

OUR OCEANS CONFERENCE 2017 – MALTA

SECURITY AT SEA – OPENING SCENE SETTER

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[SLIDE 1] Your excellencies, ministers, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen - I am greatly flattered to be asked to set the scene for this panel session. I am particularly pleased that Security at Sea is recognised as an appropriate topic for Our Oceans 2017, because without it the environment, shared prosperity, economic development and world trade all suffer.

Let me start with a definition [SLIDE 2], taken from the preparatory material for this conference. I hope captures the breadth of issues within maritime security. Important though that is, maritime security is not just about the safety of shipping. It reaches deep into the global economy, sustainability and the wellbeing of world citizens.

Let me take you on a voyage from Hong Kong to Rotterdam [SLIDE 3]. It will take 30 - 40 days (but I only have a few minutes!), nearly 20,000 kilometres. We will pass through 20 EEZs, 11 Territorial Seas, 7 trouble spots and 4 choke points.

As we head out of Hong Kong, we are straight into an area of fishing disputes [SLIDE 4]. Fish stocks, livelihoods and the availability for fish for the dinner table are all suffering from illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. In an area of the world where hundreds of millions of people are dependent solely on protein from the sea, stocks of fish have reduced by 95% since the 1960s.

As we head South it is wise to keep clear of any flash points [SLIDE 5] arising from disputes over Territorial Seas – although our ship has the right of freedom of navigation..

Further South we are able to turn West as we head for the Straits of Malacca [SLIDE 6]. The crew of our ship will be more nervous here. They would prefer not to stop and anchor, as the risk of theft and violence increases. In 2016, nearly 2000 seafarers were attacked by pirates in this area.

A period of calm crossing the Indian Ocean comes to an end as we approach the Horn of Africa [SLIDE 7]. Quieter just now, but 6000 seafarers have been taken hostage since 2009 and it has cost the international community \$26B to counter this scourge. The pirates appear to have turned to other forms of organised crime, much of it by sea, but can return to piracy when the opportunity is right.

And now as we pass the coast of Yemen [SLIDE 8] we are within the range of anti-ship missiles, which may not be sure of their target. 7 vessels have been seriously damaged this year, including some bringing aid to the beleaguered people of Yemen.

On through the Bab-el-Mendeb Straits [SLIDE 9] and we have to run the gauntlet of terrorists repeatedly issuing threats to world shipping passing through this vital choke point.

After the length of the Red Sea, the Suez Canal beckons the get us through to the calm of the Mediterranean Sea.

As is well known on these shores of our venue these two days [SLIDE 10], we in our ship now face the humanitarian challenge of the migration crisis – for which our vessel is probably most unsuitable to be able to offer any assistance. But there are legal and humanitarian obligations.

Through the Straits of Gibraltar (our 4th choke point), across the Bay of Biscay, up the English Channel – and hopefully we make it unscathed to Rotterdam.

Allow me to make five deductions [SLIDE 11] from our voyage together:

- Maritime Security is an important factor in contributing to peace and conflict. The Stable Seas report and methodology, published yesterday here in Malta, makes this abundantly clear.
- Maritime Security risks are pervasive, global and complex
- They are interrelated, shifting and variable in severity
- They reach into the global supply chain, the blue economy and livelihoods of billions of people
- A global and regional approach is needed to counter threats from poor Maritime Security.

So what is to be done? Having been given the first opportunity to speak under the heading of Security at Sea, I offer my recommendations [SLIDE 12] on what can be done – what commitments need to be made:

- Full UN member status for “The High Seas”
- Recognise the relationship between Maritime Security and Sustainability Goals
- Standing mechanisms for engaging nation states at Foreign Minister level
- Drive towards more effective governance - especially in criminality
- Centralized reporting methods, definitions, and analysis
- Collaborative approach to interconnected issues of maritime security

Let us see if any of our distinguished panel can lead us to commitments to go down this route

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Thank you very much [SLIDE 13]