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POLITICS OF MEDITERRANEAN SECURITY AND PROSPECTS FOR NAVAL ARMS CONTROL

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Paper prepared for the conference
"Naval Arms Control and Maritime Security in the Mediterranean"
Rome, 7-8 May 1992

IAI9205

ISTITUTO AFFARI INTERNAZIONALI

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Foreword

The aim of this paper is to consider whether political conditions in the Mediterranean region favor, hinder or oppose naval arms control in the region. To this end, the paper analyzes first region-wide cooperative and conflictual trends, and then specific political dynamics at work in the various subregions. In both perspectives - corresponding to Part One and Two of this paper- a general political overview is followed by an assessment of the deriving incentives and disincentives for naval arms control.

Unless otherwise specified , throughout this paper the term 'naval arms control' is considered in its broad meaning[1], encompassing measures as different as structural reductions and information exchange. The main reason for this choice, that may sometime confuse or irritate military experts, is that from a political point of view the existence or absence of an arms control process is as important as its actual content.

Moreover, since at the time of writing no proposals for naval arms control are concretely under discussion, a political analysis can only be construed in the general terms described at beginning of this foreword.

Nevertheless, the potential political implications of different categories of naval arms control in Mediterranean are analyzed in Part Three of this paper.

A summary of the conclusions reached in the various sections is presented in the conclusions.

1. Region-wide interests and tensions and naval arms control

1.1 East-West

The politico-military confrontation between NATO and the WPT has dominated for decades international security. The end of this confrontation materialized between the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991 has removed its worldwide effects. As a consequence, the strategic and military picture of the Mediterranean has also changed.

In the Mediterranean region however changes have been somehow less dramatic than in Central Europe, since a plurality of interests and conflicts other the East-West had emerged long before the end of the Cold War.

As it is argued in the following section, the strategic significance and the

[1] A working definition of naval arms control and its categories is offered by Fieldhouse, in Fieldhause, 1990, pp. 4-8.

political realities of the Mediterranean have been strongly affected, but no fundamentally altered by the end of the East-West competition.

The disappearance of the USSR, has nevertheless completely changed the military correlation of forces in the region. In the naval field, while the Soviet presence was never a real counterbalance to the West, its existence and correlation to ground and air forces has always been the focus of all Western reasoning on the prospects for naval arms control.

The evaporation of the East-West frame of reference, brought about by the dissolution first of the Warsaw Pact and then of the Soviet Union, seem to make nil and void most of the speculations about supposed advantages and disadvantages for the US and NATO if they were to engage in some form of structural naval arms control.

However, there are reasons to argue in favor of some measures of naval arms control exactly because of the new East-West security environment. Indeed, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the harsh competition aroused between Russia and Ukraine for the control of the ex-Soviet fleet could evolve in the sense of a less secure maritime environment.

Politically, it would therefore make much sense to integrate Russia and the Black Sea states in the negotiation of a regime of naval CBMs, possibly in the CSCE or CSCM framework, covering the sea areas 'adjoining' to Europe.

While it could be difficult or premature for the West, given the present political uncertainties, to engage in new arms control initiatives with the successor states of the Soviet Union, such a multilateral approach would take stock of the new Mediterranean strategic picture, in which 'traditional' Southern and new Eastern instabilities present the West with increasingly common features.

This approach would permit the inclusion of the new Balkans states as well, thus recognizing the security continuum now emerged between the Northern and Southern parts of eastern Mediterranean.

1.2 Intra-West

As of mid 1992, uncertainty continues to characterize most of the new Western security agenda and institutions, and provides a strong, although generic, psychological disincentive for any new arms control initiative likely to constrain Western military assets, which -it is widely believed- are and will be increasingly needed to manage the transition. In the maritime field, this adds a new powerful rationale to the traditional Western hostility to naval arms control, global and regional alike[2].

In fact, the new strategic environment does not seem to decrease the global importance of some broad Western maritime interests: to maintain the freedom of navigation in the high seas in peace time and the ability to achieve and maintain sea control in a crisis or war situation.

Some argue that the new post Cold war and post-nuclear Western security environment does increase the strategic value of naval missions[3]. Indeed, it seems to reinforce the US drive for global defence planning and NATO as well as US

[2] For the history and rationales of US and NATO opposition to naval arms control see Carnovale, 1992.
[3] Eberle, 1990, pp. 327-329; Grove, 1990, p. 15 and 87.

restructuring towards mobile force projection, shifting away for political as well economic reasons from the traditional forward basing strategy.

As for the Europeans, while in the future they could be interested in developing a global role and reach, they are from now interested in maintaining NATO ability to perform and protect transatlantic seaborne reinforcement as well as national and multinational force projection capabilities in what are likely to remain the out-of-area regions.

Looking from a global Western strategic perspective, the rationale for naval arms control seem therefore weak or non existent. Does this analysis change substantially when the question is approached from a Mediterranean regional perspective? The answer requires some elaboration.

First of all, what is the Mediterranean strategic significance in the 1990s?

In the Eighties, with the attenuation of the traditional Soviet threat in Europe, the Mediterranean lost its role as Southern Flank of NATO and became the borderline between the Euro-American Alliance and the security risks, still perceived mainly in East-West terms, emanating from the "arc of crises" extending from Afghanistan across the Horn of Africa to Morocco.

In 1991, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Gulf war completed the process of transformation of the strategic significance of Mediterranean region, making clear that if the arc of crises has extended northward to include the Balkans and the territories of the former Soviet Union, the Middle East retains its centrality in Western security policies because of its command of oil.

Therefore, in the new Western security agenda the Mediterranean is today the 'rear' to two areas of global concern, the former-USSR and the Arab-Persian Gulf. A role was clearly performed during the Gulf war when the vast majority of coalition forces passed through the Mediterranean, which also provided the backbone of the Western intelligence gathering system[4].

While the global, although ancillary, strategic 'rear' role of the Mediterranean is not under discussion, it is far from clear which Western security institution will manage this role and how. In fact the Mediterranean is only an element of the wide ranging intra-West discussion about the instruments needed for security management in the new, enlarged arc of crises; this debate is in turn only a part of the global reassessment of the Western global security agenda and of the resulting new roles for global and regional security institutions: the UN, NATO, CSCE, EC and WEU.

One of the difficulties of this Euro-American debate lies in the fact that these institutions, as well as the Mediterranean region itself, have a dual significance: global and regional. Various formulas have been suggested through catchwords like "interlocking institutions" or "concentrating circles", to conceptualize the need for institutional flexibility in the new Western security environment. However, from a political as well operational point of view, there are limits to the interchangeability of the different institutional frameworks managing security in the Mediterranean region; the main limit being the persisting differences in Euro-American and intra-European security concerns in the Mediterranean.

These differences are the result of a reality[5]: if the new arc of crises constitute

[4] NATO Airborne Early-Warning aircraft began operating from Trapani (Sicily, Italy) and Preveza (Ionian Sea, Greece) (Howe, 1991, p. 250).

[5] This concept is developed in Aliboni, 1992.

a continuum in broad security terms because of some important common characters in the sources and modalities of Eastern as well Southern instability, nevertheless the 'arc' covers different realities that have autonomous roots and dynamics and, more importantly, affect to different degrees the interests of the various Western partners.

In the Mediterranean context, only the crises affecting the former USSR -and, to a lesser extent Central Europe- or the Middle East have a global impact on Western security, while those of the Balkans, the Maghreb or the Horn of Africa remain of purely regional or local concern.

With an oversimplification, it can be said that the US have no interest in being involved purely regional crisis in the Mediterranean (as shown, for instance, by the different reactions in the Yugoslav and Libyan cases); Balkan crises are of pan-European concern only insofar they affect Central Europe (and therefore Albania or Macedonia do not attract much European interest); finally, the Maghreb is of primary concern only for the Southern members of the EC.

It follows from all the above arguments that, in spite of sweeping international changes, the Mediterranean maintains some of its traditional strategic features: homogeneous from a global perspective, it is highly fragmented from a regional and subregional point of view.

The fragmentation and hierarchization of the political interests as well as institutional frameworks that coexist in the Mediterranean, would seem to militate against new regional arms control initiatives: there is no single negotiating framework nor clear counterpart to the West, and it is unclear whether measures that could be beneficial in some context would not hinder other global or local Western security interests.

There is however an important element that 'glues' together the entire Mediterranean area as well as its global and regional strategic significance. As hinted above, the new arc of crises constitutes a security continuum because the sources of instability are of a predominantly politico-economic nature: everywhere from Western Sahara to Azerbaijan nationalism, confessionalism, poor economic performances and weakness of the state are the fuel of local conflicts.

This requires Western security policies to be based mainly on non military means: in a broader security perspective, Western economic as well political cooperation have much more bearing than power projections capabilities in preventing risks emanating form the new arc of crisis from becoming threats and conflicts.

However, in spite of all internal debates and limitations, the military instrument is in the Mediterranean the only crisis management instrument which is ready to use, posses a clear governing body (NATO or national) and can be used as a pan-Western instrument.

This is of relative importance vis-à-vis crises and instability emanating from the former Communist world, since pan-Western cooperative policies towards those regions have already been developed and are managed by various 'civilian' Western institutions that are integrating the former Communist countries: the G-Seven Group, CSCE, EC, NATO North Atlantic Cooperation Council. Instead, no institution integrate Northern and Southern countries of in the Mediterranean and cooperative policies are left with the EC that has no authority or means in the security field.

As a consequence, NATO is by default the only pan-Western institution in

charge of security in the Mediterranean and the military component is over represented in the Western security policies towards the Mediterranean arc of crises.

This state of affairs is already having negative effects towards the South, whose instability and anti-Western suspicions would be greatly alleviated if Western preparations for military management of crisis in the South were counterbalanced and integrated with the strengthening of all kind of Western cooperative policies, including military confidence building measures in the maritime field.

Apart from incentives deriving from the North-South context, there is yet another reason why regional naval arms control could serve Western security interests.

If the post-nuclear strategy revision increases the importance of naval roles, the reduction of US forces in Europe decrease the Alliance's ability to perform these roles in the Mediterranean. This new situation calls for the development of European naval capabilities, hopefully in cooperation with the US, that would serve NATO, European and national interests alike.

The strengthening of European naval capabilities is already in the making as a part of the global post-cold war restructuring of Western forces, in particular as a result of the increased attention to the Southern dimension of European security. However, the modernization and development programs of European navies are generally contrasted by the overall growing constrains over national defense budgets, a reality stressing the point that the modernization of European military forces can be done only on a pan-European scale to be cost effective[6].

At the operational level, Southern European navies, namely those of Italy, France and Spain, are already coordinating through a network of 'multi-bilateral' cooperation schemes that include joint exercises, joint procurement and exchanges of satellite information[7]. The political meaning of this developments is ambivalent: increased European readiness and cooperation at sea strengthen NATO capabilities in the Mediterranean, but could also be used for action outside the Alliance framework independently from the American ally.

Meanwhile the US are pursuing their traditional policy of trying to keep the growth of European military capabilities within NATO and after the Gulf work have supported the creation of a NATO standing naval force finally realized in April 1992. Confirming the potential for contradictions between the European and US attitude, France and Spain are not contributing to the new NATO force.

The solution to the present intra-West contradictions towards security and namely naval policy in the Mediterranean depends to a great extent from broader political developments in the Euro-American alliance. However, it can be argued that the rationality and transparency of the present development of Western naval policies in the Mediterranean would be enhanced by the establishment of some measures of common maritime security in the Mediterranean that would rationalize in a cooperative direction the maritime regional environment. Politically, the task of negotiating these measures with their Southern counterparts in the Mediterranean would help the Western allies to contain their own divergences.

Seen in this perspective, naval arms control in the Mediterranean would not contradict Western interest in maintaining and increasing naval capabilities, while

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[6] For an analysis of requirements and existing efforts see Grove, 1990, pp. 55-56.

[7] For more details see Aliboni, 1992 (2) and the sources cited there; Greco, 1991.

contemporarily contribute to defuse looming North-South confrontations.

1.3. The North-South Divide

The existence of a North-South divide cutting across the Mediterranean region is confirmed by all economic and socio-cultural indicators. Because of the multiple economic, political, strategic and cultural problems it poses, the North-South divide is definitely the most serious and pervasive factor of fragmentation and instability of the entire Mediterranean region.

This section does not deal with specific North-South open or potential conflicts in the Mediterranean; it tries instead to describe the general background to Northern and Southern political attitudes to security in the Mediterranean and its potential consequences for naval arms control.

1.3.1 The South

When thinking of the South or Third World in the Mediterranean context, one has to keep in mind that it is almost entirely represented by Arab countries. In fact, Malta, Cyprus and Turkey are more often than not considered part of Europe (most noticeably in the CSCE framework), making Israel the only non Arab country of the group.

Even enlarging the scope of the definition to include the adjoining seas (the Red Sea and the Gulf) the member countries remain mostly Arab, with the only exception of Iran and Ethiopia. It is therefore largely justified that, speaking of the South of the Mediterranean in general terms, one considers Arab attitudes as representative of the of the South in the Mediterranean.

In recent history, confrontation and cooperation have always coexisted in the attitudes of the countries of the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean vis-à-vis the developed North of the world in general and the West and Western Europe in particular.

After decades dominated by nonalignment, 'positive neutralism', the search for a 'New International Economic Order', and all out opportunistic manipulation of bipolarism, the cooperative mode now seems to prevail in the Southern perspective.

In the Mediterranean context the weakening of 'Third Worldism' preceded the decline of Communism and coincided with an accentuation of the politico-economic crisis of the Southern Mediterranean countries, which reinforced the traditional drive for closer economic and political integration with Western Europe[8].

At the same time, suspicion and resentment against Western economic, political and cultural dominance remain an important streak in the political culture of the countries of the South. Condemnation of the evils of 'neo-colonialism' or 'Western corruption' can still be heard. On the part of governments, however, this is usually a leverage to obtain better terms of integration with the West, not to confront it.

Nevertheless, the anti-Western bias of (radical) Islamic opposition is a reality, though it should be kept in mind that the terrain of maneuver of Islamic oppositions is domestic politics: once in power their international outlook may change

[8] For a review of cooperative relations between the European Community and the Southern Mediterranenan countries see Guazzone, 1990, pp. 301-309.

dramatically. In any case, the limits of the residual anti-Western attitudes of the Southern countries became evident during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis.

Eager to attract political attention and economic aid, the South feels increasingly marginalized by the collapse of bipolarism and by the concentration of the political and economic energies of the industrialized world on the reconstruction of Europe. The only exception to this perception of marginalization is a negative one: the Islamic South feels that it is being shifted into the role of enemy number one of Western security as a substitute for the vanished Soviet threat.

In fact, most Arab intellectuals believe that Western concern with arms proliferation in the South is an all out distortion of reality: arsenals in the South have been developed because of South-South conflicts and are not targeted against the North, moreover -they argue- why should the overpowering military capabilities of the North not be perceived as threat to the South?

After all, threat is by definition a highly subjective concept: when the Libyan leader, Qaddafi, claimed in 1981 that the INFs installed at the base in Comiso, Italy, were a direct threat against Libya, he expressed a perception that was exactly opposite of the Italian one, which saw the "Euromissiles" in a purely East-West perspective.

The foregoing provides the necessary background against which the evolution of the Southern attitude towards security in the Mediterranean can be understood and the prospects for naval arms control can be understood.

Since the mid-sixties the nonaligned riparian states expressed the general desire to strengthen peaceful coexistence in the Mediterranean. However, the request to transform the Mediterranean into a "lake of peace", as the proposal for a Mediterranean Zone of Peace was poetically dubbed, meant different things to the different proponents: for some -for instance Algeria and, later on, Qaddafis's Libya- it was mainly an act of positive neutralism, backing the proposals for the Mediterranean put forward by the USSR ever since 1961[9]. Indeed, although there is no single legal definition of such zones, the creation of a Zone of Peace could have excluded US and British naval bases and naval military activities, as well as nuclear weapons from the Mediterranean [10].

For other countries, like Morocco, Tunisia and Malta, the proposal had a less legalistic meaning, and was an attempt to defuse tensions, defend against spill overs of the East-West confrontation and try to create a network of North-South cooperation in the region independent, or at least distinct, from the East-West axis.

In fact, in the same years that the proposal to make the Mediterranean a Zone of Peace was put forward at the UN[11], there was also was a suggestion of establishing a North-South political dialogue that would have some sort of security dimension. Among the Southern countries, those of the Maghreb were the most active supporters of the dialogue[12], while the countries of the Near East saw the Mediterranean

[9] In 1961 the USSR put forward for the first time at the UN a proposal for the denuclearization of the Mediterranean (for a detailed account of the content and evolution of URSS proposals for naval desarmament in the Mediterranean see Carnovale, 1992 and Ronzitti, 1992, pp. 29-30).

[10] On the leagal meaning and precedents, see Ronzitti, 1992, pp. 13-14.

[11] Listed among Non-Aligned aims in the Mediterranean ever since the Algiers 1973 summit, the proposal for the establishment of a Zone of Peace in the Mediterranean was first put out forward by the NA in the UN General Assembly Special Session on Desarmament (1973).

[12] For the Tunisian and Algerian proposals see Toumi, 1975.

dimension only as a function of the Arab-Israeli conflict[13].

In the seventies and eighties proposals for a Mediterranean Zone of Peace continued to be pursued ritually by the nonaligned in the UN General Assembly, but attention shifted to the CSCE process since its inception. In the CSCE process the eight Southern Mediterranean countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon and Syria) acquired the status of 'Non participant Mediterranean Countries', which allows for more limited rights than does observer status, and were able to advocate the development of a Mediterranean dimension in the CSCE only through the good offices of the nonaligned participants[14].

A Mediterranean dimension was indeed developed in the CSCE, but only for the basket on economic, scientific and cultural cooperation; in spite of the insistence of the Mediterranean nonaligned countries (Malta, Yugoslavia and Cyprus) and of some non-participant Mediterranean countries (most noticeably Algeria), the security basket, although included in the Mediterranean chapter of the Helsinki Act, was not extended to the Mediterranean[15].

The very limited development of the Mediterranean dimension of CSCE was the result of the opposition of Western countries and of the Soviet Union alike (at least until 1984); in fact, both blocks feared that the development of the Mediterranean dimension could block or complicate East-West negotiations, and had specific reasons to leave their naval forces unrestrained.

The Southern countries have never ceased to argue the indivisibility of European and Mediterranean security and to ask for full participation in the CSCE process[16]. Nevertheless, even after the end of the East-West confrontation, the Mediterranean continues to lack a forum in which North-South security concerns can be approached cooperatively.

While the proposals for a Mediterranean forum on security and cooperation were reiterated under various labels during the Eighties, they have been given some substance only in 1990, when the the Western Mediterranean Group was established and Italy and Spain proposed a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean-CSCM[17].

As for the general prospects for regional arms control, it must be noted that the Southern Mediterranean countries have never been engaged in any regional arms control process. They are of course part of all main global arms control regimes, but they have not proved to share the 'culture' -if one may say so- of arms control that the countries of the two former blocs have developed over the years. The main specific

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[13] Emblematic in this sense is the answer of the Syrian president Asad to a journalist asking his opinion on the issue of the demilitarization of the Mediterranean: "That America leaves the Mediterranean does not interest us; what really interests us is that it leaves Palestine, then the Mediterranean.."(from the Syrian nespaper al-Ba'th, 16 august, 1972).

[14] On the difficult history of the CSCE Mediterranean dimension see Ghebali, 1989, chapter VI.

[15] See Ghebali, 1989, p. 371, 377, 380.

[16] Requests for a full status continue to present and are pursued by the Group of Mediterranean Non-Aligned countries (Malte, Chyprus, Yugoslavia plus the seven Arab riverains) established in 1984 (see Mediterranean Non-aligned Countries, 1990 and Ghebali, 1991, pp. 65-66).

[17] The proposal for a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean was launched by the Spanish-Italian Non Paper on CSCM on September 17, 1991 (for the text see Ministero degli affari Esteri, 1991). The Western Mediterranean Group was created on October 19, 1990 in Rome between Italy, France, Portugal, Spain and Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya; in Oct. 1991 Malta joined the group while Egypt and Greece applied for membership (for the founding platform see Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 1990).

reason seem to be the Arab strategic environment, where multiple threats encourage zero-sum thinking [18].

Until very recently the Arab countries maintained a highly ideological approach to arms control[19], as shown by the positions adopted at the 1989 Paris conference on CW, by the mostly political language of the repeated proposals to make the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, and by the Arab League's reaction to Iraq posturing immediately before the 1991 Gulf war [20].

Positions are evolving quickly however, especially after the Second Gulf war. Indeed Israel objected more than the Arab countries to the Bush Middle East arms control initiative of May 1991 (that includes North Africa)[21].

As regards naval arms control in particular, no country of the South has ever put forward directly any specific proposal in this direction, although in 1984 they have collectively subscribed to a declaration claiming that

> Naval deployment, particularly by States outside the region, that directly or indirectly threaten the interests of non-aligned Mediterranean members, should be excluded.[22]

However, interviews conducted by this author in 1991-92 with some officials of the Southern countries concerned suggest they may be interested in considering measures of naval arms control, especially CBMs, possibly in the framework of a global forum on security in the region such as the CSCE, or a CSCM.

The reasons for this potential interest in naval arms control are manyfold. Politically, it would be a small price to pay for getting the closer integration with Western Europe that they are now seeking more than ever to support their efforts for political and economic development. Moreover, the opening of a North-South forum entitled to deal with concrete aspects of military security in the Mediterranean would be in keeping with (and a vindication of) the traditional claims of the Southern countries about the indivisibility of Mediterranean and European security.

Militarly, the Southern navies would not be very concerned by the kind of structural restrictions that were suggested for the US-USSR and CFE II frameworks, simply because they do not possess most of the systems envisaged there and in most cases are not considering acquiring them; therefore, structural arms control would not limit their present and future capabilities also because none of the open or potential South-South conflicts do not have a significant naval dimension.

Naval arms control could also ease a broader dilemma posed to the Southern countries by the ambivalent significance of the strong naval presence of NATO countries in the Mediterranean. In fact, this presence has positive as well negative political and military implications for the Southern countries and naval arms control could help to keep the balance in the positive side.

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[18] This conclusion has been reached by various authors, see for example Wiberg, 1991, pp. 4-8; Feldman, 1991, p.19.

[19] Even the most moderate and informed Arab analysts followed this trend until recently (see for example Dessouki, 1989 and 1990, Ezz, 1989).

[20] For a review of Arab positions at the 1989 Paris conference see Arms Control Reporter (ACR) 1989, section 704.B, pp. 331-338; for extracts from Arab proposals for a Middle East NFZ up to 1990 see ACR, various years . For Arab defence of the Iraqi's (and Arab) right to arms proliferation see the final declaration of the Arab League Summit in Baghdad, May 1990.

[21] see "Bush's Mideast Plan Gets Muted Praise" International Herald Tribune, 31/5/1991.

[22] Mediterranean Non Aligned Countries, 1984.

In peace time, naval military cooperation existing bilaterally between most Northern and Southern Mediterranean navies and ranging from port calls to joint maneuvers contributes, sometime significantly, to the development of the operational capabilities of the South.

At times of crisis NATO navies, acting on a national basis, have exercised gunboat diplomacy to protect Southern countries vis-à-vis bellicose neighbors; in 1980, for instance, the French sent their warships in the Tunisian Gulf of Gabes after the Libyan-backed attack in Gafsa, while in 1984 a Western multinational minesweeping force was sent to the Red Sea at the request of Egypt.

Nevertheless, Western military supremacy in the Mediterranean can also work to the detriment of Southern countries. The clearest example in this sense is the US exploitation of the unlegitimate Libyan claims over the Gulf of Sydra to put pressure on Qaddafi's regime. Another example is the lack of any Western warning to Tunisia on the occasion of the Israeli bombing of the PLO headquarters in Tunis in 1985[23]. The presence in the Mediterranean of naval nuclear weapons and nuclear powered vessels is yet another source of concern for the Southern countries[24].

Therefore, naval arms control could be pursued by the Southern Mediterranean countries as a 'low cost' CSBM vis-à-vis their regional enemies, as well as an insurance against the most threatening activities of the overpowerful Northern navies.

Summing up, naval arms control in the Mediterranean, possibly in the form of enlarged CSCE negotiations on limited measures of maritime security, could be in line with present perceptions and policies of the countries of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean.

1.3.2. The North

The denunciation of 'new threats' arising from the regions lying South of the European landmass surfaced after the 1978 Iranian revolution and, since the early eighties, has became a stable item on the Western security agenda.

Meanwhile the international security environment has drastically changed and the strategic significance of the Mediterranean region has changed accordingly (see section 1.2). However, repeated involvements of Western forces in regional conflicts arising in this area -from the 1982 multinational force in Lebanon to the 1991 Gulf war- have kept perceptions of 'a threat from the South' alive in spite of all the changes and made them gain increasing prominence in Western security discourse.

At a time when NATO is struggling to redefine its purpose, and its parlance is full of uncertainties between 'threats', 'risks' and 'challenges', there is a definite danger that the main new justification for Western and European security arrangements may became that of thwarting a military threat form the South. However tempting at a time of shrinking defence budgets, such a formulation of purpose risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In any case, there is a widespread perception of 'a threat from the South,'

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[23] On the morning of 1 October 1985, four Israeli F-16 brought a surprise attack against the PLO headquarters near Tunis leaving 73 dead.

[24] For instance, Egypt prohibits transit in the Suez Canal to warships carrying nuclear weapons; in the absence of verification mechanisms, this remains, however, only a declaration of intent (some believe that during the second Gulf war some US warships did carry nuclear weapons through the Canal).

possibly not as lethal as one just vanished in the East but more difficult to face because of its diffuse and unpredictable nature.

This perception is supported by frequent references in the Western security discourse to three important factors that characterize the political environment of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean: political instability, fundamentalist Islam and arms proliferation. However, reference often is usually made by juxtapposition, i.e. without interrelating these factor, or pointing out their specific impact on regional relations, namely their eventual military implications. This leaves the notion of 'threat from the South' conceptually and politically shaky and risks delegitimizing military preparations made on this basis.

In fact, a closer analysis of the security environment South of Western Europe does not support the existence of a serious military threat from the South.

First of all, the 'South' does not constitute a unified entity from a political or military point of view, nor does it share a common, institutionalized ideological hostility against the West. In fact, the limited expressions of political and cultural solidarity among the peoples and the governments of the countries of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean have come in recent years as a reaction to what were perceived as Western intrusions and double standards (from the war against Iraq to the Israel's virtual impunity in its suppression of Palestinian rights).

Secondly, the Southern countries are indeed plagued by socio-political and economic deficits that feed chronic instability and recurrent conflicts. However, the security effect of these problems -which can be eased and, possibly, solved by an appropriate mix of domestic and international policies- is not a North-South confrontation with a significant military component: their primary effect is instead the proliferation of South-South domestic and interstate tensions and conflicts.

Finally, arms proliferation is indeed a problem: first of all because it escalates the level of devastation of local conflicts, then because it erodes the Western overwhelming military supremacy, thus making Western interventions more costly and unpredictable, and only finally because it gives some Southern countries an enhanced capacity of military nuisance against vital Western interests including the defence of European territory.

The case for Western military preparations for contingencies in the South would be much better served by a clear analysis of the mainly non-military nature of the sources of insecurity in the Mediterranean-Middle East region, as well as by a clear formulation of the legitimate Western security interests in the region[25]. The most evident of these interests are: 1) the maintainance of conditions necessary for the free production and commercialization of strategic energy resources concentrated in the area; 2) the protection of conditions needed to maintain the present high level of integration of the Southern countries in the international economy. The protection of both interests requires, among other things, the protection of shipping and environment in the Mediterranean, Red Sea and the Gulf.

These interests are shared by the US, the Europeans and the governments of the Southern countries and could provide the basis for a common, non provocative military doctrine in the Mediterranean. Of course, this approach would not eliminate the existence of sometime widely different interpretations of the means and actions best suited to serve these shared interests.

[25] A detailed analysis is developed in Aliboni, 1991.

The difficulty of finding a common ground reconciling the different views of North and Southern Europeans, of the US and of Southern partners as different as Israel and Iran should not be minimized and has often be raised to object to concrete political initiatives like the Spanish-Italian proposal for a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean-CSCM.

But the dangers inherent in the present approach should not be overlooked either. What is happening at present is that in the absence of a common European security identity and a clear definition of the respective roles of the various institutions in charge of European security, the management of security in the Mediterranean - Middle East is left to the initiatives of national actors, whose interests only partially serve the common interests described above.

In particular, the reorientation of US and Europeans national defence policies to meet an ill defined 'threat from the South', together with the establishment of specific multilateral mechanisms, like NATO Stanavformed, and the maintenance of extraordinary measures of international pressure against Iraq and Libya, risk to be unduly provocative towards the Southern countries. In the absence of counterbalancing measures of confidence building, these developments in Western security policies, that have their logic in the broader new Western security and political environment, risk to provoke exactly what they aim to prevent: a diffuse perception of North-South confrontation with an increasingly military dimension.

Insofar as perceptions are fundamental in determining crisis behavior and arm race dynamics, it would in Western interests to rationalize its own discourse on 'the threat from the South' and initiate a dialogue on common security interests with the countries of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean.

It is argued throughout this paper why common maritime security could provide the best place to start this dialogue.

1.4 Offshore political geography[26]

Offshore resources, environment management , and commercial shipping make control of the maritime extensions of national territory an attribute of national sovereignty as well as an important component of economic security. In recent years, the Mediterranean states have become increasingly aware of this offshore dimension because of the growing rentability of offshore resources (especially fishing and seabed minerals like oil and gas) and because of the aggravation of the pollution problem in the region.

Quite apart from economic and military interests, delimitation and control of a country's maritime dimension also relate to national security through 'public services' in the area of civilian security: the fight against smuggling, illegal immigration, pollution and dumping clearly fall in this category. Also in the Mediterranean, increasing awareness of national interest offshore has led to a higher attention to all questions related to maritime boundaries delimitation: internal waters, territorial seas, contiguous zones, continental shelves, and Exclusive Economic Zones.

Competing economic interests, political animosities and strategic

[26] For this concept see Gerald Blake "Offshore Political Geopgraphy: The Partitioning of the Oceans", in Drysdale, 1985, from which many of the ideas and information of this section are taken.

considerations highly complicate the process of partitioning of seas that has also intensified in the Mediterranean following to the conclusion of the United Nations Treaty on the Law of the Sea in 1982.

Some cases of interplay between economic, political and strategic interests in the process of delimitation of maritime boundaries are considered in another chapter of this study[27]. However, some general considerations can be introduced here.

While the implementation of the Law of the Sea could solve some of the pending maritime disputes and therefore prevent their exploitation in crisis situations, some of the resistances that the delimitations process encounters are actually due to considerations linked to military security at sea.

Mediterranean maritime powers have long feared that the extension of territorial seas into what are now international waters will increase the discretionality of control of costal states, especially over strategic waterways[28]. On the other hand, costal states tend to give restrictive interpretations of the Law of the Sea, also because they are not guaranteed otherwise against threatening military activity at sea.

Both types of concerns would be approached in their own merit in the framework of a process of regional naval arms control, which would specifically address local competing requirements between civilian and military security.

This is particularly important since extended offshore interests and expanded rights acquired as a result of the introduction of the Convention on the Law of the Sea will require increased naval activities by all riparian countries.

Clearly, increased responsibility in policing Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) can represent an excessive burden for less developed countries with large zones. Their inability to implement their jurisdiction effectively can be perceived as a gap in national security and may prompt them to call for unilateral measures in critical areas, more restrictive than those envisaged in the Law of the Sea Convention.

In this sense, even a limited regime of naval CBMs would be beneficial and prevent claims such as a total ban of military maneuvers in EEZ; further measures, like the sharing of satellite information regulated by a regional or subregional cooperation agreement would be of great importance[29].

The need to preserve the legitimate 'public service' role of navies may indeed conflict with military security requirements since potentially offensive systems may be employed to this end. Naval units most likely to be employed for extended patrolling activity at sea include systems like missile armed fast attack craft, the quickest growing item in Third World navies.

However, besides the fact that nature of naval systems and tasks does not allow to distinguish meaningfully between offensive and defensive systems, it is encouraging to note that in Mediterranean most jurisdiction disputes at sea have been solved peacefully. When violent clashes did occur, as in the US - Libya dispute over the Gulf of Sydra, or in the Greek-Turkish case, there were usually broader political incentives for conflict.

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[27] see Ronzitti, 1992.

[28] Together with the objections to its provision for an International Seabed Authority, this is one of the reasons for US hostility towards the UN Law of the Sea Treaty. For instance, the refusal to recognize the 12-mile territorial sea rule allowed the US to carry on its 1973 airlift to Israel over the Gibraltar Straits without the consent of Spain and Morocco (see Drysdale, 1985, chapter 5, notes 1 and 17).

[29] This suggestion has been put forward by Gudmundur Eriksson, a legal advisor to the Iceland Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see United Nations, 1990, p. 127).

Therefore, neither structural nor operational naval arms control should interfere with the exercise of legitimate control of coastal security. In any case, the naval systems that could be banned or restricted under any conceivable agreement should not be those used for the 'civilian' needs of coastal security (e.g. anti-smuggling control); in fact, most of these missions are performed in many countries by a separate paramilitary Coast Guard.

Also the forces most appropriate for the protection of economic interests lying beyond territorial seas (e.g. offshore oil-fields or fisheries) should not be unduly restricted by arms control measures; on the contrary, naval arms control should favor civilian security at sea[30] .

Summing up, it can be argued that some measures of naval arms control, and particularly CBMs, could be beneficial in defusing the most destabilizing effects of 'offshore politics', in that they would more clearly define restricted areas or activities, contribute to the prevention of accidents at sea and help avoiding the exploitation of pending maritime disputes for broader political aims. More in general, naval arms control measures can complement and facilitate the ongoing process of definition of maritime boundaries in the Mediterranean in several ways, this in turn will have a positive effect on the negotiation or implementation of naval arm control.

2. Sub-regional conflicts

2.1 The Arab-Israeli conflict and security in the South-Eastern Mediterranean

In the spite of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty of 1979 and of the recurring efforts to resolve it by diplomatic means, the Arab-Israeli conflict is still conditioning the security and political environment of the entire Middle East region.

Therefore, the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict remains a fundamental prerequisite -although not necessarily a precondition- for any real progress in regional arms control[31].

Nevertheless, the maritime military dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict is significantly different from its other conventional and unconventional dimensions. This difference -briefly examined below- could play in favor of naval arms control initiatives in the Mediterranean.

However, for all its objective and symbolic importance, the Arab-Israeli conflict is not the only local factor that determines the maritime security environment in the Eastern Mediterranean. Like others Mediterranean countries, the countries involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict have also to take into consideration threats arising from other potential conflicts, sometime originating from the adjoining maritime theaters (the Gulf and the Red Sea).

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[30] An example could be the inclusion in naval CBMs of the type of cross-national rights of inspection for national costal guards in international waters existing bilaterally between some Mediterranean countries (e.g. Spanish-Italian agreement).

[31] This conclusion is reached by most global analysis of the prospect for arms control in the Middle East (see for example Kemp, 1991, Chapter 8 "Arms Control and Conflict Resolution"); interestingly enough, also Palestinian analyses seem to agree on the "prerequisite not precondition" approach (cf Khalidi, 1992, pp. 17-18.)

Israel's geopolitical features -its size, location and manpower inferiority- dictate that all Arab-Israeli wars are decided by the Arab ability to bring a decisive ground attack as well as by Israel's ability to deter, pre-empt or quickly repel it. In this strategic context, naval missions are seen as marginal.

Indeed, the main naval missions in the framework of past and potential Arab-Israeli wars are: 1) the blockade or harassment of vital sealines; 2) coastal attacks. While a total or partial naval blockade lasting more than two-three weeks would hurt Israel much more than any of its likely Arab opponents because of Israel's lack of economic and military arrears in the region, this could occur only in the context of a prolonged conflict that would be disastrous for Israel regardless of the blockade.

As for the strategic value of coastal attacks, while they can hardly be decisive, the present and foreseeable naval balance of forces between Israel and its likely Arab opponents is such that "a situation of mutual neutralization could come about"[32].

One of the results of the marginality of the maritime dimension in the context of Arab-Israeli conflict, is that navies are the 'Cinderella' of all concerned armed forces. In spite of the relative growth experienced since the 1973 war[33], the qualitative and quantitative force building efforts devoted to the Israeli, Syrian and Egyptian navies are much smaller than those attracted by their sister ground and air forces (a fact that may lead to corporative resistance against naval arms control).

What are the effects of this situation on the prospects for naval arms control?

As hinted before, it can be argued that the strategic marginality of the naval dimension can be an incentive to (all types of) arms control in this field; in the words of an Israeli analyst: "parties might be less concerned about making mistakes"[34].

One can add to this several other incentives favoring naval arms control in the Arab-Israeli context: 1) in the naval sphere structural arms control agreements (at least those concerning platforms) would be much easier to verify than corresponding accords for ground or air systems; 2) restraint on the supplier side would be much more decisive and easier to verify, since local production is almost non-existent (only Israel has to date a limited autonomous capacity); 3) finally, the success of negotiations in the naval field would be greater for all of the above reasons and could facilitate regional arms control negotiations in other fields as well.

On the other hand, it can be argued that exactly because of its marginal strategic importance, no political energies will be invested in naval arms control because it cannot deliver the limitation of the opponents more threatening capabilities. This specific disincentive is to be added to the many global political as well as military obstacles to arms control in the Arab-Israeli and wider Middle East context.

The same arguments and counter-arguments seem to apply, although on a lesser scale, to the prospect for negotiating naval CSBMs -like rules for operational restrain- and measures to enhance transparency or avoid miscalculations. Although some authors argue that the very concept of 'confidence building measure' is difficult

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[32] Levran, 1988, p. 163.

[33] Looking at the prospects for the 1990's, Michael Vlahos states that "the fleets of the region seem tired and impoverished...we are witnessing a kind of historical pause...we will see again a flurry of naval bidding...at century's turn"(Vlahos, 1991, p.122); for an analysis of the recent evolution of the Arab and Israeli navies see Levran, 1988; Bonsignore, 1988; on the Israeli and Egyptian navies see also Leshem, 1990 and Defense & Foreign Affairs , 1989, respectively.

[34] The quotation is from Feldman, 1992, p. 4; several of the points presented here are from the same source: I am indebted to Shai Feldman also for earlier exchanges of views on the subject.

to apply in the Arab-Israeli context, in that it requires that the negotiating parties share a basic interest in avoiding exaggerated perceptions[35], it is this author's opinion that this may be a somehow extreme view, especially in light of the interest expressed in the wake of the Gulf war by all concerned countries in some form of regional arms control.

Finally, several factors militate against pursuing structural naval arms control in a purely Arab-Israeli framework. First of all, the countries involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict perceive other sources of threats within the Mediterranean, as in the case of the recurring tensions between Libya and Egypt, as well in the adjoining maritime areas of the Red Sea and the Gulf.

Secondly, regional countries need their naval strength to defend national -and sometime international, as in the case of Egypt sovereignty over Suez- security at sea against unconventional threats like terrorism or drug and arms smuggling.

Lastly, in spite of the likely disengagement of the former Soviet fleet from the Mediterranean region, the presence and mighty of the other regional and extra-regional naval powers is growing. Although there is no direct link at present between the naval structure of the local and other powers, their interests and activities are intertwined to say the least. Political and military considerations would therefore hinder agreements limiting local navies, while leaving other fleets' activities unconstrained.

Therefore, measures to increase maritime security at sea could be started in the Arab-Israeli framework, but in order to achieve significant results they would have to be linked to wider regional or international agreements. Conversely, Mediterranean-wide naval arms control initiative are likely to be resisted by the countries involved as long as the Arab-Israeli conflict remains unresolved.

Nevertheless, given the marginality of the naval dimension in the Arab-Israeli strategic context, in case naval arms control is discussed a wider regional framework, political objections would be more prominent than military considerations and therefore more likely to be overcomed provided that Arab-Israeli diplomatic negotiations are in progress.

Finally, the maritime dimension should be part of the security provisions that will accompany a political settlement; in this context it could be agreed upon a package of naval CMBs that would deal with the specific preoccupations about maritime security of the involved countries (for instance, guaranteeing Israeli rights of passage in Arab national waters and controlled straits, and preventing Israeli harassment of Arab maritime communications). This set of local and sub-regional NCBMs would complement whose stipulated through regional and international agreements.

2.2 The Greek-Turkish disputes and the changing security picture in North-Eastern Mediterranean

The dispute between Greece and Turkey in the Aegean Sea is perhaps the most serious maritime dispute of the entire Mediterranean region. The Aegean dispute is about the territorial waters, airspace and continental shelf jurisdiction of the over

[35] Khalidi and Evron, 1990.

3000 islands and islets assigned to Greece by the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923.

With regard to both the continental shelf and the territorial waters, Turkey argues that the Aegean is a special case and claim a median line maritime boundary regardless of the islands. Indeed, the normal application of the Law of the Sea would give Greece control over most of the Aegean continental shelf and waters, and hence over the seabed resources (oil) and the approaches to the Turkish Straits[36].

Over the years, the Aegean dispute has become politically intertwined with the dispute over Cyprus[37], and both disputes have fuelled perceptions of mutual threats, exacerbating relations between these two NATO members and complicating NATO planning and operations in the .

What is noticeable is that the most recent (1988) attempt to solve the bilateral Aegean dispute, the so called Davos Process[38], has introduced a set of naval CBMs which seem to date to have well served their aims, to the point that some are considering their extension in the Balkan framework [39].

Bilateral Turkish-Greek naval CSBMs agreed by the Foreign ministers of the two countries in September 1988 mix some of the provisions embodied in the Prevention of the accidents at sea treaties, modalities restricting naval exercises mutuated from the CSCE experience and crisis management mechanisms modelled on the US-USSR experience [40].

Quite apart from the Greek-Turkish disputes, the security parameters of the North-Eastern Mediterranean are being revolutioned by the changes underway in the Balkans, the former Soviet Union and the relationship between Turkey and the Middle East region [41].

The potential effects of these epochal changes on the maritime dimension is difficult to assess, but it is already possible to stress that instability in the Balkans, and possibly in the Black Sea region, will only increase the economic and military importance of Central-Eastern Mediterranean SLOCs [42].

Some see these developments as reinforcing the traditional local arguments contrary to East-West naval arms control, that would:1) accentuate the isolation of Greece and Turkey at the extremity of NATO logistical line, 2) limit the capacity to carry out amphibious operations in the area; and 3) devoid the regional states of the flexible and low provocative naval tool for crisis management [43].

To the contrary, on the basis the new security picture, others envisage measures, such as the creation of a European "Mediterranean Coast Guard", that could

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[36] For more details see Wilson, 1979.

[37] For a full analysis of the issue see Mc Donald, 1989.

[38] The Davos process was started in January 1988, after Greece and Turkey had nearly engaged in open conflict over the Aegen territorial waters in March 1987 (for details see Robert McDonald, 1989, pp. 63-64).

[39] A Turkish author, Ali Karaosmanoglu, argues that:
Although this measures are not comprehensive and are violated from time to time, they may regarded as a first step forward in the Balkan CSBM experience. Their improvement and gradual extention to the land froces and other states in the region deserve consideration (Karaosmanoglu, 1991, p. 8).

[40] The Greek-Turkish Aegean CSBMs agreement is summarized in some detail in Karaosmanoglu, 1991, pp. 7-8.

[41] See Larrabee (1991) and Protonotarios (1991).

[42] For instance, in summer 1991 part of the traditional commercial road traffic was rerouted by sea because of the war in Yugoslavia.

[43] See Karaosmanoglu, 1991, pp. 9-10.

in fact benefit from global and regional naval arms control[44].

2.3 Security in the Western Mediterranean

No major open conflict affects the Western Mediterranean which represents the closest point of contact between the Norther and Southern shores of the sea. Two main sets of relations determine the strategic environment in this subregion: North/South multilateral and bilateral relations between the EC, and the Arab Maghreb Union (UAM)[45] countries; 'horizontal' relations between these same countries and the non littoral Mediterranean countries (mainly the US and Great Britain).

North-South multilateral relations in the Western Mediterranean context are remarkably cooperative, as confirmed by the establishment in 1990 of a specific forum for subregional cooperation, the Western Mediterranean Group-WMG (also known as the Five plus Five or Group of Ten).

The rationale for the Group is explicitly phrased in security terms by its founding declaration, which recognizes "the indivisibility of Mediterranean security" and individuate the ultimate source of regional instability in the North-South development gap.[46].

However, North-South relations in the Western Mediterranean are not exempt from tensions and problems. Tensions are due to mutual negative perceptions as well as to more immediate spill overs from bilateral disputes[47]. In the long term, more serious challenges to the survival of the WMG may derive from the difficulty encountered by the Southern European participants to convince their EC partners to back up with more adequate economic and political means the development of the Maghreb.

Therefore, while at present all partners to the WMG remain convinced and willing to cooperate, the actual implementation of their cooperation programs remain weak. As for the more specifically security related aspects of the political dialogue, discussed until now only unofficially in the cooperation framework, their development is linked to the overall political climate and, technically, to activation of the Political Committee of the Group established in the October 1991 Summit.

The intense bilateral North-South relations in Western Mediterranean are strongly influenced by colonial heritage and territorial proximity, but economic ties are strong also with the main non littoral Mediterranean powers: Germany and the US.

The US have developed a close security cooperation with Morocco and Tunisia, the two more Western oriented Maghreb countries. Thus Rabat and

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[44] Valinakis, 1991.

[45] The Arab Maghreb Union was established in February 1989 between Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya with the aim to further and implement economic, social and political integration.

[46] "Les ministres ...ont exprimé l'attachement de leurs pays aux principes de la globalité et de la indivisibilité de la sécurité en Méditerranée..[et] ont consideré que les grands écarts actuels dans le niveau de développement entre le Nord et le Sud de la Méditerranée, y compris la Méditerranée Occidentale, introduisaint des désequilibres generateurs de graves dangers pour la stabilité et le bien-être de toute la region" (Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 1990, p.1-2).

[47] For instance, a summit of the Western Mediterranean Group, due to take place at the beginning of 1992, had to be repeatedly postponed because of the renewed growth of tension between Libya and the US, Great Britain and France over the Lockerbie affair.

Washington signed in May 1982 an agreement for the use of Moroccan facilities by US forces[48] and Tunisia has traditionally received US assistance in time of crisis, at least until the Second Gulf war[49]. As for the European countries, bilateral military cooperation, often in the form of Defence and Cooperation agreements, exists between all of Spain, France, Italy and Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.

However, even at the bilateral level relations are not exempt from tensions ranging from disputes over fishing rights to territorial claims. The dispute between Morocco and Spain over the two Spanish enclaves on Moroccan territory of Ceuta and Melilla, is possibly the most serious source of North-South bilateral tension within the WMG, the second being the recurring tensions between Italy and Libya.

Regardless of its legal and historical background and its bearing on bilateral relations, the territorial dispute between Spain and Morocco has one important political implication since it creates a direct link between NATO and Maghreb security concerns. Morocco has in fact frequently stated his intention to revamp its claims to soveraignity on the enclaves as soon as Spain recover Gibraltar from Great Britain, also in order to prevent Spanish territorial waters to command the entirety of the Eastern approaches to the Strait.

The tensions between Italy and Libya have been ritually flaring up whenever Colonel Qaddafi has reiterated his claims to war compensations from Italy. In fact, tensions are sustained by Italy's uneasy proximity to a country that in the last decades has been the promoter of endless attempts to export its antimperialistic struggle through terrorism and subversion, as well as by the fact that the US have repeatedly singled out Libya as one of its favorite scapegoats in its struggle against world terrorism and arms proliferation.

As for 'horizontal' relations, those of the Norther shore are well known and deserve mention only to say that Spain, Italy and France have intensified in recent years a web of 'multibilateral' military cooperation schemes that includes naval and aeronaval activities. Joint maneuvers and exchange of information are routinely performed to strengthen the European pillar in NATO but also to provide independent European or Western Mediterranean capabilities in case of need[50].

As regarding the UAM countries, their relations have traditionally been a mix of cooperation -due to their common Arab, Islamic and Third World culture- and conflict -due to profound differences in their international orientation and political systems, as well as to conflict of interests. Since the late Eighties differences were attenuated by deep changes in the domestic as well as international scene, and the cooperative trend reemerged vigorously bringing to the establishment of the UAM in 1989.

However, the Maghreb as a whole as well as the individual countries remain in the mid of a crucial transition: political and economic reforms have been started since the late 1980s, but their pace is to slow to alleviate the plights of a predominantly young and booming population to whom migration abroad and Islam appear as the

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[48] According to the Middle East Military Balance (see Levran, 1990) facilities provided to the US include: use of Sidi Slimane, Ben Guerir (Marrakesh) and Casablanca airfields in emergencies; permission for space shuttle to land at Ben Guerir; use of communications center at Kenitra; storage and use of naval facilities at Mohammedia (south of Rabat). The use of these facilities was meant to support operations of the US Rapid Deployment Force (see Marquina, 1988, p.32).

[49] Driss, 1991, pp 147-48.

[50] For more details see Aliboni, 1992(2), pp. 8-9 and the sources quoted there.

only viable options.

Islamic fundamentalism is a real threat to the incumbent regimes and cooperation for internal security is an important chapter in the UAM Treaty. To the contrary, military policies and external security are not the object of any real cooperation between the UAM countries, in spite of the existence of a mutual defence provision in the Marrakesh Treaty; nevertheless, the Defence Council established in the UAM framework in 1990 could provide a frame of reference for future intra-Maghreb or North-South security cooperation.[51]

In the strategic context of Western Mediterranean, naval CBMs, possibly including measures of operational restraint, would have the general positive effects described for the South as a whole balancing negative mutual North-South security perceptions, and helping to rationalize the behavior and pattern of development of Southern navies.

Besides these reasons, the existence of a North-South forum -the WMG- provides here an additional incentive. Indeed, the negotiation, and eventually implementation of naval CMBs, could favor the development of a 'space of common security' within the framework of the WMG. This space could include military security through a center for the prevention of crises and/or the settlement of disputes, as well as cooperation against low-intensity threats like terrorism, drug and arms smuggling, and illegal immigration[52].

3. Alternative approaches to naval arms control in the Mediterranean: political implications

As underlined at the beginning of this paper, the concept of naval arms control adopted here encompass a multiplicity of potential measures or 'categories', as well different possible areas of implementation or 'frameworks'.

An overview of the potential field of naval arms control produces the following breakdown:

Alternative Categories

1) **Structural limitations** on naval forces by number, types or weaponry of units;

2) **Operational limitations** on naval forces by deployment or 'behavioral' measures;

3) **Information Obligations** on force structures, doctrines, maneuvers; consultation in crisis contingency.

Alternative frameworks

[51] See Sehimi, 1991, pp.7-16.

[52] Suggestions in this direction have repeatedly been put forward (see Bonnefous, 1991, p. 47; Sehimi, 1992, p. 20-21); bilateral cooperation agreements in the field of low-intensity threats exist already between most state of the Western Mediterranea (Morocco is also member of the EC Group for antiterrorist cooperation, the so called Trevi Group).

1) **Global**, **Regional**, **Subregional** or **local**;

2) **Multilateral**, **Bilateral**, **Unilateral**.

In analyzing the political implications of these alternative potential approaches to naval arms control in the Mediterranean region, different categories will be considered before the different frameworks.

3.1 Alternative categories

3.1.1 Structural limitations

The potential for structural naval arms control has been analyzed to a considerable extent in recent years, although almost exclusively in an East-West perspective. The evaporation of the East-West frame of reference, brought about by the dissolution first of the Warsaw Pact and then of the Soviet Union, seems to make nul and void most of the speculations about supposed advantages and disadvantages for the US and NATO if they were to engage in some form of structural naval arms control.

Although there are reasons to argue in favor of some measures of naval structural arms control even in the (and possibly, because of) the new East-West security environment[53], the global incentives in this direction seem, at present, weak or non existent. It remains to be seen what could be the incentives, if any, looking instead from a North-South perspective.

As argued in section 1.3.2, Western perceptions about the existence of new and growing security risks from the South do include preoccupations arising from the qualitative and quantitative growth of Third World countries armaments.

However, the expansion of Third World navies focusses coastal defence, territorial waters control and resource protection. In line with this essentially defensive missions, missile armed patrol boats have been the fastest growing item in the naval inventories of the Southern Mediterranean.

Especially when armed with anti-ship precision guided munitions, Fast Attack Crafts do enhance the sea denial capabilities of Third world states, thus increasing the cost of Western power projections (as shown by the 1987-88 Gulf experience); moreover, these systems may have a destabilizing effect since they put a premium on hasty action by ship commanders.

However, the reduction of these systems is hardly a conceivable item for structural arms control negotiations: politically it would be hard to convince Third World countries to constrain one of their few effective naval assets while the major naval powers retain a panoply of other more powerful systems, while technically it would pose verification as well as correlation problems (for instance, it would be difficult to restrain naval PGMs without tackling their airborne equivalents).

The case of attack submarines is somehow different, since constraining these

[53] see Carnovale, 1992 and section 1.1

systems could make sense for the West in economic, East-West as well as North-South terms (submarines are of little utility for out of area force projection)[54]. However, structural reductions in the form of agreed, asymmetrical ceilings would be hardly palatable to the few Southern countries that possess (often outdated) attack submarines for the same broad political reasons mentioned above.

Nevertheless, it could be argued that if a provision for ceilings on submarines were to be included in a broader package of non-structural naval arms control measures, it could become acceptable since the wider goal of increased maritime security and transparency could make it politically viable. This case would be enhanced by the economic benefits that a submarine 'freeze' could entail also for the Southern Mediterranean countries.

On the whole, however, in a North-South perspective structural limitations on naval forces could be more the unilateral consequence of an indirect approach, through operational measures and CMBs, than the result of direct negotiations. Reducing threat perceptions in the naval sphere and providing the Southern Mediterranean countries with a cooperative environment supporting their ability to answer peacefully to the growing demand for the civilian control of territorial waters, would probably contribute more to a 'healthy' development of their naval inventories than structural arms control.

3.1.2 Feasibility of operational measures

The list of potential operational measures of naval arms control include a number of items, following in the two broad categories of behavioral measures (such as avoidance of harassment activities) and deployment limitations (ranging from geographical to equipment limitations).

Assuming that the most significant behavioral measures will enshrined in a global extension of the US-USSR incidents at sea agreement, other agreements could only deal with the deployment type of measures.

From a political point of view what is relevant about deployment limitations is not so much the technical content of the different measures, as their broad implication of providing a constraint on the actual deployment and deportment of military forces. Although a distinction can be made between more or less constraining measures, it is easy to argue that "there is a real limit, however, to the extent that maritime forces can be constrained without fundamentally limiting their ability to do anything useful"[55].

To put it bluntly, since in the Mediterranean naval exercises outside territorial waters are presently performed mostly by NATO and namely US forces, any operational limitation would be a largely asymmetrical measure, hardly acceptable to the West now that the Mediterranean enjoys the increased strategic significance described in Section 1.2[56].

This reality has been recognized also by the Mediterranean Neutral and Non Aligned countries that have dropped the operational limitations proposals they had previously submitted[57] in the CSCE framework.

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[54] see Carnovale 1992; Lacy, 1990, pp. 8-10; Eberle, 1990, pp. 329-330.

[55] Macintosh, 1990, p, 188.

[56] Arguments for and against operational limitations are analyzed in Carnovale, 1992.

[57] While Malta had submitted in 1984 a wide ranging proposal on naval CBMs including deployment

However, it has to be noticed that some operational limitations **are** included in only example of local naval CMBS existing in the Mediterranean: those agreed between Greece and Turkey in 1988 in the framework of the so called Davos process[58]. It may argued from this example that the only politically viable operational limitations in the Mediterranean framework would be those agreed bilaterally and implemented locally.

3.1.3 Confidence Building Measures

The first point to be considered here is that some global agreements aiming at reducing risks arising from naval activities already exist or are being pursued. The more relevant and far reaching agreements of this kind are the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS) and the 1989 proposal for a Multilateral Agreement on the Prevention of Incidents at Sea submitted by Sweden at the UN Disarmament Commission. Also a number of other international agreements already in force have a bearing on security at sea: the 1972 Seabed Treaty, 1958 Antarctic Treaty, the International Laws on Sea Warfare, the 1988 Rome Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation [59].

The very existence of these international agreements is a great contribution to the prevention and settlements of disputes and conflicts at sea, greatly enhancing mutual confidence and security at the global as well as local level.

However UNCLOS, the most important of these agreements, has not entered into force yet, because of important remaining differences; even when it does come into force[60], some of the provisions of the Convention regulating military activities will remain contentious.

It is well known that the modalities of exercising the right of 'innocent passage' in territorial waters are controversial, as it is the right to conduct military maneuvers in the Contiguous and Exclusive Economic Zone of another country. Other concepts enshrined in UNCLOS are too vague to provide concrete rules for specific regions; for example, how should the principle of excluding naval military exercises from areas of "intensive shipping and fishing" (UNCLOS art. 87) be considered in the Mediterranean context? An extensive interpretation of such a principle could lead to banning military activities from most of Mediterranean waters.

It is sometime argued that there is no need for new regimes of naval CMBs, given the existence of relevant global international agreements and the overall transparency of naval military activities. To be politically acceptable, this position should require strengthening and clarifying the existing agreements so as to work as effective naval CBMs; as for transparency, this notion should take into account the limited access to national means of verification of smaller or less developed countries.

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limitations, the N-NNA document submitted in Vienna on July 1989 did not call for these measures anymore (see CSCE/WV.5, 12.7.89).

[58] The agreement provides that:

The planning and conduct of national military exercises in the high seas and the international airspace should be carried out in such a way as to avoid the isolation of certain areas, the blocking of the exercise area for long periods the tourist peak season and the main national and religious holidays.

(As quoted by Karaosmanoglu, 1991, p. 8).

[59] For text and commentaries of the Rome Convention see Ronzitti, 1990.

[60] The Convention will come into force 12 months after 60 ratifications or accessions.

In fact, it would probably be diplomatically less cumbersome, technically more effective and politically more useful to complement the existing network of global agreements and the quantum of maritime security they provide with regional CMBs regimes tailored on local realities.

It must be notice however that the two approaches are not mutually exclusive: the harmonization of interpretations of global agreements such as the UNCLOS could proceed in parallel and be eased by the establishment of regional regimes.

If the above arguments are assumed, it follows that there global political incentives to the establishment of regional naval CBM regimes. As for the need arising form a regional perspective, it has been argued throughout this paper that there are indeed strong political incentives for the establishment of such a regime in the Mediterranean region.

It remains to be seen what should be the content of such a regime[61]. From a political point of view, all sorts of information and communications measures would be of great relevance to the North-South Mediterranean dimension, because they would constitute a first attempt to comprehensive military cooperation between the two sides that could have an impact on mutual security perceptions much more important of their intrinsic value for increased maritime security.

In this perspective, measures like mandatory exchange of defence information (force levels and location, structure of naval facilities, development programs, defence budgets), joint seminars on military doctrines and standing consultative commissions, would already constitute a great step forward.

Further steps like notification, crisis communication and maneuver observation measures, should of course be part of the CBMs regime, but could be implemented in an agreed phased manner. The inclusion of more constraining information measures, like inspection and verification (on-site or through sensing devices) measures should also be included, but possibly left as the last stage of the implementation calendar of the regime.

In any case, the latter more constraining measures, geared towards the prevention of surprise attack, would be necessary to Western information especially to verify compliance on the part of the more sophisticated naval units of the successor states of the Soviet Union. This would be important not so much to defuse traditional fears of East-West conflict, now superceded by political realities, but as yet another instrument of prevention of crisis among the former communist states or between them and their Southern neighbors.

The preceding examination of potential categories for naval arms control in the Mediterranean region, resulting from global or regional agreements, indicates that form a political point of view the most useful and feasible measures would be:
1) operational limitations deriving from:

- global agreements (e.g. exclusion or restriction of naval military exercises in the contiguous or exclusive economic zone, derived from a consensus interpretation of UNCLOS provisions; ban on dangerous deportment deriving from a multilateral agreement for the prevention of incidents at sea);

[61] On alternative frameworks for negotiating and monitoring a NCBMs regime in the Mediterranean see the following section.

- or from bilateral subregional agreements (e.g. the 1988 Greek-Turkish agreement).

2) A confidence building measures regime (information, notification, crisis communication, inspection) to be negotiated at the regional level.

3.2 Alternative Frameworks

The conclusions reached in the preceding section show that global, regional and bilateral/local frameworks could all have their specific merit for the negotiation and monitoring of the measures of naval arms control (operational and CBMs) politically most useful in the Mediterranean context. These various frameworks differ one from another in geographical scope but are by no means mutually exclusive.

To the contrary, it can be argued that in the real world global, regional as well as multilateral and bilateral (naval) arms control regimes already coexist; therefore, the often raised dilemma about the competing merits of regional vs. global frameworks is to some extent an artificial issue, often kept alive as yet another argument against naval arms control.

In fact, it can be positively argued that the best system to increase maritime security through confidence building measures should be multilayered; James Macintosh has recently suggested a 'three-tier system' based on: 1) a global, not-too-demanding regime; 2) a more rigorous regional regime; 3) a local-specific sub-regional regime[62].

If this approach is correct, it remains to be seen what form the regional and sub-regional frameworks could take in the specific Mediterranean context. To this end, the first question arising is whether the same regional goals could not be reached through unilateral or bilateral (possibly multi-bilateral) initiatives or if a naval CBMs regime can be managed only through a (specific) multilateral framework.

As for unilateral initiatives, there is no doubt that they can be beneficial: unilateral structural or operational limitations or transparency initiatives, especially on the part of the major Mediterranean powers, could stimulate reciprocal (although possibly asymmetrical) concessions and enhance mutual confidence. However, if the political interest for such developments exists, it would much more effectively invested in launching a multilateral process.

As for bilateral CBMs agreements, it is true that, as in the case of the Incidents-at-Sea, they can eventually be transformed into a multilateral treaty without affording the diplomatic costs of multilateral negotiations. However, as repeatedly pointed out in this paper, the political value of a NCSBM regime in the Mediterranean lies exactly in providing of comprehensive forum, something that bilateral or multi-bilateral agreements would offer. Also, a bilateral approach would have no room for crisis prevention and disputes settling mechanisms[63].

However, a bilateral or subregional approach would be useful and sometime necessary to regulate maritime concerns in specific conflict situations. In addition to the already mentioned Turkish-Greek case, the Arab-Israeli context could be another case, whereas in parallel and/or following a diplomatic solution, and in connection to other regional arms control initiatives specific measures of maritime security could

[62] Macintosh, 1990, p. 186.
[63] This aspect is fully developed in Ronzitti, 1992, pp. 44 and 46-47.

be negotiated to between Israel and the Arab coastal states. Once again, specific local NCBMs could complement region-wide agreements.

3.2.1 CSCE or CSCM?

Both the CSCE or the proposed CSCM (Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean) could provide an appropriate framework for the negotiation and monitoring of a Mediterranean naval CSBMs regime, which, as argued in the preceding sections, is the most promising form of regional naval arms control.

The CSCE is the only pan-European security institution and has developed a method as well as mechanisms for complex arms control negotiations. The CSCM envisages to tackle the specific requirements of Mediterranean security building on the CSCE success story and has, in principle, already rallied the support of most concerned countries (with the notable exception of the United States).

However, neither of the two frameworks is ready to act in this direction: the CSCE has repeatedly resisted the development of its Mediterranean security dimension (see section 1.3.1), while the CSCM is yet non existent.

This simple statement reveals the extent of the political obstacles to be surmounted if a multilateral naval CBMs regime is to be established in the Mediterranean. However, assuming that such a regime is indeed desirable to the end of increasing global and regional maritime security, the present situation can be altered.

The main political reason behind the underdevelopment of the CSCE Mediterranean dimension has historically been to separate East-West security concerns and negotiations from the specific dynamics of South-South (eg. Arab-Israeli) and North-South conflict and tensions.

It was also on this basis that the proponents of the CSCM, as recently as early 1990, deemed it necessary to propose a negotiating mechanisms that, while adopting the conceptual and methodological model of CSCE and including all of its members with a significant naval presence in the Mediterranean, would be kept nevertheless completely separate from the CSCE.

It may be argued that even today that the East-West confrontation has disappeared, giving full membership to the Southern Mediterraneans would highly complicate the functioning of CSCE and give a voice to unpredictable actors like Qaddafi's Libya in European security.

However, this argument loses some of its weight in the light of two simple considerations: first, why is it feasible to integrate in the CSCE the Muslim Central Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union and not Egypt or Morocco? Secondly, the CSCE has already developed mechanisms (namely in CDE and CFE) to shield arms control negotiations from the 'dilution' risks of the general rules of consensus and 'one country-one' vote systems: why would it be impossible to develop and appropriate mechanism to bring the negotiation of a naval CBM regime for the Mediterranean in the CSCE framework?

As for the merits of the CSCM proposal, it must be noticed that although its conceptual and political rationale remain valid, it remains politically weak because it is a European initiative taken at a time when the European political and security identity is both unresolved and contrasted by the US, insofar it can constitute an

obstacle or an alternative to the Euro-American alliance in NATO. In addition to that, it must be noted that the core concept of CSCM, a strategic deal between economic and security cooperation, has been captured in the multilateral track of the Arab-Israeli peace process thatinvolves Israel and the Arab countries together with the US, EC, Canada and Japan. Although geared towards a different US regional strategy, these multilateral negotiations reduce the appeal of the CSCM to some Southern countries.

Moreover, the European supporters of the CSCM differ among themselves about the scope and content of the proposal because of their different positions and interest within the Western system (i.e. French positions differ from the Italian ones)[64].

These political difficulties are reflected in the formulation of the security chapter of the CSCM proposal where it refers to the importance of "gradually increasing confidence, through increased transparency and information of each other's intentions", and states that "confidence building...is a prerequisite for disarmament" but concludes that "arms control in the CSCM is not for today"[65].

In any case, if they were to be the framework for Mediterranean naval arms control negotiations both the CSCM and the CSCE would pose a problem of membership, since the former exclude North European countries[66] and the latter all Southern Mediterranean countries; both membership exclude most riparian countries of the sea areas adjoining to the Mediterranean: the Nordic and Baltic seas to the North and the Red sea and the Gulf to the South.

The CSCE concept of 'adjoining sea area' to Europe seems to provide a useful guideline for the geographical scope of naval arms control negotiations including the Mediterranean. Indeed, while it has been argued throughout this paper that the negotiation of a Mediterranean naval CBMs regime, possibly including its southern adjoining sea areas, would make political sense from the point of view of North-South relations; disconnecting the Northen Euroepan regions from the process would not make much sense politically or militarly.

Conclusions

The post Cold war strategic environment does not seem to decrease the global importance of some broad maritime interests: to maintain the freedom of navigation in the high seas in peace time and the ability to achieve and maintain sea control in a crisis or war situation.

In fact, it can be argued that the new 'post-nuclear' Western security environment does enhance the strategic value of naval missions and the role of navies as the most flexible military instrument of national power, while growing off-shore interests increase non-military naval missions.

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[64] For more details see Aliboni, 1992.

[65] see Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 1991.

[66] The CSCM tentative list of participants includes: the EC countries, the Mediterranean countries (Albania, Algeria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Romania, USSR, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Yugoslavia), the Gulf countries (GCC members plus Iran, Iraq and Yemen), other CSCE countries (Canada and United States), UN-recognized entities (Palestine). (see Ministero del Esteri, 1991, p. 146).

Therefore, from a global Western strategic perspective the rationale for naval arms control seem at first weak or non existent. Does this analysis change substantially when the question is approached from a Mediterranean regional perspective?

Today the Mediterranean is the 'rear' to two areas of global concern, the former-USSR and the Arab-Persian Gulf. Towards the Middle East, the 'strategic rear' role was clearly performed during the Gulf war, when the vast majority of coalition forces passed through the Mediterranean.

This global role set a first set of political implications for regional naval arms control in the Mediterranean. Many in the West believe that regional naval arms control would obstacle the projection of naval forces from the Mediterranean to its Southern approaches, restricting the freedom of quickly redeploying naval forces.

However, it can be argued that, by providing increased North-South confidence and a set of common rules agreed upon by all Mediterranean navies, regional naval arms control can in fact facilitate power projection.

On the other hand, there are reasons to argue in favor of some measures of naval arms control exactly because of the new East-West security environment. Indeed, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the harsh competition aroused between Russia and Ukraine for the control of the ex-Soviet fleet could evolve in the sense of a less secure maritime environment.

Politically, it would therefore make much sense to integrate Russia and the Black Sea states in the negotiation of a regime of naval CBMs, possibly in the CSCE or CSCM framework, covering the sea areas 'adjoining' to Europe.

While the global role of the Mediterranean as Europe strategic rear towards the new arc of crisis is not controversial, it is far from clear which Western security institution will manage this role and how.

One of the difficulties of the Euro-American debate in this regard lies in the fact that Western security institutions, as well as the Mediterranean region itself, have a dual significance: global and regional. While the global interests of the Western partners towards the former Ussr and the Gulf coincide, they diverge, sometime significantly, in their regional implications.

In the Mediterranean context, only the crises affecting the former USSR or the Middle East have a global impact on Western security, while those of the Balkans, the Maghreb or the Horn of Africa remain of purely regional or local concern.

The fragmentation and hierarchization of the political interests as well as institutional frameworks that coexist in the Mediterranean, would seem to militate against new regional arms control initiatives: there is no single negotiating framework nor clear counterpart to the West, and it is unclear whether measures that could be beneficial in some context would not hinder other global or local Western security interests.

Nevertheless, regional political realities do provide some incentives for naval arms control in the Mediterranean.

The first of these incentives derives from a purely Western perspective. In fact, if the post-nuclear strategy revision increases the importance of naval roles, the reduction of US forces in Europe decrease the Alliance's ability to perform these roles in the Mediterranean and calls for the development of European naval capabilities.

The strengthening of European naval capabilities is already in the making

through national and multilateral programs, which may serve NATO, European and national interests alike. At the same time the US are pursuing their traditional policy of keeping the growth of European military capabilities within NATO; therefore, after the Gulf war they have supported the creation of a NATO standing naval force (finally realized on April 30, 1992).

These developments confirm the renewed interes for naval missions, but also stress that the potential intra-West contradictions, arising from different US and European appreciations of the global and regional strategic significance of the Mediterranean region, are already translating in the naval field.

As a consequence, there is a need to increase the rationality and transparency of the present development of Western naval policies in the Mediterranean. This could be helped by the establishment of some measures of common maritime security in the Mediterranean, which would rationalize in a cooperative direction the maritime regional environment. Moreover, the task of negotiating these measures with Southern and Eastern counterparts in the Mediterranean would help the Western allies to contain and solve their own potential divergences.

Another, possibly more powerful, political incentive for regional naval arms control derives from the North-South context. Eager to attract political attention and economic aid, the countries of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean feel increasingly marginalized by the collapse of bipolarism and by the concentration of political and economic energies of the industrialized world on the reconstruction of Europe.

The only exception to this perception of marginalization is a negative one: the Islamic South feels shifted into the role of enemy number one to Western security and substitute for the vanished Soviet threat. At the same time, suspicion and resentment against Western economic, political and cultural dominance remain an important streak in the political culture common to Arab nationalists and Islamic fundamentalists alike.

Although the Southern countries have never ceased to argue the indivisibility of European and Mediterranean security and to ask for full participation in the CSCE process, even after the end of the East-West confrontation, the Mediterranean continues to lack a forum in which North-South security concerns can be approached cooperatively.

Besides overall political considerations, there are concrete reasons to start this dialogue in the maritime field. For instance, increased responsibilities in policing territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zones can represent an excessive burden for less developed countries with large zones. The inability to implement their jurisdiction effectively is perceived as a gap in national security and prompt these countries to call for unilateral measures in critical areas, more restrictive than those envisaged in the Law of the Sea Convention.

Even a limited regime of naval CBMs would be beneficial in this sense and prevent claims such as a total ban of military maneuvers in EEZ; further measures, like the sharing of satellite information regulated by a regional or subregional cooperation agreement would be of great importance

Until very recently the Arab countries maintained a highly ideological approach to arms control, positions are evolving quickly however, especially after the second Gulf war. Therefore, an enlarged CSCE negotiations on limited measures of maritime security, could provide a concrete way to open a North-South dialogue on

military security, in line with present perceptions and policies of the countries of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean.

On the other hand, insofar as perceptions are fundamental in determining crisis behavior and arm race dynamics, it would in Western interests to rationalize its own discourse on 'the threat from the South' and initiate a dialogue on common security interests with the countries of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean.

In fact, the reorientation of US and Europeans national defence policies to meet an ill defined 'threat from the South', together with the establishment of specific multilateral mechanisms, like NATO Stanavformed, and the maintenance of extraordinary measures of international pressure against Iraq and Libya, risk to be unduly provocative towards the Southern countries. In the absence of counterbalancing measures of confidence building, these developments in Western security policies, that have their logic in the broader new Western security and political environment, risk to provoke exactly what they aim to prevent: a diffuse perception of North-South confrontation with an increasingly military dimension.

The case for Western military preparations for contingencies in the South would be much better served by a clear analysis of the mainly non-military nature of the sources of insecurity in the Mediterranean-Middle East region as well as by a clear formulation of the legitimate Western security interests in the region. These interests are shared by the US, the Europeans and the governments of the Southern countries and could provide the basis for a common, non provocative naval military doctrine in the Mediterranean.

Given the asymmetries the characterizes the North-South context, structural limitations on naval forces could be more the unilateral consequence of an indirect approach, through operational measures and CMBs, than the result of direct negotiations. Reducing threat perceptions in the naval sphere and providing the Southern Mediterranean countries with a cooperative environment supporting their ability to answer peacefully to the growing demand for the civilian control of territorial waters, would probably contribute more to a 'healthy' development of their naval inventories than would structural arms control.

As for operational limitations, since in the Mediterranean naval exercises outside territorial waters are presently performed mostly by NATO and namely US forces, any operational limitation would be a largely asymmetrical measure, hardly acceptable to the West now that the Mediterranean enjoys a renewed strategic significance.

However, it has to be noted that some operational limitations are included in only example of local naval CMBS existing in the Mediterranean: those agreed between Greece and Turkey in 1988 in the framework of the so called Davos process. It may argued from this example that in the Mediterranean context, viable operational limitations would be those agreed bilaterally and implemented locally.

It is sometime argued that there is no need for new regimes of naval CMBs, given the existence of relevant global agreements and the overall transparency of naval military activities. To be politically acceptable, this position should require the strengthening and clarifying the existing agreements that would enable them to work as effective naval CBMs; as for transparency, this notion should take into account the limited access to national means of verification of smaller or less developed countries.

From a political point of view, all sorts of information and communications CBMs would be of great relevance to the North-South Mediterranean dimension,

because they would constitute a first attempt to comprehensive military cooperation between the two sides. This cooperation could have an impact on mutual security perceptions much more important of its technical value for increased maritime security.

Further steps like notification, crisis communication and maneuver observation CBMs, should be part of the regime, but could be implemented in an agreed phased manner. The inclusion of more constraining information measures, like inspection and verification (on-site or through sensing devices) measures should also be included, but possibly left as the last stage of the implementation calendar of the regime.

In any case, the latter more constraining measures, geared towards the prevention of surprise attack, would be especially important to verify compliance on the part of the more sophisticated naval units of the successor states of the Soviet Union. This would be relevante not so much to defuse traditional fears of East-West conflict, now superceded by political realities, but as yet another instrument of prevention of crisis among the former communist states or between them and their Southern neighbors.

The conclusions reached in the preceding sections show that the categories of naval arms control politically most useful in the Mediterranean context would include:

1) operational limitations deriving from:

- global agreements (e.g. exclusion or restriction of naval military exercises in the contiguous or exclusive economic zone, derived from a consensus interpretation of UNCLOS provisions; ban on dangerous deportment deriving from a multilateral agreement for the prevention of incidents at sea);
- bilateral/subregional agreements (e.g. the 1988 Greek-Turkish agreement).

2) A confidence building measures regime (information, notification, crisis communication, inspection) to be negotiated multilaterally at the regional level.

As for the most suitable negotiating frameworks, there is no doubt that unilateral initiatives can be beneficial: however, if the political interest for such initiatives exists, it would much more effectively invested in launching a multilateral process.

It is often argued that a multilateral process could be usefully substituted by a network of bilateral agreements. Indeed, it is true that bilateral agreements, as in the case of the Incidents-at-Sea, can eventually be transformed into a multilateral treaty without affording the diplomatic costs of multilateral negotiations. However, as repeatedly pointed out in this paper, the political value of a naval CSBM regime in the Mediterranean lies exactly in providing of comprehensive forum, something that bilateral or multi-bilateral agreements would not offer. Also, a bilateral approach would have no room for crisis prevention and disputes settling mechanisms.

However, a bilateral or subregional approach would be useful and sometime necessary to regulate maritime concerns in specific conflict situations. In addition to the already mentioned Turkish-Greek case, the Arab-Israeli context could be another

case in point, whereas in parallel and/or following a diplomatic solution, and in connection to other regional arms control initiatives, specific measures of maritime security could be negotiated to between Israel and the Arab coastal states.

As a consequence, it can be positively argued that the best system to increase maritime security through confidence building measures should be multilayered and a 'three-tier system' can be envisaged.

It would be based on:

1) a global, not-too-demanding regime deriving from international multilateral agreements;
2) a more rigorous regional regime regulating information and communication CBMs;
3) a local-specific sub-regional regime, stipulating operational limitations suitable to specific conflict situations.

Both the CSCE or the proposed CSCM (Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean) could provide an appropriate framework for the negotiation and monitoring of a Mediterranean naval CSBMs regime, which, as argued in the preceding sections, is the most promising form of regional naval arms control.

However, neither of the two frameworks is ready to act in this direction: the CSCE has repeatedly resisted the development of its Mediterranean security dimension, while the CSCM is yet non existent.

In any case, if they were to be the framework for Mediterranean naval arms control negotiations, both the CSCM and the CSCE would pose a problem of membership, since the former excludes North European countries and the latter all Southern Mediterranean countries; both membership excludes most riparian countries of the Southern sea areas adjoining to the Mediterranean: the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

The CSCE concept of 'adjoining sea area' to Europe seems to provide a useful guideline for the geographical scope of naval arms control negotiations including the Mediterranean. Indeed, while it has been argued throughout this paper that, politically, the negotiation of a Mediterranean naval CBMs regime, possibly including its southern adjoining sea areas, would make sense from the point of view of North-South relations; disconnecting the Northen European regions from this process would not make much sense politically or militarly.

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