

IAI Research Papers



Italy and Security in the Mediterranean

edited by
Alessandro Marrone and Michele Nones



Edizioni Nuova Cultura

Acknowledgements

The research team would like to thank the following for the information and suggestions that they provided: the Italian Navy Chief of Staff, especially the 3rd Department of Naval Planning, Operations and Maritime Strategy; the Joint Chief of Staff, particularly the 3rd Department of Military Policy and Planning; the Cabinet of the Minister of Defence, especially the Office of Military Policy; and Fincantieri. The authors assume full and exclusive responsibility for the content of the study. This research was carried out with the support of Fincantieri.

Thanks are also due to Francesca Monaco who, during an internship with the IAI Security and Defence Programme in the second semester of 2015, contributed to the editing of this volume (last update: October 2015). This report was translated by Jennifer Higgins.

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First published 2016 by Edizioni Nuova Cultura

For Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)

Via Angelo Brunetti 9 - I-00186 Roma

www.iai.it

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ISBN: 9788868127152

Cover: by Luca Mozzicarelli

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Introduction: What Security, What Mediterranean?

The IAI research project “The Security in the Mediterranean and Italy” studied the complex and multi-faceted issue of security and, at the same time, a complex region with uncertain geopolitical boundaries such as the area surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. In doing so, it adopted a multi-disciplinary approach in the form of a working group made up of IAI researchers with a range of expertise from the following Institute’s programmes: Energy, EU’s Global Role, Mediterranean and Middle East, Security and Defence. The project also took a pragmatic approach, recognising the necessity of limiting the scope of the analysis in order to obtain the appropriate depth of study.

This inclusive and pragmatic perspective was the starting point for exploring the concepts of both security and the Mediterranean region. Regarding security, have been considered instability and conflicts in the Arab world, linked as they are to socio-economic, religious and political dynamics, as well as energy security, economic security relating to trade and maritime traffic, and obviously maritime security at a time of massive migratory flux across the Mediterranean.

Concerning the Mediterranean region, it has been deliberately viewed from a changing perspective instrumental to the kind of analysis to be undertaken. The first chapter analyses the trajectory of crises in the Mediterranean, focusing on Maghreb, Levant and Gulf, whose countries see Italy and the EU as actors external to the region. The second chapter puts the Mediterranean Sea at the centre of the analysis, studying trade between coastal states, maritime traffic, and the “blue economy” from the Italian perspective. Similarly, the third chapter keeps the Mediterranean Sea as the central focus and concentrates on energy-producing countries in North Africa, energy resources in the Mediterranean seabed, and Eu-

ropean energy policies in the region. The fourth chapter, however, first considers US and NATO perspectives on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, which, although it mainly borders the same sea, also includes the Persian Gulf countries. The chapter then takes a specific focus on NATO maritime strategy also in relation with the Mediterranean Basin. The fifth chapter discusses the European Union's Maritime Security Strategy, focusing on the Mediterranean. Finally, with an eye on the direction taken by the White Paper for international security and defence (recently adopted by Italy) the sixth chapter takes the Italian view of a "Euro-Mediterranean region" that gravitates around the Mediterranean Sea and is the priority area for military intervention – including naturally by the navy – evidence of which has been seen in the series of naval initiatives put in place to respond to the migration crisis of the last few years.

Such an approach to the Mediterranean region is not simple, but it is necessary in the case of a geo-political space that is so dense in identities and rich in history – from the Roman *Mare Nostrum* to Constantinople's "great Turkish lake" and to the Anglo-American security umbrella from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries – and recently so riddled with instability, conflicts and insecurity. Security in the Mediterranean has always been central to Italy's national interest but it is all the more so given the current state of affairs. Therefore, it demands continuous, systematic and thorough reflection by the country's elite and public opinion, with a view to the related political decisions to be taken. This volume aims to contribute to such reflection.

Alessandro Marrone and Michele Nones

List of Acronyms

AMS	Alliance Maritime Strategy
AQAP	Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
C2	Command and Control
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CISE	Common Information Sharing Environment
COI	Italian Joint Operations Headquarters (Comando Operativo di Vertice Interforze)
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
EDA	European Defence Agency
EEAS	European External Action Service
EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency
EU	European Union
EUCAP Nestor	European Union Mission on Regional Maritime Capacity Building in the Horn of Africa
EUFOR	European Union Force
EUMSS	European Union Maritime Security Strategy
EUNAVFOR	European Union Naval Force
EU OHQ	European Union Operational Head Quarters
EUROSUR	European Border Surveillance System
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GLDD	Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Company
ICI	Istanbul Cooperation Initiative
IMP	Integrated Maritime Policy
IMRCC	Italian Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
LNG	Liquid Natural Gas
Lo-Lo	Lift-on-Lift-off
LPI	Logistics Performance Index
MARSUR	Maritime Surveillance Networking
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MUOS	Mobile User Objective System
MSA	Maritime Situational Awareness
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RAP	Readiness Action Plan
RCC	Rescue Coordination Centre
RFS	Regional Full Spectrum
Ro-Ro	Roll-on-roll-off
RTAP	Regional Transport Action Plan
SAR	Search and Rescue
SATCEN	European Union Satellite Centre
SCDP	Suez Canal Development Project
SLOC	Sea Lines of Communication
SNTG	Standing Naval Task Group
SOLAS	International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea
SRM	Studi e Ricerche per il Mezzogiorno
TANAP	Trans-Anatolian Pipeline
TAP	Trans-Adriatic Pipeline
TMN-T	Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network
ULCC	Ultra Large Crude Carrier
UNCLOS	United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
VJTF	Very High Readiness Joint Task Force
VLCC	Very Large Crude Carrier
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System

1.

The Trajectory of the Crises in the Mediterranean

Silvia Colombo

The Mediterranean is at a turning point. A succession of profound socio-political changes in the countries of the region and a protracted state of instability have brought security challenges into sharp focus for the European Union (EU) and its member states. In Italy the situation is particularly pressing because the country is exposed to problems stemming from illegal migration across the Mediterranean. Many of the factors affecting the region are of crucial geo-political importance, such as, for example, the emergence of the Islamic State and the threat of Islamist terrorism connected to the power crisis and failure of existing institutional state structures as a result of the outbreak of civil wars in several countries (Syria and Libya, for example), or to sectarian conflicts in the eastern Mediterranean, including the Persian Gulf. These geo-political factors are, however, connected to essentially domestic political dynamics, inasmuch as they are born of the collapse of the transition processes set off by popular uprisings in 2011 and by the rekindling of sectarian, ethnic and tribal divisions.

For this reason, this chapter will trace the trajectory of the crises in the region, starting from the so-called Arab Spring, its thrust towards change and its legacy more than five years on. The second section will concentrate on the actors and processes that have given rise to regional challenges since the end of the Cold War. Finally, the third section will examine the region's new configuration, and discuss its implications for actors such as the EU and Italy.

1.1 FROM POPULAR UPRISINGS TO THE ISLAMIC STATE

At the beginning of 2011, the Arab world entered a revolutionary phase that would lead, for the first time in its history, to the fall of authoritarian regimes in the face of more or less peaceful protests. When the young street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi set himself alight in Sidi Bouzid in Tunisia in the middle of December 2010, he set off a wave of protests and demonstrations that, in less than three months, extended over almost the whole region. The Tunisian revolt, the so-called “Jasmine Revolution,” was described as a spontaneous and mainly peaceful movement, which, in just a few days, saw thousands of people take to the streets of Tunis and other cities chanting slogans against Ben Ali, his family and his entourage, as well as against the predatory practices of his regime.¹ The unbridled corruption of the Tunisian ruling class greatly increased the gap between rich and poor, creating frustration and discontent.

The revolutionary wave that began in the periphery in the Tunisian countryside quickly reached the centre of the Arab world, the nearby capital of Egypt. In Cairo, between 50,000 and 70,000 people assembled in Tahrir Square on 25 January 2001, designated – following Tunisia’s example – as the “day of rage.” During the eighteen days that led to the removal of Mubarak on 11 February 2011, around 6 million Egyptians took to the streets to take part in the most impressive popular movement in the history of the country and the region.² According to some authors, and also in the light of the second revolutionary wave of summer 2013 and of the role of the military hierarchy in the current politics and economy of the country, the fall of Mubarak’s regime can more accurately be attributed to a military coup d’état with popular backing. Nevertheless, the importance of the demonstrations in the square should not be underestimated, and neither should the role played by young people.³

¹ Despite the largely peaceful nature of the protest, it is estimated that 300 Tunisians were killed, which is a surprisingly high number in a country of only 10 million inhabitants. See Laryssa Chomiak, “The Making of a Revolution in Tunisia”, in *Middle East Law and Governance*, Vol. 3, Nos. 1-2 (2011), p. 68-83.

² Abu Dhabi Gallup Center, *Egypt From Tahrir to Transition*, June 2011, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/157046/egypt-tahrir-transition.aspx>.

³ Robert Springborg, “Whither the Arab Spring? 1989 or 1848?”, in *The International Spectator*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (September 2011), p. 5-12, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0393272>

A fundamental characteristic of the uprisings – or rather a sort of common denominator that unites extremely varied experiences and trajectories – is the fact that the participants were young urbanites who were well-educated and active on the internet. Naturally, this categorisation is a simplified one, and does not take into account significant variants such as the social and economic characteristics, religion or political leanings of those involved in the protests. Generally, though, in all the countries of the region, the young people involved showed themselves to be potential agents of the long-awaited change, at least in the initial phase of the Arab Spring. They were helped in this by having access to modern technology and to means of mass communication, which played a central role both in the phase of protests against authoritarian regimes and in the struggle for greater freedom of expression and for the creation of a more democratic public space.⁴ The actions of young people in the phase following the revolts intersected with processes of political and institutional transition which began to take place in some countries and whose outcomes remain, for the most part, uncertain or negative. Before analysing these experiences, and the rather conflicting dynamics that characterised them, it is useful to remember that the Arab Spring had an important element of novelty, bringing to the surface all sorts of economic, social and political unease arising from a very disparate generational and geographical backdrop. Widespread corruption, unemployment and rising poverty levels were matched by increasing authoritarianism, repression and violence by government security agencies and a disrespect of basic rights and liberties. In other words, the Arab uprisings and transitions can be seen as the end point of a series of processes that took place during the 1990s and the early twenty-first century and that saw a build-up of unsustainable socio-economic and political conditions.⁵

Despite the immediate enthusiasm with which the West greeted the Arab Spring, shifting the Arab world to the centre of the international me-

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⁴ Manuel Manrique and Barah Mikail, "The Role of New Media and Communication Technologies in the Arab Transitions", in *FRIDE Policy Briefs*, No. 106 (December 2011), <http://fride.org/publication/965/>.

⁵ Silvia Colombo and Nathalie Tocci, *The Challenges of State Sustainability in the Mediterranean*, Rome, Nuova Cultura, 2011 (IAI Research Papers 3), <http://www.iai.it/en/node/1376>.

dia stage and giving rise to comparisons between what was happening on the southern banks of the Mediterranean and the profound transformations that had taken place in eastern Europe in the 1990s, external observers and protagonists in the region soon realised that they were facing a far more complex situation. Without entering into the details of individual processes of transition, it is possible to identify three main trajectories. The first is that of slow democratic transition, a trajectory taken by countries such as Morocco and Tunisia. The second led Egypt back to the reinstatement of a semi-authoritarian system in which the army plays a key role. Finally, the third trajectory is that of the civil war in Syria, Libya and Yemen. In addition to these three strands, which are inevitably a simplification, there are the cases of those countries (first and foremost Algeria and the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council) which were not affected, or only marginally so, by the Arab Spring. This rapid overview demonstrates the necessity, from a theoretical point of view, of distinguishing between the processes of the collapse of a system of authoritarian government on the one hand, and of transition towards a potentially more democratic system on the other.⁶ In other words, the birth and consolidation of democracy are neither linear nor predictable: the experience of southern Mediterranean countries demonstrates that the end of an authoritarian system does not necessarily imply subsequent progression towards democracy, but rather an uncertain “something else” that, in the long term, could give rise to a form of democracy, to a new authoritarian regime or to conflict and instability.

In the case of the first two trajectories, a central role was played by processes of institutional transition, that is the more or less radical transformation of the established rules concerning the functioning of the state, its institutions, their interactions with one another and the horizontal links between state and society. Many of the changes and continuities that were observed in the years directly after the Arab Spring – bearing in mind that the transitions are, by definition, long and open-ended processes – did in fact affect the institutional architecture of the state, political parties and electoral dynamics, relationships between civil and military authorities

⁶ Eva Bellin, “Lessons from the Jasmine and Nile Revolutions: Possibilities of Political Transformation in the Middle East?”, in *Middle East Briefs*, No. 50 (May 2011), <http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/meb50.html>.

and the role of judicial power. These institutions underwent frequently profound transformations, while in many cases maintaining a great deal of institutional continuity, and played a central role in determining the future direction of the transformative processes themselves. An example can clarify this point: comparing the trajectories of Egypt and Tunisia in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, it becomes clear that the dynamics between political structures and pre-existing institutions, their transformation and the role played by those within these structures (political parties and leaders, unions, civil organisations, the army, etc.) had a fundamental influence on the success or failure of the transition to democracy. On one hand, in Egypt, the deep-seated conflict between the Muslim Brotherhood, which in 2011 became a real political party, and those at the top of the military hierarchy of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, was inextricably involved with, and engendered, a transition process in which elections (parliamentary and presidential) took priority over the re-defining of a divided institutional landscape that could have represented a moderating force between contrasting ideological positions. The result was a complete overturning – two years after the election of the first Islamist president of the Republic – of the balance of power, the banning of the Brotherhood and the creation of a strongly authoritarian regime. All this has taken place against a background of continuous deterioration of the socio-economic and environmental conditions in which large swathes of the population live, and of increasingly acute challenges to security in the Sinai region, which call into question the sustainability of the Egyptian state. In the case of Tunisia, the Islamist Ennahda party, which emerged from a state of total repression during the Ben Ali era, and its pragmatic inclination towards moderation and negotiation with other political forces, have taken a path towards shared political and institutional transition based on discussion of basic constitutional principles followed by elections. Elections that, in the two rounds that have taken place since October 2011, have produced a promising alternation of power and a certain political stability in the country.

The third trajectory, that of civil war, is very different from the previous two, opening up scenarios of violence and instability destined to have a profound impact on the region and its relationships with western partners. The examples of Syria, Libya and Yemen have played out against

this background. While there are notable differences in terms of the origins, internal dynamics and the involvement of external actors (whether from the region or elsewhere), these three cases have three elements in common: a) the calling into question of national borders or at least their increasing porosity; b) one of the largest waves of migration in recent decades, with a large number of people abandoning their countries and seeking exile in adjacent ones (especially Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan) or trying to reach Europe via land or sea, or becoming refugees in their own country;⁷ and c) the proliferation of Islamist terrorist groups, from those affiliated to Al-Qaeda – Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM); Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), or the Al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra), active in Syria – in rival and competing forms to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), known also as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). This last Islamist terrorist group extended its control of Iraqi territory by taking the city of Mosul and proclaiming the birth of the “Caliphate” on 29 June 2014. Since then the term Islamic State has been used not only in Iraq but also in Syria and other “provinces” of the Mediterranean region.

1.2 NEW ACTORS, OLD CRISES

The factors discussed above are in large part responsible for the geopolitical changes in the Mediterranean, with two main identifiable trends at the regional level. The first of these is that new actors, some related to the state, some not, are entering the stage, often bringing new dynamics of competition and conflict. The second trend is the sharpening of lines of sectarian, ethnic or tribal identity and division, in the face of the institutional crisis, the weakening of nation-states in the region, and the failure of Arab nationalist ideologies and of pan-Arabism which had represented a powerful uniting factor until the 1970s. The common factor of these trends, and certainly something new for the region as a whole, is that

⁷ According the statistics provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Syria alone, at the end of 2014, had 10 million internal and external refugees. See the *2015 UNHCR regional operations profile - Middle East and North Africa (MENA)*, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a02db416.html>.

today the internal socio-political dynamics of the countries in the area influence the regional order much more than the contrary. Previously, until the beginning of the twenty-first century, the regional state order, the division into opposing camps (moderate states vs. reactionary states)⁸ – divisions created during the Cold War period and then maintained, with new relevance, with the growth of Islamist movements in the region – and inter-state conflicts, especially the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, had an important influence on the internal politics of the countries of the region. The Egyptian example, from the Nasser revolution in 1952 to the easing of tensions with the West and with Israel in the late 1970s, is testimony of the importance of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern foreign policy in influencing the course of internal politics, allegiances and the level of activism and conflict between the various social groups.⁹ With the Arab Spring, the beginning of transition processes in some countries and the outbreak of civil war in others, it seems clear that new types of endogenous processes and domestic situations are having a profound influence on the foreign policies of all countries and also on the regional stage.

In terms of the emergence of new actors, another key case is that of the Islamist parties that have appeared on the electoral scene in some North African countries in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco saw the advance of such parties from 2011 to 2013, parties that triumphed and took power on the basis of a purely internal agenda (fighting corruption, moderate Islamisation of institutions, raising employment levels), with no aim to promote an “Islamist foreign policy.”¹⁰ These three Islamist governments then went through a period of apathy in the second half of 2013, although in the case of Egypt it was slightly different. At that point the paths of the three countries, as explained in the previous section, took different directions. In Egypt, in the face of a very fragmented and socially conflicted situation even with-

⁸ The first camp included countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt (after the Nasser regime), Jordan and Morocco, while the second included Algeria, Iran and Syria.

⁹ Steven A. Cook, *Ruling but Not Governing. The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria and Turkey*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007.

¹⁰ Many commentators question the very use of the expression “Islamist foreign policy” because it can be seen as too broad a term, concealing extremely varied experiences. See Filippo Dionigi and Giorgio Musso (eds.), *Partiti islamisti e relazioni internazionali in Nord Africa e Medio Oriente*, Serravalle, AIEP, 2014 (*Afriche e Orienti*, Vol. 16, Nos. 1-2).

in the Islamist camp (take for example the efforts of the conservative Salafist movement and parties to create their own space for political action, often in competition with the Muslim Brotherhood), these internal dynamics gave rise to considerable social tension. Another group occupying steadily more of the stage in many countries, but which also has an important transnational component, is the network of criminal gangs and traffickers who tend to proliferate in zones where state control is in crisis. Arms and goods smuggling, often in parallel with human trafficking, are widespread in large areas of southern Libya on the border with Niger and Chad, not to mention the lucrative trafficking that takes place in the whole of the Sahel belt.¹¹ Finally, on a regional level, the roles played by Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have also gradually changed, so that they have now become to all intents and purposes the new regional powers. Without entering into the details of the role played by these actors in the region's crises, from Egypt to Syria, from Libya to Yemen, it is important to emphasise the fact that the behaviour of such actors in the domestic affairs of these countries depends directly on their internal situations. In particular, the competition for regional supremacy between Saudi Arabia and Qatar was, at least until the new Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani came to power in 2013, dictated by internal political priorities. As far as the Saudi regime was concerned, the main objective was to avoid any threat to its political and religious authority and to guarantee internal stability in the face of growing social discontent. Qatar's approach, on the other hand, was to increase its regional influence, focusing on the Muslim Brotherhood as a way of distracting attention from its internal problems, especially from its unsustainable social and economic development model.¹²

There is a second trend linked to sharpening dividing lines based on religion, ethnicity, tribal groups or other factors, in addition to the dichotomy described above between supporters and adversaries of the Muslim Brotherhood on both regional and internal levels, and this trend has

¹¹ See the report of the International Crisis Group, "The Central Sahel: A Perfect Sandstorm", in *ICG Africa Reports*, No. 227 (25 June 2015), <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/west-africa/227-the-central-sahel-a-perfect-sandstorm.aspx>.

¹² Silvia Colombo, "L'ascesa islamista e la competizione regionale tra Arabia Saudita e Qatar", in Filippo Dionigi and Giorgio Musso (eds.), *Partiti islamisti e relazioni internazionali in Nord Africa e Medio Oriente*, Serravalle, AIEP, 2014, p. 47-63.

caused a dividing line to be drawn across the Mediterranean region more strongly than ever before. This is the division between Sunni and Shia Muslims, a theological division that goes back to the time shortly after Prophet Muhammed, and which has now become politicised and used as a tool in security politics, thus becoming a major source of regional conflicts. This was illustrated by the dispute between the Sunni monarchies of the Arab Gulf and Shia Iran, which had serious effects on the stability and prospects for peace of the whole area, especially in Iraq, Syrian and Yemen. A final, new element born out of the unfettered resurgence of sectarian, ethnic and tribal identities is the process of “demographic ethnocentrism” underway in the Mediterranean, especially its eastern areas. The Syrian conflict is causing hundreds of thousands of Sunnis to leave zones controlled by the Alawite, and therefore Shia, regime. Nearby Lebanon has by now taken in over a million Sunni refugees from Syria. In Iraq, the Islamic State is causing a large number of non-Sunnis to leave the country, with the aim of creating a homogenous Sunni population. These and other identity-related issues support the idea that the region is undergoing a process of “ethno-centric stabilisation and homogenisation,” which brings with it large-scale and repeated violations of human rights and of international law.

In conclusion, this analysis reveals a further key aspect of the current regional dynamics. This is the marked change in the types of conflict in the region as a direct result of the two points made above. Despite the fact that inter-state conflicts such as one between Israel and Palestine or the conflict between Morocco and Algeria over the Western Sahara cannot be said to have been resolved, their central position in the security landscape of the region seems diminished relative to other types of conflict. These include intra-state disputes such as the Libyan civil war or the acute tensions in Egypt between opposing visions of politics and society, and the so-called “proxy wars” between rival regional powers such as the Syrian and Yemeni conflicts. Civil wars, violence between political factions and civil society, and tensions between state and society are in fact contributing to a redefinition of the region’s geopolitics and presenting new challenges to the Mediterranean internal and external actors.

1.3 A NEW REGIONAL ORDER?

In order to confront these challenges, it is important to understand their origins and scope. As indicated above, the transformation of the conflicts in the Mediterranean region springs from the crisis of the area's nation states. This crisis is evident in the institutional weakness discussed previously, in social conflicts, in the power vacuum in some peripheral and non-peripheral areas which are now controlled by groups not connected to the state, and in the grave socio-economic difficulties that grip the region's countries. The crisis of the nation states goes hand-in-hand with the disintegration of the regional order founded on centralised structures and power, and on the role of actors such as the US and Europe.

The Mediterranean regional order dated back to the years immediately after the Second World War and was subsequently consolidated during the Cold War. It was based on a division of the region into spheres of influence: the western sphere, which included moderate states such as Egypt, Jordan and the Arab Gulf states, and the eastern sphere or so-called "non-aligned" countries, which included states firmly opposed to US hegemony in the region, such as Algeria, Libya and Syria. The global order was drastically transformed at the end of the Cold War during the era of US unipolarism and the triumph of liberal democracy. This contributed to the undermining of the regional order and laid the foundations for sectarianism, civil war and the increasing unsustainability of the authoritarian regimes in power until 2011 or, in some cases, after. On the one hand, the US and Europe maintained the status quo embodied in those political systems, especially those of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, which gave greater guarantees of stability by aiming to protect their own interests and stem the advance of groups whose anti-hegemonic aspirations were deemed harmful (Iran, for example). On the other hand, Iraq and Libya were the objects of western military interventions intended to overthrow their regimes.

Besides contributing to the transformation of the regional balance of power, the actions of the US and their European partners – as well as developments in the West itself – contributed to the erosion of the influence of these western powers in the Mediterranean. Without doubt, the global financial crisis that mainly affected the Euro-Atlantic region from 2008

onwards can be considered largely responsible, as far as Europe is concerned, for the tendency for countries to turn their gaze inwards, for the return of nationalism in foreign and defence politics, and for the stalled development of a common foreign and security policy. This tendency, which became more marked in the second decade of the twenty-first century, coincided with the emergence of other regional and external actors in ever more assertive ways. This was first true of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which signalled their willingness to play a far more prominent role in determining the balance of power in the region, with the ultimate aim of extending their own influence and guaranteeing the survival of their own regimes. Despite some friction regarding the political lines pursued by these actors – mainly between Saudi Arabia and Qatar – both among themselves and between them and the attitude of the West, deemed to be too submissive to what they saw as the greatest threat to the regional order, namely Iran, the Gulf states remain key allies of the US in the region, in the name of a pragmatic policy of “offshore balancing.”¹³

Other powerful external actors, including Russia and China, have increased their presence in the region, positioning themselves as alternatives – in economic, political and diplomatic terms – to the western powers whose influence is in decline. The new dynamics of the production and commercialisation of energy on a global level are partly responsible for this shifting of the balance of power in the Mediterranean towards other players. The shale gas “revolution,” raising as it does the prospect of the US no longer needing to import energy from the Middle East by 2020, is not in itself enough to diminish Washington’s interest in the region’s security, given its importance for global energy prices and supply to the energy-thirsty Asian continent. Nonetheless, the focus of the Mediterranean has shifted eastwards, with increasingly close relations between the countries of the region and China, India and Russia.

In their capacity as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, China and Russia have opposed the US and Europe by offering their support to Bashar Al-Assad and by abstaining over the 2011 inter-

¹³ “Offshore balancing” is a concept used in the doctrine of international relations to describe a strategy whereby a big power makes use of regional state actors to hinder the growth of other hostile powers.

vention in Libya, and they have become important partners to several states in the region. For example, Beijing and Moscow are among the principle arms suppliers to the region. China has increased its arms sales to Algeria, Morocco and Turkey, in direct competition with European ones.¹⁴ Russia was the second largest arms supplier, globally, after the US in the period 2008-2012. Algeria alone received 60 per cent of total Russian exports of arms systems in that period, while a further 10 per cent was destined for the rest of the region (including the Middle East).¹⁵ The energy market is another sector in which the presence of other external actors has increased markedly. Since the Iraq War in 2003, China has intensified its presence in the Gulf, and its increasing energy needs have guided its strategy in the Mediterranean region. Today, China has overtaken the US as principle buyer of oil from the Gulf, and Asia as a whole absorbed, in 2013, 57 per cent of the Gulf's energy exports. It is not only energy, however. Between 2003 and 2013, crude oil imports to China from Arab countries grew by 12 per cent each year, but the growth rate of Sino-Arab commercial exchange was more than 25 per cent a year in the same period. In 2014, China became the second-largest commercial partner to the Arab world as a whole.¹⁶

This brief focus on new trends linking the Mediterranean region to other areas of the world economically and politically highlights the prospect of a global Mediterranean, one increasingly open and exposed to global actors and dynamics. This is in direct opposition to the old vision of the Mediterranean as part of the EU's backyard, an idea that has been the basis of European strategy in the region for decades. Firstly, the region's borders have become more porous and new actors, once considered distant, now play an increasingly important role in the region's dynamics. Secondly, there is the increasingly problematic fictitious division, insisted on by European policies, between the (western) Mediterranean on the one hand and the greater Middle East, including the Gulf, on the other. This shows the pressing need for a reappraisal of the European political

¹⁴ Ted C. Liu, "China's Economic Engagement in the Middle East and North Africa", in *FRIDE Policy Briefs*, No. 173 (January 2014), <http://www.fride.org/publication/1173>.

¹⁵ Frank Gardner, "Russia in the Middle East: Return of the Bear", in *BBC News*, 14 November 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24944325>.

¹⁶ Ted C. Liu, "China's Economic Engagement in the Middle East and North Africa", cit.

approach in the region, towards one that takes into account the new dominant geopolitics.

State crises, new and severe forms of conflict, the proliferation of security challenges, renewed popular activism especially among young people, and new types of governance all demonstrate that the Mediterranean has emerged from the phase of authoritarian stasis and is heading towards a new, uncertain chapter of its development. While it may not yet be possible to talk of a new regional order, the driving elements of the new dominant structural logic are linked to the sectarian tensions that are determining a new situation of “Cold War” between Sunnis and Shias. The region’s continuous mutation and the fluid character of the balance of power make it difficult to capture the complexity of the Mediterranean in one static portrait. This complexity complicates political choices, as do the innumerable challenges to security which – while having internal origins – have a strong impact on the region both internally and externally. At the same time, the ability of Arab governments to confront these challenges has flagged. In this context, Europe, and in particular Italy, given its geo-strategic exposure to many of the challenges originating from the Mediterranean, finds itself in need to react to an extremely uncertain situation at a historic moment in which its own capacity for external protection seems weaker than ever.

2.

Italy in the Mediterranean: Commercial Challenges, Changing Infrastructure and New Maritime Traffic

Alessandro R. Ungaro

2.1 ITALY'S COMMERCIAL PERFORMANCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE ROLE OF SOUTHERN ITALY

What impact does the Mediterranean have on the Italian economy? How can its relevance and prominence be measured? What is the nature of commercial between Mediterranean countries? What, and how much, does Italy export to the Mediterranean area, and what does it import? Where does Italy position itself in relation to regional and international competitors operating in the area? And what are the greatest challenges and opportunities that it will have to tackle – especially in fields such as ports and logistics – in order to face the inexorable rise of new economic and commercial powers without being swamped? This first section aims to respond to these questions and others, focusing mainly on economic, commercial and infrastructural links between Italy and the Mediterranean Sea.

It is estimated that in 2014, the overall value of Italian exports amounted to 403.8 billion euros. Of this, 10.7 per cent – about 43 billion – is from commerce with Mediterranean countries (the “Med area”) and the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (“GCC area”), included within the area designated the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), which also includes Turkey.¹ Of these 43 billion, 28.9 are the fruit of eco-

¹ This follows the methodology of the SRM, which defines the “Med area” as including the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tu-

nomic and commercial relations with the Med area (7.2 per cent of the total) and 14.1 billion comes from the Gulf countries (3.5 per cent). Still more significant is the fact that Italian exports to the Med area are greater than those to the US (worth around 27 billion euros) and those to China (9.9 billion).

The trade between Italy and the Med area alone rose by 64.4 per cent from 2001 to 2013, from 33.3 to 54.8 billion euros. It is important, however, to note that despite there was this trend of continuous growth between 2001 and 2008 – the year in which exchange exceeded 60 billion euros – from 2009 onwards a series of political and economic phenomena alternated and intersected to cause a considerable decline in Italian commercial performance. Most importantly, the economic crisis in 2009 turned the clock back several years, and the trade between Italy and Med area countries fell to 50 billion euros, compared to 60 billion the year before. The second decline occurred in 2011, when the international community found itself faced with the various Arab Springs, which generated a further decrease in commercial trade with Italy to barely more than 50 billion euros. After a recovery in 2012, the latest decline was in 2013 to 2014: the worsening Libyan crisis brought exchange down to 54.8 billion euros – still much lower than the 60 billion threshold that had been reached in 2008. Nevertheless, the latest predictions from the SRM for 2016 foresee a small but significant increase in commercial exchange between Italy and the Med area countries, which should lead to a trade of around 56.6 billion euros, with an estimated increase of about 2 billion euros compared to 2014.²

It is clear that Italy will need to play its Mediterranean economic game in competition with other regional and international actors, themselves seeking to consolidate and/or increase their presence in the market. However, between 2001 and 2013 Italian export to the Med area more than doubled (+107.1 per cent), reaching 29.1 billion euros in 2013. The growth rate was greater than that of US export (+58.6 per cent) and French export (+53.8 per cent), and not far off German export (+138.7

nesia and Turkey. The GCC countries are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. See SRM, *Economic Relations between Italy and the Mediterranean Area. Annual Report 2014*, p. 26 and 40.

² Ibid.

per cent). Italy is therefore the fourth-largest exporter to the Med area in the world – after China, Germany and the US – and is the second-largest in Europe, just after Germany. As far as exchanges with the Mediterranean countries go, in 2013 the US was first, with 62 billion euros, followed by Germany with 57.3 billion. Italy is in third place with 54.8 billion. The predictions for 2016 indicate, however, that Italy, while maintaining a prominent position will drop to fourth place among the Med area's main partners, with an estimated trade value equal to about 56.6 billion euros, overtaken by China which – with an estimated 63 billion euros in 2016 – will take second place after the US.³

Of all the trade between Italy and the Med area, 40.3 per cent regards energy resources. This figure is significantly lower for Italy's principle competitors, including China (9.4 per cent) and France (20.2 per cent). Specifically, the Med area accounts for 22.4 per cent of total Italian energy imports. As far as the trade of non-energy products is concerned, however, Italy is the Med area's fifth-largest partner: between 2001 and 2013, it grew by 67.6 per cent, to 32.7 billion euros. China is the largest partner, with 49.7 per cent of exchange of non-energy products, estimated at 55.4 per cent in 2016.

What marks Italy out is the impact of the Med area on its trade exchange, an obviously distinctive and revealing aspect of the "Mediterranean specialisation" of Italy's foreign trade. In 2001, the quota was 6.2 per cent while in 2013 it had jumped to 7.3 per cent. This is a higher percentage than that of its main European and international competitors operating in the Med area: for France the figure is 4.9 per cent, for Germany 2.9 per cent, and for China 1.7 per cent.⁴ Italy's figure for 2013 (7.3 per cent) doubles to 14.6 per cent, if only southern Italy is taken into account.⁵ Southern Italy is, in fact, the Italian region with the highest rate of exchange with the Med region. Taking its exports as a whole, the degree of Mediterranean specialisation is very high, contributing significantly to Italy's international competitiveness in various industrial sectors such as: the agro-industry sector, which represents 29 per cent of the total exports; the metallurgic sector (22 per cent); the rub-

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 29.

⁵ Ibid., p. 32.

ber and plastic sector (21 per cent); and finally the automotive sector (17 per cent).⁶

As will be seen later in this chapter, 75 per cent of Italian exchange with the Mediterranean area is by sea: the Mediterranean therefore plays a key role for southern Italian ports. This is confirmed by the increase in maritime traffic through the Suez Canal, and by the strong European push towards “short sea shipping,” that is the short-range, European transport of goods to and from the countries bordering the Baltic, Black and Mediterranean Seas. The twelve ports of southern Italy represent almost 50 per cent of all of Italy’s maritime traffic, and 55 per cent of Italian so-called “roll-on-roll-off” (ro-ro)⁷ traffic in the Mediterranean. Southern Italy thus offers great opportunities in terms of specialisation in commercial exchange, sector-based diversifications, export quality, geo-economic positioning and logistical potential, which, if properly exploited, would allow the region to strengthen and increase its presence in the Med area.

There are, however, a number of critical points. First, there is an increase – perhaps an excessive one – in the energy component within commercial trade; moreover, as will be seen later on, the ports competing in the Mediterranean, in particular those in North Africa, Spain and Greece, are becoming increasingly aggressive and competitive. A third element is the lack of strategic infrastructural investment, for example in the area of intermodal transport and logistics.⁸ The fourth and final critical point is a cultural one, that is, the scant awareness of the value of the Mediterranean as an area of exchange and an instrument of economic recovery for Italy.

⁶ The term “automotive” includes all motorised vehicles, including: cars for transporting people, vehicles for transporting goods (both commercial, for loads below 3.5 tons, and industrial, for loads of above 3.5 tons), buses, caravans, concrete mixers, snowmobiles, golf vehicles and specialised cars. Motorbikes are not included.

⁷ A roll-on-roll-off unit, abbreviated as Ro-Ro unit, is a wheeled freight-carrying equipment, such as a lorry, trailer or semi-trailer, which can be driven or towed onto a ship or vessel.

⁸ See, for example, the observations of the Association for the Industrial Development of Southern Italy (SVIMEZ) in the summary of the *Rapporto SVIMEZ 2015 sull'economia del Mezzogiorno 2015*, <http://www.svimez.info/rapporto-2015>.

2.2 MARITIME TRAFFIC, PORTS AND LOGISTICS: ITALY'S STRUCTURAL VULNERABILITIES AND NEW REGIONAL COMPETITORS

Maritime transport is still undoubtedly the backbone of international commerce and of the global economy. Overall, around 80 per cent of the volume and 70 per cent of the value of world trade travels by sea.⁹ Between 19 per cent and 20 per cent of the world's maritime traffic of goods and passengers travels on the Mediterranean; in 2005, the figure was just 15 per cent.¹⁰ Among the things that pass through this basin are around 1.4 billion tons of goods, 30 per cent of the world's oil, and around two thirds of the other energy resources destined for Italy and other European countries, including those transported by undersea pipelines. Then there is cruise traffic: in 2014, around 26 million people went on cruises from Mediterranean ports, thanks to the presence of 152 ships and the choice of 2,615 itineraries. It is the second most popular destination in the world after the Caribbean.¹¹

As described above, the trade between Italy and the Med area alone grew by 64.4 per cent from 2001 to 2013, going from 33.3 to 54.8 billion euros. That fact that 75 per cent of this exchange is conducted by sea further demonstrates just how important maritime traffic is for a country like Italy and, more generally, how important the maritime system is to the national economy. Shipbuilding plays a leading role: it is one of the enterprises of the so-called "blue economy,"¹² with around 27,000 enterprises, 64.2 per cent of which are in coastal locations, and which make up 15.2 per cent of the businesses in the maritime sector.¹³ In 2013 and 2014, despite sig-

⁹ UNCTAD, *Review of Maritime Transport 2015*, October 2015, p. 22, <http://unctad.org/en/pages/PublicationWebflyer.aspx?publicationid=1374>.

¹⁰ SRM, *Nuove rotte per la crescita del Mezzogiorno: Presentazione del 2° Rapporto Annuale Italian Maritime Economy*, 4 June 2015, p. 3, <http://www.economiadelmare.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/sintesi-ricerca-maritime-2015-.pdf>.

¹¹ Alberto Maestrini, presentation at the conference "Geopolitica e economia del mare", Milan, 25 May 2015, http://www.unibocconi.it/wps/wcm/connect/142f5080-2b16-40ac-9fc9-71cb158269ec/Maestrini_Bocconi+25+Maggio+15.pdf?MOD=AJPERES.

¹² This term refers to all the various economic activities linked to the sea, from traditional ones such as fishing and shipbuilding, to innovative ones such as maritime research and biotechnology or off-shore maritime extractive activities, or eventually the tourist industry.

¹³ Italian Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport, *Piano strategico nazionale della portualità e della logistica*, August 2015, p. 58, <http://www.mit.gov.it/mit/vlink.php?id=4248>.

nificant difficulties, the sector confirmed its position as the leader in the whole marine industry, which has itself seen an increase of 26.8 per cent in its exports, thanks to significant support of the shipbuilding industry to the tune of 31.2 per cent.¹⁴ Overall, the shipbuilding industry has the capacity to generate a multiplier effect equal to 2.4 euros on the rest of the economy: of 7.2 billion euros produced in 2014, 17.4 billion were generated primarily by activities linked to metallurgy, and to research and development, etc.¹⁵

The Italian port system includes 24 ports where the relevant port Authorities are based, plus various small and medium commercial ports. Despite the large number of ports, the market is concentrated in the five largest – Trieste, Genoa, Cagliari, Gioia Tauro and Taranto – which together represent 45 per cent of all goods transported in Italy. The port sector, in terms of both goods and passengers, generates around 2.6 per cent of Italian GDP, with over 11,000 businesses in the sector and 93,000 employees. The multiplier effect here is among the highest, equal to 2.9 in terms of turnover.¹⁶ “Bulk” traffic¹⁷ represents the largest share of overall national volume transported at 56 per cent, of which 40 is liquid bulk and 16 is dry bulk.¹⁸ As for “unitised”¹⁹ freight (containers and ro-ro), this represents around 40 per cent of the volume transported.

¹⁴ Unioncamere-SI Camera, *Quarto rapporto sull'economia del mare*, May 2015, p. 52, <http://www.unioncamere.gov.it/download/4754.html>.

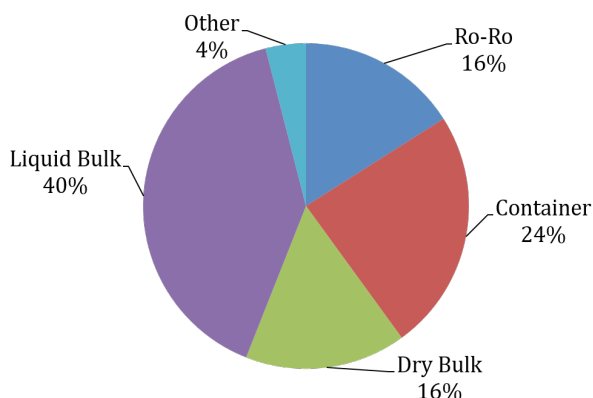
¹⁵ Ibid., p. 42.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ This term covers the transport of goods of any kind and in any physical state, transported without packaging. This constitutes the largest share of world maritime traffic, and is in turn divided between liquid and dry bulk. The transport of liquid bulk – which includes the movement of oil and its derivatives, liquefied natural gas and chemical products – represents, in terms of tons, more than 30 per cent of global maritime traffic. Dry bulk goods represent 51.2 per cent of goods transported internationally, in terms of tons. This category includes, for example, all minerals, coal, timber and seed. See Cassa depositi e prestiti, *Porti e logistica. Il sistema portuale e logistico italiano nel contesto competitivo euro-mediterraneo: potenzialità e presupposti per il rilancio*, May 2012, p. 12, <http://www.cdp.it/studi/studi-di-settore/porti-e-logistica.html>.

¹⁸ Italian Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport, Directorate-General for Ports, *Relazione annuale sull'attività delle Autorità portuali anno 2013*, January 2015, p. 20, <http://www.mit.gov.it/mit/site.php?p=cm&o=vd&id=3651>.

¹⁹ Unitised freight refers to the use of containers and crates to transport a variety of goods, mainly semi-finished and finished products. Generally, two methods are used, Lo-Lo (Lift-on-lift off) and Ro-Ro (Roll-on-roll-off).



Source: IAI, from port authority data, 2013.

In terms of ports' specialisations, the larger ones transport greater volumes of different goods, while small and medium ports specialise in particular types of cargo; this depends on whether the ports are near specific industries or, in other cases, where the ports are located. As far as the prevailing distribution model is concerned, there is a distinction between "transshipment" ports and "gateway" ports. The former, positioned along the route linking Europe to East Asia, are almost exclusively dedicated to the transfer goods from ship to ship, making the most of the favourable location and the interception of ships on transoceanic routes. Gioia Tauro, Taranto and Cagliari constitute the main transshipment ports in Italy. The ports belonging to the second category or those located in strategic positions relating to the markets where the goods come from or are destined for, and are often found near the large national industrial centres or in key positions in terms of the main European commercial corridors. The principle Italian ports that act as entrance ports to the prominent economic areas are, for example, the Ligurian ports (Genoa) and those of the northern Adriatic (Trieste).

One of Italy's logistical port specialisations is ro-ro traffic, especially for island ports. Ro-ro traffic has a very high growth potential not only in Italy but in the whole of the Mediterranean. There are two reasons for this: the first is the level of national and European maritime support for short sea shipping, which has resulted in several initiatives for the development of "sea and wheels" intermodal transport, thanks above all to the "Motor-

ways of the Sea” project.²⁰ The second reason is linked to the economic growth of the countries in the south and east Mediterranean, which are attracting import and export within the Euro-Mediterranean area.²¹

Looking more closely at the Italian distribution of the flux of container traffic between the main gateway and transshipment ports, it can be seen that ports specialising in ship to ship transport are losing a significant share of the market. Such a loss is supposedly related to the international context and to the changing nature of global maritime traffic, which is becoming more competitive and is thus redefining the roles of competing Mediterranean ports. On the one hand, the gateway ports of the northern Tyrrhenian Sea and the northern Adriatic are in direct competition with the large ports of the so-called “Northern Range,” such as Rotterdam. On the other hand, the transshipment ports of southern Italy are competing with western Mediterranean ports – especially Spanish ones such as Valencia – and are also having to compete with new ports in North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean.²²

The logistical development of the countries on the southern Mediterranean coast has contributed – and will contribute still more in the future – to a change in the landscape of the European Mediterranean maritime economy. For example, the development of transshipment terminals in Egypt and Morocco allowed these countries to enter the market of container traffic management.²³ This has certainly generated new opportunities for many European countries bordering the Mediterranean, including Italy, which has the advantage of an extremely favourable geographic location. At the same time, however, the new Mediterranean hubs have established themselves as alternatives to European ports, thanks to logistical features that adapt well to today’s maritime trade trends. Ever since port operations have represented a considerable share of the expenses involved in maritime transport, the larger shipping lines have used (and will use in the future) ever bigger ships in order to cut costs, and favour the large, new hubs of northern Africa. These lines can count

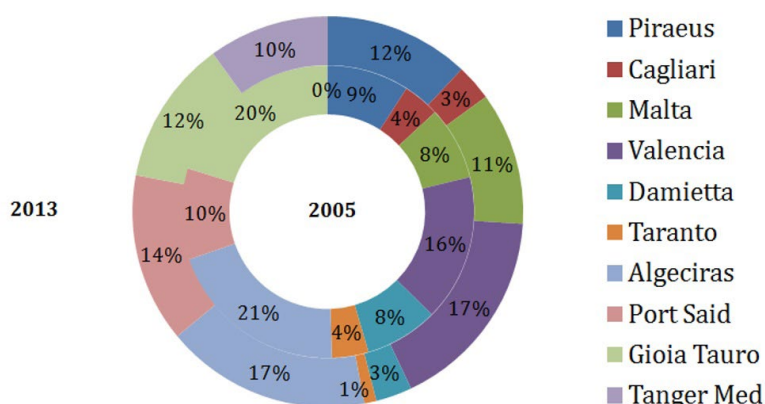
²⁰ Since 2004, this project has been part of the programme of the EU TEN/T network to promote intermodality between road and sea where alternatives to road itineraries exist.

²¹ Cassa depositi e prestiti, *Porti e logistica*, cit., p. 19.

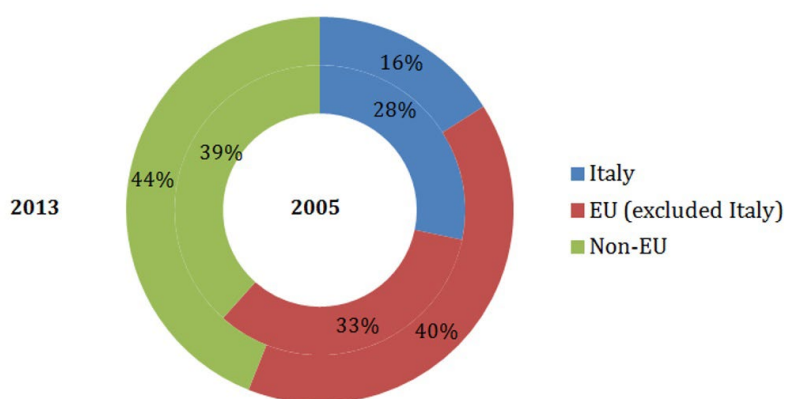
²² Ibid., p. 28.

²³ SRM, *Economic Relations between Italy and the Mediterranean Area. Annual Report 2014*, cit., p. 127-128.

on very large spaces and physical features (key locations along east-west shipping routes and very deep sea) which make them well-suited to an increase in the traffic of container ships. In fact, the southern Mediterranean ports increased their market share between 2005 and 2013, going from 18 per cent to 27 per cent, while two new competitors appeared on the Mediterranean landscape: Tanger Med in Morocco (from 0 to 10 per cent between 2005 and 2013) and Port Said in Egypt (from 10 per cent to 14 per cent).²⁴



Source: IAI, from SRM data.



Source: IAI, from SRM data.

²⁴ Ibid.

Given that transshipment traffic is subject to the strategic choices of shipping lines – which change their routes in order to pass through ports offering a lower average cost per unit transported – variables such as cost, efficiency of port services and geographic location, take on fundamental importance. North Africa and the East Mediterranean can exploit these variables to increase their competitiveness.²⁵

The data for 2014 see Italy in sixth place in the world ranking for logistics performance according to the Logistics Performance Index (LPI), four rank higher than in 2014,²⁶ and there is also a slight improvement in all of the parameters taken into consideration by the index,²⁷ in particular in “tracking and tracing” of shipments. In order to make the most of the new direction in Mediterranean maritime commerce, Italy is required to increase its port and logistics capacities. These capacities risk being marginalised despite the country’s favourable location because of bureaucratic and administrative delays, the weakness of rail links and logistical services in the areas around the ports, not to mention the limits imposed by a system of ports that are widespread but small. For example, as far as the administrative and bureaucratic mechanisms and procedures are concerned, the 2014 estimates report a waiting time of 19 days for exports and 18 days for imports of containers, as opposed to OECD averages of 10.5 days and 9.6 days respectively (although in Germany and the Netherlands these are as low as 9 and 7 days).²⁸ However, the real gap is between Italy and the North African countries, both in terms of the average time taken for the bureaucratic procedures and in terms of cost. Costs in Morocco and Egypt, for example, are

²⁵ Cassa depositi e prestiti, *Porti e logistica*, cit., p. 31.

²⁶ World Bank, *Logistics Performance Index: Country Score Card: Italy 2014*, <http://lpi.worldbank.org/international/scorecard/radar/254/C/ITA/2014/C/ITA/2012/C/ITA/2010/C/ITA/2007>.

²⁷ The parameters are the following: 1) Customs: efficiency of the clearance process (i.e. speed, simplicity and predictability of formalities) by border control agencies, including customs; 2) Infrastructure: quality of trade and transport related infrastructure (e.g. ports, railroads, roads, information technology); 3) International shipments: ease of arranging competitively priced shipments; 4) Logistics competence: competence and quality of logistics services (e.g. transport operators, customs brokers); 5) Tracking & tracing: ability to track and trace consignments; 6) Timeliness: timeliness of shipments in reaching destination within the scheduled or expected delivery time.

²⁸ SRM, *Economic Relations between Italy and the Mediterranean Area. Annual Report 2014*, cit., p. 129.

48-50 per cent lower than Italian ones, due to the cheaper labour.²⁹ It goes without saying that this translated into a loss of overall competitiveness for Italy's economy and above all into a damaging effect on the export industry.

The Italian logistics system carries out traditional activities including transport, "warehousing" (that is, the management of warehouses and stockpiles) and high added value services. In terms of costs, the most important component is transport, which alone represents over 70 per cent of the total, compared with around 30 per cent that goes to warehousing and other services. Current requirements are, however, for a logistics system able to guarantee high levels of efficiency and cost-effectiveness, alongside transport infrastructures that are suitable and well-distributed over the country.³⁰ The intermodality of sea-rail and sea-road transport – that is the possibility to use different modes of transport according to distance, to the volume and value of the goods, or to how perishable the goods are – is a decisive factor in guaranteeing efficient logistics. In Italy, the main intermodal hubs are the ports, freight terminals and intermodal terminals. Given the distribution of intermodal traffic over the country, it is clear that there is a great imbalance towards the north, with central Italy having a significant lack of transport connections and inadequate network infrastructure, that is, a lack of rail and road links on the Tyrrhenian-Adriatic axis. In fact, the Italian logistics system, while having enormous potential, is not yet managing to be fully reliable or to satisfy the demands of the nation's businesses.

Italy's National Strategic Plan for Ports and Logistics³¹ was adopted in July 2015, acting on Article 29 of the so-called "Unblock Italy" decree, and was then, with some modifications, made into Law No. 164 in 2014. The Programme proposes not only to

guarantee a relaunching of the port and logistics sector by maximising the value added that the *Sistema Mare* [Sea System] can provide in purely quantitative terms of an increase in traffic, but also to ensure that the *Sistema Mare* fulfils all of its potential in the creation of new added value in economic and employment terms for the whole country.³²

²⁹ Ibid., p. 144.

³⁰ Cassa depositi e prestiti, *Porti e logistica*, cit.

³¹ Italian Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport, *Piano strategico nazionale della portualità e della logistica*, cit.

³² Italian Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport, *Relazione illustrativa del Piano*

The following points summarise some of the critical aspects in the Italian port and logistics system discussed so far:

1. delays and obstacles in the administrative and bureaucratic process that have a negative impact on transport times and costs;
2. the lack of integrated and adequate transport infrastructures;
3. insufficient logistical services in areas surrounding ports;
4. the existence of widespread but small ports.

The National Strategic Plan identifies ten “strategic objectives” and corresponding “strategic actions.” Some of these objectives tackle the critical points outlined above, and suggest solutions. The first critical point is related to the first strategic objective, “Simplification and Streamlining,” which specifically contains “measures for simplifying and speeding up procedures, controls and interventions in ports of national importance.” The strategic actions include the completion of a Single Desk system for Customs Agency checks, the simplification of the approval procedure for infrastructure projects and for projects to drag the seabed, the adoption of directives simplifying international accord procedures.

The second critical point is tackled in the third strategic objective, that is the “Improvement of Maritime and Land-Based Accessibility and Links,” which recognises the need to

improve ports’ land and sea accessibility, enhance rail services for the forwarding of goods from ports, and promote new maritime services and links in support of those markets and logistic chains that have the greatest potential for growth and the creation of added value.³³

The measures proposed for simplifying rail operations in ports favour intermodality and the extension of European rail freight corridors to international gateway ports, as well as the development of river and sea links for the land transport of bulk and unitised goods. It is worth noting the stress placed on the “promotion of sea links with access to national strate-

strategico nazionale della portualità e della logistica, August 2015, p. 2, <http://www.mit.gov.it/mit/vlink.php?id=4248>.

³³ Italian Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport, *Piano strategico nazionale della portualità e della logistica*, cit., p. 168.

gic terminals for traffic to and from Mediterranean ports.”³⁴ This would be done through the development and financing of integrated “supply chain” projects that involve diverse professional figures and environments: from truck drivers to ship owners, from produce supply chains to research centres and universities.

The fourth strategic objective, the “Logistics System Integration,” focuses on inland terminals, and aims to

improve the quality and competitiveness of logistics services provided within and beyond the port, via a cooperative and coordinated approach, which guarantees integration of the functioning and management of port systems with inland terminals and logistics platforms.³⁵

This will entail the promotion of integrated areas and “partnership and supply agreements” between port systems and the managers of logistics platforms and linking services.

Finally, the structural elements of Italy’s port system are tackled in the tenth strategic objective, “Updating the governance of the *Sistema Mare*,” which calls for a “thorough rethinking of the structural subdivision of the national territory,”³⁶ with a view to creating multi-port systems. The proposed method of overcoming the so-called “port individualism” is to unify adjacent entities in order to create areas of expansion for Italian ports without actually expanding them physically, and to optimise existing infrastructures, spaces, land and sea connections as well as human resources. Furthermore, the Plan calls for the rationalisation, reorganisation and unification of the existing Port Authorities into Port Systems Authorities (*Autorità di sistemi portuali*), which will carry out all the main functions of promotion, planning, management and control that Port Authorities currently run.

The Plan, as a national instrument for creation of the single European transport area, is part of the EU regulatory framework. As far as the role of Italy in the Mediterranean is concerned, the Regional Transport

³⁴ Ibid., p. 175.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 168.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 172.

Action Plan for the Mediterranean Region (RTAP) 2014-2020 is particularly relevant. As well as being a further instrument of cooperation and convergence between the EU and southern Mediterranean countries, it promotes Italy's role in the development of a Euro-Mediterranean transport network. The Plan is the result of a process begun in Barcelona in 1995 and culminating in the approval of a first RTAP for 2007-2013, followed by the second plan for 2014-2020 that was approved in Brussels on 25 March 2015. The two plans have the main objective of regulatory reform bringing about the convergence of legislations in various modes of transport, as well as the updating of a future Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network (TMN-T). Such projects are strongly supported by the 5+5 group of countries (France, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain, Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia). The TMN-T will have an especially big impact on Italy and, given its commercial weight within the Med area, a transport system that is more efficient, effective and above all set within a broader strategy, would certainly facilitate Italian exports of goods and resources.³⁷

2.3 THE EXPANSION OF THE SUEZ CANAL AND MARITIME TRAFFIC IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

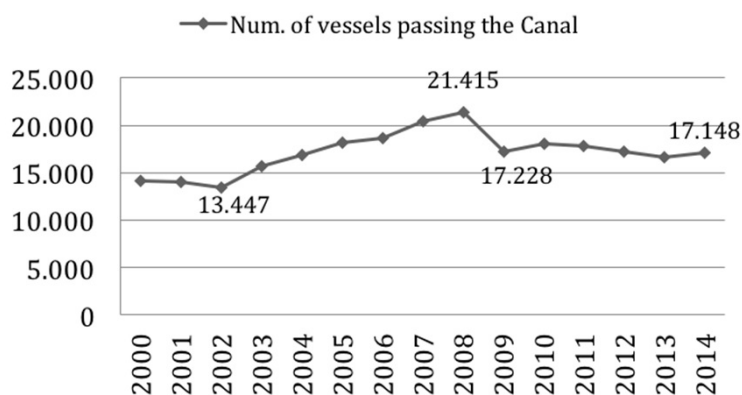
Since 1869, the Suez Canal has played a fundamental role both in global maritime traffic and in the balance of international geopolitical relations. Like the Panama Canal – the other great artificial canal, although it goes between oceans – the Suez Canal allows boats to navigate between two basins, the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean (passing through the Red Sea), without needing to circumnavigate Africa by the Atlantic Ocean. This allows goods to be transported more quickly over a shorter distance, and much more cheaply. Access to the canal is from the north – via Port Said – or the south, from the city of Suez on the shore of the Red Sea. The main body of the canal is 162 km long and including entry points its length is 193 km long.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 42-43.

From	To	Distance (nautical miles)		Saving	
		Suez Canal	Cape of Good Hope	Miles	%
Ras Tanura	Constanza	4,144	12,094	7,950	66
	Lavera	4,684	10,783	6,099	57
	Rotterdam	6,436	11,169	4,733	42
	New York	8,281	11,794	3,513	30
Jeddah	Piraeus	1,320	11,207	9,887	88
	Rotterdam	6,337	10,743	4,406	41
Tokyo	Rotterdam	11,192	14,507	3,315	23
Singapore	Rotterdam	8,288	11,755	3,647	29

Source: IAI, from Suez Canal Authority data.

The canal's relevance for the Mediterranean, present and future, can be summed up in these two data. From 2001 to 2014, the number of north-south passages of the canal directly towards the Gulf increased by 339 per cent whereas, during the same period, south-north passages from the Gulf increased by 175 per cent.³⁸ These figures also corroborate another claim: that Mediterranean maritime traffic is growing constantly despite the ongoing political tensions in the area.



Source: IAI, from Suez Canal Authority data.

³⁸ SRM, *Nuove rotte per la crescita del Mezzogiorno: Presentazione del 2° Rapporto Annuale Italian Maritime Economy*, cit., p. 16.

Since 2002, the number of boats passing through the canal has been increasing steadily, going from 13,447 to 21,415 in 2008, a year in which the amounts of transits reached its peak. As the figures from the Suez Canal Authority demonstrate, the passage of vessels has undergone a noticeable and predictable reduction since 2008, and has now settled at around 17,000 units.³⁹ Compared with 2013, in 2014 there was an increase both in the number of ships using the canal (+3.3 per cent) and in the goods transported (+9 per cent).

Despite the significant drop in 2009, around 8-10 per cent of global commercial traffic still passes through the canal, and it is still a key transit point for energy resources. According to the US Energy Information Administration, in 2014, 3.7 million barrels of oil passed through the canal each day, the highest quantity ever recorded in the canal's history.⁴⁰ Most of this crude oil (which comes mainly from Iraq), almost 2.1 million barrels a day, is destined for the European (over 70 per cent) and North American (17 per cent) markets, while the rest – 1.6 million barrels mainly from Russia – goes to Asian markets.⁴¹

The decline in the traffic of vessels and goods in 2008 and 2009 also hit the energy sector. This is largely attributable to the financial crisis that caused a global collapse in demand for crude oil, followed by a cut in the output of manufacturing countries – especially the Gulf countries – which in its turn provoked a drastic drop in regional commercial traffic. It must be said, though, that in just a few years, the flow of crude oil and refined products being transported has more than doubled, going from 1.8 million barrels per day in 2009 to the already-mentioned 3.7 million in 2014.

For liquefied natural gas (LNG), the figure provided by the US authority suggests a new trend, almost certainly due to the new order that is being established in terms of demand and supply in Europe and the US. After a considerable increase of traffic through the canal between 2008 and 2011, the year in which the peak of 59.43 billion cubic metres of natural gas was reached (equal to 18 per cent of global LNG traffic), in the

³⁹ Suez Canal Authority, *Brief Yearly Statistics*, 2016, <http://www.suezcanal.gov.eg/TRstat.aspx?reportId=4>.

⁴⁰ US Energy Information Administration, "Egypt", in *EIA Country Analysis*, updated 2 June 2015, <http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=EGY>.

⁴¹ Ibid.

course of just three years this dropped to just 10 per cent. These figures reflect mainly, but not exclusively, the fall in US imports and the relative increase in internal gas production in the US. One figure stands out: in 2011, Washington was importing 2.5 million cubic metres of gas from Qatar, but by 2014 this figure was close to zero.⁴²

“Egypt’s gift to the world” was how the Egyptian President, Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi announced the beginning of work on the new Suez Canal in August 2014.⁴³ The New Suez Canal will be 72 km long, including 35 km of dry digging, and 37 km of expansion and deep digging. The project will create a new course parallel to the existing one and, at the same time, enlarge part of the existing canal and thus eliminate any one-way sections. Just one year later, on 6 August 2015, Al-Sisi inaugurated the new Suez Canal,⁴⁴ which had cost around 8.6 billion dollars and was largely financed by bonds sold to Egyptians.⁴⁵ In October 2014, the Egyptian government and the Suez Canal Authority awarded the contracts for the execution of the project: a first commission for the construction of the new parallel section, worth 1.5 billion dollars, was awarded to a consortium made up of the National Marine Dredging Company from the UAE (the group leader), two Dutch Royal Boskalis Westminster and Van Oord, and the Belgian company Jan de Nul. For the expansion and deep digging – a project worth 540 billion dollars – there was a consortium, 75 per cent of which was Dredging International, from the Belgian DEME group and 25 per cent of which was the US Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Company (GLDD).⁴⁶

In reality the project is much broader than this, and is not limited simply to the enlargement of the Suez Canal. It is part of a regional development plan – the Suez Canal Development Project (SCDP) – dedicated to the creation of a ground-breaking industrial, technological, logistics and

⁴² US Energy Information Administration, *U.S. Liquefied Natural Gas Imports from Qatar*, <http://www.eia.gov/dnav/ng/hist/n9103qr2a.htm>.

⁴³ Egypt State information Service, *NSC: Egypt’s Gift to the World*, 29 July 2015, <http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Templates/Articles/tmpArticles.aspx?CatID=4242>.

⁴⁴ Ahmed Aboulenein, “Egypt says New Suez Canal to open August 6, eyes economic boost”, in *Reuters*, 13 June 2015, <http://reut.rs/1lQz0f2>.

⁴⁵ SRM, *Economic Relations between Italy and the Mediterranean Area. Annual Report 2014*, cit., p. 128.

⁴⁶ DEME Group, *DEME secures contract for the deepening and widening of the Suez Canal*, 18 October 2014, <http://www.deme-group.com/node/897>.

commercial hub,⁴⁷ which will attract foreign investors⁴⁸ and create, it is estimated, a million new jobs.⁴⁹ After the enlargement, seven new tunnels for cars and trains (three at Port Said and four at Ismailia) will be created under the canal, and over the next few years the other two phases will be completed, that is, the construction of various industrial areas which will facilitate the establishment of industries such as auto components, electronics, oil and refining, light metallurgy, logistics, container construction and repair, shipbuilding, furniture, textiles and glass.⁵⁰ The SCDP includes 42 projects all together, of which six are high priority,⁵¹ with a total cost in infrastructures of around 15 billion dollars.⁵²

Supervision of the work has been entrusted to the Egyptian armed forces, and the Dar Al-Handasah (Shair and Partners) company – headed by a consortium of businesses and firms – was chosen to develop the master plan for the whole area covered by the SCDP.⁵³ This award sparked widespread criticism of the project's management because it was seen as evidence that President Al-Sisi and the armed forces had returned forcibly to the centre of economic and infrastructural development in Egypt.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ Giovanni Piazzese, "Il canale di Suez offre ancora opportunità di crescita?", in *AGI Energia*, 22 October 2014, <http://www.agienergia.it/Notizia.aspx?idd=2254&id=24>.

⁴⁸ Elena Panarella, "Egitto, il canale di Suez chiama l'Italia: 'Venite ad investire qui'", in *Il Messaggero*, 25 February 2015, http://www.ilmessaggero.it/includes/_stampa_articolo.php?id=1203277.

⁴⁹ Heba Saleh, "Full steam ahead on project to expand the Suez Canal", in *Financial Times*, 29 June 2015, <http://on.ft.com/1LDePSy>.

⁵⁰ Sara Aggour, "Pharmaceutical, petrochemical, automotive industries most promising in Suez Canal project: Dar Al-Handasah official", in *Daily News Egypt*, 1 February 2015, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2015/02/01/pharmaceutical-petrochemical-automotive-industries-promising-suez-canal-project-dar-al-handasah-official>.

⁵¹ Egypt State Information Service, *The main features of the Suez Canal Corridor Development Project*, 12 August 2014, <http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Templates/Articles/tmpArticles.aspx?CatID=2877>.

⁵² SCZone, *Suez Canal Development Project cost to hit \$15bn*, 10 March 2015, [http://www.sczone.com.eg/English/news/Pages/Suez-Canal-Development-Project-cost-to-hit-\\$15bn.aspx](http://www.sczone.com.eg/English/news/Pages/Suez-Canal-Development-Project-cost-to-hit-$15bn.aspx).

⁵³ Sara Aggour, "Investment opportunities in Suez Canal Project are endless: Dar Al-Handasah director of operations", in *Daily News Egypt*, 16 September 2014, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/09/16/investment-opportunities-suez-canal-project-endless-dar-al-handasah-director-operations>.

⁵⁴ Daria Solovieva, "Suez Canal: Egyptian Military Takes Charge of Economic Development", in *International Business Times*, 3 April 2014, <http://www.ibtimes.com/node/1566638>.

Overall, the SCDP area is made up of six ports: East Port Said Port, West Port Said Port, Al-Arish Port, Al-Adabeya Port, Ain Al-Shokhna Port and Al-Toor Port. It also contains the north-west area of the Gulf of Suez (210 km²) and the so-called “Technological Valley” in Ismailia (71 km²). It contains three macro areas or principle hubs where industrial activity will be concentrated: Port Said, Ismailia and Ain Sokhna-Suez.⁵⁵

As with all large-scale projects, the income generated from the enlargement of the canal is sizeable. In 2013 alone, the Suez Canal Authority made 5.3 billion dollars in naval tolls, and it is estimated that this figure could triple by 2023, reaching 13.5 billion. Regular traffic is predicted to almost double, from 49 to 97 boats, by 2023; furthermore, the time to navigate the canal should drop from 18 to 11 hours and, finally, the waiting time should drop from the current 8-10 hours to 3, with further benefits expected in terms of cost reduction. Taking the prospects for the future as a whole, many observers believe that the project could be a great opportunity for Egypt to become a global benchmark for port operations and logistics, as well as stimulating other Mediterranean ports, including Italian ones, to be more competitive in order to attract traffic and not to lose precious market share.⁵⁶ To sum up, the SCDP seems destined to shape the future of Mediterranean port operations.

That said, not everybody agrees with the figures supplied by the Egyptian authorities, and there is much scepticism about the project’s actual potential to attract investments. Although several experts from the sector consider that the reduction in waiting times is certainly positive, the economic benefit deriving from it could drop if toll prices were to increase. On this subject Peter Hinchliffe, the Secretary General of the International Chamber of Shipping, stated that

To reduce waiting times is certainly significant. But we have no information on whether they will still use a convoy system and pilots. The tolls are going to be a factor as to whether the reduction in time will be worth it or not. This will be a very important part in commercial decision-making.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ SCZone, *Vision and Mission*, <http://www.sczone.com.eg/English/aboutsczone/Pages/visionandstrategy.aspx>.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Heba Saleh, “Full steam ahead on project to expand the Suez Canal”, cit.

Other experts go much further and even question the real necessity of and rationale behind the decision to enlarge the canal. According to Ralph Leszczynski, Head of Research at Banchero Costa, the drive to enlarge the canal does not come from the shipping community. And there is a very definite limiting factor to the canal, according to Leszczynski, which is that the water is not deep enough to allow the larger oil tankers – ULCCs⁵⁸ and to some extent VLCCs⁵⁹ – to travel through it. Still more important is the fact that it is not yet clear whether the enlargement work will make this possible for both types of vessel or only for VLCCs.⁶⁰

In any event, the key question is whether the Suez Canal can still offer sufficient opportunities to justify a project that is so ambitious in engineering and financial terms. The doubts spring from the fact that the European market is losing value and strategic importance relative to the Asian one. Most traffic towards Europe is made up of oil, which seems to have lost its previous, historic status as the driver of maritime commerce. According to Leszczynski and others, goods are tending to shift to India, China and Korea – like the growing coal and iron business shifting from Australia and Indonesia to Asia. Moreover, the presence of new gas and oil pipelines such as those linking China and Burma, trends in the global market and the announcement of new commercial land routes that will link North and South Korea to the Russian Trans-Siberian railway could confound the Egyptian government's expectations.⁶¹

The question of the Mediterranean's importance remains unresolved: does it still represent a key global nerve centre or, in the light of new global dynamics, is its significance destined to diminish in the future? The answer is not clear and has been the subject of much debate for several years. The fact remains that Italy, because of its location among other considerations, must view the Mediterranean as an extremely important factor in its economic forecast – and thus, also, its political forecast. 75 per cent of Italy's total trade with the Mediterranean area is via sea, a fact

⁵⁸ Ultra large crude carriers, oil tankers with a deadweight tonnage of over 320,000 tons.

⁵⁹ Very large crude carriers, oil tankers with a deadweight tonnage of between 150,000 and 320,000 tons.

⁶⁰ Bob Jaques, "Suez Canal boss explains expansion plan, defends pricing", in *Seatrade Maritime News*, 28 October 2014, <http://www.seatrade-maritime.com/kp6f4>.

⁶¹ Giovanni Piazzese, "Il canale di Suez offre ancora opportunità di crescita?", cit.

that reveals how important maritime traffic is for the country and, more generally, how important the maritime system is to the national economy. The shipbuilding sector alone, for example, plays a leading role, and is in the first rank of the so-called “blue economy” sectors, with around 27,000 businesses capable of generating a multiplier effect of 2.4 euros on the rest of the economy. It therefore represents an essential resource for the national economic system. The Italian port system is at the forefront of the drive to renew competitiveness and international lure in the face of the inexorable rise of the new southern Mediterranean ports, in a phase of radical transformation of international maritime traffic and the gamble – in economic, infrastructural and commercial terms – of the enlargement of the Suez Canal. Italy must therefore be alert to the risks and opportunities that it must confront in order to best exploit this role of Europe’s “advanced platform,” which geography, history and culture have allowed it to play.

3.

The Mediterranean and Energy Security

Nicolò Sartori

Energy is a key factor in political and economic relations, as well as security dynamics in the Mediterranean. Firstly, the Mediterranean basin is an important transport hub for crude oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the Persian Gulf, Russia and the Caspian Sea to European ports or US and Asian markets. Secondly, it is a strategically important area for intra-regional trade in hydrocarbons between producing countries in North Africa and consumers in southern Europe. These traditional energy dynamics, which have defined activity in the Mediterranean for decades, are now being modified by new trends. The first of these is the energy transition process under way in the Maghreb, where ever-increasing demand for energy is putting serious strain on a model based on unrestrained consumption of hydrocarbons. The second is the expansion of offshore hydrocarbon exploration and production activity on the southern and northern shores of the Mediterranean, where also European countries such as Croatia, Montenegro, Albania and Greece have launched ambitious new initiatives to exploit their marine resources. Finally, new developments in the maritime transport sector, in the light of international measures to reduce the impact of climate change, necessitate a profound reconsideration of the sea transport model and of the related infrastructures for energy provision in the Mediterranean area.

The combination of these factors could contribute significantly to a change in the strategic priorities and energy relations in the Mediterranean. The area is destined to become ever more integrated in terms of energy, given the necessity of tackling common challenges such as developing new sources of hydrocarbons or protecting the ever-increasing number of energy infrastructures, which are increasingly vulnerable and indispensable.

3.1 THE MEDITERRANEAN AND GLOBAL ENERGY TRAFFIC

Every year, thousands of cargo ships carrying oil and LNG enter the Mediterranean through its main transit points, the Suez Canal and the Turkish Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits. In 2014, around 3.7 million barrels of crude oil and oil products passed through the canal, that is around 7 per cent of all global transport of oil by sea, which was the largest amount in the canal's history. Most of the oil travelling through Suez – about 2.1 million barrels a day – comes from the Persian Gulf and crosses the Mediterranean to reach European and North American markets. The remainder, which comes mainly from Eurasia – Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan – travels south down the canal, to meet the demands of the big Asian consumers. LNG also contributes to the growth in regional traffic: in the course of four years, from 2008 to 2013, the volume of liquefied gas coming from Middle Eastern producers and destined for the European markets went from 8.8 to 34 billion cubic metres, a net growth of 290 per cent.¹

In the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, oil traffic in 2013 was around 3 million barrels per day, slightly lower than the peak of 3.4 million recorded in 2004.² This decline is mainly due to the Russian decision to send part of its exports through the Baltic Sea ports, and to the activation of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. The pipeline, which opened in 2006, allows a million of barrels of crude oil per year from the Caspian Sea to circumvent the Turkish straits and arrive straight on the Mediterranean coast, near the Turkish port of Ceyhan, where they are then loaded on to boats to travel to their markets of destination.

Despite these figures, the expansion of non-conventional hydrocarbon production in North America and the significant rise in consumption of oil and natural gas in East Asia mean that it is logical to predict a partial reduction in the Mediterranean as a scene of transit for global energy exchanges. Nevertheless, the area will continue to play a key role in regional energy traffic, given the interdependency of producers in the Mediterra-

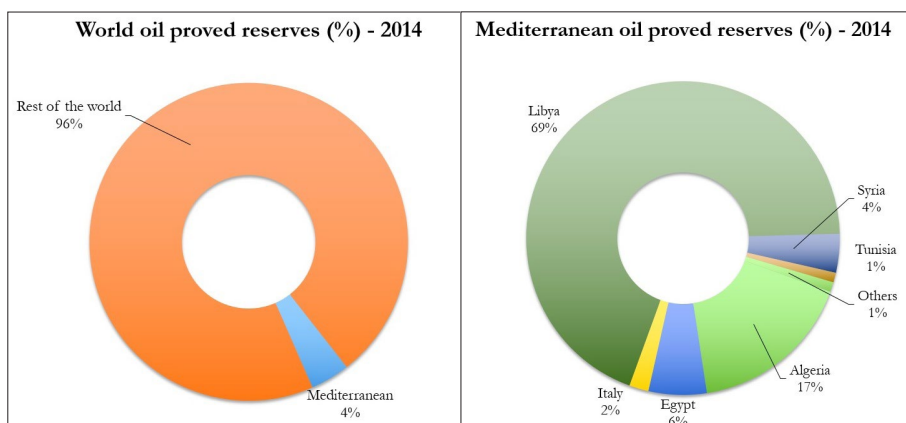
¹ LNG traffic reached a peak in 2011, when around 60 billion cubic metres of gas crossed the Suez Canal, that is 18 per cent of the global total.

² US Energy Information Administration, "Egypt", in *EIA Country Analysis*, updated 2 June 2015, <http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=EGY>.

nean and consumers in the EU, but also given the political significance of exploration and production initiatives launched by some European countries in a bid to achieve greater energy autonomy.

3.2 REGIONAL ENERGY DYNAMICS AND THE ROLE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Mediterranean Sea is traditionally a site of hydrocarbon production and exchange: the region holds 4 per cent of global oil reserves (around 70,000 million barrels) and 4 per cent of natural gas (8,000 billion cubic metres).³

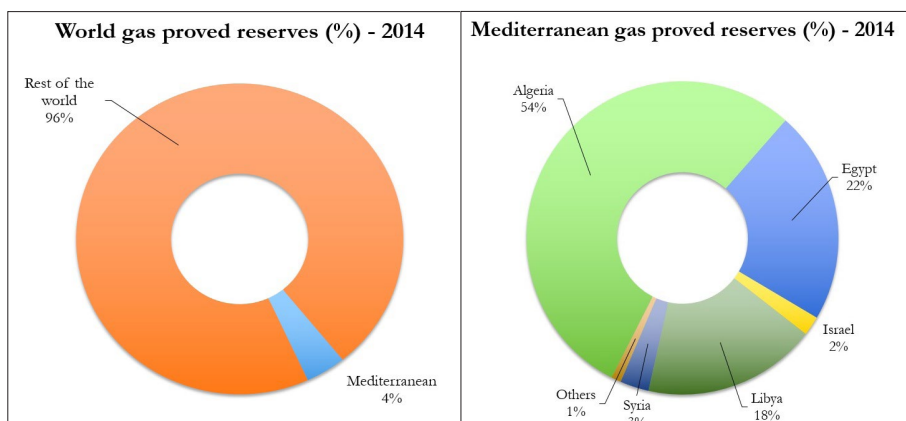


Source: BP Statistical Review of World Energy, 2015.

Despite its significant resources, taken as a whole the Mediterranean is a net importer of hydrocarbons, with 45 per cent of demand met by producers outside the region. Energy reserves are unequally distributed, with over 80 per cent of oil and gas concentrated in the south-east Mediterranean. Thus, although southern Mediterranean countries export around 25 per cent of their hydrocarbon production, the north is dependent on foreign suppliers for around 90 per cent of its oil and gas.⁴

³ BP, *BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2015*, June 2015, <https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/energy-economics/statistical-review-2015/bp-statistical-review-of-world-energy-2015-full-report.pdf>.

⁴ Medreg, *Safety and Environmental Protection for Offshore Activities*, paper presented



Source: BP Statistical Review of World Energy, 2015.

North Africa – in particular three key countries, Algeria, Egypt and Libya – is, historically, the main area of production and export, and its supplies have contributed to Europe’s energy security for decades. Algeria is a world player in the natural gas sector. With around 4.5 trillion cubic metres of gas in its territory, it is the ninth country in the world in terms of proved reserves: these guarantee a total production of 83 billion cubic metres per annum, making Algeria one of the world’s ten largest producers. Although much of the production is destined for domestic consumers (see box 1 on energy transition in North Africa), Algerian gas makes up around 15 per cent of the EU’s total imports, and provides 50 per cent of Portugal’s supply, 41 per cent of Spain’s, 23 per cent of Italy’s and 11 per cent of France’s. Libya, by contrast, especially before the political chaos that has continued since 2011, has played a leading role in the global oil sector. Libya has reserves of 48,000 million barrels of crude oil, the largest reserve of any African country and the ninth-largest in the world. It has a production capacity of around 1.6 million barrels a day. Before the conflict, Libyan oil contributed around 10 per cent of European imports, providing a significant share of Italian, German and French supplies. Although it has fewer natural gas resources, it still plays an important role in this sector, currently providing Italy – its only export market – with

at the conference “Building a Euro-Mediterranean Energy Bridge: The Strategic Importance of Euromed Gas and Electricity Networks in the Context of Energy Security”, Rome, 18-19 November 2014, http://www.medreg-regulators.org/Portals/45/external_partner/highlevel/EUROMED-offshore_safety.pdf.

around 10 per cent of its total supply. Egypt completes the group: it is endowed with large reserves of hydrocarbons, and has been a producer since 1910, but nevertheless, as a result of the rampant growth of internal energy demand, has recently abandoned its role as an exporter and now finds itself in the difficult position of having to import oil and gas to meet internal demand.

Key Infrastructures

The constant flow of energy traffic between the banks of the Mediterranean passes through a dense network of pipelines that cross the Sea longitudinally. Algeria is linked to Spain by two different gas pipelines. The first, Medgaz, which links the Algerian city of Beni Saf to Almeria in Spain, is an undersea line, 210 km long, with a maximum capacity of 8 billion cubic metres a year, and is laid on the Mediterranean seabed at a maximum depth of 2,610 metres.⁵ The second is the Maghreb-Europe Pipeline, which travels across Morocco and ends on the Spanish coast in Cordoba. This has a capacity of 12 billion cubic metres and has a 45 km offshore section along the bed of the Strait of Gibraltar.⁶ The Transmed pipeline, which also begins in Algeria, is also known as the “Enrico Mattei pipeline,” and links Algerian oilfields to the Sicilian coast near to Mazara del Vallo, via Tunisia: with its 380 km of offshore pipelines on the bed of the Strait of Sicily, and with a capacity of 30 billion cubic metres, the Transmed is one of the largest gas pipelines in Europe. The Greenstream pipeline also passes through the Strait of Sicily. This is the longest undersea pipeline in the Mediterranean, and transports around 9 billion cubic metres of gas over 520 km, at a depth of over a thousand metres, to Italy.⁷

The security of this extensive infrastructure network is one of the most critical issues in the Mediterranean energy landscape. The suspension of the functioning of the Greenstream pipeline in 2011, as a security measure in the face of intensifying armed conflict on the Libyan coast, is the most recent example of the sensitivity of this kind of infrastructure,

⁵ See the MEDGAZ website: <http://www.medgaz.com>.

⁶ GALP, *International pipelines*, March 2015, <http://www.galpenergia.com/EN/Investidor/ConhecerGalpEnergia/Os-nossos-negocios/Gas-Power/Gas-Natural/Aprovisionamento/Paginas/Pipelines-internacionais.aspx>.

⁷ ENI, *The GreenStream Pipeline*, <http://www.greenstreambv.com/en/pages/home.shtml>.

and of the vulnerability of countries such as Italy when confronted with the instability of energy flows from producer countries. For this reason, the control and security of energy installations, especially offshore ones, have taken on strategic importance both for exporter countries, which are strongly dependent on the income derived from the export of hydrocarbons, and for consumers. In the light of this, initiatives such as the *Mare Sicuro* operation launched by the Italian government, which involves units of the Italian Navy patrolling several energy installations of key importance to the country located in Libyan waters, are necessary response to the growing instability in the trajectory of events in the Mediterranean discussed in the first chapter.

The necessity of protecting offshore installations, in particular, could become extremely pressing in years to come, with the expansion of offshore drilling and the completion of new infrastructure projects. In fact, as a result of the growing number of attacks on onshore infrastructures in the Maghreb, and as a response to increasingly embittered relations with Russia – the main supplier of gas to European countries – the expansion of the offshore sector is one of the more attractive possibilities for increasing the production of hydrocarbons in the region. Between traditional producers, newcomers and potential outsiders, the energy game being played out in the Mediterranean appears very promising and compelling: between 2008 and 2013, 10 billion dollars of capital expenditure was recorded, an amount set to increase by 60 per cent over the next five years.⁸

3.3 NORTH AFRICA, AT THE HEART OF REGIONAL ENERGY PRODUCTION

The offshore component of hydrocarbon production in the Mediterranean is currently limited. In terms of oil, production has remained largely unchanged over the last three years, at around 550,000 barrels per day, less than a fifth of total production in the area. In the natural gas sector, despite steadily increasing exploration and production activities, the off-

⁸ Medreg, *Safety and Environmental Protection for Offshore Activities*, cit.

shore segment seems to have even less impact. Although these figures indicate that production levels are still limited, there is still a significant number of offshore installations in the region: over 200 active plants, either mobile or fixed, as well as a sizeable number of naval units supporting energy companies' research and drilling activities.⁹

Among the countries on the North African coast, Egypt undoubtedly exploits the energy potential of its sea floor most intensively. It produces around 95 per cent of all of the Mediterranean region's offshore crude oil. Drillings in the Mediterranean and the Nile Delta produce 60 per cent of the national production of crude oil and three quarters of the natural gas. Following recent discoveries of new resources and growing investments by international energy companies in the offshore sector, which holds around 80 per cent of Egyptian gas reserves, production seems destined to increase rapidly. In fact, ENI's discovery of a gas field in Zohr (the largest gas field in the Mediterranean with estimated reserves of 850 billion cubic metres of natural gas¹⁰) and BP's involvement in the West Nile Delta Project (which is expected to attract over 12 billion dollars of investment to develop the 140 billion cubic metres of gas and 55 million barrels of condensate located there) show that the Egyptian government is disposed to encourage new exploration on its seabed.¹¹ This is also a response to Egypt's internal energy needs, as the country has gone, in the space of a few years, from being a net exporter of natural gas to having to import it from neighbouring Israel.

The story is very different in Algeria, the main regional producer of hydrocarbons. Algeria's offshore potential is, in fact, almost completely unexplored, and the total production of crude oil and natural gas of the national energy company Sonatrach and its international partners comes from onshore fields. In 2013, the Algerian government partially revised its legislation on the development of hydrocarbons, in an attempt to attract new investors and to encourage production in its waters. The initiative was only partially successful: of the 31 offshore blocks put out to

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ ENI, *Eni discovers a supergiant gas field in the Egyptian offshore, the largest ever found in the Mediterranean Sea*, Milan, 30 August 2015, <http://bit.ly/1F9vGp5>.

¹¹ Reuters, *BP and partners to invest \$12 billion in Egypt Gas deal*, 6 March 2015, <http://reut.rs/1BartCx>.

tender in 2014, only four were assigned. Drilling in these blocks, expected to begin before the end of 2015, have not yet started. In parallel with the beginning of drillings, the government plans to launch a new competition for undersea exploration projects, which Algerian authorities hope will be more fruitful than the previous one. The decision to focus on offshore activity is born partly of the growing insecurity of onshore infrastructures, which are threatened from the south by instability in northern Mali (as demonstrated by the attacks on the In Amenas gas plant in 2013¹² and on the In Salah processing facility in early 2016¹³), and from the west by the continuing Libyan crisis and the possibility of incursions by Islamic State militias. On top of this there is growing popular resistance to the extraction of unconventional gas and oil in the centre of the country, which has prompted the government to defer the activities of Sonatrach in the area indefinitely. Nevertheless, the choice to invest in offshore activities is also a result of evolving Algerian export strategies, according to which the combination of offshore and LNG will help to diversify commercial flows currently concentrated in Europe, and to tap into the rich Asian natural gas market.

In Libya, too, despite the hopes of the authorities, offshore potential remains largely unexplored. The collapse of the Gaddafi regime in 2011 and the subsequent civil war in 2014 slowed down the international investments that ought to have contributed to an increase in national production. Frequent attacks by militias on onshore energy facilities undermine exploration and production activities, and make the Libyan oil sector less attractive to investors. The biggest international energy companies are still reluctant to invest in the country, and even traditional partners such as ENI – active in Libya for half a century – are extremely cautious in their moves to return to full activity in the country. In this context the exploration and production projects off the coast are safer and more attractive than those inland. As the new discoveries made by ENI in their explorations at the offshore Bahr Essalam South and Bouri North fields show, focusing on the offshore may prove to be the only realistic option in the

¹² Angelique Chrisafis et al., “Algeria hostage crisis: the full story of the kidnapping in the desert”, in *The Guardian*, 25 January 2013, <http://gu.com/p/3dbta/stw>.

¹³ Reuters, *Militants fire rockets at Algerian BP/Statoil gas plant, no casualties*, 18 March 2016, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-algeria-security-statoil-idUKKCN0WK10N>.

short term.¹⁴ It is, however, undeniable that Libya's uncertain political destiny is still slowing down the development of the country's undersea potential.

The race to offshore production also involves the traditional Maghreb hydrocarbon importers. Although its prospects and ambitions may be on a smaller scale than those of the major regional producers, Morocco, too, is observing the development of resources along its coast with interest. The Moroccan government is opening up to international energy companies in an attempt to move away from being dependent on Algerian suppliers: giants of the calibre of BP and Chevron have shown considerable interest in investing in the country. Despite the fact that explorations activities are traditionally concentrated along the Atlantic coast, in 2015 the western Mediterranean seabed also attracted interest, as demonstrated by the exploration licence granted to the UAE company Mubadala Petroleum to carry out seismic exploration over an area of around 3,400 km².¹⁵ Tunisia, on the other hand, already relies on hydrocarbon production from its own seabed. The offshore Miskar facility in the Gulf of Gabes is run by BG Group and provides 60 per cent of national gas supplies, while undersea oil fields such as Ashtart, Ouedna, Adam and Didon provide the majority of Tunisian crude oil production. Prospecting in Tunisian waters is destined to carry on increasing, following this trend, but still without attracting the attention of the larger international companies.

Box 1 – The Energy Transition in North Africa

In 2012, the total energy consumption of North Africa was around 164 million tons of oil equivalent, and the majority of this was fossil fuel. The five North African countries consumed, overall, 2.5 million barrels of oil per day, out of a total production of 4 million barrels, and 95 cubic metres of natural gas from a total regional output of 155 billion. Algeria and Egypt are the largest energy consumers, with an overall demand equal to around 80 per cent of the region's consumption, almost all of which is covered by internal production. The contributions of Morocco, Tunisia and Libya to the overall demand are thus limited, although Libya's pro-capita consumption is very similar to that

¹⁴ Daniel J. Graeber, "ENI finds gas offshore Libya", in *UPI*, 26 May 2015, <http://upi.com/4799702t>.

¹⁵ Reuters, *Abu Dhabi's Mubadala Petroleum to explore big Morocco offshore area*, 18 March 2015, <http://reut.rs/1MMLXDp>.

of Algerian and Egypt, which demonstrates a clear distinction between the consumption of producing and importing countries.

The analysis of national electricity mixes clearly reflects this situation. Producer companies depend almost exclusively on internal hydrocarbon production. In Algeria, natural gas accounts for 95 per cent of generation capacity, while in Libya two thirds of generation comes from oil and one third from natural gas. In Egypt the percentage is slightly lower, with hydrocarbons providing 86 per cent of the electricity produced nationally (76 per cent gas and 10 per cent oil). The situation among importer countries is less consistent: while in Morocco coal provides around 50 per cent of overall generation, the situation in Tunisia is similar to that of the large producers, with 90 per cent of generation coming from natural gas, imported mainly from Algeria.

The energy situation in the Maghreb is evolving rapidly. The growth in consumption, stimulated by generously subsidised energy prices and by insufficient energy efficiency measures, puts pressure on the North African countries' energy model as well as on the sustainability of their public finances, with a potential negative impact on socio-political stability and regional security. The combination of population growth, urbanisation and economic development predicted for the coming decades will only exacerbate this situation: it is predicted, in fact, that between 2010 and 2030 electricity consumption in the region will rise by 170 per cent, but the contribution of renewables to the energy mix will not undergo a parallel increase.

These trends may have a significant impact on the future of energy relations in the Mediterranean area. In the Maghreb producer countries, the growth in demand could in fact be met by internal hydrocarbon production. However, if this is not accompanied by a large increase in production capacity, it could result in a decrease in exports of these countries, with negative internal and regional consequences. Firstly, the sustainability and stability of these regimes, which is based mainly on the income derived from exporting energy resources, would face the threat of a collapse in foreign exports. Secondly, the need to meet internal demands would seriously endanger energy provision in consumer countries, especially those in southern Europe.

The Eastern Mediterranean Arena

The developments in the East Mediterranean are one of the main factors of change in the regional energy scenario. Despite the exceptional energy potential in Algerian, Egypt and Libya, in recent years the attention of institutional players and private investors has been focused on the possible exploitation of resources in the eastern part of the Mediterranean basin. The catalysts for this interest were initially the discoveries made by the

US company Noble Energy in the Israeli oil fields Leviathan and Tamar – whose reserves amount, respectively, to 620 and 300 billion cubic metres. Furthermore there is the success of Noble's explorations in the Aphrodite gas field off the coast of Cyprus, which according to credible estimates have uncovered reserves amounting to 130 billion cubic metres of gas.¹⁶

Israel has been the most active player in the regional energy arena. In the light of the expectations for production in these two fields, the Tel Aviv government established that from 2018, 40 per cent of offshore gas extracted will be exported to international markets. An intense national political debate has also been conducted on the subject, headed by the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who aims to increase this quota in order to maximise export income. Cyprus plays a key role in this context: following Noble's discoveries, Nicosia opened up exploration of its own seabed to a series of international energy companies, including the French Total and the Italian ENI, in an attempt to develop its hydrocarbon deposits and become an energy supplier to the EU. However, the island's situation – divided *de facto* between the Greek-Cypriot Republic of Cyprus, an internationally recognised member of the EU, and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in the north of the island, which is not internationally recognised – complicates the development of energy resources and is a source of increasing conflict. Turkey, in fact, has a keen interest in East Mediterranean resources, and affirms the sovereign right of North Cyprus to exploit the fields identified on the island's coast through a series of national initiatives that have raised tension levels. The stalled Cypriot peace negotiations, mounting tension between Turkey and Israel, and the increasing energy cooperation between Nicosia, Athens and Cairo are all contributing to rising Turkish intolerance of its regional partners and greater risk of tension in the region. The area has thus quickly become militarised, giving rise to strange maritime arrangements and alliances. For example, Israel – whose naval presence near oil platforms and in international waters adjacent to the biggest energy reserves is now constant – has begun military exercises in conjunction with the Cypriot and Russian Navies. The Russian Navy is active in the region due

¹⁶ US Energy Information Administration, *Overview of oil and natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean region*, updated 15 August 2013, <http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/regions-topics.cfm?RegionTopicID=EM>.

to Moscow's strong interest in activities in Syrian waters. Turkey, for its part, uses its navy to monitor and protect the exploration activities of the seismographic research vessel *Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa*, and in November 2014 it launched, together with NATO forces, the Blue Whale exercise (the first since 2010), which is aimed at training allied forces for naval and submarine conflict situations.¹⁷ Eight ships, four submarines, maritime surveillance and combat aircraft and Turkish military helicopters all took part in the exercise, alongside US, Canadian, British, German and Spanish military vessels from NATO's Standing Naval Maritime Group-2 (SNMG-2), as well as a Pakistani frigate. While the intensity of such activities fluctuates, the general trend is set to continue at least until the main regional geopolitical tensions are definitively resolved.

The Issue of Exports

This friction not only increases the possibility of an escalation of conflict, but also increases uncertainty around the possible development and commercialisation of energy resources located in the area. Tensions over exports are a key element in the East Mediterranean energy arena, given that economic and commercial assessments are closely tied to geopolitical and security concerns. Israel is a prime example: given the high volume of natural gas available in the Leviathan and Tamar fields, Israel is seeking the most effective way of accessing international markets. The choice between the LNG option and the possibility of transport via gas pipeline must indeed take account of current geopolitical dynamics.¹⁸ The possibility of constructing a shared LNG terminal between Israel and Cyprus, which has long been encouraged in European circles, seems to have retreated in the light of the destabilising effect of Cyprus's uncertain status on its prospection activities. A second LNG option seems more realistic: that is, the partial use of the Egyptian Damietta and Idku LNG terminals, which are currently unused because Cairo can no longer export gas due to its high internal demand, but which are expected to return operational after the first volumes produced in Zohr are ready to be export-

¹⁷ Metin Gurcan, "Military presence increases in eastern Mediterranean", in *Al-Monitor*, 5 November 2014, <http://almon.co/29j7>.

¹⁸ Simon Henderson, "Natural Gas Export Options for Israel and Cyprus", in *Mediterranean Paper Series*, September 2013, <http://www.gmfus.org/node/7496>.

ed. Even a solution like this, though, would have a considerable impact on Israel's national energy security, because Israel's export capacity would be dependent on political alliance and strategic cooperation between Jerusalem and Cairo. The election of General Al-Sisi, who has favoured *rapprochement* between the two countries, would seem to increase the possibility of developments of this kind.

The options for transporting gas from the eastern Mediterranean via pipelines are more complex. One possibility would be to link the Israeli and Cypriot fields, by way of an undersea pipeline, to the Turkish infrastructure, and from this the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) would take the gas to European markets. In this case, too, the Cyprus question, and tensions between Turkey and Israel, mean that this option would be difficult to put into practice. Another difficult project to realise is the East Med Gas Pipeline, a submarine line that should link the East Mediterranean fields directly to Greece, via Crete, guaranteeing direct access and avoiding transit countries, to the EU. The difficulty with this option is the technical and commercial sustainability of a gas pipeline composed of around 1,200 km of offshore sections, which would lay on the Mediterranean seabed in extremely deep waters, and which would also have a relatively small capacity of 8 billion cubic metres per year. Despite this difficulty and the strategic complexities of the East Med Gas Pipeline, the European Commission has designated the initiative as a project of shared interest and has financed a feasibility survey to be carried out by the Greek corporation DEPA – in conjunction with the Italian Edison – proof of increasing Greek focus on energy security.

3.4 EUROPE'S CARDS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN ENERGY GAME

Greece itself, the potential continental landing point for eastern Mediterranean gas, is one of the most active countries in the European energy context. The approach of Athens is in line with EU strategy, which takes an ever keener interest in the development of national hydrocarbon resources both in order to tackle its own energy vulnerability and to reduce crude oil and natural gas import costs. These concerns are clearly expressed in

the Commission's statement on the Energy Union, presented on 25 February 2015 by the Commission's vice-president, Maroš Šefčovič.¹⁹ This document highlights the contribution of local hydrocarbons to the improvement of the EU's energy security, and simultaneously calls for the creation of an EU strategy for LNG, released by the Commission on February 2016.²⁰ The Mediterranean is undoubtedly a lynchpin of the integrated approach to the LNG sector developed by Brussels.

Greece gave its oil sector new impetus in 2011, after a twenty-year stagnation, by revising the special law on upstream activities and on offshore seismographic explorations in the Ionian Sea and around Crete, and by beginning to cooperate with Israel and Cyprus in the eastern Mediterranean. The national energy company, Energean Oil & Gas, is attempting to increase its activities in the offshore Prinos field, in the Gulf of Kavala, and is also making efforts to attract international operators. In fact, despite financial uncertainties and frequent changes of government, Greece is seeking to attract foreign capital and companies – Russian and Chinese oil companies feature prominently among those companies invited to invest – in order to develop energy resources that are not already fully exploited. In this context, the Greek government put out to tender 20 offshore exploration blocks with a total area of 200 km², and received some positive (although not actually enthusiastic) signals from three as yet unspecified companies, which were apparently interested in carrying out explorations in the area. At the same time, Greece began a process of strategic debate on the use of LNG at a national level: despite gas's key role in the creation of the Southern Gas Corridor²¹ and Russian interest in a revived South Stream project,²² LNG is mainly seen as a solution for supplying the myriad small islands that make up Greek territory. Among

¹⁹ European Commission, *Energy Union: secure, sustainable, competitive, affordable energy for every European*, 25 February 2015, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4497_en.htm.

²⁰ European Commission, *An EU strategy for liquefied natural gas and gas storage* (SWD/2016/23), 16 February 2016, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52016SC0023>.

²¹ Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council, *Joint Press Statement*, Baku, 12 February 2015, <https://ec.europa.eu/commission>.

²² Gazprom, *Gazprom, DEPA and Edison sign Memorandum of Understanding*, 24 February 2016, <http://www.gazprom.com/press/news/2016/february/article267671>.

the options currently being evaluated are the construction of a floating storage and regasification unit, the creation of a new LNG terminal, and the modernisation and enlargement of the Revythousa terminal to create a storage capacity of at least a billion cubic metres. As well as this, there is the possibility of creating mini-installations for regasification and storage on islands such as Crete, Rhodes, Lesbos and Chios.

Developments in the Adriatic Sea

Even then newest member of the EU family, Croatia, seems to have ambitious plans for the development of its offshore resources, and is aiming to attract over two billion Euros of investment in the coming years. In 2014 the Zagreb government has launched a first competition for the assignment of 29 exploration blocks in the Adriatic Sea, attracting the interest of several international companies. Of the ten blocks assigned in early 2015, seven were won by a consortium of the US Marathon Oil and the Austrian OMV (who eventually quit their activities for territorial disputes on the Croatia-Montenegro border), while the Hungarian MOL and the Italian ENI are involved in the others. Croatia already covers 65 per cent of its own gas consumption with national offshore production, but on the basis of seismological analysis carried out by the Norwegian company Spectrum, the Croatian Adriatic sea bed could contain far larger reserves still. The sea may also provide other supplies for the country: the government is planning to create an LNG terminal near to the island of Krk which will receive, stock, load and gasify between 4 and 6 billion cubic metres of gas per year. The terminal, on which work is due to begin in mid-2016 and which will be operational in 2019, would allow Croatia to become an entry point for natural gas suppliers in the western Balkans and central Europe, where dependence on Russian gas necessitates a significant effort in terms of diversifying supply.

Elsewhere in the Adriatic, Montenegro and Albania are also very active. In 2014 Montenegro launched its first competition for the exploitation of offshore fields, attracting the interest of international companies of the calibre of ENI, Marathon Oil Corporation, Novatek and OMV. In January 2015 the Montenegrin government began preliminary negotiations with the companies, but these were met with a series of popular protests against the drilling activities. Albania opened up seismological prospec-

tion in mid-2015, and although the results of the competition are not yet available, interest was registered by corporations such as Shell, BP, Exxon Mobil, Anadarko, ENI and Repsol. Furthermore, the offshore section of the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) begins on the Albanian coast, and from 2020 will transport around 8 billion cubic metres of gas from the Azerbaijani Shah Deniz gas field to the Italian market.

Italy in the Mediterranean Energy Game

Italy, which currently produces around 7 billion cubic metres of natural gas and 35 million barrels of crude oil, has also a central role to play in the new Mediterranean energy game. While the vast majority of oil production takes place in Basilicata, the offshore sector – particularly the northern Adriatic area – provides around 70 per cent of national gas production.²³ Italian extraction potential may be limited compared with the large hydrocarbon producers of the southern Mediterranean, but it would be exploited more extensively in order to reduce both dependence on foreign suppliers and the costs of energy provision. With these objectives in mind, the government has tried to revitalise exploration and production activities through the so-called “Unblock Italy” decree,²⁴ but has met considerable resistance at both political and grassroots levels, with the launch of many initiatives against the exploration of submarine fields and the creation of new energy infrastructures, including a popular referendum held on April 2016. This kind of resistance, which jeopardises Italy’s potential to attract national and international investors, has, in the past, also slowed down the completion of LNG projects off the Italian coast, as in the case of the BG project off the Brindisi coast.²⁵ Despite these difficulties, in addition to the three regasification terminals currently operating in Italy – Panigaglia, Rovigo and Livorno – five more LNG projects have been approved by national authorities and six are in the authorisation phase. Furthermore, there is the TAP gas pipeline which – not without resistance from the local community in Puglia during the ap-

²³ Unione petrolifera, *Numeri dell’energia: Italia*, http://www.unione petrolifera.it/?page_id=469.

²⁴ Text of law decree No. 133, 12 September 2014, in the *Gazzetta ufficiale, serie generale*, No. 262, 11 November 2014, <http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2014/11/11/14A08767/sg>.

²⁵ Reuters, *Red tape pushes BG Group to shelve Italy LNG plant*, 6 March 2012, <http://reut.rs/xutrVm>.

proval phase – will bring gas from the Caspian Sea to Italy as part of the EU's Southern Gas Corridor initiative. Given all these factors, in spite of the current economic situation and the limitations imposed by local authorities, which influence the further development of import capacity, Italy's ambition to become a natural gas hub within the new European energy arena could act as a stimulus for more initiatives in the country.

This prospect fits perfectly with Italy's aim to play a key role in the Euro-Mediterranean energy game. Italy, in the context of its presidency of the European Council (since the second semester of 2014), and in accord with the new High Representative, Federica Mogherini, has in fact attempted to relaunch the EU's energy activities in the Maghreb. The inter-ministerial "Building a Euro-Mediterranean Energy Bridge" conference, organised by the European Commission and the Italian government in Rome in November 2014,²⁶ reached an agreement to create three Euro-Mediterranean energy platforms for gas, the regional electricity market, and renewable energy and efficiency. These three structures should give impetus for coordination between the opposing shores of the Mediterranean in sectors such as the security of production infrastructures, hydrocarbon transport along the Mediterranean coast, the planning of electrical market models, the improvement of generation capacity and interconnection systems, the development of renewables and the reinforcement of efficiency measures.

Box 2 – Natural Gas: a New Driving Force in the Mediterranean

Among the various policies destined to play a key role in the Mediterranean's energy future, a central one is the EU initiative to reduce maritime transport emissions and the possible impact of LNG. On the basis of the International Maritime Organisation's regulations, as contained in Annex VI of the Marpol Convention, the EU is particularly active in the effort to reduce polluting emissions produced by the maritime transport sector. In 2013 the Commission released a Communication (COM/2013/17) with the objective of integrating maritime transport emissions into European policies for reducing greenhouse gases. As a result, as of 1 January 2015, EU member states will have to ensure that ships and ferries crossing the Baltic Sea, the North Sea and the English Channel use fuels with a sulphur content no higher than 0.1 per cent.

²⁶ Italian Ministry for Economic Development, *Un ponte energetico sul Mediterraneo*, 19 November 2014, <http://unmig.mise.gov.it/unmig/agenda/dettaglionotizia.asp?id=240>.

From 2020, the Mediterranean, too, will be affected by international legislation. From then, the sulphur limit in the fuel used by ships and ferries will have to be reduced from the current 3.5 per cent to 0.5 per cent, meaning that most ship owners will have to replace the petroleum product that they currently use, that is, bunker fuel. The need to adapt to international legislation while maintaining the sector's competitiveness has fuelled, even in the Mediterranean, an increased interest in LNG as an alternative fuel for maritime transport. With the aim of speeding up this transition, the EU Directive 2014/94/EU of 22 October 2014, on the Deployment of Alternative Fuels Infrastructure, requires member states to ensure that by 31 December 2025 all ports in the Trans-European Transport Network have LNG refuelling points accessible to all, which will be used by maritime transport and for inland waterways.

Given that LNG is rapidly emerging as a valid alternative to traditional petroleum products in virtue of its price advantage – LNG is 40-50 per cent cheaper than maritime gas oil (MSG) with a low sulphur content, and 15-25 per cent cheaper than bunker fuel – the European regulations have the potential to make a serious impact on the Mediterranean energy scene. As far as Italy goes, the challenges and opportunities of this inevitable change seem to have been fully grasped. In June 2015, the government launched a public consultation on a National LNG Strategy, a document which, taking as its starting point the need for Italy to adjust to the international and European legislation on maritime and land transport, aims to analyse the opportunities provided by LNG for the supply of methane to areas not linked by national distribution networks.

On a national level, the use of LNG for maritime transport and for supplying remote areas requires a series of large-scale infrastructure investments, but it also requires efforts in terms of security of installations and fleets, as well as in the planning of effective reception capacity. On a regional level, putting the new policies into practice requires considerable effort on the part of the coastal countries in strengthening cooperation and guaranteeing a unified approach, but also in establishing cooperative mechanisms to guarantee convergence on refuelling infrastructures parameters (in terms of type, size and cost) and agreement over security protocol to be applied in the sector.

3.5 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR ENERGY COOPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Although current global trends – including the growth of consumption in East Asia, the near-independent state of US energy and the stagnation of European demand – might seem to forecast a progressive reduction of the

Mediterranean's international importance, in reality its strategic energy status seems destined to be solidified. In the face of a possible diminishing of its role as a crossroads for global oil and natural gas traffic, the Mediterranean is becoming steadily more integrated, interconnected and interdependent, and therefore fundamental for the surrounding countries. The traditional dynamics dictated by complementarity between regional producers and consumers are giving way to common challenges that must be confronted through regional cooperation which takes into consideration (and makes the most of) the shared interests of the various players in the Mediterranean.

In Europe, the need to reduce dependence on Russian supplies places the Mediterranean at the centre of new energy security strategies outlined in the framework of the Energy Union. While the stated objective is to reinforce relations with the traditional energy partners – Algeria, Egypt and Libya – there is also an attempt to seize the new opportunities offered by the Mediterranean. The expansion of exploration activities on the sea beds of member countries, and European energy diplomacy initiatives in the eastern Mediterranean area are symptomatic of the Mediterranean's growing role in the EU's energy plans. In addition, it is important to underline the European objective to exploit the LNG market as a supply source both for domestic consumption (electricity generation, households) and for maritime transport.

For southern Mediterranean countries, the emergence of new and pressing internal challenges requires significant changes in their energy *modus operandi*. In the absence of credible policies for a transition to sustainable energy in the region, producing countries must increase their hydrocarbon output: on the one hand, to satisfy the growing number of domestic consumers, on the other to maintain oil and gas export levels (from which income vital to guaranteeing economic and socio-political stability is derived). All of this, in an increasingly insecure and volatile context for onshore energy infrastructures, which jeopardises both current production capacity and the possibility of attracting companies and international investment for the development of new resources. One of the most plausible reactions to this situation is the expansion of offshore activities in Mediterranean waters, a solution that could turn out to serve the purposes of the producers who want to in-

crease their export portfolio by developing their LNG capacity to serve the rich Asian markets.

Although these dynamics are generally positive and therefore welcome, they could have serious geopolitical and security implications. Geopolitically, the quest for the development of resources in the eastern Mediterranean still represents a challenge to regional stability, and it could be used by some actors as a pretext for an escalation of conflict in the area. Also, the proliferation of offshore energy infrastructures and installations along the Mediterranean coast, as well as the increase in energy transport via sea, will contribute to the vulnerability of these waters – and their ecosystem – in the face of both human malicious activities and natural phenomena. Increased regional cooperation and convergence, not only on energy-specific matters, but also over the management of possible geopolitical and security issues arising from the intensification of energy activities, are thus a strategic priority on both sides of the Mediterranean.

4.

The West and Security in the Mediterranean

Alessandro Marrone

As seen in the previous chapters, the Mediterranean region is witnessing increasing crisis in its southern countries, fast-moving commercial exchange and enormous migratory flux, not to mention a great increase in its own prominence in the energy arena. These factors, and the region's interconnections with the rest of the Euro-Atlantic region, mean that the Mediterranean is influenced to a certain extent by the West's policies in relation to it (although the scope of this influence is obviously different for Europe and North America). A better understanding of developments in the Mediterranean, especially in terms of security, can be gained by examining the approaches of the USA, NATO and the main European countries to security in the region. These approaches have, in the last few years, undergone significant changes, as well as maintaining some key elements of continuity.

4.1 THE UNITED STATES AND MENA DURING AND AFTER THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

Analysis of US policies in the Mediterranean, or rather in the region defined by America as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA),¹ especially

¹ Traditionally, the region includes the Maghreb countries (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) and Middle Eastern countries from Egypt in the west to Iran in the east. This chapter includes Afghanistan in its analysis, due to its central importance in US

in the Middle East, is vital to this study. In fact, it is crucial to understanding how Barack Obama's administration has influenced the dynamics in the region in question, and which of the recent trends are likely to recur in the future Republican or Democrat administration. It is useful, then, to consider five main aspects of Obama's MENA politics, which are not mutually exclusive: a significant discontinuity with regard to the military approach of the preceding administration; an effort, in communication terms, to rehabilitate America's image in the eyes of the Muslim world; the White House's uncertain and delayed reaction to the changing realities of the region; the realism that is consistently adopted in practice, even though it is not formally codified in an "Obama doctrine;" and the lesser importance accorded to the region compared with East Asia and the Pacific.

Firstly, Obama's military approach to the region is different from that of his predecessor, George W. Bush, to the extent that during his first term, Obama brought operations in Iraq – which had been a key policy of the previous administration – to an end relatively rapidly (in two years), leaving no military presence to support the Iraqi armed forces and institutions or to discourage possible insurrections linked to Islamic fundamentalism. At the same time, after an initial phase of military reinforcement in Afghanistan, Obama stated his objective to end the mandate of the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan by the end of 2014, involving the pulling out of most of the US troops, leaving around 12-15,000 units to continue counter-terrorism activities and support the Afghan armed forces over the next few years.² The commitment to withdraw from two wars in which America has been involved since 2003 and 2001 was the main break with the Bush administration. Some analysts hold Obama responsible for actually having committed America to at least five military conflicts in the region³ (in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syr-

policies in the region since 2001.

² Counter-terrorism activities are carried out in the remit of the US operation Enduring Freedom, and the support of the Afghan security forces is part of the NATO Resolute Support mission.

³ Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Obama Administration: From Ending Two Wars to Engagement in Five - with the Risk of a Sixth", in *CSIS Commentaries*, 3 December 2014, <http://csis.org/publication/obama-administration-ending-two-wars-engagement-five-risk-sixth>.

ia, Yemen, and more general disputes with supporters of Islamic State) through the use of air power and/or special forces, the supply of arms to local allies and the activity of thousands of US advisers and instructors on the ground. In any case, there is certainly discontinuity in the sense that in each of these operational theatres, and also in Libya, the Obama administration has carefully avoided a military escalation that could lead to large-scale deployment of combat forces, which is what happened in Afghanistan and Iraq during the 2000s in the so-called “global war on terrorism.” Although Obama stopped publicly using the term “war on terrorism” coined by his predecessor, in reality he continued both the operations of US special forces in the MENA (which included the killing of Bin Laden in May 2011) and the drone bombardment campaigns in Pakistan,⁴ Yemen and other countries in the region, thus demonstrating some continuity with the previous administration. Key issues remain unresolved in terms of the fight against Islamist terrorism, such as the Guantanamo Bay detention centre, which Obama has downgraded – by transferring prisoners to European countries – but not closed during his two terms in office, and the practice of extraordinary rendition, which continues albeit under tighter control.⁵

The second notable aspect of Obama’s policies in the MENA, particularly in the first year of his administration, was the strategic communications campaign that the president undertook at home and especially abroad, to rehabilitate America’s image in the eyes of the Muslim world. His speech in Cairo in June 2009 was the main element of this communications campaign, aimed not only at governments but at public opinion in the MENA countries, characterised by the message that the United States and Islam are not in competition but, on the contrary, share common ideals. This speech marked a “new” beginning in mutual relations.⁶ The constant distinction made in speeches and official documents between

⁴ Alessandro Marrone, “La spina dei droni nel fianco di Obama”, in *AffarInternazionali*, 14 May 2013, <http://www.affarinternazionali.it/articolo.asp?ID=2311>.

⁵ On Guantanamo Bay see Maya Rhodan, “Plan to Close Guantanamo Bay Prison in the Works”, in *Time*, 22 July 2015, <http://time.com/3968292>. On extraordinary rendition see David Johnston, “U.S. Says Rendition to Continue, but With More Oversight”, in *The New York Times*, 24 August 2009, <http://nyti.ms/1PjOlk3>.

⁶ See, among others, Fawaz A. Gerges, “The ‘Obama Doctrine’ in the Middle East”, in *ISPU Policy Briefs*, October 2012, <https://shar.es/15sQWx>.

Al Qaeda and the rest of the Islamic world, the above-mentioned abandoning of the term “war on terrorism,” the care not to expose America to accusations of “crusading” against Islam or of being part of a “clash of civilisations,” are all part of this communications strategy in the region.

Thirdly, the Obama administration was justly criticised for the uncertainty, slow reactions and internal divisions that it showed in several circumstances relating to the MENA area. The White House was taken by surprise by the Arab Spring,⁷ just as many other western governments were, and was similarly unprepared for the rise of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria⁸ and for other developments in the region. Subsequently, the US reaction was frequently slow, and characterised by the phrase “we don’t have a strategy yet” in response to the threat posed by Islamic State.⁹ The response was uncertain in other cases, such as that of the “red line” which, according to Obama, in 2013, Assad should not cross on pain of incurring US military intervention, and which the Syrian president then crossed with impunity.¹⁰ Finally, divisions frequently emerged within the administration, for example over the rise of Islamist movements in Egypt, a rise that was opposed more by the then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton than by Obama himself. There were also divisions over the shifting strategy on the Afghan conflict, the subject of divergent ideas that clashed in the triangle of the White House, the State Department and the Pentagon.¹¹ In general, even given all of the criticisms of his administration, Obama’s politics in the MENA were largely reactive and extremely cautious given the situation. In the case of the conflict with Isis, currently the Obama administration’s main military commitment in the region, the United States has gradually increased its military support of Syrian, Kurdish and Iraqi groups fighting Islamic State, and has launched a campaign of air strikes

⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

⁸ Joe Barnes and Andrew Bowen, *Rethinking U.S. Strategy in the Middle East*, Houston, Center for the Middle East, 2015, p. 3, <http://bakerinstitute.org/research/rethinking-us-strategy-middle-east>.

⁹ White House, *Statement by the President*, James S. Brady Press Briefing Room, 28 August 2014, <http://go.wh.gov/jPwYtu>.

¹⁰ Anthony H. Cordesman, “President Obama and Syria: The ‘Waiting for Godot’ Strategy”, in *CSIS Commentaries*, 1 September 2013, <https://share.s/15sPMD>.

¹¹ See, among others, Bob Woodward, *Obama’s Wars*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 2010.

with western¹² and regional¹³ allies. These raids are small-scale, ill-defined and of doubtful efficacy. In the case of Libya, too, the initial political will for military intervention in 2011 came from Paris and not from Washington,¹⁴ with the White House “limiting” itself to military support – which was nevertheless indispensable – of an air campaign driven and managed mainly by France and the United Kingdom. This demonstrated the US idea of “leading from behind.”¹⁵

The fourth aspect of the Democrat administration’s policy in the MENA region – and not only in this region – is the realism that guides its actions, while never being officially set down in an “Obama doctrine.”¹⁶ The word realism has a double meaning in this case. On the one hand it is an approach based on the recognition of the limits of US power and on careful evaluation of the economic and political costs of a given action – especially military action – in relation to the benefits. On the other hand, it is a *realpolitik* which abandons any idea of transforming the regional situation and/or of actively promoting liberal and democratic principles, in favour of defending US national interest, an interest that is served above all by maintaining stability in the MENA region¹⁷ and by limiting the damage from the widespread conflict in the region. A *realpolitik* approach entails, for example, the absence of significant support for the movements that brought about the Arab Spring, and a timid, or even silent, public diplomatic stance which waits for events to develop.¹⁸ At the same time, this

¹² Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Italy and the United Kingdom.

¹³ Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and UAE.

¹⁴ Robert Springborg, “The US Response to the Arab Uprising: Leadership Missing”, in Riccardo Alcaro and Miguel Haubrich-Seco (eds.), *Re-thinking Western Policies in Light of Arab Uprisings*, Rome, Nuova Cultura, 2012, p. 32 (IAI Research Papers 4), <http://www.iai.it/en/node/1385>.

¹⁵ P.J. Crowley, “Obama, tell Syria’s Assad he has to go”, in *The Washington Post*, 19 June 2009, <http://wpo.st/Sh0l0>.

¹⁶ Obama has always avoided defining an “Obama doctrine,” just as he has never recognised the label of “realist”, all the while demonstrating a good deal of realism. See, among others, Matthew Yglesias’s interview with Obama for *The Vox Conversation* in January 2015, <http://www.vox.com/a/barack-obama-interview-vox-conversation/obama-foreign-policy-transcript>.

¹⁷ Fawaz A. Gerges, *Obama and the Middle East. The End of America’s Moment?*, London/New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 8.

¹⁸ Robert Springborg, “The US Response to the Arab Uprising: Leadership Missing”, cit., p. 33-35.

realpolitik allows for the possibility of dialogue both with the conservative forces opposed to the changes sparked by the Arab Spring, whether these forces be military as in Egypt or a monarchy as in Saudi Arabia, and with the emerging Islamist forces, if they succeed in taking power, as happened during Morsi's presidency in Cairo. This is a new phenomenon: the United States had, until recently, avoided contact with Islamist groups in Egypt, focusing solely on the various aspects of Mubarak's establishment.¹⁹ Nonetheless, US sympathy in recent years has remained with conservative forces rather than emerging Islamist ones. The deal with Iran is one of the prime examples of *realpolitik* in the region. The Obama administration actively pursued dialogue with a non-democratic state hostile to the United States, and then avoided resorting to violence and accepted a compromise that legitimises the regime, in order to avoid the possibility of Tehran developing nuclear armaments.²⁰ The nuclear deal has certainly not put an end to hostilities between Iran and the USA, but it could open up a space for future cooperation, even though Washington and Tehran remain in opposing camps when it comes to many other issues in the region.²¹

The fifth and probably most important aspect of Obama's approach to the MENA is the region's diminished significance in US and defence and foreign policy, both compared to the previous administration and compared to East Asia. This is an explicit change in priorities expressed by the concept of US "rebalancing" with regard to the Pacific,²² with special focus on China and, therefore, on US allies in the Asiatic and Australian region. This rebalancing has not yet resulted the US lessening its military presence in the MENA region, as Europe had lessened done until the outbreak of the crisis in Ukraine:²³ on the contrary, the deployment of

¹⁹ Issandr El Amrani, "The US Response to the Arab Uprising: Part of the Problem?", in Riccardo Alcaro and Miguel Haubrich-Seco (eds.), *Re-thinking Western Policies in Light of Arab Uprisings*, Rome, Nuova Cultura, 2012, p. 65 (IAI Research Papers 4), <http://www.iai.it/en/node/1385>.

²⁰ The deal on Iranian nuclear power is also an example of multilateralism, given that France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Russia and the EU participated in the negotiations.

²¹ See, among others, Riccardo Alcaro, "The West and the Middle East After the Iran Nuclear Deal", in *IAI Working Papers*, No. 15|25 (July 2015), <http://www.iai.it/en/node/4449>.

²² White House, *National Security Strategy*, February 2015, http://nssarchive.us/?page_id=1310.

²³ The number of US military personnel permanently stationed in European NATO

drones has increased, and there has been investment in military satellite communications infrastructures such as the Mobile User Objective System (MUOS) being constructed in Sicily. Rebalancing has actually translated into the desire to avoid military intervention, and not to invest political and diplomatic capital in regional conflicts and crises unless absolutely necessary for the US national interest. This approach is behind some of Obama's policies, such as his disengagement from the Israeli-Palestinian peace process beyond pronouncement of the usual set phrases,²⁴ and the general reluctance to assume a leading role over the Arab Spring (regarding which no strategy was ever made or announced²⁵) or over the civil wars in Syria and Libya.

These last two aspects of Obama's MENA policies, that is realism/*realpolitik* and relative political and military disengagement, are particularly relevant to this study because it is likely that they will also characterise the approach of the next US administration, whether Republican or Democrat. In fact, given the cost and results of the military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, realism – in its dual aspect of cautious use of force and *realpolitik* – prevails both among Democrats, in contrast to the liberal interventionism of the Clinton administration, and among Republicans, in contrast to the "Freedom Agenda" and the chance to "export democracy" to make America more secure which were practised by the neo-conservatives of the George W. Bush era. This realism that, according to some analysts, will also apply to US alliances with Arab countries with regard, for example, to US expectations that allies will adopt US values:²⁶ a lowering of US expectations will also reduce pressure from Washington on these countries to do so. All this reflects a propensity to isolationism among the US public and electorate, partly resulting from the recent (although

countries fell from around 300,000 units in the 1980s to around 30,000 in 2014. Interview a), NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 11 September 2015.

²⁴ Richard N. Haass, "The Irony of American Strategy", in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 92, No. 3 (May-June 2013), p. 59, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2013-04-03/irony-american-strategy>.

²⁵ Robert Springborg, "The US Response to the Arab Uprising: Leadership Missing", cit., p. 41.

²⁶ Anthony H. Cordesman, "Strategic Partnership in the Middle East: Respecting Our Arab Allies, Realism about Ourselves", in *CSIS Commentaries*, 9 October 2014, p. 1-2, <https://shares/15t08k>.

now overcome) economic crisis,²⁷ from financial, political and “moral fatigue” after a decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the assimilation of the conflicts arising from the 9/11 attacks following the killing of Bin Laden.²⁸ The difficulty of creating and maintaining the internal consensus necessary for eventual large-scale military intervention persists, and is undoubtedly a political limit on the actions of any US administration in the region. Furthermore, both sides generally agree, albeit with slight differences and pre-electoral public spats, on the economic importance of East Asia and on the military and geopolitical implications of China’s increasing power. Finally, America’s near-independence in energy terms, thanks to recent and future exploitations of non-conventional gas which abounds in the country, diminishes the strategic importance of the MENA area as far as America is concerned, even though, as discussed in the previous chapters, it does not completely eliminate the region’s importance within the global economy and energy market. It is not by chance that the US military establishment has, for several years, been more concerned by the possibility of conventional high-intensity, high-technology military conflict scenarios in the eastern Pacific²⁹ than by possible counter-guerilla activities or crisis management in the MENA area. Emblematic of this is the speech given at West Point Academy by Robert Gates, Defence Secretary under the second Bush administration and the first Obama administration, according to which anybody who advised the US president to send US ground forces to large-scale interventions in Central Asia, the Middle East or Africa “should have his head examined.”³⁰

All this does not mean, however, the end of US influence in the MENA area: US capacity to influence events in the region should not be overes-

²⁷ An example of this is the conference of the unions of the main US cities held in Baltimore in 2011, which approved an order of the day demanding an end to the sustained and large-scale US economic support of Afghanistan, because to “build bridges in Baghdad and Kandahar and not Baltimore and Kansas City absolutely boggles the mind.” Michael Cooper, “Mayors See End to Wars as Fix for Struggling Cities”, in *The New York Times*, 11 June 2011, <http://nyti.ms/1MFuHpt>.

²⁸ Joe Barnes and Andrew Bowen, *Rethinking U.S. Strategy in the Middle East*, cit., p. 29.

²⁹ Alessandro Marrone and Michele Nones, “Il rebalancing americano verso l’Asia-Pacifico e l’Air-Sea Battle: implicazioni per l’Europa e l’Italia”, in *Nomos&khaos. Rapporto Nomisma 2013-2014 sulle prospettive economico-strategiche*, 2014, p. 275- 287.

³⁰ Quoted in Richard McGregor, “US Loses its Appetite for Job as the World’s Policeman”, in *Financial Times*, 3 March 2011, <http://on.ft.com/1GJXu9U>.

timated, but nor should it be underestimated.³¹ The US continues to have a say: it has the ability to apply diplomatic and military pressure and will certainly remain present as an external player in the region. This is all the more true because despite the US establishment's wish to disengage from the MENA area, it is difficult for the country to retreat beyond a certain point,³² given its strategic interest in several issues: safeguarding access to the energy resources the global economy needs; Israeli security; combatting terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction; and the stability of countries in the area – even non-democratic ones – which prevents the spread of civil wars such as those in Iraq and Syria as well as the spread of Islamic State.³³ In particular, Israel is a key interlocutor in the region, not just for the US and Europe but also for many Middle Eastern governments. At the same time, the east-west dimension also influences the MENA area and on US engagement there. One only has to take the example of the role played by Russia in the negotiations on Iran's nuclear capabilities and in logistical support provided by NATO in Afghanistan, and the role it currently plays in the Syrian crisis (and to a lesser extent in relations with Turkey and Egypt). In conclusion, it is the weight of US influence that is changing, and will diminish further, as well as the country's role in the region, which will be marked by a cautious tendency to weigh up and react to current developments, and either support or oppose them, rather than directing them as a guiding force in a specific direction.

4.2 THE NATO COUNTRIES AND THE MEDITERRANEAN: OLD PROBLEMS AND NEW DYNAMICS

This chapter does not aim to analyse transatlantic relations between a superpower like the US and the larger European countries when it comes to security. This is a relationship that has largely (but not exclusively) been articulated through the internal dynamics of NATO and its development

³¹ Dafna H. Rand, *Prepared Statement before the Senate Committee on Armed Services*, Center for New American Security, 24 March 2015, p. 3, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=764803>.

³² Richard N. Haass, "The Irony of American Strategy", cit., p. 59.

³³ Joe Barnes and Andrew Bowen, *Rethinking U.S. Strategy in the Middle East*, cit., p. 7-8.

during the period following the Cold War.³⁴ It aims, instead, to analyse security in the Mediterranean, examining the interaction between the positions of the Obama administration and that of the main European countries – except for Italy, which is taken as a specific case in the final chapter of this book – and the resulting NATO policy in the region, especially in the last five years.

Even after the formation of NATO in 1949, France and the United Kingdom continued to set the tone for relations with the Mediterranean countries bilaterally, as did the US after it took on the role of the dominant power in the region during the Suez crisis in 1956. Seeing that during the Cold War NATO's function was simply to ensure collective defence against the Soviet Union, the role of the Alliance in the Mediterranean was, as was traditional for western European powers, to keep Moscow out of "warm waters." The post-Cold War period signalled a change in NATO, such that its current Strategic Concept, adopted in 2010 at the summit of NATO heads of state and government in Lisbon, identifies three "core tasks" of equal importance: collective defence in accordance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty; operational management of crises outside member countries' territories; "cooperative security," which includes the "open door policy" to new NATO members, partnerships with third party countries and international organisations, non-proliferation politics and armaments control.³⁵ The 2010 Strategic Concept represents a point of balance among differing internal visions within NATO that developed during the 1990s and 2000s, with varying ideas about NATO's goals, methods and geographic scope.³⁶

This balance also reflects NATO's evolving role in the MENA area. NATO has, in fact, launched the Active Endeavour naval missions in the Mediterranean to combat terrorism, and Ocean Shield missions in the Gulf of Aden against piracy. It has also begun missions to reinforce air defences in Turkey.³⁷ At a political and diplomatic level, in 1994 the main NATO

³⁴ Two useful starting points for such an analysis are: Alessandro Colombo, *La lunga alleanza. La Nato tra consolidamento, supremazia e crisi*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 2001; Vittorio Emanuele Parsi, *L'Alleanza inevitabile. Europa e Stati Uniti oltre l'Iraq*, Milan, Egea, 2006.

³⁵ NATO, *Strategic Concept*, 2010, <http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/Index.html>.

³⁶ Alessandro Marrone, "The Equilibrium of the 2010 NATO Strategic Concept", in *The International Spectator*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (September 2011), p. 111.

³⁷ From 2006 to 2011 NATO also conducted training missions with Iraqi security forces.

countries on the shores of the Mediterranean – France, Italy and Spain – initiated the Mediterranean dialogue with seven states in the region.³⁸ Ten years later, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) with the Gulf countries was launched largely through the efforts of the US, Turkey and – once again – the NATO countries bordering the Mediterranean.³⁹ Both of these NATO-MENA partnerships were criticised for achieving little both in terms of political strategy and concrete outcomes, and were generally held, by the countries concerned, to be less important than partnerships with ex-Soviet bloc countries, partly because NATO was expanding to the east in a way that it could obviously never do to the south.⁴⁰ In particular, the Mediterranean Dialogue was stalled multilaterally by the tense relations between Israel and the other MENA countries involved (as well as those between Tel Aviv and Ankara after 2010). In bilateral terms, NATO and each of the third-party countries of both forums – the so-called “NATO+1” – made significant breakthroughs, especially in terms of concrete outcomes,⁴¹ in spite of internal divisions among NATO countries over which security priorities to pursue in the Mediterranean.⁴² For example, while Italy and Spain were pushing to establish a fuller partnership, similar to that of the Partnership for Peace, other states feared that enlarging NATO in two directions could “overburden” it.⁴³ As for the ICI, it succeeded in establishing cooperation on an operative level in terms of combatting terrorism and on the issue of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and all this in an exclusively bilateral form (NATO+1) in

³⁸ Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia joined in 1995, and Algeria in 2000.

³⁹ Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE joined this initiative.

⁴⁰ Erik Reichborn-Kjennerud, “NATO in the ‘New’ MENA Region. Competing Priorities amidst Diverging Interests and Financial Austerity”, in *NUPI Reports*, 2013, p. 7, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?lng=en&id=160248>.

⁴¹ These outcomes were achieved by various working groups focused on themed areas. By the second half of the 1990s, Egypt, Jordan and Morocco had contributed to NATO missions in Bosnia, and Jordan and Morocco has also been involved in those in Kosovo. See Gunther Hauser, “The Mediterranean Dialogue: A Transatlantic Approach”, in *CRiSSMA Working Papers*, No. 9 (2006).

⁴² Florence Gaub, *Against all Odds. Relations between NATO and the MENA Region*, Carlisle, Strategic Studies Institute, August 2012, p. 8, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB1112.pdf>.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

order to avoid the problems encountered by the Mediterranean Dialogue. Once again, however, the lack of a clear, common position among member states over the methods of this partnership, as well as the absence of key Gulf States such as Saudi Arabia, meant that the ICI only achieved modest, even disappointing, results.⁴⁴ Cooperation was also limited by the fact that, as some experts have highlighted, these cooperation forums have tended to focus predominantly on the security interests and agendas of the NATO countries, rather than those of its partners.⁴⁵

Despite these considerations, both partnerships with the MENA region have served, to a greater or lesser extent, to open up dialogue between NATO and a series of governments that knew little about it and were rather suspicious of it. Furthermore, since 2011, NATO has proposed a host of collaborations to the ICI and Mediterranean Dialogue countries similar to those offered fifteen years earlier to the eastern NATO countries,⁴⁶ and six members of the Mediterranean Dialogue⁴⁷ have joined it in Individual Partnership Programmes. Subsequently, in 2015, NATO created capacity-building initiatives to support local military capacities in Jordan and Iraq. In general, in terms of the operative outcomes of individual projects on the less politically sensitive issues, for example the securing of military facilities, breakthroughs have been made via NATO+1.⁴⁸ In political and strategic terms, the exchanges that occurred thanks to the Mediterranean Dialogue and the ICI probably contributed to the Arab League's support of NATO's Unified Protector operation in Libya in 2011, and they also facilitated the (albeit modest) military support for the operation provided by Jordan, Qatar and the UAE.⁴⁹ The Mediterranean Dialogue also has the

⁴⁴ See, among others, Jean-Loup Samaan, "NATO in the Gulf: Partnership Without a Cause?", in *NDC Research Papers*, No. 83 (October 2012), <http://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=438>.

⁴⁵ Martin A. Smith and Ian Davis, "NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue in the Wake of the Arab Spring: Partnership for Peace or Succour for Despots?", in *NATO Watch Briefing Papers*, No. 19 (27 June 2011), p. 1, <http://natowatch.org/node/516>.

⁴⁶ Erik Reichborn-Kjennerud, "NATO in the 'New' MENA Region", cit., p. 22.

⁴⁷ Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

⁴⁸ Interview b), NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 11 September 2015.

⁴⁹ The three countries carried out 6 per cent of the coalition's air operations during the campaign, compared, for example, to the 9 per cent carried out by Italy, 11 per cent by the UK, 21 per cent by France and 27 per cent by the US. See Mario Arpino, "L'Italia nelle operazioni in Libia", in *AffarInternazionali*, 6 December 2011, <http://www.affarinternazi->

merit of being one of the few multilateral forums in which Israel and Arab states sit around the same table alongside Europeans and Americans to discuss security matters. It would be hard to expect more of the Mediterranean Dialogue and the ICI, given two fundamental obstacles. Firstly, the countries of the region were aiming to obtain NATO protection from external threats (such as Iran) or internal ones. In contrast, the Alliance was not disposed to provide such protection and saw the dialogue as a political confidence-building exercise, as well as a chance to improve military interoperability and convince these countries to contribute to NATO out-of-area operations. At the same time, member states such as the US, France and the United Kingdom continued to have a marked preference for their bilateral relations with the MENA countries as opposed to those conducted within the NATO partnerships, and they thus accorded the Mediterranean Dialogue, for example, relatively little political will and economic support.

In this context, the Obama administration's policies regarding the MENA area, as discussed in the previous section, saw America retreat to a certain extent from NATO's decision-making process – and in transatlantic relations in general – where the region was concerned, and in particular when it came to security in the Mediterranean. That is not to say that America became entirely absent or uninterested, but rather that it was less fully engaged, leaving a larger space for European allies to take responsibility.⁵⁰ However, the US retreat was not matched by a corresponding assumption of responsibility by the major countries of the Old Continent, either within NATO or the EU. Rather, there was a re-nationalisation of foreign and defence policy towards the region, with this policy taking very different directions in different countries. In the case of France especially, and to a lesser extent the United Kingdom, there was, according to some analysts, a rebirth of neo-colonial ambitions that led rapidly, via the military intervention of 2011, to the Libyan disaster⁵¹ that is now plain for all to see.

As far as France is concerned, both Nicholas Sarkozy's Gaullist pres-

onali.it/articolo.asp?ID=1925.

⁵⁰ Interview a), NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10 September 2015.

⁵¹ See, among others, Giuseppe Cucchi, "Il Mediterraneo senza potenza egemone", in *AffarInternazionali*, 28 July 2015, <http://www.affarinternazionali.it/articolo.asp?ID=3133>.

idency and François Hollande's socialist one were characterised by military interventionism in the Sahara and the Sahel, first in Libya in 2011 and then in Mali in 2013, not to mention more minor interventions in Chad and the Central African Republic. From 2014 onwards the French government was also more active in Syria and Iraq. In the meantime, the French army remained the second largest, after Italy's, in the UNIFIL II Mission in Lebanon, while the Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier was permanently stationed in the eastern Mediterranean. France considers the terrorist threat from the MENA region to be high, especially since the 2015 Paris attacks,⁵² which were, politically speaking, France's 9/11: in the eyes of the political decision-makers the terrorist escalation has meant that France's internal security now depends on the pacification of any areas of the Sahara and the eastern Mediterranean where Islamic State is active.⁵³ This perception fosters a vision of integrating North Africa into the European framework, a vision rooted in post-colonial relationships with the Maghreb countries and that translates into the EU's initiative for the Mediterranean, which was shelved following the Arab Spring.⁵⁴ More generally, France sees the region as a geopolitical space that goes from sub-Saharan Africa through to North Africa and the Middle East, in which there has been a significant and growing French military defence presence not only due to the above-mentioned operations but also in terms of the positioning of military equipment in bases from Niger to Djibouti.⁵⁵ France has also intensified its military cooperation with key Arab countries such as Egypt and Qatar, as demonstrated by France's sale of advanced armament systems to both countries, such as Rafale fighter aircraft,⁵⁶ and by the Egyptian government's recent purchase of two Mistral-class warships.⁵⁷ French policy in the MENA region has not, until

⁵² Jean-Pierre Darnis, "Basta con i sospetti, collaboriamo", in *Il Foglio*, 20 March 2015, p. 3, <http://www.iai.it/it/node/3945>.

⁵³ Interview carried out during the Pan-European "Worlds of Violence" Conference, Catania, 23 September 2015.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Pierre Tran, "France Sells 24 Rafale Fighters to Qatar", in *DefenseNews*, 30 April 2015, <http://defnews.ly/1GIMl4Z>.

⁵⁷ "Al-Sisi compra le Mistral costruite per Putin", in *Analisi Difesa*, 24 September 2015, <http://www.analisidifesa.it/?p=28522>.

now, been channelled through NATO but through a series of unilateral initiatives, partly because the other European NATO countries perceive the terrorist threat to be less grave and are less disposed towards military intervention. In the case of Mali, the political, diplomatic and military operation was carried out on a largely national basis, with a small amount of logistical support from the US and some European countries. In the case of Libya, the Paris initiative sought and attained the support of Washington and London on the idea of an *ad hoc* coalition, which operated outside NATO military command in the first few days of the air campaign, under US guidance.⁵⁸ The 2011 intervention signalled a realisation on the part of the French that US support is vital for military operations in the MENA area, for example in terms of high-level technology such as satellites and drones, and this led both to a *rapprochement* between Paris and Washington and to greater French investment in those sectors where they lag furthest behind the US.⁵⁹ At the same time, this reflects Paris's *à la carte* approach regarding cooperation in the field of defence. In a NATO context, too – where there is a certain measure of closeness with London due partly to the Lancaster House Treaty – France maintains a good deal of freedom of manoeuvre, refusing, for example, to accept strict obligations over the extent of its engagement in NATO's military plans.⁶⁰ NATO is seen as being vital to Europe's defence and to cooperation with the US, especially after Paris's return to integrated NATO military command, but it is not seen as an instrument for operations in the MENA region for the same reason that the EU is also not seen as such:⁶¹ because of the non-interventionist positions of other European countries, the diverging political visions within NATO, and because of a lack of military capacity for such

⁵⁸ This operation, Odyssey Dawn, began on 19 March 2011 and continued until 29 March. Following the decision on 31 March to transfer the command and control of all military operations in Libya to NATO, the operation passed formally into NATO control. For more information about the operation and the handover of military operations to NATO see, among others, Jeremiah Gertler, "Operation Odyssey Dawn (Libya): Background and Issues for Congress", in *CRS Reports for Congress*, No. 41752 (30 March 2011), <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R41725.pdf>.

⁵⁹ Interview carried out during the Pan-European "Worlds of Violence" Conference, Catania, 23 September 2015.

⁶⁰ Interview a), NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10 September 2015.

⁶¹ Interview carried out during the Pan-European "Worlds of Violence" Conference, Catania, 23 September 2015.

operations. In reality, France increasingly presents itself as a key ally for various states in the Middle East, offering bilateral guarantees of military security, and this is resulting in growing economic exchanges in the defence market.

The United Kingdom has seen an opposite trend to that occurring in France, with a strong and increasing parliamentary and public opposition to overseas military engagements, due – as in the US case – to the financial, political and human prices paid in Iraq and Afghanistan in the previous decade, as well as to the financial crisis, which resulted in large cuts to the defence budget. The stinging defeat suffered by David Cameron's Conservative government in the 2013 parliamentary vote on British participation in an eventual aerial bombardment of Syria⁶² is an emblematic example of this. Reduced defence resources and a lack of political appetite for military engagement abroad,⁶³ as well as the dominance of other issues such as the referendums on Scottish Independence and Britain's exit from the EU, have diminished British interest in the region, in spite of London's active role within NATO.⁶⁴ The United Kingdom has nonetheless remained very present in NATO's decision-making process, adopting a pragmatic position and conforming to the current aim to safeguard national interests in the region.⁶⁵ In this context, Britain's participation in the Libyan intervention was the only example of an active military role played in the Mediterranean. In 2011, the UK government was reluctant to leave it to Paris to be the political leader of such an important mission in tandem with the US, as this would reinforce France's position as Washington's new key ally for security in the MENA region: the desire to preserve the "special relationship" with the US⁶⁶ and the need to stop French stealing all of the limelight were among the main motives for Britain's

⁶² Robert Winnett, "Syria crisis: No to war, blow to Cameron", in *The Telegraph*, 29 August 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10275158/Syria-crisis-No-to-war-blow-to-Cameron.html>.

⁶³ On the British outlook, see Julien Lindley-French, *Little Britain? Twenty-First Century Strategy for a Middling European Power*, Melbourne, Wilkinson Publishing, 2014.

⁶⁴ Interview, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 15 March 2015.

⁶⁵ Interview a), NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10 September 2015.

⁶⁶ Madelene Lindström and Kristina Zetterlund, "Setting the Stage for the Military Intervention in Libya. Decisions Made and their Implications for EU and NATO", in *FOI Reports*, October 2012, p. 37, <http://www.foi.se/rapport?rNo=FOI-R--3498--SE>.

active role in 2011. These motives emerged clearly when the United Kingdom decided to transfer command of the air campaign to NATO just as the US took a step back from the MENA region in the context of the Obama approach discussed earlier. At the time, after the first Odyssey Dawn phase, Italy and other NATO countries were pressing to transfer the campaign to within the political and military structures of NATO. On this occasion, the United Kingdom opposed the French suggestion to create a Franco-British command structures that would have seen Paris play a key role, and insisted instead that Odyssey Dawn should be put under integrated NATO military command, and become Unified Protector, thus satisfying its own trans-Atlantic inclinations.⁶⁷ Britain has, then, been reluctant to commit to significant military engagement in the MENA region but has, as usual, been willing to engage alongside its US ally, as confirmed by its decision to participate in air raids in Iraq by the anti-Isis coalition led by the US in September 2014. It has not, however, taken part in bombing campaigns in Syria or supplied any ground troops.⁶⁸

Germany, for its part, has been sceptical and reluctant to intervene militarily in Libya, and in the rest of the MENA area, even in the context of a NATO mission. The dual motive behind this is the lack of strong military engagement by the US, in contrast to what had happened in Afghanistan, and Libya's location outside the European area of geopolitical interest for Berlin (an area into which, by contrast, the western Balkans, did fall, and Germany was an active participant in NATO interventions there).⁶⁹ Germany abstained from the UN Security Council Resolution to give legitimacy to the intervention in Libya, did not contribute to the military operations there, and withdrew its contribution to common NATO capabilities such as AWACS aircraft.⁷⁰ These actions were further proof of the German non-interventionist position regarding security in the southern

⁶⁷ International Institute for Strategic Studies, "War in Libya: Europe's confused response", in *IISS Strategic Comments*, Vol. 17, No. 18 (April 2011).

⁶⁸ It has since emerged that the United Kingdom did contribute to a limited extent to western bombing raids in Syria. See Patrick Wintour, "David Cameron knew UK pilots were bombing Isis in Syria", in *The Guardian*, 17 July 2015, <http://gu.com/p/4ampf/stw>.

⁶⁹ Interview carried out during the International Experts Workshop on NATO's Strategic Agenda "Beyond the Political Guidance", Como, 22 July 2015.

⁷⁰ "Libia: la Germania ritira navi da teatro delle operazioni", in *La Repubblica*, 23 March 2011.

Mediterranean. Germany, in fact, sees the Mediterranean as the border of Europe, beyond which is Africa on one side and the Middle East on the other, rather than as a region whose states are strongly interconnected.⁷¹ Beyond this European maritime border Germany has no interest or desire to intervene in Africa,⁷² both because of the still-relevant historic legacy of the Second World War and because of the negative German experience of the EUFOR Congo mission in 2006.⁷³ More generally, Germany has paid little attention to security in the MENA region since the Arab Spring (in line with its constitutional limits on the use of armed force abroad, as well as with the problematic nature of its own strategy on military interventionism⁷⁴) and has welcomed the reduced NATO engagement in Afghanistan. Berlin has thus resisted requests from other NATO members, especially France and Italy, to involve itself in the crises to the south of Europe, only providing France with a limited amount of logistical support in Mali – mainly because it did not want to jeopardise bilateral Franco-German relations.⁷⁵ Similarly, the migration crisis in the Mediterranean that has worsened since 2013 has not been a big issue for the German public, which was only affected by the influx of migrants and refugees from the Balkans to central Europe, and maritime security in the “Mare Nostrum” is still “off the radar” as far as Berlin is concerned.⁷⁶ Germany has instead concentrated on central-eastern Europe and on internal NATO dynamics linked to collective military cooperation and defence, proposing the “framework nation” concept for sharing national military capacities around a few Guide-Countries – a position for which Germany, Italy and The United Kingdom are candidates.⁷⁷ This is a policy that some

⁷¹ Interview a), Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlino, 17 September 2015.

⁷² Claudia Major and Christian Moelling, “German Defence Policy in 2014 and beyond: Options for Change”, in *Notes du Cerfa*, No. 113 (June 2014), <http://www.ifri.org/en/node/8587>.

⁷³ Interview a), Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlino, 17 September 2015.

⁷⁴ Julian Junk and Cristopher Daase, “Germany”, in Heiko Biehl, Bastian Giegerich and Alexandra Jonas (eds.), *Strategic Cultures in Europe. Security and Defence Policies Across the Continent*, Wiesbaden, Springer VS, 2013, p. 139-152.

⁷⁵ Interview b), Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlino, 17 September 2015.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ The group represented by Italy includes five other countries: Albania, Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia. The group represented by Germany includes seventeen countries. Interview a), NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10 September 2015.

commentators have seen as aiming, in the medium term, to make Germany the main US ally for European security.⁷⁸ Other directions in Germany foreign policy in the MENA region have been taken outside the context of NATO, for example the support of EU proposals for training and supply of military materials⁷⁹ to partner-countries in the region, the supply of arms systems to Algeria, or the decision to choose Syrian refugees, from among the influx of migrants to Europe, as being the ones who would integrate most easily and productively into German society.

It was in this context of relative lack of NATO interest in the MENA area on the part of the US, the United Kingdom and Germany, and of unilateral French action, that the 2012 NATO summit in Chicago was held. The summit therefore concentrated on the completion of the ISAF mission in Afghan territory, and gave little or no attention to the changes triggered by the (then) recent Arab Spring, which included the civil war in Syria, the anarchic situation in Libya and the coming to power of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Despite the fact that barely a year earlier, that same NATO had conducted eight months of air campaigns against the Gaddafi regime, contributing, if not intentionally, to the destabilisation of Libya and North Africa, no initiative promoting security in the southern Mediterranean was decided at the summit.

Since 2014 the war between Russia and Ukraine and the crisis in relations between NATO and the Russian Federation has strongly influenced the approach of NATO's member states to the MENA area. There has, in fact, been a marked and general transfer of attention and priorities from NATO's "southern flank" to its "eastern flank," in particular to the situation in Ukraine and in the Black Sea, but also to Moldova, the Baltic Sea and – to a lesser extent – the Arctic waters. This transfer has been accompanied by a return, at the summit, to the NATO priority of collective defence and member states, to the detriment of the management of "out-of-area" crises: attention is concentrated on the land border between Russia, on the one hand, and Poland and the Baltic states on the other. The member states located on the "eastern flank" have been the most ar-

⁷⁸ Interview a), NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10 September 2015.

⁷⁹ Thierry Tardy, "Enabling partners to manage crises. From 'train and equip' to capacity-building", in *EU ISS Briefs*, No. 18 (June 2015), http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Brief_18_Train_and_Equip.pdf.

dent supporters of this dual shift of attention towards continental Europe and collective defence, which was also promoted actively by the United Kingdom, Germany and Norway. This shift was sanctioned at the highest political level by the NATO summit in Wales in September 2014, which adopted a series of measures to reassure western European countries, discourage further Russian military actions, and increase the reaction capacity of NATO forces through the Readiness Action Plan (RAP).⁸⁰ The spearhead of RAP is envisaged to be the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), which Germany controls, as part of an increase in German military presence in Poland and in central-western Europe.⁸¹

In the fight against Islamic State, however, NATO has been a “dependent variable.”⁸² The international coalition to oppose Islamic State in Iraq was organised by the US with allies of varied nature, and NATO was merely used as a means of mobilisation. The general aversion of NATO countries to military intervention in Syria and Iraq meant that the alliance’s engagement was limited to a support role: reinforcing Turkish air defences, organising training programmes for Iraqi armed forces,⁸³ contributing to the monitoring of foreign fighters and the main Islamic extremist militias, and strengthening partnerships in the region.⁸⁴ On this last front, relations with the countries that are relatively “stable islands” in the region, such as Jordan, Morocco and Mauritania, have been strengthened.⁸⁵ The NATO states bordering the Mediterranean, especially Italy, have, for their part, attempted to counterbalance the dual transfer of attention by reiterating the importance of security in the Mediterranean

⁸⁰ Alessandro Marrone, “La Nato e la partita con Mosca”, in *AffarInternazionali*, 1 September 2014, <http://www.affarinternazionali.it/articolo.asp?ID=2793>.

⁸¹ Claudia Major and Christian Moelling, *Not a hegemon, but the backbone: Germany takes a leading role in NATO's strategic adaptation*, European Leadership Network, 23 February 2015, http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/not-a-hegemon-but-the-backbone-germany-takes-a-leading-role-in-natos-strategic-adaptation_2459.html.

⁸² Andreas Jacobs and Jean-Loup Samaan, “Player at the sidelines. Nato and the fight against ISIL”, in *NDC Research Papers*, No. 107 (December 2014), p. 4, <http://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=750>.

⁸³ In 2015 the Iraqi government requested the launch of a NATO Defence Capacity Building programme, which NATO is currently evaluating with Jordan.

⁸⁴ Andreas Jacobs and Jean-Loup Samaan, “Player at the sidelines. Nato and the fight against ISIL”, cit., p. 4.

⁸⁵ Interview b and c, NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 11 September 2015.

for NATO, and arguing that the military capacity that is to be modernised and made ready in the context of the RAP should also be available for missions focused on managing crises on the “southern flank.”⁸⁶ With this aim in mind, it was proposed that more attention should be paid to maritime and air issues, and that these should be better integrated into the RAP.⁸⁷ Moreover, Italy sees NATO as a political and military organisation that should safeguard stability in the vicinity of member countries, not just as a military instrument for collective defence. As the situations in Libya and Syria have worsened, and with the consequent pressure of migration through the Mediterranean and the Balkans, Italy and other Mediterranean NATO countries have insisted that NATO should be ready to give “360° defence”⁸⁸ to all its members, whether in the east or the south. This is a reaction to what is seen to be insufficient NATO engagement on the southern edge compared to that in the east. Turkey, for its part, has become more active in NATO since the worsening of the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, requesting and obtaining the reinforcement of missile defences against potential threats from its southern land borders, and more generally raising NATO’s awareness of the threats from the Middle East, especially terrorist threats.⁸⁹ With this in mind, in autumn 2015 the VJTF was tested in a large-scale simulation called Trident Juncture carried out in Italy, Spain and Portugal. With around 36,000 troops from 31 NATO member and partner countries,⁹⁰ it was the largest NATO exercise since the end of the Cold War, and its scenario was not of collective defence but of managing a crisis in a fictional non-NATO country that resembled a MENA area country. Furthermore, there is currently political and military planning taking place within NATO over possible plans to put the RAP measures in place on the “southern flank,” even though they were initially conceived in response to Russia.⁹¹ The intention is to include these plans in the agenda for the Warsaw summit, but they can only be effectively

⁸⁶ Judy Dempsey, “Why Defense Matters: A New Narrative for NATO”, in *Carnegie Europe Papers*, 24 June 2014, <http://ceip.org/1tEDSsC>.

⁸⁷ Interview c), NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 11 September 2015.

⁸⁸ Interview d), NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 11 September 2015.

⁸⁹ Interview c), NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10 September 2015.

⁹⁰ See the NATO Allied Joint Force Command website: <http://www.jfcbs.nato.int/trident-juncture.aspx>.

⁹¹ Interview d), NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 11 September 2015.

laid down if NATO clarifies, politically and strategically, what it wants to do and what it can do in the face of the threats from the Mediterranean, threats that are not military, or not only military, and to which NATO is not used to responding.

The differences within NATO between supporters of the various priorities – that is collective defence against the eastern threat or a (possibly military) response to the southern threat – extend into NATO's debate over "hybrid warfare." The term has come into common use since the Russian annexation of Crimea. Its meaning is still uncertain even though not every aspect of it is new,⁹² given previous examples of guerrilla warfare, asymmetric warfare and undercover operations carried out by various states during and after the Cold War. According to a recent definition formulated by researchers at the NATO Defence College, the term describes "a form of violent conflict that simultaneously involves state and non-state actors, with the use of conventional and unconventional means of warfare that are not limited to the battlefield or [to] a particular physical territory."⁹³ The main case of hybrid warfare is obviously that of Russian against Ukraine, which elicited NATO's reaction and the current theoretical debate on the nature of the conflict. However, various commentators from the Mediterranean countries, some within government and some not, maintain that Islamic State is also waging a hybrid war in Iraq and Syria, and that Libya could soon become the site of another one,⁹⁴ as happened in Lebanon in 2006 during the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. It is in the interests of the Mediterranean states to apply the concept of hybrid warfare not only to the eastern flank but also to the southern one,⁹⁵ notwithstanding different assessments that could be made in individual

⁹² See, among others, Alex Deep, "Hybrid War: Old Concept, New Techniques", in *Small Wars Journal*, No. 24 (March 2015), <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/hybrid-war-old-concept-new-techniques>.

⁹³ Andreas Jacobs and Guillaume Lasconjarias, "NATO's Hybrid Flanks. Handling Unconventional Warfare in the South and the East", in *NDC Research Papers*, No. 112 (April 2015), p. 3, <http://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=798>.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁹⁵ See, for example, the proceedings of the conference organised by the NATO Defence College in Rome on 29-30 April 2015, to discuss that "hybrid threat" to NATO from Russia to the east and from Islamic State to the south. Julian Lindley-French, "NATO and New Ways of Warfare: Defeating Hybrid Threats", in *NDC Conference Reports*, No. 03/15 (May 2015), <http://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=814>.

cases, in order to attract NATO's attention and resources to the south and not let them be concentrated solely in the east. Conversely, many eastern European countries, while recognising the gravity of the threats coming from the MENA area, oppose every NATO action in the Mediterranean, which they see as a diversion of necessary resources away from the east.⁹⁶

The multiple, overlapping tensions between NATO countries over whether to give priority to collective defence rather than to crisis management missions, or to the "eastern flank" rather than to the "southern flank," also tangle with the divergent national politics of the main member states. All of this is aggravated by America's decreased level of leadership: America had traditionally reined in intra-European rivalries and differences, both in the Old Continent and in the MENA area. In this context, the creation of NATO's Political Guidance – a document whose importance is second only to that of the Strategic Concept – before the forthcoming Warsaw summit in 2016, has proved problematic: large and small countries have both opposed the consensus on various questions more strongly and frequently than ever before.⁹⁷ This situation, as a whole, is destined to last at least until the next US presidency in 2017, and probably longer, given its deep roots and the medium-term nature of several of its elements.

4.3 ALLIANCE MARITIME STRATEGY

As part of an analysis of NATO's approach to the region and in particular to maritime security, it is useful to consider the Alliance Maritime Strategy (AMS) adopted by NATO in 2011,⁹⁸ a brief document focused on the duties and characteristics of the naval forces of the member countries. After a short analysis of the maritime environment, the AMS indicates that the activities of NATO's navies will contribute both to the three core tasks of the 2010 Strategic Concept and, more generally, to "maritime security."⁹⁹ It

⁹⁶ Interview b), NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10 September 2015.

⁹⁷ Interview carried out at the International Experts Workshop on NATO's Strategic Agenda "Beyond the Political Guidance", Como, 22 July, 2015.

⁹⁸ NATO, *Alliance Maritime Strategy*, March 2011, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_75615.htm.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

specifies that in their commitment to collective defence, navies will: contribute to the nuclear deterrent; provide rapid reaction capacity in terms of naval, amphibious and strike forces; protect Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) and the capacity to project striking power ashore; contribute reconnaissance assets; provide missile defence capacity to protect the territories and deployed armed forces of member countries.¹⁰⁰

As far as crisis management operations are concerned – the second core task established by the Strategic Concept – while recognising that the focus of such missions is generally on land, the AMS identifies four naval contributions. Firstly, the ability to secure control of the seas (sea control) and to prevent enemies gaining control (sea denial),¹⁰¹ to carry out strikes with sea and amphibious forces, and to carry out a command and control role (C2) from the sea, including in operations involving the navies of non-NATO countries.¹⁰² Secondly, NATO naval forces must be able to provide rapid humanitarian assistance and aid. Furthermore, naval forces must be capable of providing flexible and tailored responses to crises, from simple “presence” to “demonstrations of force,” through to the application of such force through embargoes, no-fly zones, peace-enforcing missions, and the evacuation of civilians.¹⁰³ Finally, navies must provide logistical support for joint force operations in hostile environments, including for floating command bases.

The contribution of NATO’s naval forces to the third core task (cooperative security), to dialogue and cooperation with third parties, is focused on “naval diplomacy” (such as port visits), on capacity building in terms of the naval assets of partner countries, and on joint exercises and training activities.¹⁰⁴

Finally, the document states that NATO’s naval forces will contribute to maritime security in a broader sense, in accordance with international

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁰¹ “Sea denial” is exercised when one party prevents an adversary from exercising control over a maritime area, without actually being able to take control of that area itself. See, among others, UK Ministry of Defence, *British Maritime Doctrine*, Joint Doctrine Publications 0-10, August 2011, p. 2-11, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jdp-0-10-british-maritime-doctrine>.

¹⁰² NATO, *Alliance Maritime Strategy*, cit., p. 4.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 5.

law, including treaties and customary law. This will happen through: patrol and surveillance – including in support of public security forces – in the North Atlantic area or outside this area as part of NATO missions; the maintaining of the whole range of interdiction capacities (for example to prevent the transport and deployment of weapons of mass destruction); readiness to contribute to the protection of freedom of navigation; contribution to energy security, including protection of critical infrastructures and of SLOCs.¹⁰⁵ The AMS does not entail immediate change to NATO's naval forces; indeed no NATO document could require this. However, it does aim to influence military planning within NATO so that the member states' navies will evolve according to the guidelines set out in the Maritime Strategy.

Four years on from the adoption of the AMS, the debate on maritime security within NATO has two key characteristics. On the one hand, the question is afforded a very different level of importance by the “maritime” countries (Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Denmark and Norway) compared to those countries that are not very familiar with, or interested in, maritime questions, such as the eastern European countries (Poland and the Baltic states) which, while having substantial coastlines, have a very different perception of the threat that it poses, and a generally more land-focused military stance. On the other hand, debate tends to focus on reinforcing the maritime component of the RAP, hitherto rather skewed in favour of its terrestrial component, due partly to NATO's Maritime Standing Groups.¹⁰⁶ Given this, it is not impossible that the Active Endeavour mission in the Mediterranean might be reinforced. It has, until now, been limited to an anti-terrorism role, but could be given a broader dimension of maritime security. Since the second semester of 2015, both Active Endeavour and Ocean Shield have been undergoing periodic revisions, and possible future developments may include coordination with EU missions and dialogue with international organisations involved with mercantile traffic.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6-7.

¹⁰⁶ Interview b), NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10 September 2015.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

5.

The European Union's Maritime Security Strategy: Cogito Ergo Sum?

Lorenzo Vai

This chapter's study of the European perspective on the Mediterranean will limit itself to analysis of the European Union Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) adopted in 2014.¹ Among the wide range of EU policies and initiatives aimed at the MENA region, from the European Neighbourhood Policy to the military and civilian missions carried out by the EU in the region,² the EUMSS is particularly important to this study because

¹ Council of the European Union, *European Union Maritime Security Strategy* (11205/14), 24 June 2014, <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11205-2014-INIT/en>.

² In the context of the CFSP/CSDP, the EU has carried out 11 civilian missions and 6 military operations, some of which were specifically focused on confronting threats to maritime security. The EUNAVFOR Atalanta and EUCAP Nestor missions (launched in 2008 and 2012 respectively) combat the widespread piracy in the Gulf of Aden, along the Somali coast and in the western Indian Ocean. EUNAVFOR offers military protection to commercial ships, and EUCAP Nestor is aimed at reinforcing the navies of countries whose coastlines are affected by piracy (Djibouti, Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia and Tanzania). In Somalia another mission is currently operating: the EUTM Somalia military training mission, which is designed to strengthen the military and security forces of the Somali transitional government in their fight against piracy as well as in the extremely difficult task of improving stability in the country. As far as the Mediterranean Sea is concerned, the EUBAM Libya mission (discussed later in this chapter) is not the only one. In 2015 the EU launched the EUNAVFOR Med operation to impede the criminal networks engaged in people-trafficking and in transporting migrants across the Mediterranean. The Triton border security operation has been under way in the same waters since 2014, conducted by the Frontex agency under Italian command (see the final chapter of this book). Also worthy of note, more because of the regional context than because of the challenges to maritime security, are the civilian missions under way in Palestinian territory (EUBAM

it is the first attempt to formulate an all-encompassing strategy aimed at coordinating EU policies implemented by the Commission and the intergovernmental policies of member states, based on specific definition of the interests of and threats to European security. The most ambitious objective of the EUMSS is therefore that of attaining coherence and coordination among the various aspects of the EU's economic policies, its policies on internal security, and the actions taken by the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) regarding the presence of the EU and its member states in the world's seas and oceans. It is an exercise that faces its first test in the challenges and opportunities in the Mediterranean region.

5.1 THE PURPOSE AND PROSPECTS OF THE EU'S MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY

Seas and oceans have a vital role to play for the EU and its member states. 23 of the Union's 28 states have access to the sea, and they control the 90,000 kilometers of coastline that make up the shore of four different seas and two oceans. There are 764 large ports, around 1,200 commercial ones, and 4,300 registered shipping companies. 90 per cent of the EU's foreign commercial exchange happens via sea, as well as 40 per cent of its internal exchange. European ship owners possess 35 per cent of the world's commercial shipping, on which 42 per cent of global imports and exports are transported. Finally, it is estimated that over 400 million passengers pass through EU ports each year.³ Europe has a long list of interests in the waters that cover 70 per cent of the world's surface, and these interests are increasingly intertwined with external challenges to its in-

Rafah and EUPOL Copps) and in Afghanistan (EUPOL Afghanistan). Since 2005 the EU, by means of EUBAM Rafah, has been carrying out controls at the Rafah border crossing in accordance with the Agreement on Movement and Access established between Israel and the Palestinian authorities. Palestine receives support from the EUPOL Copps capacity building mission, which, since 2006, has been helping it to establish and develop its own police force and efficient judicial institutions. Finally, since 2007, the EU has been supporting the Afghan government in constructing a civilian police force that respects human rights and the rule of law.

³ European Commission, *Towards an EU integrated approach to global maritime security*, 6 March 2014, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-224_en.htm.

ternal security. Currently, the Mediterranean region is the main source of these challenges.

Interest in the concept of maritime security among political decision-makers and analysts has grown in the last fifteen years, especially because of the increase in piracy and in the exploitation of offshore energy resources, not to mention the intensified migration flows in the Mediterranean. Therefore in recent years key actors such as the US, the United Kingdom, Russia, NATO, the African Union and the EU itself, have created documents describing – some in more detail than others – the principles, geographical focus, interest, threats and objectives that characterise their maritime presence and protection strategies.⁴

How can the concept of maritime security be defined? There does not appear to be an international consensus,⁵ and security at sea tends to be defined “negatively,” that is as the absence of a series of threats such as territorial disputes, terrorism, piracy, environmental disasters, illegal fishing, etc. The various definitions of these threats are not, however, always the same in terms of the priority they are accorded and especially in terms of the approaches adopted to combat them. A different way of defining maritime security is the “positive” approach, that is, the promotion of a progressive and sustainable maritime economic development in a context of full cooperation and the application of international law.⁶ But even in this case a series of questions arises: how best to identify productive sectors in which to invest, or those that need regulation? Which people should be in charge of which activities? The various answers are not always unanimous. The concept of maritime security turns out to be, in many ways, a buzzword, an intentionally vague term which can attain consensus in abstract terms but not in practical ones. Overall, is it an idea that has just enough “ambiguity to secure the endorsement of diverse potential actors and audiences.”⁷

⁴ See, for example, US Govt, *National Strategy for Maritime Security*, September 2005; UK Govt, *The UK National Strategy for Maritime Security*, May 2014; Russia, *Maritime Doctrine of Russian Federation*, July 2015; NATO, *Alliance Maritime Strategy*, 2011; African Union, *2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy*, 2012.

⁵ Christian Bueger, “What is Maritime Security?”, in *Marine Policy*, Vol. 53 (March 2015), p. 160, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2014.12.005>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Andrea Cornwall, “Buzzwords and Fuzzwords: Deconstructing Development Dis-

According to the EUMSS, for the EU,

maritime security is understood as a state of affairs of the global maritime domain, in which international law and national law are enforced, freedom of navigation is guaranteed and citizens, infrastructure, transport, the environment and marine resources are protected.⁸

This definition sheds light on two aspects: the “positive” approach – attributable to the liberal institutionalism integral to the EU’s external activities – and the attempt to achieve agreement among the many and diverse actors mentioned in the strategy by giving a generic but uncontroversial definition.

The procedures of the EUMSS are to some extent affected by the classic “territorial battles” that mark the EU’s decision-making processes, that is, competition between the various European institutions to maintain and/or increase their authority, powers and resources. The Strategy was adopted by the Council of the European Union on 24 June 2014, after the Commission, on the invitation of the European Council, had presented a Joint Communication on the subject in the same year.⁹ The Council, under Greek presidency, decided to revise the text provided by the Commission and rejected some proposals, including those to: control the use of private military contractors; plan periodic maritime exercises “flying the EU flag;” acquire technological equipment for civilian and military use by the EU (and not by its member states); delete the only reference to the involvement of civilian society.¹⁰ These were all points on which there was no consensus, and the member states decided not to entrust to the Commission the subsequent draft of the Plan which would cover how the strategy would be put into practice. The Plan was prepared by the *ad hoc* “Friends of the Presidency” Council working group and was released in December 2014 during the Italian presidency.¹¹ It should be remembered that there was, for many

course”, in *Development in Practice*, Vol. 17, Nos. 4-5 (August 2007), p. 474.

⁸ Council of the European Union, *European Union Maritime Security Strategy*, cit., p. 3.

⁹ European Commission, *For an open and secure global maritime domain: elements for a European Union maritime security strategy* (JOIN/2014/9), 6 March 2014, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:52014JC0009>.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11, 7, 10 and 12.

¹¹ Council of the European Union, *EU Maritime Security Strategy Action Plan* (17002/14),

years, low-level disagreement between the Council of the European Union and the Commission over the approval of the Strategy for Maritime Security.¹² In 2007 the Commission had launched the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP), an ambitious strategy aimed at increasing cross-sector integration and coordination between individual European maritime policies.¹³ This initiative was met with suspicion by many member states, who feared that the Commission could – through a “spill-over” process – extend its powers into intergovernmental contexts, such as those of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CFSP/CSDP). In the face of resistance to the IMP, the Commission responded by slowing down the adoption of a maritime security strategy, the creation of which had been requested by the Council as long ago as 2010.¹⁴ The current EUMSS has the delicate task of acting as a “comprehensive framework, contributing to a stable and secure global maritime domain,”¹⁵ positioned between the prerogatives of the intergovernmental sector of the CFSP and the carrying out of important EU policies such as the internal security strategy, the IMP, or the Blue Growth initiative.¹⁶ An institutional balancing act aimed, fittingly, at increasing consistency between the actions of the various supranational, state or private European actors.

16 December 2014, <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-17002-2014-INIT/en>. There are some curious follow-up procedures in the EUMSS conclusion. While it is stressed that the joint creation of the Strategy (by the Council, member states, Commission and High Representative) was “an efficient way of working that should continue,” a few lines later, the task of periodical revision of the document is assigned to the Friends of the Presidency working group, with the possible exception that they can “may request input [...] from other relevant *Council* working bodies” (p. 15, *Italics added*). This clear contradiction probably arose from the difficult negotiation process.

¹² Lennart Landman, “The EU Maritime Security Strategy. Promoting or Absorbing European Defence Cooperation?”, in *Clingendael Policy Briefs*, April 2014, p. 3, <http://www.clingendael.nl/publication/eu-maritime-security-strategy>.

¹³ European Commission, *An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union* (COM/2007/575), 10 October 2007, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:52007DC0575>.

¹⁴ Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusion on Maritime Security Strategy*, 3009th Foreign Affairs Council meeting, Luxembourg, 26 April 2010, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/113998.pdf.

¹⁵ Council of the European Union, *European Union Maritime Security Strategy*, cit, p. 2.

¹⁶ On the Blue Growth initiative, see European Commission, *Blue Growth opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth* (COM/2012/494), 13 September 2012, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:52012DC0494>.

The strategy is based on four guiding principles:¹⁷

- a cross-sector approach designed to improve cooperation between all those in the maritime field (civilian and military) while respecting their existing internal structures: EU agencies such as the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), Frontex, the European Defence Agency (EDA), the European Union Satellite Centre (SATCEN); and industries such as maritime transport and security services;
- functional integrity that does not jeopardise the authority of those involved, and that avoids introducing new structures, norms and administrative burdens;
- respect for the norms and principles of international law on which the EU is based, from the safeguarding of human rights to the application of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS);
- maritime multilateralism involving all relevant international partners and organisations, beginning with the United Nations and NATO.

These guiding principles are followed by a detailed list of objectives, interests and threats to maritime security. The first go from sustainability to growth, the economic competitiveness of the maritime sector, and the development of the EU as a global actor and protector of security. The interests focus on the security of the EU and its member states and their citizens, but also on safeguarding international peace, protecting economic interests, managing borders efficiently, and protecting the environment. Finally, the exhaustive list of threats enumerates risks such as the use of force against member states and their citizens, organised and cross-border crime, terrorism,¹⁸ nuclear proliferation, threats to freedom of nav-

¹⁷ Council of the European Union, *European Union Maritime Security Strategy*, cit, p. 4-5.

¹⁸ The EUMSS does not give a definition of terrorism or refer back to any definitions in other EU documents. However, it is probable that the strategy uses the description of the objective and subjective elements that define terrorism that are found in the Council Framework Decision on the fight against terrorism adopted in 2002 and modified in 2008. The adoption of a new definition of terrorism different from the one given in this Decision would be superfluous and would probably result in new, and avoidable, divergences between the states. See Council of the European Union, *Council Framework Decision 2008/919/JHA of 28 November 2008 amending Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA on combating terrorism*, 28 November 2008, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:32008F0919>.

igation, environmental risks such as illegal fishing, the consequences of natural disasters and environmental disasters, and illegal archaeological research.

On the basis of these objectives and interests, the EUMSS identifies five courses of action:¹⁹

- raise the profile of maritime security in activities outside the EU, promoting multilateralism, the application of a “global approach,”²⁰ internal consistency between EU initiatives and the development of regional material capacity;
- increase “maritime situational awareness,” surveillance of maritime spaces and the sharing of information, giving rise to a “shared environment”²¹ for pooling data gathered by existing surveillance systems;
- maintain the development of dual-use technology, cooperation over standardisation and certification, with the aim of improving civilian and military interoperability and industrial competitiveness;
- improve risk management, the protection of important maritime infrastructures and crisis response, developing common systems of risk analysis and maintaining cross-sector and cross-border cooperation;
- promote research, innovation, education and training in the field of maritime security through civilian and military programmes, both public and private, funded by the EU.

The next Action Plan for carrying out the EUMSS identifies and explains 130 ways of attaining the objectives in the above-mentioned sectors, assigning a time-frame to each (immediate, medium-term or long-term), and stating which EU institutions or states will be in charge of implementing them (in their role as so-called “lead actors”). It is, in fact, a programmatic document that seems very difficult to put into practice, both because of the large number of recommended actions, and because of a lack of clarity over the subdivision of work among the various parties. Al-

¹⁹ Council of the European Union, *European Union Maritime Security Strategy*, cit., p. 8-15.

²⁰ See European Commission, *The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises* (JOIN/2013/30), 11 December 2013, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:52013JC0030>.

²¹ For an analysis of the concept of “shared environment” see the next section.

though the document indicates which EU institutions, agencies or member states should carry out the various points, it frequently identifies more than one responsible party, with the risk that the implication of the strategies could be affected by conflicting opinions or apathy arising from difficult inter-institutional dialogue.²²

5.2 THE EUMSS AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

The EUMSS also has a geographical dimension. It would be difficult to claim that the potential threats from the Pacific Ocean could have a significant impact on EU security as those from the Mediterranean. For that reason, despite the EU's aspirations to become a "global security provider,"²³ limits on its operational capacity and a series of obvious geopolitical considerations²⁴ mean that the EUMSS actually focuses on the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, the North Sea, the Arctic Sea, the Atlantic Ocean and the "outermost regions."²⁵ This geographical reach is extensive, but does limit itself to seas that touch the shores of the EU, and thus addresses the needs of the countries of northern, eastern and southern Europe, resulting in a realistic vision (that is, the necessity of monitoring one's own maritime neighbourhood) at odds with the liberal approach (that is, global defence of shared maritime resources) outlined in the strategy that is typical of the EU's external activities.²⁶

The Mediterranean Sea is a crucial testing ground for the Strategy

²² Lennart Landman, "The EU Maritime Security Strategy", cit., p. 4.

²³ On this subject, for a close examination and evaluation of European capacities, see Margriet Drent, Lennart Landman and Dick Zandee, "The EU as a Security Provider", in *Clingendael Reports*, December 2014, <https://www.clingendael.nl/publication/report-eu-security-provider>.

²⁴ For a comparison of the geopolitical approaches of the principle maritime security strategies, see Basil Germond, "The Geopolitical Dimension of Maritime Security", in *Marine Policy*, Vol. 54 (April 2015), p. 137-142.

²⁵ Council of the European Union, *European Union Maritime Security Strategy*, cit., p. 4. The term "outermost regions" refers to distant EU territories, that is, French overseas departments (French Guiana, Guadeloupe, La Réunion, Martinique and Mayotte), the French overseas collectivity (Saint-Martin), the Portuguese autonomous regions (Azores and Madeira), and the Spanish autonomous region (Canary Islands) in the Atlantic Ocean.

²⁶ Basil Germond, "The Geopolitical Dimension of Maritime Security", cit., p. 141.

and its Action Plan, especially given that European interests vested in the Mediterranean are as great that the threats that face it. As has been amply demonstrated in the preceding chapters, the Mediterranean Sea is, today, vital for the EU in terms of maritime traffic and energy supplies, not to mention for the exploitation of its fish and natural resources. It is, however, encountering a variety of problems and issues that have repercussions for EU interests and security:

- widespread crises and instability in southern Mediterranean countries, including civil wars and “proxy wars;”
- an increasing but irregular flow of migration from Africa to Europe;
- territorial disputes;
- illegal trafficking of various kinds;
- the danger of environmental damage and the unsustainable and unauthorised exploitation of fish and natural resources;
- the active presence of international actors such as China and Russia.

Some of these events are linked by cause and effect (political instability and increased emigration to Europe), and some have direct implication for the EU's internal security, from the threat of terrorism to the safeguarding of energy sources. In order to assess the extent to which the EUMSS provides an effective and coherent plan of action for the Mediterranean, the following sections will aim to analyze the relevance of its proposals to the threats in question.

The political instability and civil war that are widespread in the Arab world pose broad questions about the EU's will and ability to engage in conflict resolution and to promote economic and democratic development in its neighbouring countries. The European Security Strategy and the European Neighbourhood Policy are currently being revised, and will attempt to respond to these questions.²⁷ In the face of these challenges, the EUMSS aims mainly to improve – without introducing any additional burdens – the use of the military maritime capacity that the EU has at its disposal, in terms of coordination, interoperability and standardisation,

²⁷ See European Council, *Council conclusions - 25 and 26 June 2015* (EUCO 22/15), <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-22-2015-INIT/en>; *Council conclusions on the Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy*, 20 April 2015, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/04/20-council-conclusions-review-european-neighbourhood-policy>.

both among member states and, wherever possible, between the EU and international organisations such as NATO. Exercises and shared training activities, sharing good practice, and pooling and sharing initiatives are among the suggestions in the Action Plan. This last suggestion is also aimed at promoting capacity development through the launch of technological research and development programmes involving public and private, civilian and military elements, on a national and European level (member states, the Commission and the EDA are named as lead actors in this sector). These programmes have the potential to increase technological efficiency and the competitiveness of European industry thanks, for example, to more research in dual-use technologies or in energy efficiency, in such a way that they also generate large cost savings. In theory, an EU with a more coordinated, efficient and avant-garde military capacity would also be in a better position to respond to the need to carry out autonomous military peace enforcement operations, maritime security operations such as naval blockades or defending commercial or fishing fleets, and to fight organised crime and terrorism.

When it comes to the struggle against terrorism, organised crime and piracy, coordination between military and civilian elements, that is, between policies on freedom, security and justice, and CFSP/CSDP policies, is absolutely vital. The threats tend to appear on the EU's borders and in neighbouring seas, where civilian and military elements are working close by one another. In such situations, the rapid exchange of information, operative coordination and the ability of the military to carry out policing roles where necessary, are of the utmost importance. Here, too, the EUMSS identifies areas for action, beginning with better connections between internal and external security, something that the EU has already tried to bring about in recent years.²⁸ By developing rapid response mechanisms, action plans, and cross-border exercises and cooperation, the Plan sets out a path towards improved responses to these threats. A central element of the EUMSS is still the development of a Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE), able to integrate existing maritime surveillance systems and networks on both a national and a Eu-

²⁸ See Council of the European Union, *Strengthening ties between CSDP and FSJ. Elements of a draft Road Map* (15562/11), 17 October 2011, <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15562-2011-INIT/en>.

ropean level. This would allow all relevant authorities to gain access to any information they need, by rationalising data collection and sharing. Currently, there are around 400 different national authorities (border police, coastguards, customs, intelligence agencies, etc.) each collecting information separately and not sharing it, risking useless and expensive duplications.²⁹ In the future, various other maritime surveillance systems managed by the EU – SafeSeaNet, MARSUR, EUROSUR and VMS³⁰ – will make their data available to the CISE.³¹ The construction of an integrated maritime surveillance system is vital to many of the objectives linked to Mediterranean security, including the management of irregular migration flows. The rapid sharing of information would help both search and rescue (SAR) missions – which can save hundreds of lives if effectively coordinated³² – and the fight against the trafficking of immigrants.

²⁹ Andrea Frontini, “The European Union Maritime Security Strategy: sailing uncharted waters?”, in *EPC Commentaries*, 26 June 2014, http://www.epc.eu/pub_details.php?pub_id=4569.

³⁰ SafeSeaNet is a maritime traffic monitoring system created by the EMSA which brings together data collection by European maritime authorities. For more information, see: <http://www.emsa.europa.eu/ssn-main.html>. MARSUR is a network developed by the EDA which facilitates the exchange of information between national navies that are carrying out CSDP missions. For more information, see: <http://marsur.info>. EUROSUR is an information and cooperation network between national authorities responsible for border surveillance. It was developed by Frontex. EUROSUR is esigned to improve member states’ response “to any incidents concerning irregular migration and cross-border crime or relating to a risk to the lives of migrants” (European Commission, *EUROSUR kicks off: new tools to save migrants’ lives and prevent crime at EU borders*, 29 November 2013, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-1182_en.htm). VMS (Vessel Monitoring System) is a satellite control system that allows national authorities to locate and access information about fishing vessels currently at sea. VMS is sponsored by the European Commission, and all European fishing boats must be equipped with it. For more information, see: <http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/control/technologies/vms>.

³¹ See European Commission, *Draft Roadmap towards establishing the Common Information Sharing Environment for the surveillance of the EU maritime domain* (COM/2010/584), 20 October 2010, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:52010DC0584>; European Commission, *Better situational awareness by enhanced cooperation across maritime surveillance authorities: next steps within the Common Information Sharing Environment for the EU maritime domain* (COM/2014/451), 8 July 2014, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:52014DC0451>.

³² Among the migrant boats abandoned in the sea due to a lack of coordination among member states, the EU and NATO, the most famous and tragic case is that of the “left-to-die boat.” See Charles Heller, Lorenzo Pezzani and Situ Studio, *Report on the “Left-To-Die Boat”*,

One phenomenon in particular, that of illegal immigration, puts the development of the EU's maritime operative capacities to the test and is also a testing ground for the adoption (currently more theoretical than practical) of a "global approach" that would act directly in the countries from which people were emigrating. This approach would unite programmes supporting economic development with civilian and/or military missions helping the country in question to manage its borders and fight organised trafficking crime. It is an approach that, as the Commission's Communication regarding the EUMSS states,³³ has produced its best results in fighting piracy along the Somali coast, where the EU's EUNAVFOR Atalanta and EUCAP Nestor missions have succeeded in tackling the symptoms and, to a lesser extent, the causes of the phenomenon. It is a model which, for various reasons, it has not been possible to apply to the Libyan case. The EUBAM Libya mission, which aimed to help the Libyan authorities to develop efficient management of national borders did not obtain the hoped-for results, and must now be considered to have failed.³⁴

The actions and instruments described above can also be used to prevent environmental damage or illegal activities such as unauthorised and unregulated fishing, but they alone may not be sufficient without dialogue and involvement on the part of the EU and other countries in the region. Countries such as Turkey, Israel and Egypt can make the Mediterranean Sea a safer place, or a less safe one. Disagreements between Cyprus and Turkey over control of the exclusive economic zone can result in instability and therefore risks to European interests. Furthermore, the increased presence of Russian,³⁵ Chinese and Iranian military vessels, and

Goldsmith, University of London, 2014, <http://www.forensic-architecture.org/case/left-die-boat>; Leonhard den Hertog, "Two Boats in the Mediterranean and their Unfortunate Encounters with Europe's Policies towards People on the Move", in *CEPS Papers in Liberty and Security in Europe*, No. 48 (July 2012), <http://www.ceps.eu/node/7183>.

³³ European Commission, *An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union*, cit., p. 6.

³⁴ For an analysis of the EU's specific policies in Libya, and of the lack of an overall European approach to the Libyan crisis, see Silvia Colombo, "La crisi libica e il ruolo dell'Europa", in *Documenti IAI*, No. 15|16 (July 2015), <http://www.iai.it/en/node/4442>.

³⁵ Following the annexation of Crimea, which was historically Russia's access route to warmer waters, an increased Russian naval presence in the Mediterranean is to be expected in the future. This prediction is confirmed by Moscow's revision of its maritime doctrine, published in July 2015. This doctrine, referring to the Mediterranean, expresses the hope for a peaceful regional climate, with stable political and military relations and

of non-European fishing boats that are often fishing illegally³⁶ confirms the need to achieve multilateral governance of the Mediterranean: it is a unique maritime space, accessible from only three straits, at the centre of many geopolitical interests and marked by continuous crisis situations. The Mediterranean Sea, with the slow withdrawal of the US – whose gaze seems to be turning increasingly towards the eastern seas, which are, for them, western – will experience an ever greater power vacuum that the EU will be called on to fill. On the basis of these considerations the Strategy plans to increase the EU's presence on the maritime sector, reinforcing its capacities but also basing its predictions on inclusive multilateralism that will strive to promote respect of international law, mechanisms of peaceful resolution of disagreements and political dialogue in the relevant international power centre. This is a strategic vision that is more applicable than ever to the Mediterranean case, which has no regional forum – although the EU did have plans to establish one, now abandoned – and which has to negotiate many pitfalls on the way to peace and security.

The EU's Maritime Security Strategy puts forward, as well as a simply theoretical evaluation, valid ideas and proposals for confronting the security threat that the Mediterranean poses to Europe. Given the variety of impacts that the events in the region can have on EU internal security and on the protection of its interests, it is not surprising that the EUMSS sets out a complete framework of analysis and action for each identified threat. The EUMSS is, nonetheless, generic when it comes to the EU's regional maritime strategies. Within the context of the IMP, the European Commission does, in fact, have specific strategies relating to seven sea basins: the Adriatic and Ionian Seas,³⁷ the Arctic Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean, the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, the North Sea and the Mediterranean

the presence of a "sufficient" naval force. See Maurizio Carta, "Assertiva e presidenziale: la nuova Dottrina del mare della Russia", in *Limes online*, 18 September 2015, <http://ow.ly/SoHwX>.

³⁶ Timo Behr et al., *The Maritime Dimension of CSDP: Geostrategic Maritime Challenges and their Implications for the European Union*, Brussels, European Parliament, January 2013, p. 29, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EXPO-SEDE_ET\(2013\)433839](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EXPO-SEDE_ET(2013)433839).

³⁷ European Commission, *A Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas* (COM/2012/713), 30 November 2012, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:52012DC0713>.

Sea. That being said, the aforementioned strategies are focused on promoting increased economic sustainability, and do not include a comprehensive approach that tackles security threats directly. In its specifics, the regional strategy for the Mediterranean Sea – in contrast to the other strategies – lacks a specific action plan, and is based almost exclusively on the Integrated Maritime Policy for the Mediterranean,³⁸ which is part of the European Neighbourhood Policy. This maritime policy aims to help southern Mediterranean countries to develop integrated naval and maritime strategies, and runs alongside tentative international co-operation initiatives, working groups and information-sharing forums, all of which are incapable of tackling the threats posed.³⁹ Overall the approach is difficult to explain, other than by putting it down to simple political short-sightedness in the face of extraordinary events in the Mediterranean, events that should have justified the adoption of a broader strategy for the entire basin.

The weakest aspect of the Strategy is in the realisation of its aims. The priority that it gives to Mediterranean issues may not be enough to provide the necessary political impulse to undertake the proposed actions and achieve the proposed projects. The next move must now be made by the member states, the Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European agencies, national authorities, industries and all the actors identified in the EUMSS. This adds up to a lot of different elements, and this in itself, given the past experience of the EU, can only complicate matters further. But would anything different have been possible? It may be that it would not. While it is regrettable that the Strategy has notable gaps (in particular, why does it not involve civil society bodies concerned with the rights of migrants?⁴⁰), the fish caught by the Commission – to paraphrase Altiero Spinelli's hopeful words – has been brought to shore almost intact, without the twenty eight sharks reducing it to a skeleton. Or rather, the theory is there. We must wait for the practice.

³⁸ For more information see the EU site: <http://www.imp-med.eu>.

³⁹ For more information see the European Commission, *Mediterranean Sea basin*, http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/sea_basins/mediterranean_sea.

⁴⁰ Theodore Baird, "Where is civil society in the EU's new Maritime Security Strategy?", in *openDemocracy*, 7 November 2014, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/node/87572>.

5.3 A STEP FORWARD AND A TEST FOR THE EU

When writing a strategic document there are two key questions to be asked. For whom am I writing? And what is the subject, or the values, that must be defended?⁴¹ The EU's Maritime Security Strategy is aimed mainly at the EU and the many elements of which it is composed. It has the distinction of confronting the serious problem of (in)coherence that afflicts the EU's external actions, which are divided institutionally between EU policies and the CFSP/CSDP, but it is also limited in the sense that it can only diminish, not solve, the EU's most serious problem. The incoherent coexistence of a variety of policies and decision-making processes – supranational, intergovernmental and national – creates a separation between European and national interests that could actually converge, in areas (such as foreign policy or economic governance) where the lack of integration is clearly the cause of inefficiency and crises.

The EUMSS was written for anybody wondering about the role that the EU would like to play in maritime affairs. One doesn't have to write a screenplay in order to be an actor, of course, but having a script is the first step towards treading the boards and acting alongside others. The strategy aims to defend the interests of a liberal Europe that wants to promote international commerce, spread the respect of basic rights, democracy, the rule of law and multilateral dialogue. But it also aims to defend the interests of a realistic Europe, one that wants to consolidate its presence and influence in the seas that surround it by improving the military and civilian capacities with which it controls migrant flows and protects its infrastructures and energy supplies.

The EUMSS can be seen as a first test, bringing together elements that are internal and external, civilian and military, public and private, intergovernmental and supranational, in a global and multilevel approach to the governance of maritime security.⁴² It has already encountered power struggles between the Commission and the Council, and it encourages better military cooperation within the CSDP as well as the "communitisation" of the deployment of European military assets in carrying out

⁴¹ Sven Biscop, "Global and Operational: A New Strategy for EU Foreign and Security Policy", in *IAI Working Papers*, No. 15|27 (July 2015), p. 2, <http://www.iai.it/en/node/4459>.

⁴² Lennart Landman, "The EU Maritime Security Strategy", cit., p. 11.

the Commission's policies. Both of these outcomes may become reality in those areas in which the Strategy is implemented.

The Mediterranean will be the most suitable arena in which to evaluate the EUMSS action plan's future progress. There is no other sea in the world that currently poses more challenges and threats to EU security. And there is no other sea in the world that is casting light on the thin line between internal and external security, as well as on the lack of solidarity among member states both at sea and on land. The situation in the Mediterranean is also calling into question many fundamental elements of the EU, albeit not as radically as the Eurozone crisis. The EUMSS cannot solve these problems: it is limited to indicating which direction to follow. It is an exercise that may seem insignificant but that is actually essential, given that, as Seneca remarked, "if a sailor does not know to which port he is steering, no wind is favorable." The sailors of Brussels and all the European capitals have been warned.

6.

Italian Defence Policy, Armed Forces and Operations in the Mediterranean

*Alessandro Marrone, Michele Nones
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The analysis in the preceding chapters highlights a range of elements closely linked to Italy's national interest in the Mediterranean: the reduction of instability and the fight against security threats that form part of the crises taking place on Europe's southern borders; the development of commercial exchange and maritime traffic across the basin, and more generally harbour operations and the maritime economy; the protection of critical Italian energy supply infrastructures that cross the Mediterranean and the exploitation of the region's onshore and offshore resources; the promotion of Italian priorities regarding the Mediterranean on the NATO and EU agendas, concerning the position of the main EU countries and the European Institutions.

Added to all this there is the question of migrant flow across the Mediterranean Sea, which has increased significantly in recent years. This will be analysed in the next section, along with recent and current naval missions in the Mediterranean Sea and the role of the Italian Navy. The second section considers Italian defence policy in the Euro-Mediterranean region from the starting point of the White Paper on national defence and security adopted in April 2015, and also considers the question in relation to internal NATO dynamics. The concluding section focuses on military engagement in the Mediterranean, beginning with the naval component. The analysis is therefore more limited than the broader spectrum of Italy's policies relating to its national interest in the Mediterranean, which range from energy to migration, from port infrastructures to the

legislation needed to develop the maritime economy. This limit is consistent with the analyses of the book as a whole, and reflects the growing conflict and instability in the Mediterranean region, which makes the area a priority for Italian defence policy – and foreign policy – and thus an appropriate subject for a concluding, in-depth study.

6.1 THE MIGRATION CRISIS AND NAVAL OPERATIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

In recent years, Italy has had to face an unprecedented increase in migration from the southern Mediterranean. The section sets out essential data and interpretations, and considers the relationship between this migration and Italian and European naval operations that are being conducted to tackle it.

Migration Flows across the Mediterranean Sea

The time period examined here begins in 2011, when the first real increase in migration occurred, and ends in mid-September 2015.¹ According to Ministry of Interior data, the first large wave of migration to Italy was in 2011, when 62,692 migrants arrived on the Italian coast following the so-called Arab Spring. In the following year, the number of migrants arriving in Italy dropped to 13,267, only to triple in 2013, reaching 42,925.² However, the highest figure recorded was in 2014, with 170,100 migrants arriving in Italy,³ not including the 2,860 recorded as having died in the Mediterranean Sea in their attempt to reach Italian soil.⁴ Of these 170,100, around 45 per cent were Syrian (42,323) or Eritrean (32,329), and the rest were from Mali (9,938), Nigeria (9,000), Gambia (8,707), Palestine (6,082) and Somalia (5,756).⁵

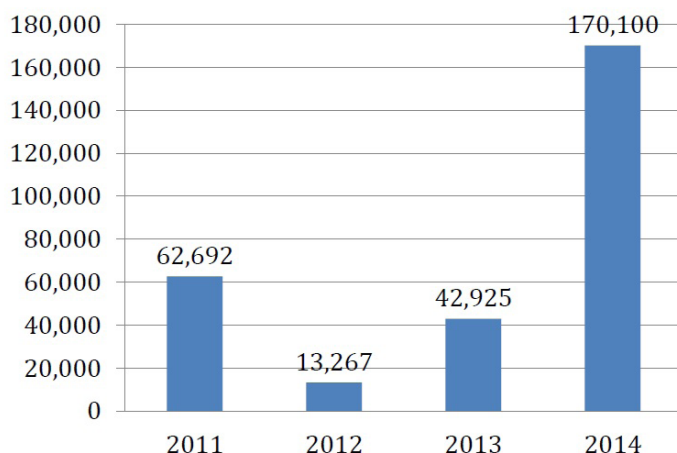
¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Sea Arrivals to Italy*, <http://unhcr.it/risorse/statistiche/sea-arrivals-to-italy>.

² Italian Ministry of Interior, *Presenze dei migranti nelle strutture di accoglienza in Italia*, 2 March 2015, <http://www.interno.gov.it/it/node/1849>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ International Organisation for Migration, *Missing Migrants Project. Mediterranean Update*, 3 November 2015, <http://missingmigrants.iom.int>.

⁵ These figures are taken from the nationality as declared upon disembarkation.



Source: IAI, from Italian Ministry of Interior data.

For 2015, the International Organisation for Migration records the following figures, updated on the 14 September: Italy registered 121,619 migrants out of a total of 464,876 who arrived from the Mediterranean as a whole. 70 per cent of this total arrived in Greece, that is 340,991 people,⁶ more than three times as many as arrived in Italy. The main countries of origin of the migrants arriving in Italy were: Eritrea (30,708), Nigeria (15,113), Somalia (8,790), Sudan (7,126) and Syria (6,710). Again, the number estimated to have lost their lives crossing the Mediterranean is alarming: from January to the beginning of November 2015, the figure was over 3,400, while in the same period from 2014 it was 3,162.⁷ Overall, it is estimated that there were 195,000 illegal immigrants into Italy in 2015, compared to 170,100 in the preceding year.⁸ These figures are part of the context of three interlinked trends in migrant flow that can be identified in the Mediterranean.

The first relates to the evolution of migration routes: until 2014, the

⁶ International Organisation for Migration, *Missing Migrants Project. Mediterranean Update*, cit.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Fondazione ISMU, "L'evoluzione del fenomeno degli sbarchi in Italia fra 2014 e 2015", in *INSMU*, Vol. 9, No. 109 (3 June 2015), p. 2, http://www.ismu.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/In-ISMU-109_giugno-2015.pdf.

so-called central Mediterranean route was the main one used by migrants and asylum seekers trying to reach Italy and then Europe. In 2015 alone, the eastern Mediterranean route – especially the Turco-Greek section and, more generally, the Balkan section – saw significant growth in the number of migrants heading towards continental Europe, as demonstrated by recent data on arrivals in Greece. This reveals, as Paola Monzini states, that

the growth in trafficking is not only due to the geopolitical crisis in Libya, which does create opportunities for traffickers, but also and mainly to the growth in migratory pressure arising from geopolitical instability, and the ability of traffickers to meet the growing demand for illegal travel. The traffickers respond to strengthened borders and checks – and to migrants' increased spending capacity – by expanding the geographical scope of their activities.⁹

For Monzini, this demonstrates the need for

a systematic response: the organisational capacities of the trafficking networks are increasing, interconnections are growing, international 'joint ventures' are being created, and more and more money is being invested. The smuggling of migrants is one of the fastest-growing illegal transnational networks.¹⁰

It is now clear that migration has become a large-scale money-making business. "The sums involved are astounding: the migrations managed by the five criminal networks that control flows in Libya alone make an estimated 260-300 million dollars every year."¹¹

The second trend has to do with the composition of migrant groups, which is varied and changes from year to year and depending on the route. 2011 was notable for large numbers of migrants arriving from Tunisia as a result of the fall of the Ben Ali regime (out of 63,000 total arrivals, 28,000 were Tunisian),¹² while in 2013 and 2014 there was a large

⁹ Paola Monzini, "Le rotte dei 'nostri' migranti", in *Limes*, No. 6/2015 (July 2015), p. 67.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 67-68.

¹¹ Piero Messina, "Cosa loro: la cupola dei mercati di carne umana", in *Limes*, No. 6/2015 (July 2015), p. 75.

¹² Giorgia Papavero, "Sbarchi, richiedenti asilo e presenze irregolari", in *ISMU Fact*

increase in Syrian and Eritrean migrants, and the number of Somalis has fallen drastically since 2012.

The third trend relates to which country the boats depart from: Libya remains the most common embarkation point for Italy. Following the fall of the Gaddafi regime and the worsening of the civil war in 2014, there was a growth in the number of arrivals from Libya: in 2014, 83 per cent of migrants had set off from the Libyan coast, while in 2013 this was only 64 per cent, and in 2012, 38 per cent.¹³ It is estimated that in 2015 this figure will rise to over 90 per cent. There are several related causes for this, linked mainly to internal and regional issues, such as: the strength of criminal networks, Libya's attractiveness in terms of work and economy, its continuing insecurity, and the emergence of humanitarian crises and conflicts in migrants' and asylum seekers' home countries.¹⁴ This final factor also helps to explain the diverse and changing composition of migrant groups and routes, as illustrated by the previous points. Conversely, European policies on migration "don't seem to contribute significantly to explaining the increase of such phenomena in 2014 and in the first few months of 2015."¹⁵ That being said, Libya, or rather its political crises, gives cause for concern not only because of the number of migrants and asylum seekers setting off from its shores, but also because of the increasing presence there of extremist militant Islamist groups, which are increasingly hard to distinguish from criminal gangs, armed militias and traffickers.¹⁶

Overall, the number of migrants to have arrived in Italy is among the highest in Europe, together with Germany, the United Kingdom and France.¹⁷ However, while migration to these other three countries has,

Sheets, February 2015, p. 2, <http://www.ismu.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Sbarchi-richiedenti-asilo.pdf>.

¹³ Arezo Malakooti, *Migration Trends Across the Mediterranean: Connecting the Dots*, Altai Consulting for IOM MENA Regional Office, June 2015, p. 93, <http://publications.iom.int/node/41>.

¹⁴ Silvia Colombo, "La crisi libica e il ruolo dell'Europa", in *Documenti IAI*, n. 15|16 (July 2015), <http://www.iai.it/en/node/4442>. See also Mattia Toaldo, "Migrations Through and From Libya: A Mediterranean Challenge", in *IAI Working Papers*, No. 15|14 (May 2015), <http://www.iai.it/en/node/4183>.

¹⁵ Silvia Colombo, "La crisi libica e il ruolo dell'Europa", cit., p. 8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Eurostat, *Statistic Explained: Migration and migrant population statistics*, updated

for the most part, fallen into the category of people seeking to be reunited with family there, Italy is the destination point for “mixed migratory flows,”¹⁸ made up of asylum seekers but also economic migrants. This makes the response procedures more complex for EU countries, including Italy.¹⁹ In recent months, the theme of immigration has been at the centre of political and media debate in Italy but, beyond the various ideas and opinions put forward on the subject, one thing seems clear. The phenomenon of migrant flows from the southern Mediterranean and from the MENA region in general is not a momentary one, but rather a deep-seated and potentially increasing one.

Italian and European Naval Operations in the Mediterranean Sea

In the face of the issues described above, the Italian navy has undertaken a series of operations in the Mediterranean specifically aimed to manage the migration crisis, to fight smuggling and reinforce maritime security. First there was operation Mare Nostrum, which began on 18 October 2013 and was officially concluded on 21 October 2014. This was dedicated to tackling the humanitarian state of emergency in the Strait of Sicily in the wake of an enormous influx of migrants. Then there was the Triton joint operation that was headed by the EU agency Frontex,²⁰ which replaced the Hermes and Aeneas operations that had been active in the central Mediterranean since 2010. Within the framework of Triton, the navy provides occasional patrols alongside deployments of the Guardia di Finanza (Italian Financial and Customs Police) and the Capitaneria di Porto (Harbour Master’s Office). Therefore, Triton only represents a low level of engagement for the Italian navy compared to national operations such as Mare Sicuro or European ones such as the European Union Naval

June 2015, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics.

¹⁸ International Organisation for Migration, *Sono più di 150.000 le persone arrivate via mare in Europa nel 2015*, 10 July 2015, http://www.italy.iom.int/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=336.

¹⁹ Emanuela Roman, “Mediterranean Flows into Europe: Refugees or Migrants?”, in *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2015*, October 2015, p. 312-315, <http://www.iemed.org/actualitat-en/noticies/fluxos-migratoris-a-la-mediterrania-refugiats-o-migrants>.

²⁰ Frontex is the European agency for the management of operational cooperation at the external borders of the EU member states.

Force Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR Med).²¹ These operations will be analysed later in this chapter.

Mare Nostrum was a military and humanitarian operation, with the double mission of safeguarding lives at sea (later to become its primary aim) and ensuring that those who made money from the illegal trafficking of migrants were brought to justice.²² Its activities resulted in the development of, among other things, a naval high-seas aid plan for the protection of human lives at sea and humanitarian assistance, as well as the creation of a healthcare plan that provided health checks for migrants before they disembarked onto Italian soil.²³

Mare Nostrum was seen as a way of strengthening supervision of migration flows that were already being carried out by the Constant Vigilance mission, and its 43 km² scope extended 400 nautical miles south of Lampedusa and 150 nautical miles to the east, covering the Search and Rescue (SAR) zones of Malta and Libya (see the map below). Thus, Mare Nostrum operated mainly in international waters close to Libyan waters, and was authorised by a series of Italian and international laws, especially the Inter-ministerial Decree of 14 July 2003 and the technical-operational agreement for interventions linked to illegal migration by sea adopted on 14 September 2005.²⁴ These documents give the navy responsibility for the control of international waters and for operational planning and co-ordination of activities relating to surveillance, prevention and tackling illegal migration at sea.²⁵ In the context of international law, Mare Nostrum operated – through the Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) in Rome – according to a series of regulations established by the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the SEA (UNCLOS), by the 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), and by the 1979 International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR), which is a cornerstone of the international SAR system.

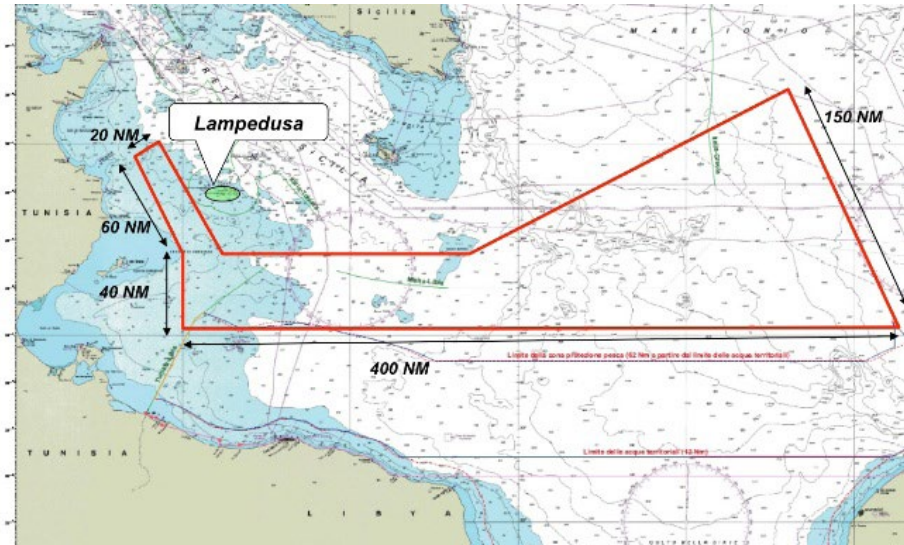
²¹ Interview, Rome, 23 September 2015.

²² Italian Navy, *Mare Nostrum Operation*, <http://www.marina.difesa.it/EN/operations/Pagine/MareNostrum.aspx>.

²³ Interview, Rome, 20 October 2015.

²⁴ 'X-trà: Mare Nostrum: Comando e Controllo e operazioni aeronavali', supplement to *Rivista italiana Difesa*, n. 10/2014.

²⁵ Ibid.



Source: AffarInternazionali.

Mare Nostrum deployed personnel and naval and air resources from the Italian Navy, the Air Force, the Carabinieri (Italian Police), the Guardia di Finanza (Italian Financial and Customs Police), the Capitaneria di Porto (Harbour Master's Office), the Italian Red Cross Military Corps, the Ministry of Interior – personnel from the State Police involved with Navy units – and other State military and civilian corps, which all contributed to controlling migrants flows at sea.

It has been estimated that Mare Nostrum cost over 9 million euros per month, and a total of 114 million euros for the whole year of its activity.²⁶ From 18 October 2013 to 31 October 2014, Mare Nostrum was involved in 439 SAR events, assisting 156,362 migrants – with levels peaking at around 9300 migrants per week²⁷ – and arresting 366 presumed people-traffickers who were turned over to the judicial authorities.²⁸ This activity was possible thanks to the assistance of submarines which re-

²⁶ Italian Ministry of Interior, *Si conclude "Mare Nostrum", al via "Triton"*, 31 October 2014, <http://www.interno.gov.it/it/node/2166>.

²⁷ Interview, Rome, 19 October 2015.

²⁸ Italian Navy, *Operazione "Mare Nostrum": dati statistici al 31 ottobre 2014*, <http://www.marina.difesa.it/cosa-facciamo/operazioni-in-corso/Documents/Dati%20statistici%20Mare%20Nostrum.pdf>.

corded criminal activities, unbeknownst to the people-traffickers.²⁹ The operation also received vital aid from merchant ships that intervened spontaneously or at the request of Italian SAR. These kinds of intervention saved the lives of tens of thousands of migrants³⁰ and became an integral part of the operation, such that in 2014 the Italian Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (IMRCC-MARICOGECAP) requested the assistance of around 300 merchant ships compared to 59 in 2013, while in the first nine months of 2015, 250 merchant ships were involved in SAR operations.³¹ This raises a number of critical issues both in economic terms and in terms of the suitability and security of the ships involved.³² Firstly, there is a security threat to merchant ships if, due to poor organisation, crews of a few dozen people have to manage hundreds of migrants without adequate means of protection.³³ Secondly, it is impossible for these ships to carry out health checks on the migrants on board, and identifying them before they disembark poses a health risk and makes it difficult to maintain order on board and in the ports where they arrive.³⁴ Finally, these situations represent a significant engagement and a great, unreimbursed, expense for the owners of the ships that are called on to intervene through the “obligation to render assistance,” and there is a subsequent risk of being deviated from normal routes followed by maritime traffic in the central Mediterranean. These and other issues have been the cause of protests from ship owners because of the significant impact they have on their commercial activities.

For the sake of painting a complete picture, even though this falls outside the scope of this analysis, it is worth noting that the wide scope of Mare Nostrum raised the question of whether it had a “pull factor,” that is, whether it encouraged more migrants to travel to Italy and Europe because there was the possibility that they would be saved at sea even out-

²⁹ Interview, Rome, 19 October 2015.

³⁰ Italian Senate, *Indagine conoscitiva sui temi dell'immigrazione: Audizione del comandante generale del Corpo delle capitanerie di porto-Guardia costiera, Felicio Angrisano*, 17 June 2015, <https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/DF/314746.pdf>.

³¹ Interview, Rome, 19 October 2015.

³² For a detailed examination of the subject, see Umberto Leanza and Fabio Caffio, “Il SAR mediterraneo”, in *Rivista marittima*, Vol. 148, No. 6 (June 2015), p. 13-14.

³³ Interview, Rome, 19 October 2015.

³⁴ Ibid.

side Italian territorial waters.³⁵ Without a doubt, the migration phenomenon has deeper roots and causes that have their origins far beyond the reach of this analysis of Mediterranean naval operations, and these roots are often underestimated in public debate on the subject. What we can be sure of is that one of the main challenges has been to manage the complexity of these operations and ensure efficient coordination between the various organisations and personnel being managed by State bodies and agencies. Furthermore, many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as the Rava Foundation, the Italian Red Cross and Save the Children lent their support both on board ships and on land, as did as personnel from the Health Ministry. One of the most positive, albeit complex, aspects of these operations was certainly the “pre-screening” of migrants by personnel from the Ministry of Interior and health screening by qualified professionals, both of which helped to speed up the procedures carried out after the migrants disembarked.³⁶

The shift from Mare Nostrum to Triton signaled an immediate reshaping of the field of operations and activity. The “obligation to render assistance” remained, and still remains, in place, however, in accordance with current regulations and with international agreements,³⁷ and Triton’s profile evolved considerably in the months after its inception, so much so that it represented a turning point for the Frontex Agency. For around six months, Triton played a marginal role in the management of migration flows, partly because SAR missions were not formally part of its remit.³⁸ It was only with the adoption of the April 2014 Regulation³⁹ that Frontex carried out a radical review of its activities in the light of the pressing demands relating to safeguarding life at sea, which now require

³⁵ Marco Del Panta, “L’Italia guarda oltre Mare Nostrum”, in *AffarInternazionali*, 20 June 2014, <http://www.affarinternazionali.it/articolo.asp?ID=2700>.

³⁶ Interview, Rome, 23 September 2015.

³⁷ Umberto Leanza and Fabio Caffio, “Il SAR mediterraneo”, cit.

³⁸ Fabio Caffio, “Quale futuro per Mare Nostrum”, in *AffarInternazionali*, 30 April 2014, <http://www.affarinternazionali.it/articolo.asp?ID=2621>.

³⁹ Regulation (EU) No 656/2014 establishing rules for the surveillance of the external sea borders in the context of operational cooperation coordinated by the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union, 15 May 2014, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:32014R0656>.

respect of the principle of *non-refoulement* (or “push-back”); safeguarding of human rights; intervention – when necessary – in SAR activities; transport of people saved from the sea to places of safety where, in accordance with international law, their lives are no longer at risk, and where their basic needs can be met. The issue of SAR has been a problem for Frontex for many years, and it is only now resolving it by making the obligation to rescue part of its mission.⁴⁰

Thus, Triton was bolstered at the end of May 2015 by a new operational plan which extended the operation’s range from the original 30 nautical miles of Italian coast to 138 miles to the south of Sicily. Moreover, compared to an initial endowment of twelve means of transport (four airplanes, one helicopter, four deep-sea vessels, one coastal patrol boat and two coastal guard ships), the new plan provides for three aircraft, six deep-sea vessels, twelve coastal patrol boats, two helicopters, new officials for interrogating migrants and six for identifying asylum seekers.⁴¹

There are currently two operations being carried out in the Mediterranean for which Italy is solely responsible: Mare Sicuro and Vigilanza Pesca. Mare Sicuro

was launched on 12 March, 2015, in response to the worrying developments in the Libyan crises and the subsequent need to increase national security protection measures in the central Mediterranean, through a reinforcement of the aero-naval capacities operating there.⁴²

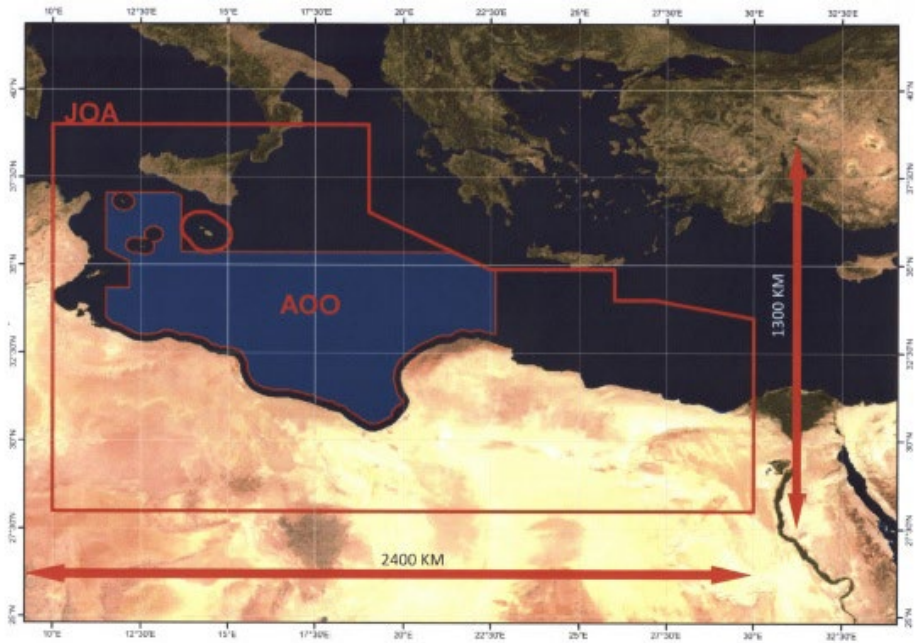
The potential risks that were considered when launching the operation were possible attacks on cruise ships, fishing boats and merchant vessels as well as on offshore oil platforms, or even on Coast Guard units – which are almost always unarmed as they are working in the context of SAR

⁴⁰ Fabio Caffio, “L’Europa fra Triton e Mare Nostrum”, in *AffarInternazionali*, 11 November 2014, <http://www.affarinternazionali.it/articolo.asp?ID=2865>.

⁴¹ Italian Senate, *Conferenza interparlamentare per la Politica Estera e di Sicurezza Comune (PESC) e la Politica Comune di Sicurezza e Difesa (PSDC)*, 2 September 2015, p. 74, <https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/00938039.pdf>.

⁴² Italian Senate, *Indagine conoscitiva sui temi dell’immigrazione: Audizione del Ministro della Difesa, Roberta Pinotti*, 21 July 2015, p. 5, <https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/DF/315915.pdf>.

– carrying out migrant rescue missions.⁴³ Despite the mission’s military aspect, the Ministry of Defence was also keen to reiterate the fact that “the participating units can be called on to help with search and rescue missions in cases of shipwreck, in compliance with the aforementioned obligation to render assistance required by international law.”⁴⁴ Mare Sicuro can engage as many as five naval units and six naval helicopters. At least one of the naval units has advanced logistical capacities and command and control capacities, as well as first-response medical and health capacities. The range of capacities includes the potential to use submarines, which are especially useful for the surveillance of suspect boats, and drones, which are extremely well-adapted to surveying large expanses of sea over long periods.



Source: Italian Chamber of Deputies.⁴⁵

⁴³ Pietro Batacchi and Giuliano Da Frè, “Mare Sicuro: a difesa dell’Italia”, in *Rivista italiana Difesa (Portale Difesa)*, 24 March 2015, http://www.portaledifesa.it/index~php-pag,3_id,575_pubb,2_npp,3_npag,17.html.

⁴⁴ Italian Senate, *Indagine conoscitiva sui temi dell’immigrazione: Audizione del Ministro della Difesa, Roberta Pinotti*, cit., p. 5.

⁴⁵ Italian Chamber of Deputies, Parliamentary Committee of Control for the Enforce-

Mare Sicuro works alongside Triton and EUNAVFOR Med, the most recently launched operation, which works in the context of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The map shows EUNAVFOR Med's current area of operation. There is an overlap with the area covered by Mare Sicuro, especially since the inception of EUNAVFOR Med's second phase.⁴⁶ It is therefore important to ensure that the naval activities of the different missions remain within their respective mandates, which are separate and only overlap when it comes to fighting the trafficking of migrants.⁴⁷

The last mission, chronologically-speaking, was EUNAVFOR Med, launched on 22 June 2015 with the objective of

fighting the criminal networks associated with trafficking and the exploitation of migrants crossing the Mediterranean and reducing the flow of migrants travelling by sea (so that this flow can be managed by the existing capacities of coastal countries) in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.⁴⁸

The mission is conducted from the European Operational Headquarters (IT EU-OHQ) at the offices of the Italian Joint Operations Headquarters (*Comando operativo di vertice interforze*, or COI) in Rome. It is run by Italy and has Rear Admiral Enrico Credendino as its Operation Commander and Counter Admiral Andrea Gueglio as its Force Commander. It will have three phases:⁴⁹

ment of the Schengen Agreement, *Indagine conoscitiva sulla gestione del fenomeno migratorio nell'area Schengen, con particolare riferimento alle politiche dei paesi aderenti relative al controllo delle frontiere esterne e dei confini interni. Audizione dell'ammiraglio di divisione Enrico Credendino EUNAVFOR MED Operation Commander*, 8 October 2015, http://documenti.camera.it/leg17/resoconti/commissioni/stenografici/html/30/ind-ag/c30_confini/2015/10/08/indice_stenografico.0004.html.

⁴⁶ Interview, Rome, 23 September 2015.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Italian Navy, *Operazioni in corso: EUNAVFOR Med*, <http://www.marina.difesa.it/cosa-facciamo/operazioni-in-corso/Pagine/EUNAVFORMED.aspx>.

⁴⁹ Italian Chamber of Deputies Research Department, *Partecipazione di personale militare all'operazione EUNAVFOR-MED*, Dossier n° 330 - Schede di lettura, 27 July 2015, <http://www.camera.it/temiap/d/leg17/d15099>.

1. In a first phase, migration networks will be identified and monitored through information gathering information and sea patrols, in accordance with international law.
2. The mission of the second phase will be:
 - to detain, inspect, sequester or divert boats in international waters suspected of being used for the trafficking and trade of human beings, in accordance with the regulations of international law, in particular with the UNCLOS and the protocol for fighting the trafficking of migrants;
 - in accordance with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions or with the agreement of the coastal country in question, to detain, inspect, sequester or divert boats, either in international waters or in territorial or internal waters, which are suspected of being used for the trafficking and trade of human beings.
3. The third phase, in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions or with the agreement of the coastal country in question, will take all necessary measures to eliminate or render useless any boat or equipment suspected of being used for the trafficking and trade of human beings in the territory of that country, according to the conditions set out by the aforementioned resolution or agreement.

Apart from Italy, other 21 countries contribute to the operation to varying extents, both financially and by providing military equipment and/or personnel: Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.⁵⁰ In July 2015, only 14 nations had confirmed their willingness to participate in the mission by providing staff for the General Headquarters or contributing aero-naval equipment.⁵¹ As far as the mission's costs are concerned – setting aside the budgets of the individual countries which cover the costs for their respective national contributions – 11.86 million

⁵⁰ European Union External Action, *Factsheet on EUNAVFOR Med Mission*, November 2015, http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eunavfor-med/pdf/factsheet_eunavfor_med_en.pdf.

⁵¹ Italian Senate, *Indagine conoscitiva sui temi dell'immigrazione: Audizione del Ministro della Difesa, Roberta Pinotti*, cit., p. 7.

euros have been allocated to cover the common costs of the operation⁵² during the first twelve months of its full operative capacity. On 30 July 2015, Italy approved Law Decree No. 99, which authorises the country's participation in the naval mission, allocating 26 million euros, 19 million of which come from the missions fund and 7 million of which are reimbursed by the UN, for the participation of 1,020 military units and the engagement of naval equipment and aircraft.⁵³

The mission is predicted to last 12 months, starting from when it reached full operational capacity on 27 July 2015.⁵⁴ After the first phase was completed, and all the "military objectives"⁵⁵ had been attained, the second phase began on 7 October 2015. In fact, on 14 September 2015, the EU General Affairs Council gave its consent for

the EU's naval operation against human smugglers and traffickers in the Mediterranean to conduct boarding, search, seizure and diversion on the high seas of vessels suspected of being used for human smuggling or trafficking, within international law.⁵⁶

The mission will also be allowed to carry out arrests, on condition that it does not enter Libyan waters (except in the case of an *ad hoc* UN resolution). The Force Generation Conference was then held, with the aim of defining more clearly each country's contribution in terms of personnel and equipment in the second phase of the operation, which is much more complex and demanding from a military point of view. The Italian aircraft carrier *Cavour* – already operational in the first phase of the operation – is

⁵² This financing is managed by the Athena mechanism which handles common costs of EU military operations in the context of the CSDP.

⁵³ Italian Chamber of Deputies Research Department, *Partecipazione di personale militare all'operazione EUNAVFOR-MED*, cit.

⁵⁴ European External Action Service, *EUNAVFOR Med Force Fully Operational*, 28 July 2015, http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eunavfor-med/press-releases/20150728_en.htm.

⁵⁵ Council of the European Union, *EUNAVFOR Med: Council adopts a positive assessment on the conditions to move to the first step of phase 2 on the high seas*, 14 September 2015, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/09/14-eunavfor-med-council-adopts-positive-assessment-on-conditions-to-move-to-first-step-of-phase-2-on-high-seas>.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

the mission's flagship, supported by an Italian submarine, a German frigate and supply ship, and a British auxiliary ship. Furthermore, three patrol aircraft have already been deployed from France, Luxembourg and Spain.⁵⁷ Although the operation's mandate is well-defined and delimited, it does not exclude – as is often repeated – the obligation to carry out SAR operations when necessary. There is a reason for this: EUNAVFOR Med has already involved in search and rescue missions ever since its inception, helping to save the lives of 2,400 migrants.⁵⁸

The role of the Italian Navy in Mediterranean security has not, however, been limited to the complex and critical management of migration and to fighting people-traffickers and/or terrorism. It was, for example, already involved in the Mediterranean in the 1990s, with operation Alba in Albania, giving humanitarian aid to the population and providing a peace force to prevent the risk of civil war.⁵⁹ Also, more recently, it was engaged with Operation Leonte as part of the UN-led UNIFIL mission in 2006. This operation helped reinforce the peace contingent in Libya and lift the Israeli naval blockade, using the Garibaldi aircraft carrier group. Finally, the Navy played a role both in the Odyssey Dawn operation and, to a greater extent, in the NATO Unified Protector operation in Libya in 2011. Its contribution to Unified Protector was varied and extensive: from the direction and implementation of joint operations to ensure the respect of the UN arms embargo on Libya, to patrol and supply activities, as well as surveillance missions near to Tunisian waters, implementing the agreement between Italy and Tunisia on the migration crisis. The deployment was enormous, with 14 ships, 2 submarines, 30 helicopters and 3,500 men and women.⁶⁰ The aircraft carrier's long-range helicopters were NATO's only combat SAR equipment capable of intervening in

⁵⁷ Nicolas Gros-Verheyde, "Un P3 Orion espagnol pour EUNAVFOR Med", in *Bruxelles2*, 15 September 2015, <http://www.bruxelles2.eu/?p=58209>.

⁵⁸ European Union External Action, *Busy weekend for EUNAVFOR Med ships*, 28 September 2015, http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eunavfor-med/news/20150928_en.htm.

⁵⁹ For an accurate analysis of operation Alba and the navy's contribution to it, see Pino Agnelli, *Operazione Alba. La missione della Forza multinazionale di protezione in Albania*, Novara, Istituto geografico De Agostini, 1997.

⁶⁰ Italian Chamber of Deputies, *Temi dell'attività Parlamentare: Libia: l'impegno delle Forze armate italiane*, <http://leg16.camera.it/561?appro=773>.

the whole area covered by the operation. As for the air power involved in the Libyan operation, in the 78 days it spent at sea, the Garibaldi launched 8 AV-88 sorties each day, with a total flying time of 1,218 hours, carrying out 62 per cent of the reconnaissance missions and 53 per cent of the airstrikes.⁶¹

6.2 THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN REGION IN THE ITALIAN WHITE PAPER AND NATO

The starting point for any discussion of Italian defence policy and military deployment in the Mediterranean must be the recent White Paper on international security and defence that was presented to the Italian Supreme Defence Council in April 2015 by Roberta Pinotti.

The White Paper gives particular attention to the so-called “Euro-Mediterranean” area. This is defined as

a large geopolitical zone, with its own clearly-defined characteristics, [...] a complex and diverse space in terms of political, social, economic, cultural and religious systems, unified by the common factor of sharing and gravitating towards the Mediterranean Sea.⁶²

According to the White Paper, this “gravitating” joins together five areas with differing characteristics: the EU countries, the Balkans, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean area of the Middle East and the Maghreb. Other zones that are connected to this region and yet distinct are the Mashriq, the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and the Persian Gulf.

This is a new geopolitical vision for Italian defence policy and, indirectly, for foreign policy. The concept of the Euro-Mediterranean region is different from the traditional Italian foreign policy view of three circles – European, transatlantic and Mediterranean – and it inserts the EU

⁶¹ Italian Navy, *Linee programmatiche della Marina Militare*, 21 June 2013, http://www.marina.difesa.it/conosciamoci/notizie/Documents/2013/06/Linee_programmatiche_Marina_Militare.pdf.

⁶² Italian Ministry of Defence, *Libro Bianco per la sicurezza internazionale e la difesa*, 30 April 2015, point 43, http://www.difesa.it/Primo_Piano/Pagine/20150429Libro_Bianco.aspx. Translation from the original Italian text.

countries both within the “Euro-Atlantic region”⁶³ and in the Euro-Mediterranean region, making a distinction that is not only geographical but geopolitical: while in the first area NATO and the EU provide a security framework that can be maintained and developed, in the second area there is no such framework, and there are crises posing direct threats to national interests. On this basis, the White Paper makes several important statements about defence policy and the military in the Euro-Mediterranean region. It says that “the zone’s proximity and the direct influence on Italy of events there mean that the evolution of the various ongoing crises cannot be ignored.”⁶⁴ The Paper insists on the necessity of creating, along with NATO, a “sufficient deterrent” to prevent future conflicts, and of the need to “anticipate, prevent and possibly manage” events arising from instability which threaten Italy’s interests, such as “the risks arising from mass migration, pandemics, terrorism and crime.”⁶⁵ At the same time, it confirms that it is

necessary for Italy to take greater responsibility and to participate actively in the international community’s effort to resolve such crises. Italy cannot separate the Euro-Mediterranean region’s security from that of the Euro-Atlantic region, as both are essential and complementary cornerstones of national defence and security.⁶⁶

Classifying security in both the Euro-Mediterranean region and the Euro-Atlantic region as “essential” means giving far more importance to the Euro-Mediterranean region than ever before, given the high levels of prevention, deterrence and collective defence – not to mention the level of political and economic integration – already in place in the Euro-Atlantic

⁶³ The White Paper confirms that “The Euro-Atlantic region is not definable exclusively in terms of geographic boundaries, but more by common values and common belief in democracy that are held by that states within it [...]; the relationship that has been built between the European states and those of North America is one of the most solid and durable cornerstones of global equilibrium. [...] the Euro-Atlantic region is the crucible of national interest and, as such, its security is the country’s top priority. The constitutional requirement of defence of the nation as the sacred duty of every citizen is thus enacted through the broader defence of peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region.” *Ibid.*, point 40.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, point 48.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, point 3.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, point 49.

region. Unsurprisingly, the White Paper states that “creating similar conditions [to those in the Euro-Atlantic region] in the Euro-Mediterranean region means that taking action over the Euro-Mediterranean region must be a top national priority.”⁶⁷ This articulates a clear priority for defence policy and also sets out possible field of intervention for the Italian armed forces. In so doing, the White Paper is notable for its “clarity” (which risks exposing rifts with those who do not agree with it), “farsightedness” and “determination.”⁶⁸ This farsightedness was confirmed by developments in the Mediterranean in the months following the White Paper’s publication, which saw the worsening of the migration crisis, of the threat of Islamic State and of the Libyan and Syrian civil wars.

The White Paper’s approach includes elements of both continuity and innovation. On the one hand, the Euro-Mediterranean region is already one of the Italian military’s main fields of engagement, from the western Balkans to Lebanon and Libya, and is the scene both of intense bilateral interaction between the Italian Ministry of Defence and those of the various countries in the region, and of large-scale Italian exports in the aerospace, security and defence industries.⁶⁹ Above all, the region is the origin of the main current risks to Italian security and national interest, because of its geographical proximity and other factors. On the other hand, the White Paper’s short- and medium-term priorities are innovative in the sense that they prioritise international missions such as those carried out during the last two decades in Afghanistan rather than those in East Timor or Haiti. As some commentators have noted, the White Paper “seems to indicate that in the future there will be limited scope for more distant missions with NATO.”⁷⁰

The third chapter of the White Paper, entitled “International Security and Defence Policy,” begins by stressing that the ultimate aim of such policy is

⁶⁷ Ibid., point 50.

⁶⁸ Passepartout, “Il Mediterraneo e le crisi di ieri e di oggi”, in *Airpress*, No. 59 (September 2015), p. 10.

⁶⁹ For example, in 2013 Fincantieri provided the UAE Navy with the ASW “Abu Dhabi” corvette and the FLAJ2 “Ghantut” patrol vessel (following that already provided in 2012). See Fincantieri, *Muggiano: doppia consegna per la Marina degli Eau*, 8 January 2013, <https://www.fincantieri.it/cms/data/browse/news/000485.aspx>.

⁷⁰ Gianandrea Gaiani, “Libro Bianco della Difesa: una svolta necessaria”, in *Analisi Difesa*, 23 April 2015, <http://www.analisdifesa.it/?p=22964>.

the protection of Italy's vital and strategic interests. The attainment of this objective relies on efficient defence of the State and its sovereignty, on the construction of a stable cornerstone of regional security and on the creation of a favourable international environment.⁷¹

This is a clear and explicit appeal for national interest, and its tone is different from that of Italian defence policy since the Second World War, which is expressed through three concentric circles of action: national, regional and global. At the same time, the White Paper explicitly recognises international missions as an important instrument of Italian defence policy. Drawing on the experience of 25 years of missions with NATO, the UN, the EU and other *ad hoc* coalitions, sometimes run by Italy,⁷² the White Paper puts forward an ambitious statement of principle regarding the Mediterranean. In its third chapter, it states the objective of attaining "a more secure Euro-Mediterranean region," and maintains that

Italian defence must be ready to assume direct responsibility in response to crisis situations and to be prepared for pacification and stabilisation missions decided on by the international community. In some operations Italy may also take on a managing role, as lead nation.⁷³

Italian defence policy in the Euro-Mediterranean region is not limited to international missions. The White Paper proposes that, in terms of bilateral relations with countries in the region, Italian defence must aid the development of governmental policy aimed at attaining "greater stability and democratic development in Mediterranean countries," through "targeted cooperative military action with all countries in the region, working towards further and deeper collaborations to create improved and

⁷¹ Italian Ministry of Defence, *Libro Bianco per la sicurezza internazionale e la difesa*, cit., point 54.

⁷² In the context of the rolling system of command agreed by NATO, Italy has commanded several NATO missions in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan during the 1990s and the 2000s, as well as the UNIFIL II mission in Lebanon for six of the last eight years. It also organised and managed the 1997 Alba mission in Albania.

⁷³ Italian Ministry of Defence, *Libro Bianco per la sicurezza internazionale e la difesa*, cit., point 71.

long-lasting security.”⁷⁴ As is usual with Italian foreign and defence policy, multilateralism is a high priority, alongside bilateral action, so the White Paper recommends that in the Euro-Mediterranean region,

in terms of common EU security and defence policy, and of activity linked to NATO’s “Mediterranean Dialogue”, Italian defence policy will be sensitive to the issue of Euro-Mediterranean security, and, as recommended by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, play a key role in current and future initiatives in central Europe and the Balkans.⁷⁵

With this perspective in mind, the third chapter of the White Paper closes by outlining four missions established for the armed forces, the first two of which are the most important and relate to the Mediterranean.

The first mission is the

defence of the state against any attack, in order to safeguard: the integrity of national territory; the country’s vital interests; the security of areas of national sovereignty and of Italian nationals abroad; the security of access routes to the country.⁷⁶

This is an updated and enlarged version of the traditional concept of territorial defence of the nation. In fact, as well as “the integrity of national territory,” the White Paper calls for the safeguarding of three other elements, whose geographical definition is somewhat flexible. Firstly, the “vital interests” of the country which, according to the White Paper guidelines – presented to the Italian Supreme Defence Council by Minister Pinotti on 18 June 2014 – are

the elements that constitute the country’s primary and vital needs, including self-preservation, territorial integrity and economic security. These cannot be negotiated and in order to safeguard them, the country is ready to use all available means and strength, including the use of force or the threat of its use.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., point 72.

⁷⁶ Ibid., point 81.

⁷⁷ Italian Ministry of Defence, *Libro Bianco per la sicurezza internazionale e la dife-*

This defence of the national interest can, of course, include the deployment of the armed forces in missions abroad either unilaterally or as part of international organisations such as NATO. Similarly, protecting Italian nationals abroad is likely to involve use of the armed forces in missions outside national territory. Finally, safeguarding access routes to the country may well require, for example, military operations in international waters, given Italy's position in the Mediterranean. Overall, the White Paper defines the main mission of the armed forces, that which is most closely linked to national defence, as involving a significant engagement in operations abroad.

The second mission consists of the "defence of Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Mediterranean spaces," that is, "contributing to NATO's collective defence" and "maintaining stability in the area around the Mediterranean Sea, in order to protect Italy's vital and strategic interests."⁷⁸ It is very significant, and innovative in the context of Italian defence policy, that maintaining stability in the nearby Mediterranean should be given the same level of importance as NATO collective defence. This reflects the priority given by the White Paper to the Euro-Mediterranean region, also due to current crisis and threats for national security and interests, and indicates a willingness to deploy the armed forces, if necessary, in military operations there.

Concerning missions abroad, the sixth chapter reiterates the fact that the military should be able to "lead possible multinational crisis-management operations" in the Euro-Mediterranean region, with "adequate resources to exercise military command of both multinational forces operating in coalition and of large intervention capacities in the full spectrum of these operations."⁷⁹ The phrase "full spectrum" refers to a range of operations

from "soft" stabilisation, that is, peace keeping, to "hard" stabilisation, that is, peace enforcing, or actual warfare. This is what is known as a "regional full spectrum," a military that is capable of intervening in the Mediterranean even in high-intensity operations.⁸⁰

sa. *Linee guida*, 18 June 2014, p. 15, <http://flpdifesa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Linee-Guida-per-il-Libro-Bianco.pdf>.

⁷⁸ Italian Ministry of Defence, *Libro Bianco per la sicurezza internazionale e la difesa*, cit., point 81.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, point 138.

⁸⁰ Pietro Batacchi, "Il Libro Bianco 2015", in *Rivista Italiana Difesa*, No. 6/2015 (June

The White Paper also examines the end of foreign operations, such as the ISAF operation, as “a chance to identify a new balance of the forces posture, in order to better support security policies in the Euro-Mediterranean region.”⁸¹

Given the analysis of security in the Mediterranean conducted in earlier chapters of this book, the drawing up of the White Paper should be important bilaterally, with the MENA countries, and multilaterally, with the EU and NATO.

As far as NATO is concerned, it would be useful for Italy to continue three courses of consolidated action, and to achieve an ambitious feat. The first course of action is to rebalance NATO’s political and diplomatic view of the Mediterranean, both through partnerships – especially the Mediterranean Dialogue – and through strategic debate within NATO: there is a need to increase awareness, especially among NATO countries of northern and eastern Europe, that the threats from the Mediterranean do not affect only the southern, coastal countries but the whole of NATO. In order to do this, Italy must clarify what it wants NATO to do in the Mediterranean, politically, strategically and militarily, so that it is not simply making vague declarations about the importance of the “southern flank.” The second course of action has to do with the Readiness Action Plan, which is the main short- and medium-term method of operational planning for NATO armed forces, including their readiness for action and possible engagement scenarios. Here it is vital to reinforce the RAP’s maritime component with sufficient NATO military planning, if this military instrument is to be capable of operating in a potential Mediterranean scenario, rather than just in a land-centred scenario in Eastern Europe. These two courses of action are closely linked, in the sense that insistence on the importance of the Mediterranean brings few real results if it is not accompanied by concrete military plans – unlike the case of the Eastern European member states, where political and operational considerations already go hand in hand. For example, the maritime domain should be high priority in the development of NATO’s military plans for the “southern flank,” in the sense that it would be easier to find the neces-

2015), p. 26.

⁸¹ Italian Ministry of Defence, *Libro Bianco per la sicurezza internazionale e la difesa*, cit., point 113.

sary consensus on the level of the threat and the possible NATO response to other more complex and controversial (but by no means impossible) potential scenarios involving intervention on the ground in the southern Mediterranean.

The third course of action is that of maintaining the balance between collective defence and crisis-management missions outside the area identified by the 2010 Strategic Concept, in the event of a revision of this key NATO document, which may happen at the next summit in Warsaw – a revision that would probably lead to a subsequent shift in NATO's political and military centre of gravity in terms of collective defence and therefore also in terms of the “eastern flank.” These three courses of action will play a part in the preparations for the 2016 NATO summit, in shaping the themes and dossiers that the heads of state gathered in Warsaw will be called on to discuss – or to ratify, if they have already been discussed and decided on at a ministerial level. Increasingly over the last decade, NATO summits have taken on the role of catalysts in its internal decision-making process: decisions are made on the various dossiers on the agenda, and the political and military “machine” is subsequently directed towards certain priorities and in certain directions. The summits are important for countries such as Italy which count on international organisations such as NATO to tackle multilateral challenges and threats to security and national interest that they cannot manage alone.

Given the security situation in the Mediterranean and its relation with national interests, as well as following these courses of action, Italian defence policy needs to achieve an ambitious feat, and has proposed to do so by suggesting that NATO should create a new Alliance Maritime Strategy. The strategic context has changed considerably since 2011, when the Strategy was first adopted, both in the Mediterranean (with the worsening civil wars in Syrian and Libya and the escalation of the migration crisis) and in the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea (with the crisis in relations with Russia). Furthermore, the recent adoption of an EU Maritime Security Strategy and the current creation of the new EU Security Strategy would facilitate dialogue between NATO and the EU on maritime issues aimed at increasing cooperation. This strategic debate could include modification of the NATO Standing Maritime Groups in order to make them more reactive and more closely linked to the RAP, and could also improve the

distribution of member states' contributions to these groups. The new Maritime Strategy could also develop regional maritime strategies relevant to NATO, including in the Mediterranean where Italy could take on a leading role, being the only major European NATO country to have its entire coast in the Mediterranean Sea. Finally, this strategy would be a useful framework for the possible redefinition of NATO's Active Endeavour mission, to give it a broader maritime security mandate in the Mediterranean alongside the EUNAVFOR Med mission. Given Italy's engagement in EU naval missions (as analysed in the previous section) and Federica Mogherini's role as High Representative for Foreign Policy and Security, it is quite possible that Italy could play a leading role in bringing together the strategic plan and the operational one. Such a policy within NATO, in line with current regional and international security environment, would constitute a further development of the traditional Italian approach, which is in favour of multilateral responses to crisis and threats having an impact on Italy's security and national interests that the country cannot manage alone. In fact, considering the Mediterranean context analysed by previous chapters, in particularly the reduced US leadership in the MENA region, the French activism, and the renationalisation of foreign and defence policy by European countries leading to diverging national agendas, it would constitute a "realist multilateralism". It would be realist in three ways. First, it would consider the allies' strategies based on national interests sometimes different from Italian ones. Second, it would combine unilateral, bilateral, mini-lateral and multilateral actions towards the Euro-Mediterranean region. Third, it would provide and mobilise resources – including but not limited to military ones – necessary to implement the strategy adopted by Italian foreign and defence policy.

France is increasingly active in the Mediterranean region, and will no doubt continue to be so in the future, whereas the US retreat seems irreversible, at least in the short to medium term. Therefore, Italy must have a pro-active strategy when it comes to France, pursuing political initiatives supported by the military, in order to find a means of cooperation that will satisfy the national interests of both countries. This pro-active stance must also be taken in relation to the United Kingdom and Germany, other NATO, EU member states and EU institutions, and should have a trans-Atlantic dimension, although it may not necessarily be applied

to the traditional US leadership. For example, the creation of a “contact group” for the crisis in Libya and/or Syria made up of Italy, the EU High Representative and the main European countries concerned should be a priority for Rome, especially given the trilateral meetings held in the second half of 2015 between France, Germany and the United Kingdom following the worsening of the migration crisis on the EU’s borders. As discussed previously, Italy is one of the European countries most affected by migration from or through Libya and Syria, which are both in the throes of civil war involving armies from within and outside the region. At the same time, Rome is making a significant contribution to maritime security in the Mediterranean by leading EUNAVFOR Med and managing the Italian Mare Sicuro mission, as well as being able to draw on a network of contacts and links in Libya and participating extensively in the US-led coalition fighting Islamic State in the Middle East: these are all important contributions that Rome can bring to a possible future European contact group. This would be a group to which Italy’s contribution, as in many other bilateral and multilateral contexts (whether international organisations, *ad hoc* coalitions or other informal forums), would depend on its political and strategic vision as well as on the operational availability of its army.⁸² This availability means maintaining operationally ready military capacity, and the political ability to plan and decide how to use it rapidly, reliably and consistently.

6.3 ITALIAN MILITARY DEPLOYMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Italian military, and especially naval, involvement in the Mediterranean raises a series of issues. In general, Italy is exposed to two main threats, directly or indirectly. One is the conventional, military threat that may arise when states come into conflict with one another; the other is the non-conventional threat, mainly of jihadist and/or terrorist activity that takes root in unstable regions and fragile or failed states. The level of

⁸² On the link between participation in international missions, foreign and defence policies, and the Italian national interest, see among others Alessandro Marrone, Paola Tessari and Carolina De Simone, “Italian Interests and NATO: From Missions to Trenches?”, in *Documenti IAI*, No. 14|12e (December 2014), <http://www.iai.it/en/node/2382>.

conventional threat is currently low but the possibility of future conventional crises cannot be discounted, especially given that many groups are re-arming as they struggle for regional supremacy in the Mediterranean.⁸³ The non-conventional scenario is more likely, and includes the possibility of hostile action or maritime terrorism by radical or extremist groups.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the various crisis-points in the Mediterranean, from Libya to the eastern side, are clear evidence that even in conventional scenarios, regular armed forces may be joined by non-state groups that are nonetheless organised along military lines.

In this context, the Italian Navy is employed in several missions: the promotion of peace and security using the whole spectrum of naval capacity; maritime defence of national territory, maritime traffic routes, choke points, routes giving access to ports and the national maritime transport system; integrated supervision of maritime spaces; presence and surveillance in relevant areas to maintain intervention capacity and support legitimate maritime activity; tackling the threat of ballistic and cruise missiles through involvement in national air defence; participating in international missions; protecting military and humanitarian crisis-response facilities on the ground; carrying out foreign policy and consolidating political and economic relationships with other countries; ensuring that nationals abroad are safe from threats from state and non-state groups; preventing the illegal exploitation of undersea resources and protecting strategic objectives such as offshore platforms and national energy infrastructures; policing the seas and combatting illegal activities such as piracy, terrorism and the trade in weapons of mass destruction; controlling migrant flows across the sea; anti-pollution surveillance and intervention; navigational security; involvement in search and rescue at sea.

In the near future, the Italian Navy will continue to carry out maritime security operations such as those previously analysed: the increasing and sustained naval deployment in the Mediterranean over the last fifteen years is likely to continue in the short and medium term. On the one hand, Italy has assumed several responsibilities at a European level, such as EUNAVFOR Med, but also on a NATO level (with Active Endeav-

⁸³ Interview, Rome, 19 November 2015.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

our and the future implementation of the Readiness Action Plan) and a national level with Mare Sicuro and Vigilanza Pesca: all these will continue to require political and military investment, especially in terms of the navy. In particular, the second and third phases of EUNAVFOR Med involve much that is challenging and unfamiliar, such as potential armed conflicts that demand adequate tactical, operational and strategic planning and resources. More generally, European attention to the issue of the maritime domain, especially in the Mediterranean, is likely to increase, especially given the implementation of the EU Maritime Security Strategy, so the navy will be called upon to contribute, as will other public and private bodies.

At the same time, increasing instability and conflict examined in the preceding chapters seems to be set to continue and could easily lead to new joint-force operations with a naval component, as happened in 2011 in Libya, in 2006 in Lebanon and in 1997 in Albania. This could be due to the migration crisis and its major impact on public opinion and on the governments of the main European countries, including elements that were traditionally non-interventionist such as Catholics. Military aero-naval intervention could also become necessary due to the military escalation in Syria that has resulted from the regional crisis becoming entangled with tensions between the West and the Russian Federation, tensions that have spread from Ukraine to the Middle East, right through the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Also, France's increased involvement in the region, and the possible future involvement of the United Kingdom and/or Germany, could mean that Italy has to offer to deploy its own military in order not to be excluded from the management of a crisis that will have intentional or unintentional implications for Italy's security and national interest. Finally, new offshore energy resources have recently been discovered in the central and eastern Mediterranean, and these will affect, among other things, Egypt's economy and politics. In security terms, this could easily become a new field of conflict and clashes, not to mention terrorism. Given these possibilities, the Italian Navy will need to maintain its conventional capacities (anti-aircraft, anti-ship and anti-submarine), including those adapted for high-intensity military operations.

The surveillance and supervision of Mediterranean maritime airspace remains a priority for the Italian Navy, in order to ensure full Maritime

Situational Awareness (MSA). These activities must be carried out both nationally – in coordination with the police and public safety forces, by sharing, preferably in a single hub, all available information – and internationally, continuing to work within the EU and NATO.⁸⁵ At the same time, the navy must continue to cooperate with other Mediterranean countries in confidence- and capacity-building exercises so that their maritime spaces can be properly supervised.

Crucially, the field of manoeuvre for the Navy is essentially a continuum, from national territorial waters to international waters, and including the maritime spaces of other countries. Conventional and non-conventional threats can arise, possibly simultaneously, in all these contexts.⁸⁶ As the analysis in this book has shown, this affects how the Navy must develop in various ways: it must become increasingly involved in maritime security; it must maintain its capacity for the various kinds of conventional conflict; it must contribute to protect civilians in the case of natural or manmade disasters.⁸⁷

Given all of the elements considered in this section, the military is increasingly in need coherent, harmonious, integrated, joint-force and balanced development in terms of the missions that it is called on to carry out in the Euro-Mediterranean region, missions that vary depending on the threats and national interest at stake. In the case of the Mediterranean, this approach means that several elements must be kept up-to-date and ready: command and control of national and NATO aero-naval forces; aerial and electronic surveillance, including manned fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft, and, as soon as possible, unmanned and satellite crafts; coastal surveillance; establishing military presence through aero-naval, amphibious and special forces, which must be flexible, rapid and logistically independent, able to intervene from the sea and penetrate far inland, for example to protect and repatriate Italian citizens; increased versatility in tackling both non-conventional threats – terrorism and piracy, for example – and conventional land, air and sea threats that may include ballistic and cruise missiles which may entail combat near to their launch zones; navigational research, rescue and security; support of national en-

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

ergy supplies at sea; support of other coastal countries that are either NATO members or allies of Italy. Overall, it will be vital to maintain naval capacity to support national interest at sea and participate in possible ground operations. All of this highlights the need for interoperability with the other EU and NATO navies, with the aim of achieving greater integration and sharing of assets so that, for example, equipment and aircraft may be deployed on ships from various different countries.⁸⁸

The process of acquiring naval capacity must, therefore, be informed by the need to transform the fleet in the medium to long term.⁸⁹ The construction of new platforms cannot be speeded up, given the complexity of naval systems, not to mention the high costs involved. Furthermore, naval platforms last longer than air or ground equipment, so naval units have to undergo frequent on-board systems updates, which take a long time and cannot always be done during maintenance works. Therefore, shipping planning needs to allow a margin of growth in terms of the size and weight of the apparatus involved, given the difficulties of energy requirements, electromagnetic interference and maintenance.⁹⁰ This means that the actual availability of naval units is sometimes lowered, so their number needs to be increased to ensure constant adequate capacity. There is also the fact that the Euro-Mediterranean maritime region is extremely large, so an effective naval presence requires a large number of naval units of various different kinds.

The Navy, just like the Air Force⁹¹ and the Army,⁹² must balance the need for technological innovation to increase efficacy and efficiency, which requires economic investment, with the need to maintain a sufficient number of assets. While advanced technology improves the performance of an individual platform, below a certain quantitative threshold even a techno-

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Interview, Rome, 21 September 2015.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ See, among others, Vincenzo Camporini et al., *The Role of Italian Fighter Aircraft in Crisis Management Operations: Trends and Needs*, Rome, Nuova Cultura, 2014 (IAI Research Papers 16), <http://www.iai.it/en/node/2155>.

⁹² See, among others, Alessandro Marrone, Michele Nones and Alessandro R. Ungaro (eds.), *Technological Innovation and Defence: The Forza NEC Program in the Euro-Atlantic Framework*, Rome, Nuova Cultura, 2016 (IAI Research Papers 23), <http://www.iai.it/en/node/6335>.

logically advanced navy loses efficacy and sustainability.⁹³ This especially true given that some naval capacity is always committed to NATO, some is already taken up with current missions, and some is unavailable due to normal maintenance and adjustment procedures. Also, using technologically advanced equipment is not always cost-effective in less demanding operational theatres, but such equipment is nonetheless necessary in case of an escalation of the mission, and as a permanent deterrent that functions independently of current operations. The Italian Navy must therefore find the right balance between larger, complex units and ones that are smaller but able to carry out medium range patrol and rescue, and that have defence and combat capacities. The number of these smaller units could be usefully increased, with the advantage of being able to deploy them more quickly and of achieving better economies of scale as well as not having to use the larger units unless absolutely necessary.

The multi-purpose nature of some platforms offers possibilities for the development of a more balanced naval capacity, because it allows the Navy to respond to a range of conventional and non-conventional maritime threats, and to help in the case of natural disasters occurring in areas that can be reached by sea. This responsiveness is increased by the flexibility of new naval units, something that is achieved through increased modularity in the planning phase. The Italian Navy's involvement in Mare Nostrum and Mare Sicuro has highlighted the importance of the dual civilian-military⁹⁴ character of widely-used SAR platforms in non-hostile environments and in cooperation with NGOs and the Italian authorities. This dual requirement is increasingly considered in the planning phase, for example by leaving plenty of space for loading materials and apparatus in order to improve medical and transport capacities for humanitarian aid.⁹⁵ Naval equipment also needs to find the right balance between the advantage of multipurpose systems on the one hand and the need to have specific platforms for certain missions on the other, especially given the time it takes to reconfigure the ships so that they can work together

⁹³ Interview, Rome, 21 September 2015.

⁹⁴ On the theme of dual-use technology and the Italian military, see, among others, Alessandro Marrone and Michele Nones (eds.), *The Role of Dual-Use Helicopters in the Security and Defence Field*, Rome, Nuova Cultura, 2015 (IAI Research Papers 20), <http://www.iai.it/en/node/4431>.

⁹⁵ Interview, Rome, 19 October 2015.

according to the needs of the mission rather than always in the same way. This balance is all the more important given that high-intensity conflict is by no means an impossible scenario in the Mediterranean region.

The Italian Navy's fleet is about to be extensively updated as part of a programme approved by the Parliament through the 2014 Stability Law, for a total of 3,830 million euros distributed over a twenty-year period.⁹⁶ This money will be used to construct six multirole patrol ships, a multirole amphibious unit, a logistical support unit and two smaller units for the Italian Special Forces. The multirole patrol ships will replace the *De La Penne*, *Minerva*, *Costellazioni*, *Lupo*, *Soldati* and *Comandanti* units, with the aim of being able to tackle a wide range of operations from "low end" (such as SAR) to "high end" operations including the defence of national territory and participation in international missions.

One of the most innovative aspects of this programme is the direct involvement of the Italian Navy in the design of the units, instead of the traditional client-supplier relationship in which the navy described the need and the supplier suggested solutions. This has significantly decreased the time it has taken to launch the programme despite the fact that it involved large units.

Nevertheless, while this programme is being carried out, around fifty naval units will be dismantled: except for small units, the only ones still in service will be the *Cavour* aircraft carrier, the *Orizzonte* destroyer, the *Fremm* frigates and the *U212A* submarines. So even though it will have been modernised and boosted by the new units, the Italian Navy's fleet will be smaller than it is now.

The Italian military is facing a difficult situation and this decision signals a new tendency: the hope is that it may lead to others that will achieve the aim of creating an effective and well-balanced defence and security for Italy, capable of defending the national interest.

⁹⁶ Law of 27 December 2013, No. 147, Article 1, Clause 37.

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Printed in July 2016
with technology *print on demand*
at the press centre Nuova Cultura Rome
p.le Aldo Moro n. 5, 00185 Rome
www.nuovacultura.it

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