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SOUTHERN EUROPE AND THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE  
by Roberto Aliboni

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In order to evaluate Southern Europe's role with respect to the organization of Western security, two related and interacting dimensions must be examined: a) the East-West dimension, b) the out of NATO area dimension.

a) The global and Western dimensions

Recent developments in US-USSR relations and the reorganization of European security called for by the Treaty of Washington eliminating intermediate and shorter range weapons, creates two interconnected problems for Europeans: a) the continuity of deterrence in the framework of cohesion between the US and Western Europe and b) the role of the "European pillar" in maintaining the continuity and the cohesion. The reactions of European countries and in particular, those of Southern Europe, to these problems have been varied. With the removal of American F-16s from its soil, Spain has shown that it does not intend to detour from its plans for military disengagement, which the Gonzales government promised the electorate in return for continued membership in NATO. Madrid thereby confirms its tendency to understand NATO more as a factor in its integration in the West than as a factor in its security. France is now drawing closer to NATO and seems to be particularly interested in relaunching and strengthening the "European pillar", by relaunching with Bonn the proposal of a common European defence and its institutions. The Italian government, on the other hand, has viewed this French initiative with suspicion, fearing that it may lead to the creation of a Franco-Anglo-German directorate from which Rome could be excluded. It has, therefore, supported strengthening the "European pillar" in a more traditional sense, that is, through a greater military contribution to the Alliance, confirming the pre-eminence of American leadership and denying support to the Franco-German proposal for a relaunching of European defence.

All this has to do with Western European security in general. What is so specifically Southern European about it? The Southern European specificity lies in the fact that while the countries in question work out and implement their security policies with an eye to the East-West picture and relations with the United States, in actual fact, their policies take into consideration and are conditioned by an anything but negligible Mediterranean - or more generally, Southern - dimension. Spain is conditioned by the priority of the threat from the "South" in the framework of its security perceptions. Italy, with its White Paper published by the Ministry of Defence in 1985, has started a fundamental

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reassessment of its military policy, which calls for the acquisition of a "Mediterranean" military capability in addition to its traditional capability directed at the right flank of Europe's central front. Finally, as far as France is concerned, its activities are certainly centered around its relation with the German Federal Republic. However, French policy is completed by proposals for military collaboration in the Mediterranean to Spain and Italy, which these two countries have accepted.

b) The out-of-area dimension

There are two dimensions to Western European countries' ever more frequent interventions in the out of NATO area. First, the geopolitical dimension justifying intervention on the basis of threats to national security interests. Second, there is a dimension which might be called "Transatlantic". Within this dimension, European countries intervene in relation to threats which they may not necessarily consider as such, but which the United States does. Thus, the "Transatlantic" dimension justifies intervention on the basis of the European countries' interest in supporting the US, in that it is a fundamental factor in their security in Europe, regardless of their opinion of the threat. As is obvious, and as was seen in the last years very serious conflicts can arise in this dimension.

Another but no less important aspect of out of area intervention concerns the specific organization of European allies. The European countries' recognition of their common economic interests and the resulting institutionalization in the framework of the European Community has made it possible to define common objectives in this area and to organize Community policies, agreements and institutions, which have certainly had considerable impact. The absence of a common security concept and common defence institutions, along with the institutional weakness of European Political Cooperation, has resulted in the fact that an analogous politico-military Community presence in the out of area sphere has ever been developed. Whenever it has occurred, the joint presence of European countries in the out of NATO area has been a multinational presence, not based on European solidarity. One important consequence of the lack of European political integration is the European countries' weakness in negotiating American requests and motivations in the "Transatlantic" dimension of out of NATO area intervention.

Southern European countries have a specific role to play with respect to these problems. They can affect the "Transatlantic", as well as the European dimension either positively or negatively.

Southern European countries lie on the border of the out of NATO area. Although the nature of their economic and political interests is not substantially different from those of Northern European countries, their security perceptions, their historical and cultural ties and sometimes even their economic and business interests are different and more intense than those of non-borderline allies. This situation makes them particularly exposed to the conflicts implicit in the "Transatlantic" dimension. Wherever the institutional framework of the Alliance is lacking, such as in out of area operations, bilateral relations end up prevailing between the United States and her European allies. It is no coincidence that these bilateral relations, which parallel multilateral ones, are more important between the US and Southern

European countries. Taken individually, the countries in the south of Europe are objectively weak with respect to the US. In the discussions or controversies which arise time and again in relations between the two parties, the Southern European nations try to find compensation in anti-American rhetoric or the price of bases, but in the end, they do not prevent the United States from pursuing policies which would have to be negotiated on totally different grounds in a multilateral context or the framework of the "European pillar". The hijacking of the "Achille Lauro" liner and the events that followed at the Sigonella base provide a clear lesson in this sense. Therefore, the positive role which can be expected from Southern European countries is a contribution towards strengthening of the procedures of Atlantic consultations, or both. On the other hand, the contribution could be negative if strictly national interests were to prevail in the countries of Southern Europe. A higher profile for Southern European countries could have either a positive or a negative effect on the allied position with regard to the out of area question and, therefore, a positive or negative effect on the West's stance in relation to the global transformations it is about to face.

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The question concerning NATO's southern flank is not new. What is new is its territorial expansion, the higher profile of the countries lying along it, its greater importance in their military policies and security perceptions. What is new is also the growing importance of the "out-of-area" presence. This means that the integration of southern flank policy with general Alliance policy and, more generally, with Western European and Western security policy, is becoming both more urgent and more delicate. The major problems are: a) one of political balance among the countries of the southern flank, some of which suspect hegemonic or directorial drives behind the proposals and the undertakings of the others; collaboration on the southern flank must not be allowed to fragment to the bilateral or trilateral level, and must be rechanneled into the multilateral arena, which is also more reassuring with respect to political risks and national susceptibilities; b) secondly, one of coordinating the problems of the southern flank in the multilateral framework of the entire Alliance and the entire European Community, without interpreting different dimensions of the same problem as alternative and mutually exclusive; the Mediterranean dimension and the European dimension are two aspects of a single security problem; c) thirdly, one of coordinating the growth of the political and military autonomy of the "European pillar" with the political and military cohesion between Western Europe - in particular, the European Community - and the United States. In synthesis, the problem is to encourage Southern Europe to take on a higher profile which is both coherent and integrated into existing European and Atlantic institutions.

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