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**NATO AND THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION**

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## Introduction

The end of the Cold War has drastically changed the strategic situation in Europe. The traditional scenario of a conventional war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact escalating to a nuclear exchange has been relegated to history. But the end of the Cold War has not meant the end of regional wars. The conflict in the former Yugoslavia, the ethnic tensions and conflicts in several republics of the former Soviet Union, the Russian military intervention in Chechnya, the endemic instability and the threats and risks emerging from the Mediterranean area and the Gulf region are all a stark reminder of the the "new" multifaced and multidirectional parameters of the European strategic equation.

In fact, while the collapse of the Communist regimes and the end of the ideological and military confrontation has initiated a process of profound political and economic changes in Central-Eastern Europe, the impact on the Mediterranean area has been marginal, at best.

Though "NATO's main security front has swung away from Central Europe to its Southern Flank",<sup>1</sup> the latter still remains the "soft underbelly" of the Atlantic Alliance. While NATO's military weaknesses in the Southern region have been eliminated by the disappearance of the Soviet threat, other traditional weaknesses are still present, such as the still open Greek-Turkish antagonism in the Aegean, and the endemic domestic political instability, social tensions and economic difficulties of all Southern NATO members.

Moreover, the Mediterranean area constitutes the strategic backyard of any crisis opening in the Gulf region or in the Horn of Africa.

Finally, the Mediterranean area is one of the most unstable regions of the world, a region where old and new political issues, uncertain economic development, religious fanaticism, high demographic growth rates, weak democratic or authoritarian regimes, high levels of conventional armaments, risks of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and long-range ballistic missiles, and hegemonic foreign policies are all factors which contribute to a latent status of tension and to endemic controversies and conflicts.

Quoting German Defence Minister Volker R  he, "the Eastern and Southern arcs of crisis on the periphery of Europe overlap geographically in the Caucasus-Balkans-Middle East triangle...Our political and strategic thinking cannot be geared solely to Central and Eastern Europe".<sup>2</sup>

## 1. The new strategic situation. Risks and challenges

More than ever before, purely military terms are insufficient to define European security. This is particularly true in the Southern Region where, even during the Cold War, the East-West

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Secretary of Defence William Perry, at the meeting of NATO Defence Ministers, Seville, 29-30 September 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Speech at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, 4 February 1995.

confrontation was more complex and complicated than in Central Europe as a result of several elements: (i) the Arab-Israeli conflict; (ii) the close political and military relationship between the Soviet Union and many countries in North Africa and the Middle East; (iii) the tendency of all the countries of the region to use the Soviet-American confrontation, and their own pro-East or pro-West alignment, for acquiring weapons and pursuing their foreign policy objectives; (iv) the lack of a security identity in the region which could form the basis for cooperative frameworks; (v) perceptions of security mainly linked to South-South regional threats, unrelated to the NATO and Warsaw Pact military posture in the Mediterranean.

#### **a. Risks**

The risks now emerging from the Mediterranean region are mainly political and economic in nature. This does not mean that military risks have totally disappeared. It does mean, however, that while all the traditional East-West military scenarios are obsolete, and short-warning military threats from the South are groundless, the possibility of regional crises touching important European interests and eventually involving Southern Europe's territory is very real. In fact, even though the military capabilities of the Southern Mediterranean countries (considered individually or collectively) are no match for the military forces of NATO or the Western European Union (WEU) -- in particular for their low level of operational readiness, training, logistic support and maintenance -- the military aspects of any Mediterranean crisis which could affect European security should not be underestimated.

#### **(i) The radical Islamic fundamentalism**

The most evident risk is represented by the area's volatility. The war in the former Yugoslavia with the related danger of a spill-over into a wider regional conflict involving other countries is a good example of a crisis situation which went astray mainly because of a lack of European resolve and American leadership.

The domestic instability of the majority of the North-African and Middle Eastern countries is another good case in point. The spreading influence of Islamic fundamentalist movements and the aggressive pursuit of their political aims through military means pose serious problems to the governments of the majority of the Mediterranean countries. The accession to power of a militant Islamic regime in any of the Mediterranean countries would impact on the whole area. It seems logical to assume that such an outcome would have a galvanizing effect on the fundamentalist groups operating in other countries, and it is likely that the new regime would be willing to provide them with political and financial support, possibly even covert military assistance.

It should be very clear that Islam is not and cannot be considered a security issue. Even Islamic fundamentalism cannot be labeled as a threat. The problem is the explosive mixture of widespread religious fanaticism, radical domestic and foreign policy, and open anti-Israeli and anti-Western biases which are typical of Islamic fundamentalist states. The problem is Islamic fundamentalism militancy and the use of terrorism as a means to achieve political aims. It can rightly be argued that the Mediterranean is geopolitically and geoeconomically very different from the Gulf, and it would be wrong to assume that an Islamic fundamentalist regime in the Mediterranean would adopt the same parameters of foreign behaviour as Iran. But it can also be argued that such a regime would certainly be against the peace process in the Middle East, and that its external policy towards the Mediterranean area and the European countries would likely be characterized by militant and confrontational attitudes.

The influence on European security could be brought to bear, either directly by fomenting instability in the area, or indirectly through covert aid to international terrorism and the use of Islamic supporters among the 4.4 million people from the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean presently living in Europe.

Finally, the establishment of one or more radical Islamic regimes in the Mediterranean would fuel the flow of immigration from the South to the North of Europe to the point of posing serious social problems and indirectly affecting European security.

### **(ii) Terrorism**

The second impending risk in terms of importance is terrorism. After a long lull since the tragic period of bombings in Europe in the early and mid-eighties, terrorism is again becoming a threat. In the first months of 1995, cells of radical fundamentalists mostly reportedly tied to the Algerian "Groupe Islamique Armé" (GIA) were discovered in Belgium, France, Germany and Italy, expanding and consolidating a network in preparation for terrorist acts. Arms caches were seized, opening serious questions about their objectives and external links. In July and August bombing attacks in Paris confirmed the danger of international terrorism, underscored the extreme vulnerability of urban societies to terrorist acts and the difficulty of an effective defence strategy.

### **(iii) Immigration**

As previously stated, unchecked immigration could become a security risk. On the one hand, it can foster social tensions, increase the level of urban criminality, strain government's funds for social and health services. On the other hand, it can facilitate the infiltration of terrorists, while offering a large and friendly environment for hiding and greater opportunities of cooperation and logistic support.

The South-to-North migration is basically the result of two problems -- the very poor socio-economic situation in all the countries of the Southern rim of the Mediterranean and the very high population growth. As previously stated, the problem is likely to be aggravated by the establishment of Islamic fundamentalism states in North-Africa.

Although demographic projection cannot be taken as the basis for predicting migration potentials, it is fair to assume that the rapid increase in population is going to exacerbate the political, social and economic problems of the Southern Mediterranean countries.

Apart from giving fresh ammunition to those fundamentalist movements which preach Islam as the only solution to those problems, the population explosion is bound to increase the demographic pressure on the EU, already confronted with the huge task of integrating the approximately 8 million foreigners who are not nationals of any of the member states.

### **(iv) Proliferation**

Proliferation of WMD and long-range ballistic missiles can be a long-term prospect or become a short-term problem. At present, no Southern Mediterranean country (with the exception of Israel) possesses nuclear weapons or has the capacity to produce them domestically in the short-term. On the other hand, a nuclear military capability can be rapidly achieved if a nuclear country is willing to sell or supply a nuclear device or very sensitive nuclear material and technology.

The same can basically be said also for the proliferation of long-range ballistic missiles.

Today, Israel is the only Mediterranean country to have a complete missile force. Other countries possess old FROG-7, SS-21 (only Syria), and SCUD-B and C missiles. Presently, however, no Southern Mediterranean country has the industrial and technological ability for the domestic construction of long-range systems with a militarily significant Circular Error Probable (CEP) without consistent external support. In fact, considerable technical skill and industrial infrastructure is required for indigenous development of long-range surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs). It is more likely that proliferation would be the result of direct acquisition from a foreign supplier willing to export its systems. If this occurs, the resultant regional picture would immediately become militarily significant, linking together even further the geostrategic parameters of the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf.

Today, Saudi CSS-2 ballistic missiles can target one third of Libyan territory and can reach northward beyond the territory of Turkey, Iraq and Iran. Israeli JERICHO II missiles can easily strike Riyadh, Baghdad and Bengasi. Iraqi-modified SCUD missiles have demonstrated that they can reach Tel Aviv.

In the past, only China and North Korea were willing to export their missiles to the Mediterranean and the Gulf. North Korea, apart from upgrading the Soviet SCUD-B missile to SCUD-C with a 600 km range, a payload of 600-700 kg and an improved accuracy, has already tested the NO-DONG missile with an estimated range of 1,000 km. Moreover, it is reportedly developing two new missiles, the TAEPO DONG-1 and TAEPO DONG-2.<sup>3</sup> There have been reports that North Korea is attempting to export both SCUD-C<sup>4</sup> and NO-DONG missiles to the Mediterranean area, and that Iraq and Libya have agreed to cooperate for the development of a long-range SSM based on the old "BADR" design.<sup>5</sup>

Now, the possibility that ballistic missiles with a range of 1500-3000 Km. would eventually be acquired by North African countries would not only strengthen the military links between the Mediterranean and the Gulf -- Libya would be able to target Cairo and Tel Aviv, while even Algeria could attack Israeli territory -- but would 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 and a dramatic impact on European security.

Somewhat different is the situation in the field of chemical proliferation. In the Mediterranean area, Egypt, Libya, Israel and Syria are believed to possess chemical weapons. Another country, Algeria, has the industrial infrastructure and the basic technology for the production of chemical agents.

The chemical threat is greater because it would be much easier for organized crime or terrorist organizations to acquire or produce chemical agents than nuclear explosive devices, however primitive, and they could become a terrifying means of destabilization in their hands. The nerve gas attacks in the Tokyo subway are a good case in point. In Tokyo a threshold has been crossed and unfortunately similar episodes are likely to be replicated in Europe in the future.

## **b. Challenges**

### **(i) Counterproliferation**

The first challenge is to stem the potential proliferation of WMD and their delivery means. The indefinite extension by consensus of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) can be considered a major victory for international security. But the stakes are still high. With the accession of Algeria to the NPT in January 1995, all Mediterranean countries are NPT members subjected to the control of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). But, as the Iraqi case demonstrated, there is the possibility of an NPT country pursuing covert programs for the development of nuclear weapons, while nuclear proliferation opportunities are multiplied by the dismantling of the huge nuclear arsenal of the former Soviet Union. Thus, the scenario of nuclear terrorism or nuclear blackmail could become a true international nightmare.

Even more threatening is the potential proliferation of chemical weapons. Though its implementation is lagging, the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is a first step in the

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<sup>3</sup>. The Military Balance 1994-1995, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, Brassey, October 1994, p. 165.

<sup>4</sup>. In 1991, North Korea reportedly exported to Syria 24 SCUD-C missiles and 20 mobile launchers.

<sup>5</sup>. Guido Olimpio, "Quel missile per i due rais", Corriere della Sera, 5 May 1995, p. 13.

right direction, since it explicitly requires the enactment of legislation making it a crime for any person to develop, produce, stockpile or use any chemical weapons agents. But it is not enough without aggressive, internationally coordinated counterproliferation actions.

Finally, the proliferation of SSMs would compound the nuclear and chemical potential threats by providing means of delivery for which European countries have a very limited defence capacity. The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) is the only "supply side" approach to stemming missile proliferation and preventing the transfer of missile systems and technologies. Though China and Russia have committed themselves to abiding by the provision of the regime, the results are mixed.<sup>6</sup> It is expected that the MTCR can, at best, extend the development process, increase R&D costs and retard or block qualitative improvements.

However, the risk of SSM proliferation should not overshadow the fact that the proliferation of high-performance combat aircraft is already a reality in the whole Mediterranean region. In military terms, and in terms of offensive capabilities, they represent a potential threat which is not to be underestimated. In fact, the aircraft are capable of carrying not only higher explosive payloads than ballistic missiles' conventional warheads, but also nuclear and chemical weapons.

Counterproliferation should include diplomacy, arms control, export control and intelligence collection and analysis, but also the willingness to enforce it if prevention fails.

### **(ii) The North-South gap**

The second challenge is the widening North-South gap which is at the root of the political and social malaise which, in turn, fuels radical attitudes, social unrest, domestic instability and migration.

If it is true that the growing influence of Islamic fundamentalist movements is mainly the result of a failed modernization effort, then only economic cooperation and a strong policy in support of political and economic development could reverse the tide towards greater regional instability.

Europe, and in particular the Southern European countries, are in a position to play a significant role, but a coherent European Union approach is still lacking, while Eastern Europe is still privileged as far as economic assistance is concerned. The challenge is made more difficult by the instability of the regimes of the Southern Mediterranean, and Europe's intention to avoid preset political choices in favor of one or the other of the forces conducting the present power struggle, given that the issue of what EU relations with Islamic fundamentalist regimes should be is still open.

This is why long-term programs and a general and multilateral framework for cooperation are normally preferred, while at the same time the security aspects of EU's Mediterranean policy are played down. But whether this somewhat ambiguous policy is capable of eventually fostering regional stability is open to question.

### **(iii) The "Russian factor"**

The third challenge is what can be defined as the "Russian factor". The dissolution of the Soviet Union, the withdrawal to Black Sea ports of the former Soviet Mediterranean Fleet (SOVMEDRON), and the weakening of the former ties with many countries in the area have put into question the future presence and role of Russia in the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean area, but not the Balkans, would probably be considered a low priority region, at least for the short-

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<sup>6</sup>. In the recent past, three possible violations have been underscored: the sale of Chinese M-11 SSM to Pakistan; the sale of rocket engines and associated technology by Russia to India; and the interception in Ukraine of a cargo of rocket fuel in transit from Russia to Libya. The Military Balance 1993-1994, IISS, Brassey, October 1993, p. 251.

medium term. But this does not mean total neglect. In fact, the new assertiveness of Russia's foreign policy would probably be applied to the region as well, not within the scope of a grand strategy as in the past, but more on a case-by-case basis with the aim of demonstrating to the world that Russia still has a significant role to play vis-à-vis the West. The recent Russian initiatives and positions with respect to the Bosnian war are an example of this.

However, the presently more assertive Russian foreign policy notwithstanding, and without excluding the possibility of a further trend towards "neo-imperial" attitudes and reactions, Russia's range of policy options is likely to be limited particularly in the military domain.

A compromise was reportedly reached between Moscow and Kiev on the possession of the Black Sea Fleet. What it will entail in terms of its military mission and operational capabilities is still unclear. It appears fair to assume, however, that together with its lost military tasks vis-à-vis NATO, any Russian residual naval presence in the Mediterranean will hardly be capable of performing a credible deterrent function or of being a credible instrument of foreign policy.

This does not mean, however, that Russia should be excluded "a priori" from participation in the Western stabilization initiatives in the region.

It would be odd to prod Russia to be a serious and reliable partner in the establishment of a new European security system and refuse its eventual contribution in the Mediterranean and Gulf regions. In fact, Russia already plays a role, being a member of the Contact Group and participating in the UNPROFOR.

However, it remains a difficult challenge. It should be handled with a firm attitude towards all Russian attempts at limiting or hampering NATO's policy or at asserting a kind of veto right on NATO's decisions in those regions.

## **2. What Nato Role in the Mediterranean?**

If the previously outlined picture of risks and challenges in the Mediterranean region is correct, then what role can NATO play in it?

The end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Soviet threat has changed the traditional Alliance's strategy, but has not ended its mission of safeguarding Europe's security and ultimately providing for its defence.

The clear operational parameters within which NATO used to operate in the Southern region appear superseded and ineffective in coping with the new strategic environment.

The situation is further complicated by several elements: (i) the difficulty of a military Alliance adjusting to a situation in which political and economic factors play a greater role than in the past; (ii) the fact that characteristic security features of the Mediterranean area such as international terrorism and mass migration are not bound to be deterred or deeply affected by powerful military postures; (iii) the likelihood that future Mediterranean crises will occur in a South-South more than in a North-South dimension posing tough management and intervention choices; (iv) the possibility of spill-overs from NATO's area of interest into NATO's area of responsibility, thus forcing the passage from crisis management to collective defence; (v) the differences among NATO allies on how and with what tools to approach and deal with Mediterranean issues, particularly the Islamic fundamentalist issue;<sup>7</sup> (vi) the possibility of a gradual erosion of the Alliance's solidarity or a loss of NATO's international credibility which

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<sup>7</sup> The U.S. Secretary of Defence, William Perry, has stated that during the meeting of the NATO Defence Ministers in Seville the allies were unable to agree on what, of anything, NATO should do about Mediterranean security issues. North Atlantic Assembly (NAA), Sub-Committee on the Southern Region, Draft Interim Report by Mr. Rodrigo de Rato, May 1995, p. 4.

could generate a re-nationalization of the security and defence policy of the Southern European countries.

What role, then, for NATO in the Mediterranean region? Let us try to analyze schematically what NATO could do to enhance the stability and the security of the region, and the limits to its potential role.

### **a. Counterproliferation**

Meeting in Istanbul on 9 June 1994, the North Atlantic Council agreed upon an "Alliance Policy Framework on Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction".<sup>8</sup> The main decisions were: (i) to assess the potential proliferation risk presented by States on and beyond NATO's periphery; (ii) to contribute to the implementation and strengthening of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation norms and agreement; (iii) to address the military capability needed to discourage WMD proliferation and use, and (iv) to protect NATO territory, populations and forces, if necessary.

It can be argued that this policy is insufficient even after the international agreement on the indefinite extension of the NPT. And it can be argued that prevention through diplomacy, export control, international pressure and sanctions could be inadequate to block potential proliferators.

NATO should develop the capability to forcefully stop clandestine nuclear programs, to protect its territory against ballistic missiles, and to target and eliminate fixed and mobile missile launchers.

In other words, NATO policy should be complemented by a more explicit enunciation of NATO's readiness to use force to respond to WMD developments which would threaten its security and by a greater effort toward the realization of a theater missile defence supported by an effective warning system.

Though it is open to question whether NATO would ever be able to muster the political will to stop WMD proliferation in the Mediterranean area by military means, at least an anti-tactical ballistic missile (ATBM) defence and the means to hunt and destroy mobile missiles should be actively pursued.

Thus, NATO should eagerly support the development of the Medium Extended Air Defence System (MEADS) agreed upon by the United States, France, Germany and Italy, and follow through on the Cooperative Engagement Capability (CEC) tests conducted by the Sixth Fleet in late February 1995.<sup>9</sup>

### **b. Crisis management**

It can be argued that the difficulties NATO is presently facing as the U.N. military arm in the management of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia would pale in comparison to those with which NATO would be confronted in case of peacekeeping or peace-enforcing operations in the Mediterranean area.

It is easy to predict that the divisions which plagued NATO's decision making process in search for an agreed formula for the employment of NATO air power in Bosnia, would be even sharper if the use of force would have to be decided for the management of a Mediterranean crisis. Consensus among the Sixteen might be very difficult to achieve.

Moreover, NATO's potential role is bound to be further complicated by the anti-NATO bias of many segments of the Arab and Muslim world, which basically consider the Western Alliance as an American military instrument, and which would feel directly or indirectly involved, pro or against, in any NATO intervention in the Mediterranean.

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<sup>8</sup>. Atlantic News, n. 2631 (Annex), pp. 5-7.

<sup>9</sup>. Jane's Defence Weekly, 11 March 1995, p. 3.



Thus, it can be argued that in the field of crisis management in the Mediterranean, NATO's most useful function would be to play a supportive role for European institutions (EU and WEU), particularly if it is true, as previously stated, that military means are likely to have a limited value in any crisis prevention and management in the Mediterranean region.

In fact, Europe possesses those political and, above all, economic means which are considered determinant for effective crisis prevention and management, while NATO has the full range of those military capabilities which may eventually be required for enforcement.

This should lead to a sort of what I would like to define as "concertation on labour" between NATO and the EU/WEU. Both organizations should be ready to assume the responsibility for the management of those Mediterranean crises which are relevant to European security. In accordance with the crisis situation, and the tools which are better suited to face it, and through a coordinated decision-making process, EU/WEU or NATO should take the lead. If the EU/WEU leads and military actions are required, WEU could eventually use NATO collective assets and capabilities within the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) framework. If NATO leads it is expected that the WEU assets that are not already earmarked for NATO would eventually strengthen NATO capabilities. However, considering the types of crises which could be anticipated in the Mediterranean area, the probability of an earlier involvement of the EU/WEU appears higher.

Two fields of effective use of NATO military capabilities could be air and naval enforcement of sanctions and economic embargoes (such as over Bosnia with operation "DENY FLIGHT" and in the Adriatic against Serbia and Montenegro in the framework of operation "SHARP GUARD"), and maritime operations for the achievement of sea control -- naval blockades of sea areas, choke points, channels, straits and ports.

In any case, NATO should retain its main responsibility for collective defence against all military threats to the NATO area of responsibility.

### **c. Building a security architecture.**

In February 1995, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) decided to establish regular contacts with five Southern Mediterranean countries (Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia) with the aim of strengthening dialogue and confidence.<sup>10</sup> The range of actions NATO could eventually take in this field appears quite limited, however, and a cautious attitude on the part of the interested Arab countries should be expected.<sup>11</sup> There is the risk that the initiative could end up by complicating or even aggravating relations between neighbouring countries. Moreover, it is one matter to convince the Mediterranean countries that NATO does not represent a threat to anybody, but quite another to simply discuss security issues. And it is a different matter altogether to try to advise on how to stem Islamic fundamentalism. In the military field, it is debatable whether NATO could do more than merely assist in the gathering and sharing of sensitive intelligence information, and in the command and control of the armed forces by providing technologically advanced C3 assets. In fact, the more useful political and economic support could better be provided by the European organizations and by single European countries -- or by the United States.

For the time being, extension of NATO's Partnership for Peace to the Southern Mediterranean appears very difficult and very unlikely, particularly in terms of positive responses

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<sup>10</sup>. William Drozdiak, "NATO Turns Attention to Islamic Extremists", International Herald Tribune, 9 February 1995. In June 95, NATO Secretary General Willy Claes ended the second round of talks with ambassadors of the Mediterranean countries to know their point of view on cooperation with NATO. The subject of the first meeting, held at the end of February, had been an explanation of the role and functioning of NATO and the aim of future dialogue.

<sup>11</sup>. As of March 1995, only Israel had responded to NATO request on how the dialogue should develop. Moreover, the ambassador of Morocco reportedly did not participate in the second round of talks.

from the countries concerned. Moreover, the burden of a prospected Southern PFP at a time in which NATO is fully involved in the Eastern PFP program and planning for its enlargement would be unsustainable.

In 1987 the WEU established a Mediterranean Group<sup>12</sup> which, among other things, has prepared and pursued dialogue with the Maghreb countries, later expanded to include Egypt and other interested Mediterranean countries.<sup>13</sup> The WEU governments are also ready to address new security challenges, such as humanitarian emergencies, proliferation, terrorism, international crime and environmental risks, including those related to disarmament and the destruction of nuclear and chemical weapons.<sup>14</sup>

Though WEU's final goal is yet unclear, this may be interpreted as an indication that the WEU intends to assume a special security role in the Mediterranean within the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). This would be in line with the conclusion<sup>15</sup> that "stability and equilibrium in the Mediterranean region are a responsibility of the European Union as a whole" -- and thus of the WEU as its military arm.

In this framework, the need for close coordination between the WEU and NATO is evident, to avoid presenting conflicting policies aimed at different if not diverging security goals to the same countries.

#### **d. Arms control.**

A few considerations on arms control in the Mediterranean.

It can be argued that bilateral arms control agreements will be unlikely until there is a more stable security environment, and that regional arrangements would be unfeasible without an institutional framework. However, it can also be argued that it would be possible to take the first step by promoting a wide set of confidence and security building measures (CSBMs).

In terms of CSBMs applied to the Mediterranean strategic environment, very little has to be invented. All the issues about possible measures, control techniques, systems for verification, etc. have been fully addressed in the recent past in the framework of the arms control process in Central Europe and similar solutions could also be applied to the Mediterranean with minor modifications. The same is true for arms control measures applicable to naval forces. In this field, there are plenty of naval CBMs which could be derived from the agreements reached in the past by the United States and the Soviet Union, agreements specifically aimed at preventing incidents at sea.

The question is, in what framework should CSBMs and eventually arms control in the Mediterranean be inserted and advanced? NATO or WEU or the Five-plus-Five organization, at least initially, for the Western Mediterranean? I think that, in the first phase, the Western security organizations should stay on the sideline, expressing their willingness to provide assistance and expertise. Only in the second phase, when an agreement is close or has already been reached, should they decide whether and how to provide supervision, verification and guarantees.

NATO could sponsor, support and possibly guarantee regional CSBMs and arms control agreements. A role in the CSBMs domain would fit into the first phase of the previously mentioned new NATO policy towards the Southern Mediterranean countries, which entails the building of reciprocal confidence between NATO and these countries and among themselves.

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<sup>12</sup>. The group was upgraded to a WEU Council Working Group in its own right in 1993.

<sup>13</sup>. "Noordwijk Declaration of the WEU Council of Ministers" and "Preliminary Conclusions on the Formulation of a Common European Defence Policy Examined by the WEU Council of Ministers in Noordwijk", 14 November 1994, Europe Documents, n. 1910 and 1911 respectively.

<sup>14</sup>. Preliminary Conclusions, cit., Europe Document, n. 1911, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup>. Reached by the CFSP Security Working Group of the EU and cited in the final document of the WEU Council in November 1994 dealing with a common European defence policy. Europe Document, No. 1911, cit., p. 5.

## Conclusions

It is difficult for NATO to find a true security role in the post-Cold War Mediterranean area, where situating the risks "on the map or in the calendar" is a problem.<sup>16</sup> NATO is concentrating its effort on Central-Eastern Europe and attempting to establish a cooperative security relationship with Russia, and it is unlikely that other relevant political and military resources can be dedicated to the Southern region. Furthermore, the regional environment does not favor NATO involvement, while NATO's military posture would not function as an effective deterrent for the most probable and significant risks -- international and criminal terrorism in particular.

The problem of political and economic instability can be better addressed by the European organizations. It can be argued that the issues which could become the precursory elements of a crisis in the Mediterranean region are likely to be confronted more adequately by the EU/WEU and that the WEU will be better positioned than NATO to cope with its security aspects -- if Europe is finally able to forge a true CFSP.

A greater reluctance on the part of the United States to become militarily involved in crises in which no significant national interests are at stake, would eventually compel Europe to take the lead. And it can be argued that there are few interests in the Mediterranean region today, which Washington would consider important enough to call for an American military intervention. This is likely to become a salient feature of future American foreign policy guidelines as well.

On the other hand, the WEU is also strengthening its operational capabilities in the Mediterranean. France, Italy and Spain have agreed to develop an on-call air and sea rapid intervention force for the Mediterranean (EUROMARFOR) and an on-call ground force (EUROFOR),<sup>17</sup> both answerable to WEU -- a sort of Southern Eurocorps.

There is the risk of developing a WEU operational role which would lead to unnecessary duplication of structures and assets (particularly in command, control and communications). This risk appears particularly acute in the Mediterranean, because there might be the temptation to try to alleviate the complexity of crisis management scenarios, and resolve the differences in policies and membership among Southern European countries (Turkey is still not a full member of the WEU and the EU, while France is still outside NATO's integrated military structure), by establishing parallel military capabilities, infrastructures and C3 assets.

In military terms, the solution to the security contradictions of the Southern Flank might be found in making the Mediterranean the region in which to concentrate the efforts to further develop the WEU as the core of a European security and defence identity and, at the same time, as a means to strengthen the European pillar of NATO. In other words, to develop the European security and defence identity within rather than outside the Alliance.

In this context, let me make a very provocative proposal to be executed in at least two phases and in the medium term.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>. Interview of NATO Secretary-General Willy Claes in the Belgian newspaper *Tijd* on 8 February 1995.

<sup>17</sup>. The creation of an on-call ground force was an Italian initiative. It was discussed and approved in the WEU Council of Ministers in Luxembourg on 22 November 1993. The force will be composed by three brigades (French, Italian and Spanish) earmarked for WEU assignment. Portugal has expressed its willingness to participate. Though the force would be on-call, a permanent Hqs will be established in Italy.

<sup>18</sup>. This proposal has been outlined for the first time in a paper this author presented at a conference jointly organized in Naples at the end of February 1995 by the American Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) and by AFSOUTH Hqs.

In the first phase, AFSOUTH's subordinate Headquarters restructure in such a way as to be able to operate as NATO and WEU Headquarters and their commanders assume triple-hat (NATO, WEU and national) responsibilities and functions. STANAVFORMED (the NATO standing naval force in the Mediterranean) is strengthened by integrating the units earmarked for the planned Franco-Italian-Spanish naval force and exercises and operates both as a NATO and a WEU force, as the situation demands.

In the second phase, the command and control of the Allied Forces in the Southern Flank is rotationally assumed by a European Admiral (who will wear a NATO and a WEU hat), flanked by an American Admiral (who will maintain his NATO and national hat). STRIKEFORSOUTH continues to be an American force earmarked for NATO assignment.

I realize that in order for this plan to be viable, it has to satisfy at least three difficult conditions: France rejoining NATO in the Southern Flank, Turkey being accepted as a full member of the WEU, and the United States agreeing to the changes. And I know that this is just a general scheme and more details would have to be worked out, particularly in C3 arrangements.

But this restructuring and re-orientation of NATO is perhaps the way to address and face the range of ethnic and national disputes and the multifaceted risks that may erupt in the Mediterranean region.

In fact, this solution:

(i) would establish, at least in the Southern Flank, a deeper security and defence integration of NATO and WEU to be seen in the perspective of the now discussed New Trans-Atlantic Pact;<sup>19</sup>

(ii) would facilitate Euro-Atlantic crisis management by concentrating NATO and WEU functions in NATO Headquarters;

(iii) would facilitate the organization and functioning of WEU in times of crisis, and the performance of its peacekeeping and peace-enforcing role;

(iv) would prevent the build-up of parallel WEU C3 arrangements eventually leading to the costly and unnecessary duplication of the NATO integrated military structure;<sup>20</sup>

(v) would favor the smooth passage from a WEU- to a NATO- directed operation -- and eventually from peacekeeping to collective defence.

(vi) would allow for better use of the capabilities and assets presently available and dedicating of the limited European defence resources to modernization;

(vii) would ease the implementation of the CJTF concept.

(viii) would fit into the present NATO<sup>21</sup> and WEU trends towards an expanded dialogue and cooperation with Southern Mediterranean countries;

(ix) would help the development of European security and defence identity within the transatlantic context.

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<sup>19</sup>. Joseph Fitchett, Western Europe Proposes New Trans-Atlantic Pact, International Herald Tribune, 7 February 1995.

<sup>20</sup>. It is true that EUFOR and EUROMARFOR Hqs could find space in existing facilities but it would be very costly to upgrade their communications to the standard needed to exercise effective operational control, a standard normally found in NATO Hqs.

<sup>21</sup>. The question of what should NATO do is under discussion in the Alliance ever since the informal meeting of NATO's Defence Ministers in Seville on September 1994. After the January 1995 NATO Council, the issue is officially on NATO's agenda.

A final remark. Only NATO gives Europe the transatlantic links that insure the maintenance of the U.S. political and military contribution to Europe's security and defence. This is particularly true in the Southern Flank. In fact, while it continues to be the "soft underbelly" of NATO, because of the political instability, economic crisis and military weakness of its Southern members, the Flank has evolved into a true frontier region for European security -- as the Central Region was during the Cold War. With one notable difference, however: while the Central Region of the old days was confronted with a clear military threat, today's Southern Flank is confronted with multiple risks which are difficult to address in purely military terms, and faces a rapidly changing environment, whose repercussions on European security are hard to assess. For the foreseeable future, NATO and the EU/WEU are both necessary and complementary in the Mediterranean. It would be unfortunate if, in pursuing its goal of a security and defence identity, Europe were to end up undermining NATO. And it would be unfortunate if the United States were to end up eluding its international political and military international responsibilities, weakening or renouncing its leadership role.

Rome, August 1995.