center aimed at understanding and coordinating responses to the south will soon become a reality as the NATO Strategic Direction South Hub prepares to begin work. The NSD-S Hub, under the roof and lead of the southern Italy-based Allied Joint Force Command Naples, is designed to focus on concerns such as destabilization, potential terrorism, radicalization, migration, environmental pollution and natural disasters. Officials say the new center aims to focus on southern regions to include the Middle East, North Africa and Sahel, sub-Saharan Africa and adjacent areas, waters and airspace.

"The Hub is not going to command big military operations," said NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg during a February press conference. "The hub is a hub for collecting information, for improving situational awareness and for coordinating efforts and activities."



The HUB

The NSD-S Hub is a natural progression for NATO, as the staff at JFC Naples has been busy conducting Mobile Training Team events.

Last July at the NDC the JFC Naples Commandant, said de-confliction and coordination are two of the main tools the hub will bring to allies and partners to enhance comprehensive understanding, situational awareness, decision making and information sharing for the south.



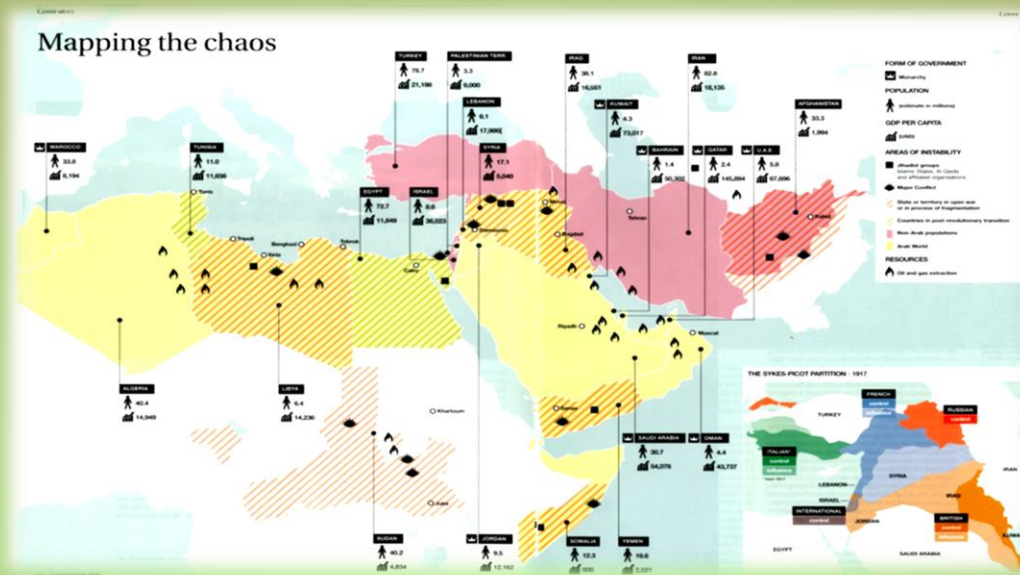
"There are a lot of actors engaged in the southern region, but who is doing the coordination?"

"There is a proliferation of multilateral and bilateral engagement in the region, but little evidence of de-confliction."

It was stressed that there's a lot of existing expertise in NATO which it should be the Hub's first priority to coordinate in order to successfully address the challenges involved with the new center. A key to the Hub's success will be the engagement of allies and partners for who it is hoped will send some of their best experts to help staff the Hub.

According to JFH Naples, a key to the early stages of the Hub will be the sharing of good analysis and sifting out what's important effectively. This should allow NATO and others to be less surprised by and reactive to events, such as the case during the 2011 Arab Spring.





Initially, about 100 military and civilian personnel, mainly from JFC Naples and supplemented by voluntary national contributions, will man the Hub.

Officials working to get the Hub established say it's not just NATO and national military structures that will benefit from the center. The Hub aims to also connect personnel across the civilian spectrum of regional development and crisis handling.

Coordination is already happening between NATO and partner organizations such as the European Union, African Union, United Nations, academics and non-governmental organizations.



QUESTIONS?

