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**PERSPECTIVES ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE  
AT THE START OF 1993**

*by Maurizio Cremasco*

Paper presented at the IAI-RAND joint conference  
on "Mediterranean security environment"  
Washington, February 18-19, 1993

IAI9315

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**Foreword**

This document is composed of two separate but complementary papers.

The first is the paper on which the time-limited presentation at the conference was based.

The second is a "background" paper, which was distributed in advance and which details many of the issues touched upon in the presentatio paper.

**Presentation Paper**

In the past two years, hopes for a "new world order" have been replaced by the cold reality of a "new world disorder" which will presumably last for decades. As we begin 1993, there are 26 conflicts in the world -- either between two warring countries or, within a country, between government and insurrectionary forces -- and 47 areas in which ethnic tensions and national rivalries could be a source of potential conflict.

The prospects are for a further fragmentation of the international system and, in the longer term, for a deepening of the political and economic divide between North and South, with the additional complication of an Islamic world which appears headed toward deeper anti-Western sentiments and attitudes.

One has the impression of witnessing a return to an earlier historical period, with the re-emergence of the main issues of the closing years of the 19th century -- the Balkan powder-keg, the Eastern Question and the endemic instability of multi-ethnic nations. The international events have again confronted Western decision-makers with old diplomatic dilemmas: Will appeasement of aggression today not bring more costly and bloody results tomorrow? Should the West intervene, even when its vital interests are not at stake? Where, how and with what instruments should the West intervene? Where should the line be drawn between advocating and supporting territorial change and defending the status-quo? When does the intervention cease to be a necessary humanitarian action and become interference in the internal affairs of a country?

Today, the situation is even more difficult because the old dilemmas are mixed with new problems, mainly deriving from the disintegration of the Soviet empire, a tectonic shift in the international scene, with consequences and repercussions which have still to be completely felt and which are bound to influence international events for a long time. New problems are deriving also from the alarming situation in the African continent where several countries (Zaire, Angola, Somalia) are on the verge of total breakdown.

It is open to question if the West has the political will, the military force and the economic power to respond to risks to its security which are multifaceted in nature and multidirectional. This is particularly true if one thinks that the majority of those

risks cannot be confronted with the instrument of deterrence as had been done in the past when the West was faced with the traditional Soviet threat.

There could be the temptation of adopting a strategy of containment similar to that applied during the Cold War. In other words, to establish a "cordon sanitaire" around the crisis area, limiting the action to avoiding the spill-over and the enlargement of the conflict.

But this policy would appear too self-centered and strategically, politically and economically counterproductive in the long run. The West cannot isolate itself and refuse to participate in, and possibly manage and direct, this epochal transition.

Moreover, the West would be accused of a double standard unless the policy is applied in every case and everywhere, regardless of geographical proximity or national interests to be safeguarded.

Finally, it would be difficult to rationalize and defend such a policy before the Western public, particularly in cases in which human suffering becomes the main element of judgement such as in Somalia and Yugoslavia.

On the other hand, the West cannot and should not intervene in all crises, playing the role of world's policeman. Some domestic crises simply have no solution which could be imposed from the outside. Does anyone seriously believe that the situation in Somalia will not return to the "status quo ante" as soon as the U.S. Marines and the other forces are withdrawn? Other crises are too complicated or too risky, and probably the less messy solution is to contain the fire and let it extinguish itself, no matter how long it takes.

In this context, the future of the United Nations is of paramount importance. There would be a significant difference in the successful management of international instability if the UN were to evolve from an organization limited to peacekeeping to one capable of peacemaking with the full participation of all major nations -- Russia, Japan and China included.

In June 1992, the European Council in Lisbon reported on the likely development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and identified areas open to joint European action, ranging from Central and Eastern Europe (Russia, the former Soviet Republics and the former Yugoslavia included) to the Maghreb and Middle East.

However, Europe does not appear willing to go beyond generic commitments to promote political stability; contribute to the creation of political and economic frameworks capable of advancing regional cooperation; and support peaceful solutions in the former Yugoslavia and the Middle East.

In fact, Europe is divided on the approach to the problem of international instability and ethnic conflicts, and its weak and confused response to the Yugoslav crisis is a good case in point.

From a strictly European perspective, there are at least three relevant short-term security issues: the unrelenting pace of migration from the East and the South toward Germany and the Southern European states; the possibility of a trade war between the EC and the United States, a war which will have a dangerous impact on trans-Atlantic security and defense relationships; the spread of the civil war in Croatia and Bosnia to Macedonia and Kosovo, with the Balkanization of the conflict and the possible intervention of external actors. In this context, the recent, new Russian attitude and political posturing in favor of Serbia is an additional element of concern.

It might seem odd to cite migration as a significant security risk. But, in Germany mass migration, which is difficult to stem and control is aggravating an

already serious social and economic situation. It is becoming an element of domestic instability with clear political repercussions, which, in turn, might fuel a change in German foreign policy.

A trans-Atlantic trade war would be a tragedy. I do not think it is necessary to explain what this would mean in terms of the continuous viability of the American defense commitment to Europe, the survival of NATO as the symbol of that commitment, and the possibility of unleashing centrifugal forces within the EC.

The spread the civil war in the former Yugoslavia would be an even bigger tragedy, with direct consequences on the whole international situation. As of the date of this paper, no diplomatic solution is in sight and time is running short for preventing the slaughter from expanding to Kosovo. This will certainly trigger a reaction not only in Albania but also in other Muslim countries.

Europe and the United States are still undecided on the best diplomatic and military course, while the UN contingent is impotent in the face of the spreading violence, incapable of providing a consistent flow of relief aid, and suffering losses. The Clinton Administration has decided to set aside the use of military force for now and concentrate on a new peace initiative. The European countries, on the other hand, appear to favor the Owen-Vance peace plan.

Let us move to a longer term perspective and to different areas.

In the Gulf, Iran is posed to become the dominant power, probably a nuclear one in the early part of next century -- unless Israel will still be willing and able to intervene to stop Iran's nuclear development -- and there is little the other Gulf countries could do to change this outcome. The alternative represented by a "repowered" Iraq as a regional counterweight is not acceptable. This means that stability in the Gulf, particularly in terms of protection of smaller countries and the oil flow will mainly depend on the United States for the foreseeable future.

In the Mediterranean region, the focus is on at least four developments which are bound to have an impact on European security: the continuation of the Arab-Israeli peace process; the proliferation of long range ballistic missiles; the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and high-tech weapons; the diffusion of Islamic fundamentalism in North Africa; the deepening of the economic and social North-South gap, aggravated by insufficient agricultural production (the countries from Morocco to Egypt have become net importers of agricultural products) and an inadequate industrialization process, a high foreign debt burden (foreign debt reduces their export incomes from a fifth to a third) and an explosive population growth.

The risk of proliferation of long-range ballistic missiles in the Mediterranean area is less immediate than it is thought.

No Arab country in the Mediterranean has the industrial and technological ability for the domestic construction of long range surface-to-surface missiles with a militarily significant CEP.

Moderate technical competence is required to reverse-engineer and replicate simple systems, while significant technical skill and industrial infrastructure are required for indigenous development. It is more likely that proliferation would be the result of acquisitions from a foreign country -- China, India, Russia -- willing to export its systems.

As a matter of fact, even the 600 km. range SCUD-C missiles presently possessed by Iran, Egypt and Syria are not a domestic upgrade of the Soviet SCUD-B systems, but have been provided by North Korea.

Obviously, the deployment of missiles with a range of 2500-3000 km on any

North-African country will present Europe -- and particularly Southern Europe -- with a totally new strategic situation.

But the threat is medium-term and at present no European nation is seriously thinking about the development of an anti-tactical ballistic missile (ATBM) system.

Western means for constraining missile proliferation are limited and partially effective.

The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), whose membership, as of mid-1992, has reached 18 countries from the original seven, should prevent the transfer of missile systems and technologies. Together with unilateral or bilateral restrictions, it is the only "supply side" approach to stemming missile proliferation. The results of the regime are mixed. It is expected that the MTCR can, at best, extend the development process, increase R&D costs and retard or block qualitative improvements in technology.

However, the risk of proliferation of ballistic missiles should not overshadow the fact that another proliferation, that of high-performance combat aircraft, is already a reality in the whole region.

In military terms, and in terms of offensive capabilities -- considering that the aircraft are capable of carrying nuclear and chemical weapons -- the Tu-22s, the Su-24s, the Mig-27s represent a potential threat, which is not to be underestimated.

The proliferation of chemical and nuclear weapons is even more difficult to restrain and control. The nuclear proliferation opportunities are more numerous today than in the past because of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and the possibility of smuggling part of the vast amount of nuclear material, which will be made available by the dismantling of the former Soviet weapons -- according to a recent estimate it would amount to about 500 tons of highly enriched uranium and 96 tons of plutonium.

The question is simple. How far is the international community, and the West in particular, ready to go to stop other nations from acquiring a nuclear military capability? Should military options (limited options?) be considered, and in which cases? How could these options be eventually applied without becoming an element of further destabilization of the international system, considering that the majority of potential proliferators are Islamic countries?

The spreading influence of the Islamic fundamentalist movements is an instability factor for the entire North African region, from Morocco to Egypt, and is a European security liability because of their basically anti-Western political posture. It may be true that the foreign policy of the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front, if it takes power -- an event that French Intelligence estimates to be possible in less than two years -- will be different from that of Iran. But it would be easy to predict that the links between Algiers and Tehran will be strong, and that Iran will somewhat influence Algeria's attitudes. Moreover, an Islamic Fundamentalist regime in Algeria will have profound repercussions in Tunisia, Lybia, Egypt, three countries which are already struggling with strong Fundamentalist movements. Moreover, it will probably influence the future objectives of the Algerian nuclear program, which has been only recently unveiled.

One last note on population growth.

The Middle East and the Maghreb are in the forefront of the world's demographic explosion. From Morocco to Iran, populations are increasing faster than in Latin America.

The population of the Middle East and North Africa (excluding Turkey and

including Iran) will increase from the 272.4 million of the 1990 to 562.2 million in 2025.

The demographic explosion is bound to affect all attempts at economic development and socio-political reforms. Already in the 80's, the increases in the gross national products of the Northern Africa countries were basically offset by population growth.

## **Background Paper**

### 1. Introduction.

In the past two years, hopes for a "new world order" have been replaced by the cold reality of a "new world disorder" which will presumably last for decades. At the start of 1993, there are 26 conflicts in the world -- either between two warring countries or, within a country, between government and insurrectionary forces -- and 47 areas in which ethnic tensions and national rivalries could be a source of potential conflict.<sup>1</sup>

In this brief overview, I will try to analyze the main elements of the present, fragmented and dangerous international situation, concentrating on the Mediterranean region and on the areas geo-strategically linked to it.

In general terms, apart from the final outcome of the European integration process, the further and stable evolution of the former Soviet Union, and Russia in particular, toward democracy and an open market, and the role that the United States under President Clinton will be ready and willing to play, there are several factors, which are bound to shape the future of the international scene in this decade, and to have an impact on European and American security.

These include the following:

- \* The gradual return to a more stable international system, or a negative trend toward its further fragmentation and the passage from endemic tensions to open conflict in the 47 areas of the world previously mentioned.

- \* The role of the United Nations, and its evolution from an organization limited to peacekeeping to one capable of peacemaking. In this respect, the U.S. attitude and policy will be of paramount importance.

- \* The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and of mass impact, i.e. the proliferation of nuclear and chemical armaments, and of long range ballistic missiles and high-technology weapons systems.

- \* The prospect of nuclear blackmail and terrorism, facilitated by the disintegration of the former Soviet Union and the diffusion of nuclear material and know-how in the Third World. It is expected that the dismantling of the former Soviet nuclear weapons will produce about 500 tons of highly enriched uranium and 96 tons of plutonium. Experts fear the likelihood of smuggling.<sup>2</sup>

- \* The increasing "Islamic" sentiment in the Arab world which, even when it

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<sup>1</sup>. Jane's Defence Weekly, 2 January 1993, pp. 12-19.

<sup>2</sup>. David Hughes, Arms Experts Fear Nuclear Blackmail, Aviation Week and Space Technology (AWST), 4 January 1993, pp. 61-62.

is far from the revolutionary zeal of the fundamentalists, appears to find part of its strength in general anti-Western feelings and attitudes.

\* The growing social disruption potential and security repercussions of widespread migration to Europe as a result of domestic political instabilities, bleak economic prospects and ethnic tensions in the South and East.

\* The deepening of the international connections and the spread of cooperation among mafia-type criminal organizations and the possible use of terrorism for the achievement of their aims.

\* The population growth in the South and its impact on domestic social and economic development and migration trends.

\* The economic and social impact of environmental risks.

## **2. The Problems**

Let be now more specific. Keeping in mind the general background I have just outlined, I will touch on the main problems of the Mediterranean region which have a direct bearing on security.

I will confine my analysis to some aspects of these problems, considering that they will be fully addressed in the course of our discussions.

### **a. The Gulf. Iran's foreign and security policy**

Internationally, Iran is pursuing an ambitious and wide-ranging foreign policy. Among other initiatives, this involves the attempt to gain greater influence in the Persian Gulf (the occupation and reported fortification of Abu Mussa is a stark reminder of the continuity of Iran's regional ambitions, which date back to the Shah's era) and the attempt to exploit the openings in the non-Arab Muslim Asian republics of the former Soviet Union, which are more likely to be receptive to Islamic fundamentalist credo. Groups of Tagiki militia men reportedly received guerrilla training in military camps in Sudan (where Iran supports Islamic fundamentalism) under the guidance of Pasdaran instructors. They are now back in Tagikistan sustaining the party of Islamic Renaissance and taking part in the fighting against Russian troops and government forces. It is widely assumed that the weaker Tagikistan is only the first target of Tehran's grand design for the emergence of radical Islamic states in central Asia. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are expected to be next.<sup>3</sup>

Particularly troubling are the patterns of Iran's alliances with Syria,<sup>4</sup> Pakistan, China and North Korea, and its developments in the military and nuclear fields.

Iran appears to be on its way to becoming the most powerful military force in the region.<sup>5</sup> In 1991, Iran reportedly paid \$5 billion to China, \$4 billion to the Russian

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<sup>3</sup> Luigi Ippolito, "Offensiva Islamica nell'Asia ex-Sovietica", *Corriere della Sera* (CS), 8 November 1992, p. 7. See also Guido Olimpio, "Nuovi adepti nella legione di Allah", *ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> In this context, it is significant that an agreement on joint production of SCUD C missiles was apparently reached in October 1991 during a visit to Tehran of the Chief of Staff of the Syrian Army. See, "Syria and Iran Pool SRBM Resources", *Flight International*, 16-22 October 1991, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> For data on Iran's weapons systems acquisition, see Arnold Beichman, *Insight*, 29 June 1992. On the sale of state-of-the-art technologies by European, Asian and American companies, see Steve Coll "Iran Devours Technology as Wahington and Allies Differ on Export Controls" and R. Jeffrey Smith, "U.S. Opposes Sales That Aid Armaments", *International Herald Tribune* (IHT), 11 November 1992,

Federation and \$3 billion to North Korea for modern weapons. North Korea supplied 170 SCUD B and SCUD C missiles (presumably more than 100 of the C model),<sup>6</sup> while China supplied 600-mile range M-11 ballistic missiles.

Moreover, Iran is reported to have tested two new ballistic missiles in 1991 - the first with a range of over 700 km. and the second with a range of over 1000 km.<sup>7</sup> These are believed to be the result of a joint Chinese-Iranian project.

In March 1992, Tehran signed a \$1 billion contract with the Russian Federation for the delivery of 400 T-72 tanks, including crew training in Russia, as well as maintenance and repair. Another contract for \$175 million was signed for the purchase of 500 MBP-2 armored fighting vehicles (AFV), while China has granted a \$14 million credit for spare parts for the AFVs already in Iran's possession.

Apart from the Iraqi combat aircraft redeployed to Iran during the Gulf conflict and eventually requisitioned as compensation for the damages of the 1980-1988 war, Russia has recently sold Tehran advanced aircraft such as SU-24s, Mig-29s and, reportedly, even Tu-26 Backfire long range bombers.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the acquisition of two (with an option for a third) KILO class conventional attack submarines will give Iran a unique undersea capability of disruption of commercial traffic in the Gulf of Oman, northwest Arabian Sea and Strait of Hormuz.<sup>9</sup> The military importance of the KILO submarines should not be overestimated, but it is fair to say that they can provide a measure of sea denial,<sup>10</sup> and a means to intimidate and harass with significant political effects.

This new development will force the other Gulf countries to reassess their security requirements and arrangements. Oman, considering New Delhi's interest in balancing the loose alliance between Iran and Pakistan, is reportedly contemplating the enlistment of India's large anti-submarine warfare capabilities. It is likely that Saudi Arabia will consider the acquisition of submarines or ASW assets of its own. In the longer term, Iraq might follow suit.

There is increasing concern that Tehran may try to acquire nuclear weapons. Suspicions about Iran's nuclear propensity and intentions have grown because of a series of elements which point towards an expansion of its nuclear programs. In the framework of the 1990 scientific agreement with China, which included nuclear cooperation, Iran bought a minitype reactor (27 kilowatt) and an electromagnetic separator (calutron) that produces fissionable isotopes. Though there is no evidence that China is assisting Iran in making nuclear weapons, the equipment could be used

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p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> B. Gertz, "Iran Fired Ballistic Missile", *The Washington Times (WT)*, 24 May 1991, p. A5. Other reports suggest that the contract was for 200 missiles. See K. Royce, "The Gulf War Briefing: Iran's Arsenal Worries Analyst", *Newsday*, 30 January 1991, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> It is possible that the same missile was tested over two different ranges. See, Joseph S. Bermudez jr., "Ballistic Missiles in the Third World -- Iran's Medium-Range Missiles", *Iran*, April 1992 *Jane's Intelligence Review*, pp. 147-152.

<sup>8</sup> *AWST*, 30 November 1992, p. 19.

<sup>9</sup> The Bush Administration was so worried about the prospective sale that it tried to convince Saudi Arabia to pay Russia the cost of the submarines (about \$600 million) in they would abandon the transaction. See, Barton Gellman, "U.S. Sought Saudi Aid on Iran Subs", *Washington Post (WP)*, 30 October 1992, p. A-29.

<sup>10</sup> The KILO submarines carry up to 18 torpedoes or 24 mines. The possibility of laying mines is the more subtle element of its sea denial capability.



to produce fissile material and eventually build an atomic bomb.<sup>11</sup>

According to other experts, the Chinese small reactor and calutron are not capable of producing significant quantities of bomb-grade material, but they certainly contribute to Iran's nuclear technology and can indirectly facilitate the development of a nuclear weapons program.

Moreover, Iran tried to import nuclear technology from Argentina, Brazil, France, Germany, India and Russia. Considering Iran's large oil and gas resources, there appears to be little justification for the procurement of powerful civilian reactors.

There have been widespread reports that Iran received three tactical nuclear weapons, which disappeared from a former Red Army depot in Kazakhstan,<sup>12</sup> but these reports have not been substantiated to date. Nuclear experts believe that even if the Iranians obtained nuclear weapons from a CIS republic they could not explode them in the short term. Their fissile material, however, could be used for weapons of Iran's own design and their devices could provide information about the design and construction of nuclear weapons.

In May 1992, CIA director Robert M. Gates confirmed earlier intelligence assessments about Iran's willingness to pursue a nuclear military capability,<sup>13</sup> though it was not to be expected before the year 2000.<sup>14</sup> But after the Iraqi experience, any predictions about nuclear developments in a country dominated by a dictatorial regime, and in which the only controls are those performed by the IAEA, should be taken with caution.

Iran's expanding military capabilities deserve some considerations.

The high-technology portion of Iran's military build-up is still not fully ready for high-intensity warfare and for the time being it would be difficult for the Iranians to conduct sustained operation with its high-tech weaponry.

Very little could be done to curb Iran's military build-up and its consequences in terms of balance of power and political influence in the Gulf region. Saudi Arabia and the other small countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) will not be able to provide a valid counterbalance, no matter how many modern arms they are willing to acquire, and their security will continue to depend on the United States for the foreseeable future. Furthermore, the GCC is divided. There has been tension between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, while an old territorial dispute between Qatar and Bahrain remains unsettled.

The only Gulf country capable of providing a strategic counterweight would be Iraq. But even a "reformed" Iraq to offset Iran would be a bad proposal. Stability in the Gulf could not be predicated on re-arming Baghdad even if Saddam is not in power.

Considering that arms control measures are unlikely to succeed, the solution may be dependent on the GCC's putting aside its divisions and taking the lead in

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<sup>11</sup>. WP, 30 October 1991, p. A1, A20. NYT, 5 November 1991, p. A11. On Iran's attempt at nuclear proliferation see also David Albright and Matk Hibbs, "Spotlight shifts to Iran", *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (BAS), March 1992, p. 9-11.

<sup>12</sup>. U.S. News & World Report, 23 March 1992, p. 62. About the denial of Lt. Gen. Sergei Zelentsov in Moscow, WP, 18 March 1992, p. A-18.

<sup>13</sup>. In October 1991, Iran's deputy president, Ayatollah Mohajerani, explicitly declared that "because the enemy has nuclear facilities, the Muslim states too should be equipped with the same capacity." WP, 30 October 1991, A-1, A-20.

<sup>14</sup>. WP, 28 March 1992, p. A-1, A-17. See also Elaine Sciolino, "CIA Draft Says Iran Nears Nuclear Status", *International Herald Tribune*, 1 December 1992, p. 1.

"building a reinforcing network of new and strengthened security ties" to use Jim Baker's words. The new security arrangements should also include the essential participation of Iran, Iraq in due time, and Middle-Eastern countries.

### **b. The Gulf. Iraq.**

A few words on Iraq to complete the overview of the Gulf region.

Iraq is still a limited-sovereignty state, subject to the conditions imposed by the UN ceasefire and subsequent resolutions addressing the protection of the Kurds in the north and the Shi'ites in the south. Saddam Hussein, however, is still firmly in power and has not abandoned the goal of rebuilding Iraq's military power.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the fact that Iraq offered the GCC countries its support in connection with Iran's occupation of Abu Mussa is a clear indication that Baghdad has not renounced a role in the regional power game.

Last January's Iraqi provocations have demonstrated that Saddam is able to call the shots and that the UN sanctions are an inadequate tool to restrain his behaviour. Even though Iraq was not in the position to oppose the U.S. military actions, it reaped clear political dividends: it divided the anti-Saddam coalition; it opened a crack in what had been a solid Russian-American front; it repolished its image as the only Arab country capable of facing Western "imperialism" and it regained political space for further maneuvering.

The problem represented by Saddam Hussein's Iraq is unlikely to disappear soon and, as Antony Cordesman has written,<sup>16</sup> a "proportionate escalation" strategy, as that adopted during the recent military operations in the Gulf, appears inadequate to weaken the Iraqi leader, or to inflict losses which could put an unbearable pressure on Saddam and constrain his actions. This does not mean that the use of unrestrained military force would solve the problem.

The United States and Europe should devise a long term strategy for the whole Gulf region based on a series of political initiatives and supported by credible military instruments. This strategy should take into consideration the close strategic links between the Gulf and the Mediterranean region and the paramount importance of the successful outcome of the presently stalled Arab-Israeli peace talks.

### **c. North-Africa.**

The major problems of North Africa which have a direct impact on European security can be summarized as follows: the proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons and ballistic missiles; the spreading influence of Islamic fundamentalism; and the difficult economic and social situation of many countries, aggravated by high population growth.

Let me touch very briefly on these points.

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<sup>15</sup>. According to U.N. officials, Iraq has put virtually all of its top rocket scientists and engineers to work at the large research facilities of Ibn al Haytham on the outskirts of Baghdad, possibly to prepare for an eventual renewal of prohibited work on long-range ballistic missiles. R. Jeffrey Smith, "Iraq Consolidates Missile Research, Worrying the UN", IHT, 28 January 1993, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup>. Antony H. Cordesman, "Proportional Escalation" Will Not Work in the Gulf, IHT, 19 January 1993, p. 4.

**\* Missile Proliferation.**

I will not repeat what has been extensively written about missile proliferation. I will just note that today Saudi CSS-2 ballistic missiles can cover up to one third of Libyan territory and, on the north, they can reach beyond the territory of Turkey, Iraq and Iran. Israeli JERICHO II missiles can easily strike Riyadh, Baghdad and Benghazi. Iraqi modified SCUD missiles have demonstrated that they can reach Tel Aviv. The possibility that ballistic missiles with a range of 1500-3000 km. would eventually be acquired by north-African countries will not only change the threat picture of the Mediterranean (Libya would be able to target Cairo and Tel Aviv, while even Algeria could attack Israeli territory with CSS-2 type missiles), but will also present the southern European countries with a totally new strategic equation. The eventuality that the possession of ballistic missiles will be matched with a chemical and/or nuclear capability is an additional strong factor of instability with unifying interregional repercussions.

**\* Nuclear Proliferation.**

Syria is reportedly seeking to proceed with a nuclear program with the eventual goal of building nuclear weapons. Though it might be attributed to a growing sense of isolation stemming from the loss of the Soviet Union as the protector power, it seems odd that Syria would try to become a nuclear power when Iraq's nuclear ambitions have been drastically curtailed. Furthermore, the Israeli military explicitly stated that it will react to any attempt by Arab countries at acquiring nuclear weapons,<sup>17</sup> and talks with Israel are supposed to address arms control issues and strict security arrangements.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from the small (one megawatt) research reactor bought from Argentina, which has been operational since March 1989,<sup>19</sup> Algeria did not appear to have nuclear ambitions until recently. But in 1991, a significant nuclear project was finally unveiled after having been kept secret for some years: a Chinese-supplied research reactor<sup>20</sup> was being built near the town of Ain Oussera.

Many aspects of this project are cause for concern:

- its initial secrecy,<sup>21</sup> and the fact that the facility is said to be encircled by anti-aircraft guns;
- the military potential of the reactor, the technical feasibility to operate it at higher power than declared, and eventually to enlarge it;
- the scarce justification of a civilian nuclear program in a country rich in oil and gas;

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<sup>17</sup>. Lorenzo Cremonesi, "Monito dello Stato Maggiore. L'esercito israeliano pronto a fermare l'atomica degli arabi", *Corriere della Sera*, 18 April 1992, p. 11.

<sup>18</sup>. The Jordan-Israel draft accord considers the discussion of issues regarding arms control and the destruction of unconventional weapons. The same issues could be part of a Syria-Israel agreement.

<sup>19</sup>. Though Algeria is not a signatory to the NPT, the reactor was placed under IAEA safeguards.

<sup>20</sup>. The power of the reactor was initially rated at 40 megawatts or larger (a size more appropriate for plutonium production than for peaceful research) and then downgraded to about 15 megawatts. In May 1991, China and Algeria revealed that 15 megawatts was actually the maximum power rating and that normal operations would be conducted at 10 megawatts. See John M. Deutch, "The New Nuclear Threat", *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1992, pp. 131-132, and Leonard S. Spector, *cit. pp.* 190-192.

<sup>21</sup>. The project was discovered only through U.S. intelligence satellites.

- the fact that Algeria is still not a party to the NPT, and uncertainty following the resignation of the Benjedid government which had pledged to join the treaty and put the facility under IAEA controls;
- the lack of a clear military threat and of security requirements which could stimulate and justify nuclear ambitions.

**\* Islamic Fundamentalism.**

The problem of Islamic fundamentalism is now deeply felt in all the Arab countries from Egypt to Morocco. In Algeria the prospect of the Islamic Salvation Front taking power is an event that French intelligence services reportedly believe to be possible in less than two years.<sup>22</sup> The future of the Algerian nuclear program should be seen in this prospect, as more militant leaders might have different ideas about the nuclear program remaining totally peaceful. Thus, the future of the program will depend largely on the political future of the country.

A domestic factor with a direct bearing on Tripoli's foreign policy, and on the ultimate importance of its military arsenal in terms of Mediterranean security, is the serious challenge posed by fundamentalist movements.<sup>23</sup>

The eventuality of a fundamentalist state in Algeria will very likely have deep repercussions in Libya, with long term effects on the internal stability of the country. In fact, the possibility that a radical Islamic government in Algeri would be tempted to subvert Gadhafi's regime cannot be excluded .

A similar development in Tunisia, where radical Islamic movements are becoming stronger, would actually transform the political landscape of the entire Maghreb and radically change the security parameters of the Mediterranean region.

Finally, Egypt is struggling against a fundamentalist movement, which by targeting foreign tourists, attempts to erode one of the main sources income of the state. Cairo is worried about the spreading influence of the movement and, at the same time, concerned about developments in Sudan where Iranian influence is growing, and training and support is provided for Islamic activists and revolutionaries.<sup>24</sup>

Considering the strong anti-Western attitudes of Islamic fundamentalism -- the byproduct of the necessity to present poverty, disastrous economic situation and relative lack of power in the international world as a result of European hegemony and American imperialism -- the presence of one, and possibly more, Islamic regimes on the southern shores of the Mediterranean Sea is bound to influence European security in the years to come.

This influence could be brought to bear either directly, fomenting instability in the region, or indirectly through covert aid to terrorist groups -- it has been reported that Iran has moved its support from the Heltzollahs in Lebanon to Islamic fundamentalist groups in Sudan -- and the use of Islamic supporters among the 4.4 million third country foreigners from the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean who are presently living in Europe.

Finally, the aim of Islamic regimes to fully control and regulate all aspects of

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<sup>22</sup>. Roger Faligot, "France warns of coup in Algeria", The European (EU), 22-25 October 1992, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup>. On the activism of Libyan Islamic fundamentalists and the problems they have already created, see Jennifer Parmelee, "Moslem Fundamentalists Pose Domestic Challenge to Gadhafi", WP, 10 January 1989, p. A16.

<sup>24</sup>. See James Wyllie, "Sudan - The Middle East's latest Rogue State?", Jane's Intelligence Review, July 1992, pp. 310-311.

social and private life will force the more educated and liberal to emigrate, thus enlarging the flow of people toward Europe. It would be difficult for European countries to refuse this new tide of emigrants, since they could rightly expect to be considered political refugees.

**\* Population growth.**

Just a brief note on population growth.

The Middle East and the Maghreb are in the forefront of the world's demographic explosion. From Morocco to Iran, populations are increasing faster than in Latin America.

The population of the Middle East and North Africa (excluding Turkey and including Iran) will increase from 272.4 million in 1990 to 562.2 million in 2025.<sup>25</sup>

The demographic explosion is bound to affect all attempts at economic development and socio-political reforms. Moreover, this will tend to deepen the economic gap between the north and south of the Mediterranean region. Already in the 80's, the increases in the gross national products of the North-African countries have been basically offset by population growth.

Moreover, the countries from Morocco to Egypt have become net importers of agricultural products, while each country depends, though to a different degree, on foreign financial and technical support.

Finally, all north-African countries, with the exception of Libya, are burdened by their foreign debt that reduces from a fifth to a third their export incomes.

**d. Russia and Europe.**

Let me conclude with some brief considerations about Russia and Europe.

**\* Russia.**

Even though there are still serious uncertainties on the final outcome of the current political and economic process in the former Soviet Union, at least three interconnected considerations can be made regarding Russia and the Mediterranean region.

First, Russia's political and security interests will be necessarily different from and have more limited scope than those of the Soviet Union, and the Mediterranean - - but not the Gulf -- would probably be considered as a lower priority region than in the past.

Second, it would be now very unlikely for the Mediterranean Third World countries to use -- as they often did in the past -- US-USSR ideological differences, political rivalries and confrontational attitudes in the international arena for pursuing national interests, or to utilize their special relationship with the Soviet Union for shielding their foreign policy objectives and somewhat constraining the potential range of American actions.

However, the new Russian positions on the events in the Gulf, and particularly in the former Yugoslavia, appear a telling sign that the Russian pro-Western attitudes cannot be taken for granted and that Yeltsin is willing to push Russia again in the

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<sup>25</sup>. More detailed information can be found in James Wyllie, "Inter-Arab Security - The Demographic Challenges", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, August 1992, pp. 364-365.

forefront of international politics and regain at least part of its traditional world role.

Third, NATO has ceased to see the East as its potential "enemy". Apart from the eventual changes in the command structure and military posture of the former Soviet forces, SOVMEDRON's presence and operational readiness have already been affected to the point of rendering the NATO maritime forces' mission in the Mediterranean virtually superfluous.

It is fair to assume that in addition to having lost its military tasks vis-à-vis NATO, any residual naval presence will be incapable of performing a credible function as an instrument of foreign policy.

There is another consideration to be made with regard to the dissolution of the traditional threat picture and this is the weakening of the perceptions of NATO as the indispensable framework for European security and defense.

This weakening appears to be greater in the South where unique geopolitical and geostrategic factors play a more evident role. In particular, new requirements seem to be emerging in Greece and Turkey, which are more in line with a national vision of foreign and security policy interests.

The tendency toward the re-orientation of foreign and security policy is clearer in Turkey as a result of its unsuccessful attempt to become an EC member, the emergence of religious and nationalistic sentiments in the population, and the result of the independence of the Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union. This creates new prospects for Turkey's foreign and economic policies.

This re-orientation might, in the long run, not only progressively detach Ankara from Europe -- an outcome which would kill the prospect of a true European security and defense identity -- but also stimulate a national approach to present and future regional crises. Turkish support for the Islamic population in Bosnia-Herzegovina, or Greek involvement in Macedonia are hypotheses which may not be excluded if Yugoslavia's civil war expands. Even in the case of a possible renewal of traditional Greek-Turkish controversies over Cyprus and the Aegean Sea, the uncertainty about the Soviet attitude and potential threat would not play the constraining role on national behaviors that it had in the past.

#### **\* Europe.**

The prospects of a situation of endemic instability in the whole Mediterranean area with sudden crises and an increase in the North-South confrontation -- in terms increasingly envisioned by both radical and now also moderate Arabs -- is bound to be matched by the prospects of a European Community still unprepared to confront the international challenges of the 90's.

The way the European Community acted throughout the course of the Yugoslav crisis from its warning signs in 1989 to the outbreak of hostilities in June 1991, and the tragedy of the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, says a lot about the EC's political weakness and the uncertainty about the actualization of a true common foreign and security policy (CFSP).

The WEU suffers from the same lack of strong political will and, in scenarios of out-of-area crises, does not possess the military capabilities -- long range air transport, high definition satellite reconnaissance, high-tech weapons systems, total control of the battlefield through JointSTARS, - which constitute the sine-qua-non conditions for playing a credible role.

This means that for complex crisis management and peace keeping roles, or particularly for peace enforcing roles, the participation of the United States military

power -- and the U.S. leadership, as in the case of the 1990 Persian Gulf crisis -- would be of paramount importance.

It is still difficult to foresee if and how NATO will become the military arm of the CSCE. In any case, if hypotheses of crises in the Mediterranean area are taken into consideration -- with the inevitable overtones of North-South confrontation that such crises would entail -- NATO's intervention might radicalize Arab attitudes and policies, unless it is carried out under the authority and within the limits of a United Nations' mandate.

On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine that the potential differences and divisions among the European countries which might emerge in the EC and the WEU would not also arise in the Atlantic Alliance, especially if the intervention is envisaged solely as a NATO operation.

The political and military trends in the region from Morocco to Iran have ominous implications for Europe, particularly if they are added to the signs of political instability and social disintegration evident in Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union.

In the southern Mediterranean countries the growing North-South economic gap is bound to fuel domestic instability, radicalization of the political life with chances for the Islamic fundamentalist movements to expand their influence, and eventually gain access to power, and a further increase in migration toward Europe, with direct repercussions on France, Italy and Spain.

In the longer term, the proliferation in the fields of high-tech weapons systems, ballistic missiles, and chemical and nuclear armament will pose serious security problems by radically changing the strategic situation of the whole Mediterranean area.

Unfortunately, the EC is presently divided about its economic and political future and the European countries do not appear ready to take prompt action on these issues with the necessary foresight.