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OUT-OF-AREA ISSUES: A NEW CHALLENGE TO THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE

by

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In recent years, crisis management outside of the province of the Atlantic Alliance has ceased to be a theoretical and prospective problem. On the contrary, it is very real and topical, with much more complex implications than expected in its political, military and institutional aspects.

The concept of collective security acknowledged and applied within the NATO area has had little bearing on management of peripheral crises. In the absence of a clear institutional context within which to work out political and military responses to threats, protection of common interests has been left to chance or to the good will (and contingent interests) of the parties concerned.

The various forms taken on by external threats (coups d'Etat, territorial fighting, civil wars, terrorism, economic boycotts, etc.) have called for modulated responses and ad hoc measures, and have made it even more difficult to extend the western concept of collective security to the new situations that have emerged in areas other than those of traditional East-West confrontation.

So that each government has given the response that it felt able to give, by means of political, economic and, in some cases, military pressure, according to the circumstances. It is the last, and certainly most controversial aspect, that is of particular interest to us.

In fact, on the practical side, an outcome of that troubled period of huge crises is that some countries have already had instruments for military intervention in the Middle East and, more generally, in crisis areas ready for some years now. The most obvious aspect of these initiatives has been the formation of rapid deployment forces as the "longa manus" of a national will to deal directly with threats to the periphery of the Atlantic Alliance.

The presence of these structures and rapid intervention forces has raised some very specific questions: how to define relations between these instruments and the Atlantic Alliance; when and in what situations to resort to their use; how to coordinate, with partners directly or indirectly involved, the use of these instruments.

These are the basic problems to be dealt with by all countries involved in the out of area problem, but the Europeans are faced with the additional problem of defining the relation between out of area initiatives and pre-existent or "in fieri" European institutions, even only partially competent for this kind of problem: in particular, the EPC (European Political Cooperation) and the WEU (Western European Union).

Out of area: a history which starts with the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty

The history of the interrelations between NATO and out of area is pretty well known. Under Article 6 of the North Atlantic Treaty, the Alliance boundaries are drawn at "the Islands under the jurisdiction of any Party in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer".

In the past war period, the geographical limitation in the North Atlantic Treaty to areas north of the Tropic of Cancer was the result of strong American pressure; the US did not want to be involved in European colonial conflicts. Furthermore, Americans were the "champions" of democracy, freedom and human rights, since they had helped Europe to fight against nazism and fascism. Finally, at that time, America's most evident concern was to confront the emerging power and the threat of the Soviet Union. As Herrero de Minon points out in a recent NATO report, "the line was established, therefore, to mark a distinction between Alliance territory on the one hand, and, on the other, national interests that did not fall automatically within the protection of the Alliance" (1).

Among the first to experiment this American attitude were the Dutch in 1949 with their struggle against the nationalists in Indonesia, followed by the French in Indochina who, in 1952, received only verbal support from their NATO allies. The Suez crisis probably marked the highest point of American opposition towards post-colonial engagements of the European allies. But apart from that well-known example, the French government particularly had complained about American hostility: "French policies in North Africa - as pointed out by Dieter Dettke - is a case where the NATO Treaty ever gives France a legal basis for assistance. Article 6 includes the Algerian Departments of France" (2). And here again the maximum that France got was a declaration of good will and cold backing.

Only at the end of the sixties, with the pending engagements in Vietnam, did the US become less convinced of the opportunity of a strict definition of NATO's borders and tasks. In fact, even before then NATO showed a growing concern for out of area issues. In the 1956 Report of the "Three Wise Men", it was noted that "NATO should not forget that the influence and interests of its members are not confined to the area covered by the Treaty, and that common interests of the Atlantic Community can be seriously affected by developments outside the Treaty area".

The broadening of the scope of the Alliance was also stressed in the Communiqué of the Heads of State or Government in 1957: "our Alliance cannot ... be concerned only with the North Atlantic area or only with military defence. It must also organize its political and economic strength on the principle of interdependence, and must take account of developments outside its own area".

This definition of interdependence was a "prelude" to the famous Harmel Report of December 1967 in which it was recognised that the Alliance's business could not be treated in isolation from the rest of the world and that NATO's countries should contribute within the UN and other international organisations towards the maintenance of international order.

All this declaratory activity did not change the basic, restrictive attitude of NATO's members concerning the out of area issues, but provided the conceptual framework for entering a new era of debate on the role of NATO in a more interdependent world.

In effect, what contributed drastically to the change of climate inside NATO, with regards to the out of area issue, was the Afghanistan crisis at the end of 1979. The Soviet invasion, in addition, followed the downfall of the Shah of Iran and the subsequent Islamic Revolution, therefore contributing

towards accelerating destabilisation in the area. The West was already concerned with its energy dependence on the Middle East and the Gulf by the repeated oil shocks; the increasing closeness of the Soviet Union to the sources of oil supply provided additional elements of trouble. Regional instability was then further intensified with the start of the Iran-Iraq war and the threats of a closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

This combination of events forced the Alliance to devote more attention to the Middle East and to consider what kind of action the Allies might be obliged to take in order to protect their own interests.

Out of Area: a case for a new american Unilateralism?

The new strategic environment which arised around the 80s forced the Atlantic Alliance to open a long debate on the appropriateness of the post-war concept of western security, with particular reference to the out of area issue. The situation which emerged in the Middle East during that period was a perfect example of the complexity of the new kind of threats and challenges that Europeans and Americans had to face. They, in fact, included: a large and unmanageable number of local conflicts; the overlapping of political, economic and military factors in every crisis; the actual risk of reproducing the East-West confrontation in a less controllable context; the intermingling of East-West and North-South interests in a single region.

The Western allies, in addition, were particularly concerned with the possible repercussions on the NATO area of the deployment of US forces in the Gulf region. In May 1981, the Defence Planning Committee (DPC) took the initiative of attempting a definition of the out of area issue.

The first element was a clear recognition of the national role in it: "although the policies which nations adopt outside the NATO area are matter for national decision, the Allies have recognised that situations outside NATO's boundaries may ... threaten the vital interests of the West and therefore have implications for the security of members of the Alliance".

The second concept is that of enlarging NATO consultations to out of area issues, with the aim of starting a process of coordination in the assessment of a threat and its implications and, possibly, to identify common objectives for the West. These consultations are considered particularly important for those nations who are in the practical condition of deploying forces in the out of area and willing to do so, in order to deter aggression and respond to other nations' requests for help. This last recommendation reflects the concept of the "principal nations approach", which became famous in the Four Institutes 1981 Study on NATO (3).

A final, important double concept is the need to consider the effect of such deployment on the Alliance security and defence capabilities. Allies must consult in the appropriate NATO bodies either to maintain out of area deployments in support of the vital interests of all and to maintain the levels and standards of forces necessary for defence and deterrence in the NATO area.

The same Communiqué recognises the prevalent role of the United States in bearing the military responsibility in the out of area, in that it favours a certain already emerging tendency towards what has been called the American global unilateralism.

The above mentioned points have been reconfirmed on several occasions, both at NATO's Committee and ministerial Council level. But the most important elaboration was carried out by the NATO International Military Staff with a

South-West Asia Impact Study in 1983. This study was based on four major considerations: events outside the Treaty area can affect the common interests of the Allies as members of the Alliance; the importance of timely consultations on such events; the maintenance of sufficient military capabilities in the Treaty area to guarantee a credible defence posture; and finally, the need for Allies to facilitate the deployment of forces outside the Treaty area, when they are in a position to do so.

Taking for granted that the US are willing to take up the major responsibility to intervene militarily in the out of area, this has in fact created more trouble than advantages for the European governments. They have to respond to three main questions: first, how to substitute American forces in Europe (that is, to measure the credibility of a conventional defence of Europe with a diminished American presence); secondly, how to logistically support the American effort in the out of area (the use of NATO bases, for example); thirdly, how to coordinate the use of other means (diplomatic and economic) to help the stabilisation of a given situation without being involved in military actions.

Criteria for a coordinated crisis management in the out of area.

In the extreme case in which Europeans and Americans decide to manage a peripheral crisis together, this leads to problems of coordination different from those whereby the Europeans limit themselves to playing the role of spectator. In fact, in the case of a multilateral initiative in the out of area, the directives of the various governments will have to coincide, as well as the general political aims. And all this under the pressure of a situation of international emergency.

Crisis handling calls for the ability to evaluate the threat, the possibility of foreseeing it to some extent and access to the greatest possible number of sources of information. Generally, there is not enough time during a crisis for complete information - a necessary condition for correct action. In fact, the crisis alters response times to an event and increases the difficulty of straightening out errors. Lastly, it causes shifts in the aims that a government or a group of states initially had in the area.

Coordination in crisis management, therefore, requires a series of pre-conditions making possible a positive conclusion:

- the mandate given to a group of states must be clear and sufficiently broad, both in terms of means provided and implementation time;
- in loco operations require very strong political support. Furthermore, it must be continuous and must prevent rapid erosion of consensus;
- an operation must have the support of the threatened host country of the government involved;
- the financial burden of the operation must be well distributed among the allied countries and generous enough to allow for freedom of action and a massive initial action;
- the size of the military force must be commensurate to the type and foreseeable length of the threat;
- the tasks of the (integrated) military commands must be clearly defined and must respond to unambiguous political objectives.

These are only a few of the guiding criteria which would allow for a reasonable response both to unexpected events and, above all, to crisis

situations of a certain importance that seriously jeopardize Western interests in the peripheral area.

Out of area experiences. Lack of coordination among European and American partners.

The difficulty must be understood in applying even the minimum criteria mentioned above in the light of the out of area experiences had up to now in the Mideast.

If we take into consideration some of the rare cases of multilateral cooperation in recent years (for example, the multinational operation in Lebanon), limiting ourselves to the purely operational aspects, it is easy to realize that the major drawbacks to lasting success derive from:

- insufficient forces in the field for the tasks assigned them;
- gradual changes in the political reasons for intervention and the relative tasks assigned;
- paucity of coordination among military commands;
- insufficient exchange of information;
- collapse of the support of the host country;
- lack of clear political instructions.

Almost none of the critera listed above as being necessary for success has been respected. The same kind of reasoning can be extended to more recent cases, such as management of the Achille Lauro affair. The most evident deficiency is the practical impossibility to coordinate effectively out of area (the only exception being the multinational peace-keeping force in the Sinai). Despite attempts made up till now, coordination has escaped any precise regulation and has been almost exclusively left up to the goodwill and interests of the parties in question. Each country personally manages its own special intervention forces on the basis of different criteria, thus making operational integration difficult. On the other hand, in a common out of area action, there is a vital need to create a unified command structure able to function as an integrated and efficient military unit. Efficiency of an operation also calls for a considerable degree of harmony among the various parts, constant and reliable communication and the operational compatibility of the military forces in the field.

The Middle East and the Out of Area Issue.

Experience in recent years in the Middle East, the area in which most crisis situations have cropped up, damaging Western interests and sometimes requiring military (as well as political and economic) responses, has underlined that the West lacks conceptual and practical instruments with which to deal with emergency circumstances with an acceptable degree of cohesion. In fact, the trend that seems to be emerging from this experience, is that of less cooperation the more serious the crisis and the more experience in cooperation grows. From the MFO-Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai, the MNF-Multinational Force in Lebanon, the Task Force for the neutralization of mines in the Red Sea, to the Achille Lauro hijacking (not to speak of the American strike on Libya), the capacity for joint military intervention and application of a homogeneous security concept has rapidly diminished.

This factor implies a deep reconsideration of the ways in which Western allies deal with regional security issues. As past experience has taught us, the major focus in the debate among allies for the next years will remain the strategic situation in the Middle East and the use of force to match the threats arising there. Our analysis, therefore, will limit itself to these aspects, the Middle East and the recourse to military means, with the objective of describing not only their availability and credibility, but also the limits and alternatives to their use.

In order to carry out this analysis, and due to the complexity of the issue, we have decided to touch on various points, directly or indirectly linked to it.

The first one is that of attempting, by means of a fresh analysis of the Middle Eastern environment, to draw a picture of the level of conflicts in the Middle East, with particular reference to political interactions and the factors underlying them; the ways in which they threaten Western interests; the interplay of changing alliances on the stability of the area and the types of threats more likely to arise in the future (see Cottam's chapter on "Levels of Conflict in the Middle East").

A second task is that of reviewing the incentives and constraints on the use of force, adapted to the circumstances in the Middle East. But more importantly, it makes the point of the Western military capability and of the forces available for deployment to the Middle East. Particular attention is paid to the latter forces of US, Italy, France, Great Britain and Turkey and to their balance both in that area and in Western Europe (see the chapter by Cordesman on "The Uses of Force in the Middle East").

Another study deals with the national positions on the Out of Area question, describing the attitudes of the principal governments concerned, their views with respect to the circumstances under which force should be used, and the types of responses which seem appropriate to the various types of threats (see the chapter by Cremasco on "Do It Yourself: The National Approach to the Out-of-Area Question").

The public perspectives on threats to security arising from the Middle East is another important question. It is, in fact, a decisive element for Western governmets to know how public opinion and political elites would react to the use of force (see Rummel's chapter on "Political Perspective and Military Responses to Out-of-Area Challenges").

Finally, any Western initiative in the Out of Area needs a certain level of coordination between Europeans and Americans at the various possible levels, military, political and economic. This implies an overview of the direct or indirect role played by existing organizations such as NATO, Western European Union, European Political Cooperation and ECC in the formulation of responses to threats from the Middle East and of ad hoc instruments for coordinating policy and directing operations in the area (see Edwards' chapter on "Multilateral Coordination of Out-of-Area Activities").

All this effort is meant to help us in trying to define the Western interests in the Middle East, the possible ways of combining them together for common actions and the prescription for the future drawn by the lesons from the past. More particularly, what is relevant to us (and this is reflected in the last chapter on "Conclusions and Recommendations) is to be able to judge about the effect of Western military actions in the Middle East both on the Atlantic Alliance and, more generally, on the Western cohesion. In fact, one of the less clear points concerning Out of Area is the role, direct or indirect, that NATO can play and the way in which Europeans and Americans perceive it.

Possible Threats and military Response.

One of the main difficulties encountered in management of crises in the Middle East is the almost impossibility of defining the nature of the threat. In fact, both with regard to extension (global, regional or local) and with regard to implications (economic, politial or military), the critical criteria and perceptions of Western governments are profoundly different. The web of political, religious, nationalistic, irredentist and economic factors relative to the Middle Eastern situation is such as to render problematic both identification of the threat and, naturally, formulation of an appropriate response (see the chapter by Cottam).

Application of labels such as "high intensity threat" or "low intensity threat" is rather risky and response to crises may well depend on other circumstances such as the urgency of the problem to be solved, the national perception of it or the concrete possibility of reaching a positive result. In other words, the decision to resort to a military solution does not necessarily depend on extension of the problem (for example, global) nor on its meaning (for example, military), but rather on the national perception of a vital interest to be defended or the conviction of being in possession of the means to rapidly solve the problem unilaterally.

Therefore, analysis of concrete intervention possibilities in the Middle East is complicated by various factors and circumstances that are difficult to classify in a very rigid manner.

Furthermore, it must also be observed that, even if threat perception was homogeneous on several occasions, choice of instruments for intervention was not. Therefore, it does not follow that similar perceptions result in the same kind of reaction on the part of the countries in question.

Finally, one of the reasons that can lead to the decision to resort to the use of the military instrument seems closely linked to the interrelationship between the scope of the military instrument available and foreseeable political effects. In other words, the use of force is closely tied to the predictions of the possible success of the operation. The use of limited forces, on the other hand, does not achieve significant political results, unless both the objective itself and the time of intervention are limited.

First of all, one must have a rather precise idea of the military forces being fielded and the concrete possibilities of their integration (see Cordesmann's chapter).

Of all Western countries, only the United States, France, Great Britain, Italy and Turkey have set up rapid intervention forces or have used the military instrument for actions in the Middle East. Other countries have served for support or indirect intervention in the area.

Among other things, this military capacity has, in recent history, been used in different ways, depending on the kind of conflict situation (4):

- law and order enforcement operations;
- dissuasion operations;
- multilateral and multinational buffer operations;
- coercion operations;
- anti-terrorist operations.

There is nothing to rule out that the range of actions may increase and diversify in extent and roles in the future. But it is clear that intervention

forces must be appropriately dimensioned. Factors such as rapidity, mobility and surprise may not be sufficient to face more extensive crises.

Moreover, on the basis of the peace-keeping experience accumulated up until now, it can be said that the use of force can, within the bounds and in the forms employed to date, give negative results in the long run. The fundamental problem is that actions of that kind have strong political motivations and since the political reasons behind the use of force are liable to change with time and with the development of the situation, the military instrument can prove inadequate or even counter-productive at a certain point in solving the crisis.

The role of Western governments and political factors in out of area actions.

Naturally, the problem of organizational coordination cannot be explained without referring to the political context which made it possible. Behind the practical problems implicit in an out of area action, there is the question of the political factors conditioning it.

These factors work at three levels:

A. National
B. Multilateral
C. Institutionalized international.

A. The national context. It is obvious that the will of a nation to take on a problem outside of the NATO area is required to give rise to an action. In the four Institutes' report on Western security mention is made of a "Principal National Approach", meaning that only those nations in a position to take on the political and military risk of a specific action can be taken into consideration (5). Past experience indicates that, at least for the Middle East, the main actors are the USA, the UK, France, Italy and to a lesser extent Turkey. It would be interesting to study what kind of role neighbouring countries such as Greece and Spain can plan and to study the limits of the "rearguard" role assumed by the German Federal Republic which has sometimes (in the fight against terrorism) stepped into the forefront.

However, the fact that decisions concerning out of area matters are taken mainly in the national sphere points to the difficulties that coordination of an action of this kind may encounter. Each government bases its policy on strictly national strategic and military security considerations and its reactions to external threats are dictated by defence of individual rather than common interests. This make both the means and the modalities of out of area intervention hardly comparable (see Cremasco's chapter).

B. The multilateral factor. Despite objective difficulties in surpassing the national level, there is a kind of conditioned reflex in favour of and some political convenience in undertaking certain actions in a multilateral context (see Cremasco's chapter). This is true, above all, for operations with strong popular backing such as buffer forces or peace-keeping forces in crisis areas. Cooperation becomes more difficult in strictly military actions or in the case of incidents due to terrorist acts.

Nevertheless, even in the event of political consensus to pursue a common end, cooperation among countries can deteriorate. The principal factors determining the survival (or breaking-up) of consensus are the following:

- length in time of the operation. The longer it is, the more difficult cooperation becomes;

- stability of the causes requiring the action; if they change, the interests in collaboration vanishes;
- a constant cost/benefits ratio for each party concerned;
- achievement of a few concrete successes in terms of field operations.

Obviously, calculations relative to multilateral cooperation also depend on the sharing of some fundamental ideological values and the concrete possibility of agreeing on political strategies with regard to specific problems. But these factors generally play a role in the initial phases and are later overcome by the concrete effects of the action being carried out.

C. The institutionalized international factor. The role of international institutions and agencies to which countries interested in the out of area action belong in decision-making is much more ambigious. NATO, lacking authority n the area, European Political Cooperation (EPC), lacking authority in the matter (politico-military and security) and the Western European Union (WEU), lacking any real power and means, are essentially additional political covers for out of area intervention (see Edwards' chapter).

Nevertheless, they can, at least indirectly, be operationally involved in actions:

- for NATO, the main problem is use of its bases for operations; subordinately it could hypothetically also offer information and communications support;
- for the EPC, the main supportive instrument is constituted by common declarations; nevertheless, in the past, economic instruments have sometimes been resorted to (sanctions, for example) in support of actions independently carried out by an EEC member state.

In general, therefore, the problem of political coordination of these three factors represents a conditioning element for all out of area actions. Without it, integrated actions at a political-operational level among responsible nations is inconceivable.

Public Opinion and out of area military actions.

Besides the role of the government and, more generally, that of common interest at a national level, there is another all-important element and that is, public opinion. In Western democratic societies, public opinion often plays a decisive role in sectors such as foreign policy which traditionally escaped its control. Governments can deal with crisis situations even without widespread consensus, but that is true only in very exceptional cases of extreme danger.

Political, parliamentary and party elites are actually much more sensitive to the mood of public opinion. In justifying the decision to take actions outside of national territory, government explanations must be particularly convincing. From experience acquired in the past, some motivations which can create initial consensus become evident (6):

- defence of a violated national interest;
- risk of serious negative effects on the national economy and society;
- the desire to foster a pacification process;
- assistance to a friendly government in a very dangerous situation;
- defence of a fundamental ideological value of liberty and democracy.

Naturally, and above all, when defence of concrete national interests is invoked, the political motivations of each country involved may diverge radically and not find many points of intersection allowing for actual coordination among partners, either at a political or at an operational level.

Common action is easier when it comes to defending a more abstract interest, such as pacification, defence of the weak or the restoration of democracy and liberty.

But in the latter case, much more so than in the former, the factors of time, danger and financial burden or the operation take on importance. A positive initial attitude in public opinion can rapidly turn into open hostility to actions which cause death in the family or to the perception of failure. Even if governments can influence public opinion with new arguments, resistance to strong pressure exerted by citizens and the mass media diminishes with time.

Finally, perception of interests and risks in the out of area vary greatly from country to country, depending on the culture, the ties with the Third World and other factors peculiar to each society. Especially between Europeans and Americans, there is the risk that perceptions are almost never the same (see Rummel's chapter).

American and European Interests at Stake. The Emerging Concept of European Security

In the process of the definition of an update concept of collective security in the out of area, one of the basic elements is clearly constituted by the convergence of Western interests. The Middle East particularly, has proved to be a hard point for combining American and European interests in a homogeneous way. Under this aspect, the history of the Alliance in the Middle East is not a successful history. The many episodes of these last years have stressed the divergences more than the cooperation between the two sides of the Atlantic.

The same concept of European security, which has started to emerge, is largely based on a growing divergence of interests with the US (7). Furthermore, the Middle East is also particularly relevant for the US because of the complex nature of interests. The first element of this complexity is due to the growing closeness of the Soviet Union, after the invasion of Afghanistan, to the vital Western strategic energy sources. But apart from this aspect of the East-West confrontation in the region, other elements are relevant to the US presence. Among others, the strategic linkage with Israel, the variety of economic interests, the importance of some channels and straits, the need to maintain some stability in the key countries (like Egypt and Saudi Arabia), the challenge to western values of Islamic fundamentalism, etc.

Most of this concern is shared by the European allies. Nevertheless, they increasingly feel the need for a more autonomous presence, based on a different political and strategic perception of the threat and on a more frequent use of economic and diplomatic means for stabilising the region.

More in general, the difficult cooperation between Europeans and Americans in the Middle East is just one aspect of the widening gap between the two sides of the Atlantic. The main reason lies in the European attempt to introduce a more independent concept of security.

It is in itself evident that security concerns have increasingly become, among other issues, one of the top priorities for European governments. What is

far less clear is the European willingness and capability both to transform that issue into a homogeneous and actual security policy and to set up a credible common mechanism to deal with it.

As far as growing European interest in security issues is concerned, some of the major reasons have already been pointed out several times: long-lasting divergences with the US, affecting the whole range of common policies (economic, monetary, military, international, etc.); a parallel, subsequent and growing perception of a European "specificity" in the solution to be given to international crises and problems (post-detente, M.E., Central America, Eureka vs. Sdi, etc.).

It is mainly in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East that Europeans and Americans have come up against the greatest obstacle to coordinating a common action. The very first signs of this reluctance go back to 1973, to the time of the oil crisis and the start of the difficult but meaningful Euro-Arab dialogue.

Distances between the allies have grown with the Venice Declaration and following initiatives in the Middle East. The same four European countries' participation in the Sinai peacekeeping force, in support of the American presence, has been publicly kept separated from the Camp David peace process (8). More generally, Europeans have tried: to underline their own vocation for an autonomous role in the area; to avoid any overlapping between the concept of East-West confrontation, in which NATO has strict competence, and other questions, both global or regional, having at least an open chance for alternative interpretation in terms of threats and possible responses to be given.

From a strategic viewpoint, Europeans have therefore enlarged their concerns from the Central Front and Eastern Threat to other neighbouring areas, like the M.E. and the Persian Gulf. Under the pressure of the growing number of crises arising in those regions, some European countries have adapted both their military doctrines and army structure. In addition to that, Europeans do not neglect to deal with local conflicts in other parts of the world like, for example, Central America or the Falkland Islands, sometimes taking a distance from the solutions proposed by their American ally.

The emerging European tendency to deal with issues clearly outside NATO's competence area has been underlined in some European Parliament reports, namely the 1981 Diligent Report on the protection of maritime lines of communication in the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf and the 1982 Haagerup Report on European security policy (9). In this last report Haagerup points out that the relations between the European Community and several Third World countries are usually considered of a political and economic nature; this does not mean that they cannot affect strategic and even military interests, particularly when one considers Europe's dependence in the field of raw materials.

In Haagerup's judgement, it would be wrong to deny a strategic role to the European Community, even if not supported by military means, due to the great commercial and economic importance that it holds in the world. In addition - he continues - single member states are free to act in the military field and launch military actions; a case in point is the initiatives taken by France in Africa or Great Britain in the Falklands. Those initiatives do not require previous approval by the other EC partners. A further proof of some European countries' willingness to use military means with the aim of preventing conflicts has been their participation in some peace forces in Cyprus, the M.E. and Beirut.

But the real questions still remain that of the availability of national military forces for operations in the Middle East and of their credibility in terms of effectiveness as pointed out in Cordesmann's chapter.

Scenarios and possible consequences on Western cohesion.

Scenarios that can be envisaged for the future are mainly based on past experiences and current developments in the Middle East (see chapters by Cottam and Cordesmann). It is evident that their validity is largely subject to the precariousness and the variety of elements involved. If the criteria for selecting them are the implications on European and American cohesion and their probability, then it seems clear that the number of cases to be considered is rather high. Experience in recent years from buffer actions between rival parties to the neutralization of mines in the Red Sea, from the fight against terrorism to protection of oil-routes, shows that the number of possible scenarios is infinite. Among other things, all these actions affect European-American cohesion and all are highly probable.

One further criterion the impact on the Atlantic Alliance's military structure, can obviously make for greater selectivity in that it refers to events of greater breadth such as the fall of a friendly regime (Egypt, Saudi Arabia) or the outbreak of a new conflict between Israel and the Arab states, in which Western collective interests are directly threatened.

However, this last limitation may weaken a forecast of Western allies' behaviour while there are good possibilities of analyzing and understanding it in the so-called minor cases, where handling of crisis situations is less risky but certainly rich in information and lessons.

European-American cohesion, with its inevitable effects on the image and the essence of cohesion within NATO, is and will remain the central problem of all out of area actions, even so-called minor ones.

Furthermore, present experience points to the complexity of cohesion and cooperation among European states, both in the various seats of political (EPC) and military (WEU) mediation and outside of them, multilaterally. To this must be added the growing differences in approach between the Americans and the Europeans with regard to the use of political and economic instruments rather than military ones in out of area crises. Concepts such as civilian power rather than military power are much more popular in Europe than in the United States.

It is therefore opportune to start with an analysis of a wide range of low intensity actions to then move to forecast of a high intensity event (in the pure sense of the extension and importance of Mideast conflicts rather than according to national perceptions). Thus, it will be possible to more correctly identify military, political and organizational factors needed to give an integrated out of area action credibility while avoiding negative effects in Europe and overseas.

For this reason our choice has fallen on three prototype scenarios. At the beginning of our research project they were four, including an American strike on Libya in retaliation of some terroristic activity ...; the events have progressed too quickly, so that we have been obliged to shift that scenario into a case study. The remaining three are: an internal strife in a Middle Eastern country of crucial importance for the west, a local conflict having a major impact on the regional balance and, finally, an Israeli-Syrian clash with the direct involvement of the superpowers. We warmly hope that these will

remain theoretical scenarios and that our guess on the Libyan affair will be an isolated one. Our general aim is, in fact, that of underlining the necessity of using extensively diplomatic, political and economic means to avoid the unpredictable high risk of basing western response on purely military intervention, in the light of the many difficulties encountered in the past; or, if strictly needed, at least to determine a certain rationale to the use of force.

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