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THE CHANGING BALANCE OF POWER IN WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN

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For the last 3 years the World 's global balance of Power has been changing. The Soviet Union disease broke down the Cold War equilibrium. In the mean time, the Gulf War increased the fracture between North and South, even if the coalition was very wide with Europe, Arab and American Forces. In the same time, development of fundamentalism in Muslim Countries is becoming an essential issue altering the political and social landscape. Moreover the demographic growth, linked to the persistent economic stagnation, creates the conditions of a deep crisis in the Southern Countries. In such a situation, what is now the strategic framework and the new balance of power in Western Mediterranean ?

1) South European Countries

Strategically, European Countries have not yet drawn all lessons from the Soviet Union collapse. The Gulf War was an unprepared action which cannot be considered as a model of a new style in North-South relations, nor as a sample of future military action. Doubts on the right way to stop the Yugoslavian conflict reveal the European inability to define a coherent strategic response to new crisis. This cause of uncertainty is certainly linked to the disappearance of an identified direct threat : the Soviet one.

For many years, Soviet threat involved a quasi exclusive orientation to the European "theaters". Since 1989, the Soviet threat let place to a diffuse Security need in response to potential Southern risks (1). Few years ago the failed Libyan missile strike on Lampedusa Island in response to Tripoli and Benghazi U.S. bombing was the first revelation of an effective South threat. In 1986, the presentation of the first Spanish Strategic Plan (PEC) revealed that military attention was essentially focussed on the South. The Andalousian military Region was the most important in term of scale, equipments, and budget. France has always shown a grand interest to the Maghrebian events, for historical reasons, and for Libya, because of war in Chad.

a) Budget cuts in an uncertain landscape :

Now, European Countries are engaged in a deep military budget cuts with the phasing away of the Soviet threat and increased by by current economic depression. Spain announced in october 1992 a 10% cuts in real terms of military investment. The situation in Italy is worth. 1993 budget has just been announced, and the tremendous economic crisis will probably lead to severe cuts. France goes in its slow but drastic Armed Forces

reorganisation ; (22 400 work stations have to be suppressed in the 1993 budget which will grow only 1,35%, less than inflation).(2).

b) Cooperation in different modes :

Such a situation should lead Southern European Countries to find new solutions for future military options. Cooperation may be an answer to budget reductions in each Country. Similar analysis about a growing instability and the multiplication of risks in the Mediterranean could be valorized in a common reflexion and joined manoeuvres. But the most relevant way of cooperation is actually, Intelligence. Prevention of crisis, identification of threats (like proliferation), regular information exchanges must be the way to maximize rare resources (Helios cooperation in data distribution is a good example). Such an approach could be developed in a trilateral framework, but it would be also possible to find a broader dimension. Western European Union would be the best structure to manage that situation because NATO, due to its geographical constraints, is unadapted. Naval control of UN embargo in Adriatic coast by WEU Naval Forces (with Nato), may be a good example of future ways of military deployments. As a matter of fact, WEU State Members identified Mediterranean as a main objective in Security (June 19, 1992 Declaration of Petersberg). They gave mandate to WEU to "instaurer progressively a dialogue with Maghreb Countries,..."(pt 18) (3). Moreover, the creation in Spain of an agency for exploitation of Satellites imagery is the first step for an integrated cooperation in Intelligence.

2) The Arab Countries

Since the early 80's, the Maghrebian States weakening process is striking. Economically, Algeria is near collapse and Libya experiences severe difficulties with oil prices fall. Politically and socially, Tunisia and Algeria are affected by the rise of fundamentalism (4). That peculiar topic was treated differently in both Countries ; Tunisian islamists are under President Ben Ali's iron hand ; Algeria lives on an Emergency State, since General Nezzar "*Coup d'Etat*" created the *Haut Comité d'Etat (HCE)*. Despite a rough repression, islamist resistance shows its reality with a strong strategy aiming at killing members from Security Forces, attempts against civil-military objectives and rural guerilla. Strategically, Libya lost a lot of his influence in the Mediterranean and Central Africa. American bombing, then, severe defeats in Northern Chad stopped Colonel Qadhafi's Regional initiatives. But Libya is still using terrorism as political mean to promote its interest and though under UN embargo, refuses his Secret Services members extradition and prosecution in Europe.

Inter-maghrebians issues seems to change too. Henceforward Libyan threat against Tunisia appears substantially weakened. The Algerian political and economic failure lead to restrain support to the Republic Saharaoui Polisario Front (RASD) Armed Forces and Morocco is now managing the referendum process in Western Sahara. The unknown lies in King Hassan capability to drive the referendum process to his best profit and Algeria's purpose to reintroduce Western Sahara issues as a National Security priority, appears not in a near calendar. UMA integration process is likewise switched off. The economic and political situation of each of its members are so at odds to promote a real rapprochement.

3) Major imbalances

a) Demographic growth in Southern Country

The demographic balance between North and South in the Western Mediterranean is now changing to the advantage of the South. UN evaluation for the beginning of the new century shows that, for the first time in History, Maghrebian population will near european one. In 2025, wild and coastal urbanisation aggravated by food and water lacks of supplying, (according to the UN *Plan Bleu*, 80 % of population in the Mediterranean will live on the coast in 2025) (5) could cause social disturbances and sanitary and epidemiologic problems.

b) Economic failures

The increasing population would not be a real problem if Southern Countries were able to provide their citizens an economic welfare. Indeed each national country has enough natural ressources to absorb such an increase in population, but declining economies prevent them of providing ressources for unemployment, housing and, sometimes food supplying, to the actual population. Then Northern migrations become the ultime mean to find a best way of life or, more simply, to life. In 1987, 2 millions Maghrebians (Algerians, Tunisians, Moroccans) were living in Europe. The migration most dramatic expression is, today the "naval bridge" between Tanger and Algésiras through wich illegal migrants try, risking drowning, to reach Spanish coasts, with poor boats. Libya is the single country to receive 500 000 foreign workers (essentially Arabians), because its own population is insufficient and unable to assume the technical functions necessary to numerous modern jobs.

Maghrebians Countries (except Libya which accepted wilfully a tremendous internal crisis) did not escape to the Eighties debt growth. Ideological policies or energy ressources bad use, plunged these Countries in a deep crisis. Maghrebian debt in 1989, was 53, 9 billions dollars. Unemployment reaches now 23 % of active population in Algeria, 15 % in Morroco and Tunisia (6). Algeria is now engaged in a very severe

restructuring plan, but the international economic gloominess and the absence of boost coming from part of the European Countries, let few opportunities for a better development.

c) The rise of fundamentalism

Economic and social situation is complicated by the rise during the last ten years of fundamentalist movements which took a very relevant place in Maghrebians societies. This synthesis between political parties, charitable organisations and religious congregations took advantage of economic and political failure, mainly in Tunisia and Algeria. Fundamentalism was first a protest movement which used the very narrow mean of expression let by authoritarian regimes (personal dictatorship in Tunisia, Socialist and Baassist single party inspired in Algeria) : Mosque. It tried also to be an alternative to occidental economic and political schemes, unable to provide to the South a decent way of life. Fundamentalist movements, wich benefit a wide logistical and moral sustain from Iranian Revolution and, also Sudan. Moreover, they received very substantial finances from Petromonarchies, and mainly, Saoudi Arabia. (7)

Islamic movement suffer a rough repression from part of President Ben Ali in Tunisia where 3000 supporters are supposed to be in jail (8). In Algeria after a very spectacular growth in local elections leading to control main municipalities by FIS, the islamic party was dismissed shortly during the legislative elections by a military coup putting into trial islamics supporters. Now the question is to know if the Government team (President Ali Kafi and Prime minister Abdelaïd Abdelslam) wich took office after President Boudiaf murder, is able to win the economic challenge and definitively break fundamentalism influence.

Libya an Morocco are less directly concerned by islamic rise. Qadhafi imposed his very special, modernized and "revolutionnary" vision of Islam, and does not seem to suffer too much from Sudanian influence. It is important to precise that Qadhafi dismantled the old mode of proselytism and social organisation in Libya, the Confraternities, when he arrived into power in 1969, for the main structure of King Idriss power and legitimacy based on Muslim Sanussi Confraternity, also active in Sudan.

The case of Morocco is different. King Hassan from Alauit dynasty (direct Prophet Muhammad family), represents by himself, the legitimacy of religious and civil power. It is very difficult for an opposition movement, even fundamentalist one to use Islam to counter such a power. Nevertheless, some manifestations appeared in the 80's ; each of them, were quickly repressed with the discret Makhzen's *savoir faire*.

d) Algeria as the key for Maghreb stability

For the future, it seems obvious that Algeria represents the main "choke point" for Western Mediterranean Security. If Islamic would take the power in Algier, both neighbours countries would be threatened. Tunisia first, because President Ben Ali's power is not absolutely asserted. His real popularity, even for the anti-Islamic fringe of population is low and the wave effect in case of fundamentalist victory in Alger could certainly sweep out the regime. Morocco is in a different situation for reasons of King Hassan's religious dimension but one should forecast, in a same hypothesis, a hardening in Islamisation if the King or his successor perceived such a threat upon the Crown ; or moreover, the destitution and change of regime due to the aggravation of social pressures. In Libya the prospective remain unpredictable. Certain signs show a weakening in Qadhafi's power, but it's not easy to detect if that kind of messages are coming from manipulation by the Power or if they are really true. It would be interesting to study now the real influence of Confraternities regarding to Sudan proselytism. Nevertheless in all cases and for each Country, the fall of Algeria in fundamentalist hands will announce the whole destabilisation of the Maghreb.

4) European Community decisive role

European Community represents now the main actor likely to provide a security framework to the Region and, more widely, the whole Mediterranean. First, EC is the first seller and customer in Maghreb Countries (except Libya), meanwhile Maghrebian exchanges reach on the 2-3 % in each economy (9). Then Maghreb is indissolubly linked to EC. In counterpart, EC should favour a better development and reinforce economics links despite economy competition, mainly in Southern agricole products. But it could also play a decisive role in policy cooperation. In 1991, during the Gulf War, Renewed Mediterranean Policy has been launched, with a 4,405 billions Ecu for a 1992-1996 period (10). New financial Protocols have been signed with Algeria and Tunisia. Negotiations are under way with Morocco wich refused previously the Protocole in reaction to the initial European Parliament squeeze for Human Rights contempt in Alait Kingdom. Recently, some horizontal initiatives on research (Averoes project), Urban cooperation (Med Urbs), University networking (Med campus) and industrial investment (Med invest) took place. That new major implication in Mediterranean issues designates European Community as the more relevant element of stability for next decade. The report to European Council (Lisbonne, June 1992), about the Common Foreign and Security Policy (PESC) likely evolution, designates the Maghreb as one of the most relevant topics necessitating a peculiar attention. Maghreb then will represent a great interest for "Security and social stability"-(demography growth, migrations and

fundamentalism rise are seen as main questions threatening the stability). The report insists on the necessity to improve the dialogue and to strengthen cooperation with Magrheb (economic but also in Drug and terrorism enforcement). Regional integration and finally the respect of international agreements in disarmament and **non-proliferation** are the main others points. (11)

5) South European initiatives for a Security framework

Despite the Gulf War, initiatives from South European Countries tried to introduce a wide framework for Security in the Mediterranean. During the Conference of Mallorca, Italy and Spain proposed to establish a general framework for the whole Mediterranean, after the model of European CSCE process, including all protagonists, states, minorities, ect... (12). France, launched the less ambitious "5+ 5" process, concerning the Western Mediterranean Nations and the Commission of Community. This approach tries to propose simple ways of cooperation (legal, technical, industrial, environmental...) easy to launch, with limited prime objectives.

After this first start, the process was frozen due to Libyan attitude regarding to UN sanctions following the international investigation about attempts against UTA and Pan Am commercial aircrafts. The meeting which took place november 12, 1992 in Mauritania between European Commissioner Matutes and UMA actual President, may be interpreted as a sign of renewal of the dialogue, certainly with EC and UMA, but in the 5 + 5 process too, (if Libya could accept international rules).

Conclusion

Western Mediterranean is now entering a deep period of uncertainty, oscillating between failure and cohesion. Growing element of crisis may lead to sudden explosions of violence and generate higher proliferation. Northern Nations are looking for a new strategic role but the economic situation should lead them to strengthen the military and Intelligence cooperation to prevent or reduce risks and threats. Algeria stays the unknown and its future evolution will determine the stability in the Region. At last, despite the difficult awakening of Maastricht's European Union, European Community will be the main structuring factor in terms of Security and Stability. Last year, Roberto Aliboni was clearly defining forward objectives : "The complexity of the Mediterranean security situation requires integrated multilateral institutions. Extending the areas of competence of European Community institutions to include military, security and foreign policies would foster European security in the Mediterranean and make the European role in North-South Mediterranean institutions more effective" (13).

The new balance of power in the Mediterranean will depend on both entities (Algerian State and EC) ability to manage the future.

NOTES

- 1) See Jean-Michel Boucheron, "Rapport au nom de la Commission de la Défense nationale et des Forces armées sur le projet de loi de programmation relatif à l'équipement militaire et aux effectifs de la Défense pour les années 1992-1994", deux tomes, Assemblée nationale, N° 2935 du 7 octobre 1992, tome 1 p 131 and also, interview of Italian Defense Minister Salvo Ando, Defense News, September 14-20, 1992, p. 54

- 2) Les Echos, october 1°, 1992

- 3) Conseil des Ministres de l'UEO, le 19 juin 1992 au Petersberg (Bonn), Europe, n°1787 du 23 juin 1992

- 4) See Rapport Boucheron, op cit, tome 1, p. 155-160

- 5) Plan Bleu, "Perspectives sur le Bassin Méditerranéen (Développement et environnement" 1° phase 1985

- 6) See Jean François Daguzan, "Coopération industrielle et transferts de technologie au Maghreb : entre développement et sécurité", in Méditerranée occidentale : sécurité et coopération, sous la direction de Marie Lucy Dumas, FEDN, Paris 1992, p. 127-148

- 7) See Rapport Boucheron, op cit. tome 1, p. 159

- 8) Le Monde, november 10, 1992

- 9) See J.F. Daguzan, "Le modèle d'industrialisation de l'Espagne démocratique est-il adaptable au Mahgreb ?" ; in L'avenir de l'Espace Méditerranéen, sous la direction de Christian Reynaud et AbdelKhader Sid Ahmed, Crédit Mutuel Méditerranéen-Publisud, Paris, 1991, P.474

- 10) See Kalioppe Joséphidès, "Géopolitique d'une coexistence : l'avenir des relations Europe - Maghreb", in Méditerranée occidentale : sécurité et coopération, op cit.p. 83-105

11) Rapport au Conseil Européen de Lisbonne sur l'évolution probable de la Politique Etrangère et de Sécurité Commune (PESC) visant à cerner les domaines se prêtant à une action commune vis-à-vis de pays ou de groupes de pays particuliers, Europe, n° 5761 des 29/30 juin 1992

12) Les Européens face aux défis d'une politique de sécurité commune, sous la direction d'Yves Boyer, see Maurizio Cremasco, "Le cas de l'Italie", Les Cahiers du CREST n° 7, juin 1992, P. 55-101

13) See Roberto Aliboni, La Sécurité européenne à travers la Méditerranée, U.E.O. - Cahiers de Chaillot n° 2 mars 1991, P. 42

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