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***Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges at NATO Jamie Shea said that present maritime policy does not lift a number of threats to its members. Among them, Shea mentioned global warming and the growing presence of Russia in the Eastern Mediterranean.***

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Speaking at the Crans Montana conference on October 27 in Brussels, **NATO's Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges Jamie Shea** said that the Western military alliance is facing a number of challenges in the field of maritime security.

“Global warming and sea level rise may have long-term considerations for global social stability and economic prosperity. The NATO's navy capabilities are also directly affected by changing environment because a number of American ports, for instance, have great percentage of the Atlantic based fleet and rising of sea level will make us dysfunctional within the next few years,” Shea said.

As a response to climate change, NATO plans to adopt a wide-ranging strategy, by building multifunctional ships with greater maneuverability, which will also support humanitarian operations. In 2016, the Alliance, at the request of Germany, Greece and Turkey, already contributed to the efforts aimed at stemming the flow of illegal human trafficking and migration in the Aegean Sea by providing surveillance, reconnaissance and monitoring capabilities.

During his speech at the conference, Shea also stressed the growing tension in the international political environment, particularly because of Moscow's bellicose policy in the neighbourhood of NATO. After the Russian military intervention in the Syrian civil war in 2015 on the side of the brutal Assad's regime, Moscow significantly increased its presence in the

Eastern Mediterranean sea, a strategic junction of world trade and a source of energy diversification for the EU. In October 2016, NATO members were put on high alert because of a flotilla of Russian warships passing through the English channel, which was en route to take part in operations against Syrian Islamist rebels.

With emerging global security and environmental challenges, NATO is planning to revise its outdated 2011 Alliance Maritime Strategy, which no longer reflects the present geostrategic reality.

“We have to have a clear picture of what is going on on the oceans as we have, for instance, in space or in the air. It is particularly important in the age, where vessels hang around with switched identification numbers. From this perspective, a clear maritime authentication system must be implemented,” Shea said.

In its new strategy, NATO is also planning to regenerate its maritime capabilities because at present the alliance faces “painful choices” when it concerns strategic choices and interests in the Black sea. Strengthening maritime cyber defense capabilities should be also put at the heart of revised NATO’s strategy Shea added.

“We have seen a number of cyber attacks, which affected shipping companies and caused significant financial damages to them. From this perspective, NATO sees an importance of protecting integrity of maritime shipping and navigation,” Shea said.

At present, NATO operates four Standing Naval Forces, made up of vessels from Allied countries, which can be rapidly deployed in the event of a crisis.