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## AFTER SEPTEMBER 11TH: EUROPE, THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST IN A TRANSATLANTIC PERSPECTIVE

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## A new Mediterranean strategic setting

After the end of the Cold War, the Western countries responded to the new situation in the Southern approaches to Europe by setting in motion the Madrid/Oslo process for peace in the Middle East and establishing other frameworks for regional political and security cooperation, such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership –(EMP) and the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue (NMD).

After ten years the balance sheet is not very encouraging. Western responses have not matched expectations. The Madrid/Oslo process, increasingly challenged and successfully weakened by its adversaries, in the Israeli as well as Palestinian camp, has finally collapsed. While the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue has remained very limited in its scope and goals, the EMP has proved unable to live up to its political and security ambitions, partly because the failure of the Middle East Peace Process has made any multilateral security cooperation between Israel and the Arab countries impossible; partly because no degree of security co-ownership is acceptable to both the EU and the Arabs. The EU has been unwilling to conceive of the EMP as anything more than its own Mediterranean policy. The Arabs have proved unable and unwilling to set up an agenda of political and economic reforms fitting EU requirements. In sum, the Partners have not found any satisfactory common ground and the EMP has failed to work in the way the Partners had hoped for when it was established in Barcelona.

The balance sheet of Mediterranean cooperation is thus unsatisfactory and demands reshaping. Against this backdrop, however, the strategic perspective of Western-Southern relations across the Mediterranean is being further transformed by the emerging post-September 11th US foreign policy and its strategic implications. The American response to the September 11th attack asks not only for adaptations in Western policies on the Mediterranean and the Middle East; but also for a sweeping change, in which cooperative responses tend to be trivialized and military responses, instead, emphasized. In the transatlantic perspective, this change generates considerable differences between the Atlantic allies on almost every issue at stake in the region.

This paper will, first, comment on old and new challenges in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, seeking to look at them in a transatlantic perspective. Second, it will try to provide some suggestions about ways and means to make trans-Mediterranean policies more effective in the framework of more cohesive transatlantic relations.

## Old and new challenges in the Mediterranean and the Middle East

In a broad and traditional perspective, risks and threats in the Mediterranean regions stem from three major epicenters: (a) the unsolved conflicts in the Middle East - namely the Israeli-Arab and Palestinian conflicts, Iraq, and the Balkans; (b) the absence of democracy, the rule of law and good governance in most of the regional states; and (c) the gap between wealth and order in Europe and poverty and instability in the southern regions.

Let's concentrate on the Near East, namely the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and related Israeli-Arab disputes and tensions. In this area, unsolved conflict and lack of democracy coalesce in generating both domestic and international instability. Domestically, they are the primary source of instability, political tyranny and economic decay. Furthermore, they project instability regionally and even globally by stirring up WMD proliferation, refugees, emigration and spillovers from terrorism, thus nurturing the conditions allowing international crime to prosper.

The responses to instability under (a) and (b) are also linked to one another. Some believe that a process of domestic political and economic reforms would enable the countries concerned to establish peaceful relations within the region. Thus, attainment of democracy would be the condition for making peace rather than the other way round. Incidentally, this seems to be the view underlying President George W. Bush's June 24 2002 Rose Garden statements on Palestine. All in all, it seems very difficult to ascertain what has to come first. In general, the two processes of peace and democratization should be complementary.

It must be noted, however, that the two goals - peace and democracy - belong to two different temporal spheres: peace may be a shorter-term goal, whereas democracy is definitely a longer-term one. Furthermore, while the absence of peace makes countries hostage to nationalism and is a strong obstacle to reform, the absence of democracy may render peace more difficult to attain but it is not in itself an absolute obstacle to it, as was demonstrated by the Egypt-Israel and Jordan-Israel peace treaties . In sum, the only effective strategy is peace in the short term to make long-term reform possible and thus consolidate peace. It is in this sense that the two processes are complementary.

The disruption of the peace process, that is the most violent re-eruption of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has made things worse in at least two respects: (a) it has reinforced hard-liners and, by the same token, weakened moderate forces and regimes, that is the only forces able to achieve peace in the shorter term (as feeble as the latter may result); (b) by failing to generate peace, it has magnified obstacles to reforms in the longer term. This means, that unless a peace-making perspective is restored, not only will violence continue to prevail in the shorter term but any longer-term action to foster reform is bound to become more difficult and even futile.

An immediate and determined political and diplomatic action by the West with a view to restoring the peace-making perspective is therefore a condition for making national efforts and Western support for long-term policies of democratization and peace-consolidation effective.

The third major epicenter of instability is the relentless socio-economic gap between North and South. Here again we have had failures and shortcomings in international diplomacy in addition to failings in domestic policies and negative ideological approaches towards international integration. These approaches have brought about rejection of globalization trends rather than attempts to find new balances between opportunities and liabilities. The agendas of the RDWG and MENA Economic Summits declined and subsequently evaporated with the collapse of the Middle East Peace Process. At the same time, the EMP program for regional trade integration and financial aid has weakened.

After seven years spent in pursuing a Euro-Med common free trade area, the pattern of integration in the Mediterranean regions reflects political rather than economic impulses and is very fragmented: Cyprus and Malta have cleverly worked to establish the conditions to become members of the EU; Israel and Turkey, each according to its

format, have increased their integration with the EU and, at the same time, reinforced bilateral cooperation; a number of Arab countries have initiated an inter-Arab process of integration with the Agadir Pact. In general, every country has tried to extract the best possible outcome from its bilateral relations with the EU, while neglecting horizontal ties. MEDA has consequently privileged a largely bilateral approach as well. In this mostly bilateral framework, success stories are not lacking, as in the case of Tunisia, Morocco and, in a sense, Turkey. Still, the agenda for implementing multilateral integration directed at opening the door to independent and significant economic growth seems to have disappeared and been replaced by stagnation and some marginal, individual success.

Like peace, lack of development will not foster democratization - although it will not, in itself, impede it either. As for peace and democracy, the interplay between economic development and democracy cannot be easily defined. Democracy is an inherent dimension of economic development and the other way round. Still, there are thresholds of economic development that have to be overcome in order to materialize the minimal conditions for attaining democracy, for instance overcoming poverty and vulnerability or improving income distribution. This is not to say that democracy must be overlooked as a condition for attaining development (as in Tunisia) but that the absence of development will not help democracy emerge. In recent years, Morocco may be regarded as a good example of virtuous interplay between democracy and economic development.

Here again, international policies must be reinvigorated, in particular those conducted by the EU in the framework of the EMP. These policies should rely less on conditionality than ownership, and should provide the Southern partners with more gradualism and some assurances about disruptions and the emergence of windows of vulnerability in their developmental process. At the same time, while the positive value of sub-regionalism must be recognized and related policies encouraged, the need for region-wide solidarity and harmony has to be strongly upheld. Thus, bold new initiatives are required. To inspire confidence, it is essential that such initiatives be supported by the restoration of determined conflict resolution policies.


**Global and regional terrorism**
In sum, in the current situation, many risks, although not new, are so magnified that in a sense they have taken on a new quality. Is there any really new risk or threat? As a consequence of the September 11th events, terrorism seems to be shifting from being a risk to a threat. In fact, in addition to the spillovers of terrorism that usually made it a source of risks for European countries (Europe as a logistical base for activities in the Middle East and North Africa; political assassinations in Europe; political disputes among immigrants; attacks on US or Israeli property and interests in Europe; etc.), after September 11th Europe also feels targeted by terrorism. In the 1990s, only France was under direct attack by Algerian Islamists' bombing campaigns. Thus, with few exceptions, a direct threat from terrorism is something new for Europe.

The new perception of terrorism refers to global factors. Al Qaeda attacked the United States with a typical Islamic discourse casting a new bipolar world divided between "Dar al-Islam" and "Dar al-Harb", a discourse inherently global. On the other hand, an attack on the United States, the sole superpower and by far the most powerful state on the planet, is by definition a global issue. The United States' response has accepted the bipolar model suggested by Al Qaeda by dividing the world into friends and foes.

Finally, NATO allies have activated Art. 5 for the first time in history. Does global terrorism have significance for the Mediterranean as well? Does terrorism need a global response in the Mediterranean in addition to the regional one?

The response to this question is very complex. The first point to consider is whether Al Qaeda really represents the "Dar-al-Islam" sector of the world. If we were to believe that Mr. bin Laden's discourse is succeeding in establishing a hegemony on the various components of the community of believers, he would admittedly represent and lead that community and Al Qaeda's weapon, terrorism, would have a global significance. There could be regional differentiations rather than different regional responses or agendas. What we know, however, suggests that such hegemony is less than fully accepted.

There is no doubt that most of the Muslim masses tend to suspend their moral judgment on terrorism (or to construe a moral equivalent between perceived injustices inflicted by the West over the Muslims and terrorist responses). They approve the anti-Western, in particular anti-American crusade launched by Mr. bin Laden, and look at terrorism as a legitimate success. This consensus is shared by Muslim masses around the Mediterranean. Yet, other important actors do not go along with this large political consensus for Al Qaeda's discourse.

Several Muslim actors, such as incumbent governments and most conservative national religious establishments rebuff Al Qaeda's discourse and its underlying hegemony by separating the truly tolerant and benevolent Islam as a religion from the instrumental use of Islam by Mr. bin Laden and his colleagues. As weak as the regimes' consensus and legitimacy may be, and independently of the value the separation between Islam and Islamism may have, this is an important obstacle to Al Qaeda's bid for hegemony in the Muslim-Arab world.

From our point of view, even more important is the rejection of Al Qaeda's discourse by Mediterranean or Mediterranean-related actors. One important rebuff comes definitely from Iran. Teheran is certainly unwilling to have its anti-Israeli and anti-American struggle play into the hands of Al Qaeda - the latter being a Sunni movement that is also directly responsible for the Shiites' sufferings in Afghanistan, Southern Iraq, Al Hasa province and elsewhere. Iran's opposition to Al Qaeda is no doubt reflected in its regional allies in Lebanon and Palestine. Another clear rebuff has come from the Palestinian National Authority. The Palestinian leadership has been clear in seeing Al Qaeda's call as an attempt to illegitimately take possession of a national struggle which, on the contrary, has to remain in Palestinian hands.

Another terrorist trend that tends to remain uncoupled from Al Qaeda's attempts at hegemony is in Algeria, where the national terrorism' struggle remains, in a sense, rather parochial, i.e. focused on the Algerian regime, its specific history, the alleged remnants of French colonialism and ties with presentday France.

For sure, terrorism in the Mediterranean regions may well refer in its rhetoric to Al Qaeda's global discourse. It is, however – like other Mediterranean terrorist trends we won't go into here, e.g. the PKK - primarily local, national and regional in its character. If so, what Europe and the West are facing is less a globalization of traditional Mediterranean factors of terrorism than a new global trend that may compound regional ones.

The emergence of global terrorist trends has not been overlooked around the Mediterranean basin. As a matter of fact, post-September 11th investigations have exposed a significant proselytism by Al Qaeda in the Mediterranean, especially in European countries. Many militants may have been attracted by the ideological

superiority of an international vs. national Islamist approach and shifted to a more "principled" layer of action to fight for the same cause. At the end of the day, "internationalism" is an experienced outlet of both pan-Arabism and Islamism, as South Yemen, Afghanistan and Bosnia have demonstrated. Furthermore, Europe is definitely a logistical asset from the point of view of a global organization. It is very close to the United States. It is itself a possible and interesting target. Finally, it offers a single space where police control is still in the making. Thus, while the bulk of Mediterranean terrorism remains regional in character, there is no doubt that a substantial stream of global terrorism is emerging in the region beside it. Also, there is no doubt that there will be alliances with and references to each other.

In sum, regional and global terrorism (a) tend to remain separate ideologically and operationally, (b) with the importance of regional terrorism broadly prevailing over the global in the region.

Since regional and global terrorism are different from one another, should this difference be reflected in the Western response?

European policy towards national terrorism in the region - both in Europe and beyond the Mediterranean - has always carefully taken into consideration the political background of terrorist activities. What is not legitimate is the way terrorists seek to achieve their goals, not necessarily the latter in themselves. The fight against terrorism has to be aimed at squarely suppressing terrorists. At the same time, if terrorism has to be undermined, it requires alternatives responses to the political goals they pursue. Alternative responses are particularly important when terrorism's goals receive mass political and/or social consensus. For these reasons, while the Europeans reject Palestinian terrorism, they insist on the need for a political response to the national issues from which terrorism stems.

In contrast, global terrorism lacks a precise, unequivocal political background. Despite its rhetoric, Al Qaeda is no exception. Thus, a prevailingly military response seems to be suited to the case of Al Qaeda.

In principle, the conclusion is that, while the global, transnational terrrorism of Al Qaeda deserves a military response, the regional, nationally-motivated terrorism in the Mediterranean needs a political response in addition to suppression. As a matter of fact, however, things are less clear-cut than that. The distinction is blurred by the *de facto* hegemony exercised by Al Qaeda's discourse, that is by the fact that Al Qaeda and national terrorism, particularly in the Mediterranean region, share the same large social consensus, no matter how instrumental Al Qaeda's claims are.

Let's try to discuss the point in more detail. To begin with, if a political response to Mediterranean regional terrorism is not provided or indefinitely postponed and a military response is provided instead on the assumption that there is no difference between global and regional terrorism - as the Israeli government is doing with US support- the result is a policy that is inadvertently still strongly subject to Al Qaeda's bipolar logic. In fact, Al Qaeda asserts, illegitimately though successfully, that there is only one Muslim cause. A single Western response to global and regional terrorism would seem to confirm Al Qaeda's claim.

This is why the West and Europe must retain a difference in their response, as difficult as this may be (in the region and, by the way, in the framework of immigrant communities). They should sharply repress terrorism. They should, however, uphold a more articulated response to national terrorism in the region.

On the other hand, if a political response were given to regional terrorism, without providing the hard and visible military response Al Qaeda's terrorism deserves in the region and elsewhere, this would be regarded as a sign of weakness or exposed as such by Al Qaeda's followers. And this would weaken the regional political response as well. In sum, the West cannot give one kind of response only. It must be active on both fronts, each receiving the response that suits it . In other words, what is needed is a finely articulated joint response. However, it must not be overlooked that success at the regional level - a firm Israeli-Palestinian agreement - would undermine Al Qaeda, publicly unveil the instrumental character of its discourse and strengthen the moderate forces throughout the region. It would mark the beginning of Al Qaeda's decline and point a way out of the current conflict.

In this sense, the restoration of an effective, concerted Western effort to bring compromise and peace to historical Palestine, along with improvements in the EMP and NATO Mediterranean Dialogue look like a strong and urgent priority.


**Rogue states**

Terrorism —and now global terrorism in particular — is linked to the issue of so-called rogue states, a definition several states recovered with President George W. Bush's election, after they had been redubbed "problematic states" by President Clinton, perhaps in a gesture of complacency towards European allies.

Indeed, the concept of rogue states is not unambiguous. Broadly speaking, it refers to states that use terrorism to achieve their interests either directly or indirectly. Furthermore, it refers to states that buy and develop weapons of mass destruction and fail to adhere to international treaties of arms control and limitation or more often than not fraudulently abide by them.

This being their fundamental profile, rogue states are also those that infringe human rights on a large scale and practice forms of genocide and extermination. In this respect, Serbia was considered a rogue state in the 1990s.

Rogue states are thus defined by a legal profile. However, if this legal definition is strictly and coherently applied, the number of rogue states is greater than that currently indicated by the West. In fact, besides North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Serbia and Libya, the list would have to include a number of other states, generally allies of the West.

For sure, the applicability of this legal point would be controversial, limited and debatable. However, there is no doubt that, in the end , the concept of a rogue state boils down to that of an enemy state, featuring denigration as a first act of hostility.

Singling out a state as an enemy may raise problems in the post-Cold War world, where Western compactness is softened by the absence of an overarching enemy and a grave and imminent danger. In fact, the short history of rogue states after the Cold War hardly reveals a compact West. This would not be the case today, however, in view of global terrorism, a development considered such a threat that the allies have activated Art. 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. In view of a shared, grave and impending danger like that stemming from global terrorism, legal profiles and concerns about double standards should be put aside and the countries suspected of terrorism regarded as rogues states and enemies by all Western states.

However , European polls and the positions of the allied governments illustrate that this is not the situation. In general, the European allies have taken global terrorism seriously and responded to it with appropriate domestic and international measures. In particular, they quickly upgraded their cooperation through a set of key judiciary and police

measures to make the EU space less porous. Still, there is a fundamental difference between the United States and Europe with respect to the response that rogue states deserve. There are many further differences, for example on whether information on these states is reliable or whether they really pose a direct threat, and so forth. What makes the substantive difference, however, is whether they need coercive and military responses and, if so, to what extent.

The worst rogue state the West ever had to confront so far, the Soviet Union, was given a very articulated response. It was composed of numerous measures of economic, cultural and military coercion, but also included cooperative responses and instruments. Many Europeans and Americans alike have not forgotten that lesson.

Thus, when it comes to Iraq, the rogue states of the day, most Europeans and Americans alike believe that the West should provide a well articulated response rather than only a military one.

Besides a difficult and expensive military campaign, the real disquieting question concerning Iraq is the post-conflict situation both domestically and regionally. Domestically, Iraq is a fragmented country with structural fault-lines, in which the few existing organized opposition forces are also fragmented, have different objectives and no popular consensus. More often than not, they are undemocratic in nature and subject to foreign loyalties. The West is already managing very difficult post-conflict situations in Bosnia, Kosovo and now Afghanistan. There is no doubt that Iraq, once liberated from the present regime, would require the West to stay, probably at length. To the political and ethnic rifts inIraq, the West definitely has no better political responses than it does in Kosovo. the FYROM or Afghanistan.

Moreover, from a regional point of view, such a massive Western presence in the Upper Gulf would magnify the impact and appeal of Muslim extremism and terrorism. It would freeze still fuel regional competition. This heightened impact would contribute to undermining regimes in the Gulf and the Near East. On the other hand, installing a weak regime in Baghdad and leaving the country would trigger regional competition, call in Muslim extremism and, at the end of the day, require further interventions from the West. The regional context in the Gulf may prove even more difficult than the Western Balkans and Central Asia. The West runs the risk of being overstretched and defeated. This is why an articulated response, in terms of containment, seems better than a military attack.

Other rogue states, such as Iran, are not for the moment being threatened by military attack within the framework of the campaign against global terrorism initiated after September 11th. However, there are similar transatlantic divergences about them. These divergences partly reflect national interests. Partly, however, the different vision presently underlying the Iraq case: the need for case-by-case responses more attuned to circumstances and political contexts.

In sum, the rogue states deserve responses, but they should remain distinct from responses to global terrorism. Most of all, they should be appropriate and well articulated responses, coercive as well as cooperative, military as well as political in character.


**Cooperative responses in a transatlantic perspective**
At the beginning of the first decade of the new millennium, the transatlantic perspective on the Mediterranean and the Middle East looks weakened by significant disagreements. Common concerns relating to trans-Mediterranean regions are emerging.

Still, responses from the two sides of the Atlantic may not be in tune. Nevertheless, despite disagreements and differences, the United States and Europe do not seem on a collision course. On the contrary, cooperation is notable. What is lacking, though, is a strategic understanding, i.e. a common strategic perspective.

This lack of strategic tuning is due to a difference in global and regional perceptions. The same difference affected Euro-American relations when President Reagan launched the war against terrorism in the 1980s. At that time, terrorism was regarded by the United States as a global factor for it objectively (and sometime even subjectively) linked up with the Eastern camp. Today, it is perceived as global because it attacks the global power of the United States and the West as a whole.

As in the 1980s, the Europeans today do not deny the global dimension of the conflict, but they are concerned by the neglect of the regional dimension and, most of all, by the links between the regional and global levels.

In the current situation, what seems to be at stake is precisely the relation between regional and global issues. The difference in Euro-American points of views stems most of all from the Palestinian and Iraqi issues. As far as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is concerned, the United States does not see it as a threat to its national security, which is instead posed by global terrorism. Obviously it concentrates and asks the allies to concentrate on the latter, while trivializing and downgrading the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the need for a peaceful settlement in the Near East. By contrast, the Europeans feel that a peaceful settlement in the Near Eastern region is not only an urgent goal in itself but one linked positively to the global struggle against terrorism.

As far as Iraq is concerned, while there is consensus on the negative role played by Mr. Saddam Hussein's regime in both the regional and global dimensions, the Europeans are afraid that the aftermath of a war on Iraq would prove politically unsustainable and that the war would weaken pro-Western forces in the region.

In both cases, management of the regional dimension could be instrumental in helping undermine or strengthen global terrorism: the re-starting of an Israeli-Palestinian peace process aiming at a two-state solution - not to speak of its success - would strongly undermine global terrorism as well as regional support for Palestinian hardliners. By the same token, refraining from a military attack and, at the same time, building a new stronger containment response towards Iraq would avoid the strengthening of global terrorism and the mistaken Muslim ambition it is nurturing.

Actually, above and beyond ongoing disputes and polemical exchanges, one can discern the first signs of emerging common strategies based on a virtuous combination of global and regional concerns. An authoritative stream of American opinion is trying to convince the administration that what makes the military option in Iraq too risky is the combination of an unmanageable domestic aftermath domestically with a volatile, complex and conflict-laden regional context. The impression, in European as well as American quarters, is that a military attack would be conducted without the necessary allied support, most of all in the region, and could result in the weakening of friends and strengthening of foes. On the contrary, a response to Iraq could be based on a renewed policy of non-military coercion based on strong international and, most of all, regional support. Sanctions have failed and turned into a humanitarian disaster that has backfired on the UN and provided advantages for the Iraqi regime. A more determined and well-conceived action to inspect Iraq could be the start of a new, more fruitful approach. Containment should be based on international arms control rather than economic sanctions.

As far as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is concerned - in European eyes more important than Iraq in fighting global terrorism - the dispute on the policy pointed out by the Rose Garden statement seems to be linked less to the substance of the statement than to rhetoric and emotions. In principle, there is no doubt that mere postponement of diplomatic action to a time when the Palestinian Authority will hopefully be democratized is arbitrary and dangerous. As such it strongly disappointed the Europeans. Still, it can hardly be denied that a change in the structure of the Palestinian leadership is needed. Attempts to set up a united national Palestinian platform conducive to compromise have repeatedly failed; the kind of tactical unity sought by Mr. Arafat cannot be a substitute for it. The democratic restructuring to which the West is currently committed in Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo and Afghanistan, has to be anticipated in Palestine - that is carried out even before a settlement is reached - as a condition making that settlement possible. This restructuring aims at reinforcing moderates (and must be carried out with a view to achieving precisely this aim).

It should be noted that this strategy is already being pursued in the shape of the Task Force on Reform (of the Palestinian National Authority). As a matter of fact, beyond the Rose Garden rhetoric, diplomacy is at work. Transatlantic disputes should be left to the mass media and their theatrics of international relations. The Atlantic nations should concentrate substantive diplomacy on the common endeavor of the Task Force as a means to prepare a breakthrough in the Near East, which would definitely help undermine global terrorism. All in all, the Quartet is a good example of working transatlantic cooperation with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Finally, global and regional challenges relating to the Middle East and Mediterranean, or even the Greater Middle East, must be mainstreamed in the existing cooperative inter-regional frameworks, i.e. the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue and the EMP.

The NATO Mediterranean Dialogue is now seeking to enlarge its mandate by becoming the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue Partnership. It has already incorporated the fight against terrorism among its tasks. In order to fulfill that specific task, it must obtain more cooperation from the Southern Mediterranean countries involved today in the Dialogue and perhaps enlarge its affiliation.

As for the EMP, the question is more complex as it is linked to the EU's efforts to strengthen its CFSP. To do so, the EMP attempted to develop its political and even military relations with its Southern Partners in the 1990s. But objective conditions did not allow the EU to achieve this goal. As a consequence, the EMP is presently in a state of flux. In a transatlantic perspective, what has to be done is to reshape EMP by upgrading and reorganizing its assets, i.e. soft security and economic cooperation.

A renewed EMP, with strong capabilities in the field of regional soft security and economic development would be an important asset in the fight against terrorism. By the same token, an emerging NATO Mediterranean Dialogue Partnership would give substance to political solidarity with the moderate forces of the region and thus greatly help in the struggle against global terrorism.