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**NATO'S MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE:  
CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS**

by

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December 2003

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**NATO'S MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE: IMPLICATIONS FOR EUROPEAN  
SECURITY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis analyses the challenges facing NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue. This Dialogue is an important part of NATO's adaptation to the post-Cold War security environment. It is an expression of the Alliance's policy of outreach and its cooperative approach to security. The new security concerns in the southern Mediterranean region—terrorism, economic disparities, demographic imbalances, the potential for social and political instability, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction—have begun to gain prominence in the Alliance, especially since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. These challenges have enhanced NATO's significance as a vehicle to address security tasks in the southern Mediterranean region. NATO has distinctive military capabilities, and a well-established multinational organizational culture. This thesis recommends that the Dialogue be enhanced through coordination with European initiatives concerning the Mediterranean and greater involvement of the southern Mediterranean countries in the formulation and pursuit of goals and activities intended to foster peace and cooperation.

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Umit Neset CAYAN, Monterey, December 2003

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **A. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

This thesis investigates the implications of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue for European security. After the end of the Cold War, NATO and European security organizations focused mainly on Central and Eastern Europe. During the immediate post-Cold War years, the southern Mediterranean region remained at the margins. As Europe has become more secure, however, the problems across the Mediterranean Sea and their implications for European security have begun to gain prominence, especially in light of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. This increases NATO's importance as a vehicle to address the new security challenges in the southern Mediterranean region since NATO has distinctive military capabilities, a well-established multinational organizational culture, and a transatlantic link. The purpose of this thesis is to make policy recommendations for the further enhancement of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue.

This thesis is built upon three foundations: (1) an analysis of the security challenges in the southern Mediterranean region, (2) an assessment of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, and (3) a review of non-NATO European initiatives. The analyses of the security challenges in the southern Mediterranean region and NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue form the basis for an assessment of the prospects and requirements of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue. Additionally, the review of the non-NATO European initiatives—namely, the Barcelona Process of the European Union (EU), the Mediterranean Dialogue of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Mediterranean Dialogue of the Western European Union (WEU), the Mediterranean Forum, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Summits—provides a basis for a comparison of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue with non-NATO initiatives. These discussions pave the way for the recommendations concerning future challenges and prospects for NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue.

## B. BACKGROUND

NATO's North Atlantic Council (NAC) launched the Mediterranean Dialogue at the December 1994 Brussels ministerial meeting. It currently involves seven non-NATO Mediterranean nations: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. According to the Alliance's 1999 Strategic Concept, "NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue is an integral part of NATO's external adaptation to the post Cold War security environment, as well as an important component of the Alliance's policy of outreach and its cooperative approach to security."<sup>1</sup> NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue reflects the conviction of the Allies that "security in Europe is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean."<sup>2</sup>

NATO's recent explicit interest in the Mediterranean Sea region, as part of its external adaptation to the post-Cold War security environment, goes back to the 1991 Strategic Concept of the Alliance. In addition to highlighting the Alliance's conviction that the stability and peace of the countries on the southern periphery of Europe are important for the security of the Alliance, the Allies made reference to a specific threat in the 1991 Strategic Concept: "the build-up of military power and the proliferation of weapons technologies in the area, including weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles capable of reaching the territory of some member states of the Alliance."<sup>3</sup> This may be regarded as an implicit reference to a missile threat to Turkey and other southern region Allies.

However, throughout the first decade following the end of the Cold War (1991-2001), the Mediterranean Dialogue was not at the center of Alliance debates. Issues related to the Mediterranean region remained essentially at the margins of European security and NATO concerns.<sup>4</sup> During that period, both Alliance and European Union security efforts focused mainly on Central and Eastern Europe. Owing in part to the concurrent enlargement of NATO and the EU, the nations of Central and Eastern Europe generally have grounds to hope for a more stable

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<sup>1</sup> North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 24 April 1999, par. 38.

<sup>2</sup> NATO officials have reiterated this statement on many occasions. It is also stated in basic NATO documents. See, for example, North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 7-8 November 1991, par. 11 and North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 24 April 1999, par. 38.

<sup>3</sup> North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 7-8 November 1991, par. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Ian Lesser, Jerold Green, F. Stephen Larrabee, and Michele Zanini, *NATO's Mediterranean Initiative Policy Issues and Dilemmas* (Santa Monica, California: Rand, 1998), p. 1, available online at <http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR957/> <04.20.2003>

and prosperous future. The evolution of the security environment in the southern Mediterranean region and the recent developments—the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the March-April 2003 war in Iraq—have made the future of relations in the Mediterranean region part of mainstream security discussions on both sides of the Atlantic. As a sign of this growing interest in Mediterranean security, the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Prague on 21 November 2002 decided to upgrade substantially the political and practical dimensions of the Mediterranean Dialogue and to encourage intensified practical cooperation and effective interaction on security matters of common concern, including terrorism-related issues.<sup>5</sup>

In short, NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue is becoming a more important vehicle for promoting European security in light of the growing prominence of the evolving security challenges in the Mediterranean region. Given the Alliance's decision to move the Mediterranean Dialogue more towards the center stage, the Alliance's future prospects are central to the debates concerning the further enhancement of the Mediterranean Dialogue. To determine the implications of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue for European security, the following questions must be addressed:

- What are the security challenges in the southern and eastern Mediterranean region?
- What has NATO done to address these security challenges?
- What are the relevant aspects of the non-NATO European initiatives toward the Mediterranean?
- What are the future challenges for further enhancement of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue?

There is no direct military threat to Alliance territory from the southern Mediterranean region. However, given the cultural, religious, political and economic diversity of the southern Mediterranean region, a complex and interrelated set of threats has emerged. According to official NATO documents and statements made by NATO officials, the Alliance has a broad and

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<sup>5</sup> North Atlantic Council, Prague Summit Declaration, par. 10, available online at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm> <04.21.2003>

multi-faceted definition of threats.<sup>6</sup> First, the region's potential for political and social instability could alter the long-term political orientation of the states in the region. Second, the southern Mediterranean region, because of its unresolved political, social and religious questions, may be a fertile breeding ground for terrorism. Third, in light of the Iraq crisis, the issue of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) is central to the emerging security environment in the southern Mediterranean region as well as to the future of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue. Fourth, economic disparities, demographic imbalances and the migratory pressures they imply could pose severe economic and social challenges to European social order and stability. Finally, given that the southern Mediterranean countries provide approximately 40% of the oil and natural gas needs of Europe, energy security deserves greater attention in Alliance debates.

To clarify the future challenges and prospects for NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, this outreach endeavor must be analyzed. The Mediterranean Dialogue is part of NATO's external adaptation to the post-Cold War security environment as well as an important component of its policy of outreach and its cooperative approach to security. Since its inception, the Mediterranean Dialogue has adopted a progressive, non-discriminating approach towards the southern Mediterranean region. Given the difficulty of bringing such diverse interests into a multilateral forum, the Mediterranean Dialogue is primarily bilateral, bringing each participant and the Alliance together in a 19+1 format. Nevertheless, the Mediterranean Dialogue allows for multilateral discussions as well in a 19+7 format. The establishment of a Mediterranean Cooperation Group (MCG) at the 1997 Madrid Summit, a permanent body having the overall responsibility for the Mediterranean Dialogue as well as for conducting bilateral political discussions with individual partners, was an important breakthrough in the political dimension of the Mediterranean Dialogue.

Besides the political dimension, the Mediterranean Dialogue has a practical dimension. The practical dimension includes a wide range of activities from invitations to participate in courses and certain NATO activities to visits by opinion leaders, academics, journalists and parliamentarians from Mediterranean Dialogue countries to NATO Headquarters and other

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<sup>6</sup> See NATO Secretary General Javier Solana's speech at the Conference on The Mediterranean Dialogue and The New NATO, Valencia, 25 February 1999, available online at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1999/s990225a.htm> Also see NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson's Speech at the Royal United Services Institute, Moving from Dialogue towards Partnership, London, 29 April 2002, available online at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s020429a.htm> <04.19.2003>

NATO facilities. As part of the practical dimension and as a signpost for the further enhancement of the Mediterranean Dialogue, three Dialogue countries—Egypt, Jordan and Morocco— have contributed peacekeepers to the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia. Moreover, Jordan and Morocco currently have soldiers in the Kosovo Force (KFOR).

As the Alliance has stated, the Mediterranean Dialogue is intended to complement other international initiatives concerning the Mediterranean region.<sup>7</sup> No single organization can claim to handle this diverse set of challenges. Therefore, this thesis analyzes the relevant aspects of non-NATO European initiatives concerning the Mediterranean region. These initiatives are as follows: the Barcelona Process of the European Union (EU), the Mediterranean Dialogue of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Mediterranean Dialogue of the Western European Union (WEU) and the Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (Mediterranean Forum) initiated by France and Egypt.

### **C. METHODOLOGY**

This thesis is largely based on NATO communiqués and other NATO documents as well as statements by NATO officials and Mediterranean Dialogue country officials. This thesis also makes use of studies by scholars and experts involved in defense and security matters. These sources are analyzed on a qualitative basis, and no quantitative analysis is undertaken, except with regard to numbers of meetings and other activities.

The thesis is organized as follows. Chapter II examines the security environment in the southern Mediterranean region. Chapter III analyzes various principles and dimensions of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue as well as the transformation of the Alliance relevant to the Mediterranean Dialogue. Chapter IV reviews the non-NATO European initiatives concerning the southern Mediterranean region to provide a basis for the discussion of NATO's complementary role in relation to the multilateral European efforts concerning the southern Mediterranean region. Chapter V analyses the future challenges for NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue and offers policy recommendations to further enhance its effectiveness.

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, North Atlantic Council, Prague Summit Declaration, par. 10, available online at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm> <05.19.2003>

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## **II. SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION**

Security in the Mediterranean is wholly linked to security in Europe. The southern Mediterranean region matters to NATO because of a complex and interrelated set of threats looming on the horizon. The first is the potential for political and social instability. Second, terrorism has been high on the agenda, especially since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Third, the Alliance has considered the proliferation of WMD a major security threat since 1990. Fourth, economic disparities and demographic imbalance between the southern Mediterranean region and Europe are increasing the migratory pressure towards Europe. Lastly, Europe is highly dependent on the energy resources of the southern Mediterranean region.<sup>8</sup>

### **A. POTENTIAL FOR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL INSTABILITY**

The southern Mediterranean region has a significant potential for political and social instability. The underlying causes of social instability include the ailing economies of the southern Mediterranean countries, high unemployment, inflation, migration from rural to urban areas, and the entry of large numbers of young people into the already weak economies. Given the fact that there is a strong correlation between prosperity and stability, the southern Mediterranean region may be socially unstable in the future. Aside from material factors, there is also a cultural and religious dimension to social instability. As long as economic difficulties prevail, it may be easier for radicals to recruit supporters for their causes.

Political instability is looming on the horizon parallel to the social problems and the erosion of state control in the southern Mediterranean region. A tug-of-war between the popular masses and the traditional monarchies (e.g., in Morocco) and the authoritarian leaderships (e.g., in Algeria) dominates the political arena in an age of greater transparency and pressures for reform.

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<sup>8</sup> Lord Robertson, the Secretary General of NATO, identified these five concerns that make the southern Mediterranean increasingly important for NATO. See "Lord Robertson, NATO and the Mediterranean-Moving from Dialogue to Partnership", Royal United Service Institute-RUSI, London, 29 April 2002, available online at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s020429a.htm> <08.05.2003>

There are three types of regimes in the southern Mediterranean region. First, the monarchies such as Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia rely heavily on traditional clan ties and religious ties as a basis of legitimacy. Second are the secular dictatorships such as Libya and Syria. The third group includes the so-called democracies of Algeria, Egypt and Mauritania in which the military either directly or indirectly controls political affairs. In the whole southern Mediterranean region, Israel is the only democratic country by Western standards. These oppressive regimes are far from meeting the basic demands of human dignity such as freedom of speech. This puts the legitimacy of these regimes into question. The erosion of state legitimacy brings political Islam to the forefront as seemingly the only alternative to the failed and corrupt regimes of the southern Mediterranean region. Although the power of political Islam is contained by force in Algeria, political Islam is consolidating its ideological base and continues to fight by going underground. The forces of political Islam will probably use any means to gain power. Since political Islam is not confined to a certain state, the fall of any state into the hands of Islamic radicals could foment radical movements in other countries of the southern Mediterranean region.

## **B. TERRORISM**

Because of its many unresolved political, social and religious questions, the southern Mediterranean region may prove to be a fertile breeding ground for terrorism, especially religious terrorism. Since the murder of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat on 6 October 1981, religious fundamentalism has been considered a threat to security and stability in the region. The perception of religious fundamentalism as a threat has gained prominence in light of the terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001. Political Islam has deep roots in the region since it played an important role during the de-colonization and nation-building process.

Thus, it is an essential part of national identity. Moreover, political Islam is gaining support throughout the region. The civil war in Algeria is the most recent example.<sup>9</sup>

The radical Islamist trends within the countries of the region have caused apprehension in Europe and North America. The perception of Islam in European countries as the biggest ideological challenge to secular democracy in Europe is a significant stumbling block in the way of further cooperation. European states not only fear the policies that Islamic governments may pursue; they also fear that even democratically elected Islamic leaders could take advantage of their position to abolish secular democracy. In Europe political elites and public opinion have developed an impression that Islam and democracy can never be compatible. As a result of this impression, the Islamization of politics on the southern shores of the Mediterranean is considered a dangerous threat. For example, the Turkish scholar Emriye Bagdagul Ormanci has said that “the Islamization of southern [Mediterranean] society and politics is considered to be the most dangerous threat that the Mediterranean region may witness in the near future.”<sup>10</sup>

Since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, a new strategic setting has appeared in terms of political Islam. “[R]elatively sparse trends, at national or local level, are now objectively coalescing in a single and enlarged perspective. The wars in Afghanistan, the western Balkans and Chechnya have contributed to unifying and strengthening Islamist trends from the Maghreb to Central Asia.”<sup>11</sup> Relatively weak governments in the southern Mediterranean region have neither the capacity nor the cooperative culture to tackle this complex challenge. Besides, the southern Mediterranean governments usually tend to handle political Islam by suppression

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<sup>9</sup> “The surprising first round success of the fundamentalist FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) party in the December 1991 balloting caused the army to intervene, crack down on the FIS, and postpone the subsequent elections. The fundamentalist response has resulted in a continuous low-grade civil conflict with the secular state apparatus, which nonetheless has allowed elections featuring pro-government and moderate religious-based parties. The FIS's armed wing, the Islamic Salvation Army, disbanded in January 2000 and many armed militants of other groups surrendered under an amnesty program designed to promote national reconciliation. Nevertheless, small numbers of armed militants persist in confronting government forces and carrying out isolated attacks on villages and other types of terrorist attacks.” See CIA World Fact Book, Algeria Country Profile, available online at <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ag.html> <10.30.2003>

<sup>10</sup> Emriye Bagdagul Ormanci, “Mediterranean Security Concerns and NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue,” paper submitted to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Individual Research Fellowship for the Academic Cycle 1998/2000, p. 12, available online at [www.nato.int/acad/fellow/98-00/ormanci.pdf](http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/98-00/ormanci.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Roberto Aliboni, “Strengthening NATO-Mediterranean Relations: A Transition to Partnership,” at the International Seminar “From Dialogue to Partnership, Security in the Mediterranean and NATO: Future Prospects,” p. 1, Rome, Italian Parliament, 30 September 2002, available online at [http://www.iai.it/pdf/mediterraneo/September\\_Seminar\\_inglese.PDF](http://www.iai.it/pdf/mediterraneo/September_Seminar_inglese.PDF) <03.06.2003>

rather than by democratic political means, thus alienating the public from the state structures. This adds a new dimension to the already existing threat.

Additionally, Europe is vulnerable to direct terrorist threats as well as to “spillovers” from conflicts in the southern Mediterranean region. Since Europe has been used as a logistical platform for dissident political and terrorist activities aimed at North Africa and the Middle East, terrorist organizations already have an infrastructure there. Increases in migration have expanded this infrastructure and may have enhanced the efficiency of some of its elements. Post-11 September 2001 findings have shown that Europe has become a logistical platform directed not only at North Africa and the Middle East but also at Europe and the United States.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to regional and global terrorist networks, directly aiming at pro-Western North African governments and at Western governments and societies, the activities of rogue states in the region increase the possibility of a direct terrorist threat to Europe. For instance, Syria and Libya appear to be the main supporters of terrorism in the southern Mediterranean region, and they are cited on the U.S. State Department’s list of states sponsoring terrorism.<sup>13</sup> For this reason, Libya and Syria have been excluded from the multilateral initiatives to bring stability and peace to the region.

### **C. PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION (WMD)**

It has been apparent that several states in the region have an interest in acquiring weapons of mass destruction (WMD). However, it is clear to serious analysts that the rationale for acquiring these weapons largely resides in regional circumstances. The motivation behind the acquisition of WMD is not targeting Europe. Instead, it is a quest for security and regional prestige and influence. Until now, the only concrete ballistic missile attack against Western

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<sup>12</sup> Roberto Aliboni, *Between Dialogue and partnership: What North-South relationship Across the Mediterranean?* (Paper presented to the conference organized by the Istituto Affari Internazionali on “Governing Stability Across the Mediterranean Sea: A Transatlantic Perspective, Sponsored by the NATO Office of Information and Press and the German Marshall Fund of the United States), Rome, 21-23 March 2002, available online at <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/air17/air17.pdf> <08.11.2002>

<sup>13</sup> *Patterns of Global Terrorism-2002*, Released by the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, April 30 2003, Overview of State-Sponsored Terrorism, available online at <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2002/html/19988.htm> <08.05.2003>

territory from North Africa has been the ineffective Libyan Scud attack against the Italian island of Lampedusa in April 1986, after the US aerial attack on Libya.<sup>14</sup>

Israel has a considerable nuclear weapons program with an estimated 100-200 weapons and means of delivery as well.<sup>15</sup> Israel's Arab neighbors feel threatened by this nuclear capability. Since they lack comparable means, they tend to devote more attention to chemical and biological weapons. Both Libya and Syria have chemical weapons, and Algeria has been developing a nuclear infrastructure.<sup>16</sup> Egypt also has active chemical weapons and long-range missile development programs. For the moment, the neighbors of proliferators in North Africa and the Levant are the most likely first victims of WMD use. This does not, however, change the fact that such WMD programs might become capable of threatening European territory in the near term. Indeed, given the fact that Turkey is within range of Syrian missiles, Alliance territory could already be threatened by Damascus.

#### **D. ECONOMIC DISPARITIES, DEMOGRAPHIC IMBALANCE, AND IMMIGRATION**

There is a strong correlation between prosperity and stability. The economy, as the foundation of social development, is an important parameter of the Mediterranean security environment. First, the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean have completely different records of economic development. The countries on the northern shore of the Mediterranean—particularly the European Union countries—have prosperous industrial economies. On the other hand, the southern Mediterranean states' economies rely heavily on

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<sup>14</sup> Ian O. Lesser, *The Renaissance of Mediterranean Security*, p. 6, available online at <http://www.afsa.org/fsj/oct01/lesseroct01.cfm> <03.06.2003>

<sup>15</sup> For more information on Israel's WMD capabilities, see the Country Study Profile for Israel in the Country Profiles of WMD Capabilities, Programs, Use, and Treaty Membership, Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, available online at <http://cns.miis.edu/research/wmdme/israel.htm> <10.09.2003>

<sup>16</sup> Syria has the largest and the most advanced chemical weapons capability in the southern Mediterranean region. Syria has a stockpile of sarin and is believed to be capable of delivering sarin with missiles (SCUD-C with 500 km range and SCUD-B with 300 km range) and combat aircraft. Syria is not known to have produced any specific biological agents. See Paul Kerr, "Top U.S. Officials Voice Concern about Syria's WMD Capability," *Arms Control Today*, May 2003, p. 32, available online at [http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2003\\_05/syria\\_may03.asp](http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2003_05/syria_may03.asp) <08.11.2003>. According to John Bolton, the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs, Libya is "pursuing chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons and ballistic missile systems that would make it still a grave threat to its neighbors both in North Africa and across the Mediterranean Sea, and indeed worldwide possibly." See Radio Sawa Interview with Under Secretary John Bolton, 16 April 2003 at <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/03041601.htm> <08.11.2003>

labor-intensive industries, especially agriculture and tourism. Societies in the southern Mediterranean region are experiencing rapid and uneven economic change which in turn brings economic and social instability.

Second, as important as the economic situation itself, is the lack of regional economic institutions bringing the southern Mediterranean countries together. Trade and economic relations among the states of the region remain very limited since they have competitive economies, rather than being complementary. In contrast, the main European economies are well organized within the EU and exert influence within the global economy as well.

Last but not least, some countries in the region, such as Algeria, have special trade links with the former colonial powers. The factors listed above contribute to social instability by causing high rates of unemployment and unplanned urbanization. The political impacts of economic disparity along with its results could affect these countries' long-term internal and foreign policy orientation.<sup>17</sup>

There is also a drastic imbalance in demographic trends between the two shores of the Mediterranean. The North African population is expected to reach 260 million by the year 2005, while the total population of all the EU members is expected to be approximately 300 million by that time. Moreover, the North African countries are in the midst of a demographic upsurge. 45 per cent of the younger generation in the southern Mediterranean region is under the age of 15 as compared to 25 per cent in Europe. The huge population growth on the southern shore of the Mediterranean promises to increase the already existing heavy burden of North African cities by aggravating the problems of urbanization, scarcity of resources, and social disorder.<sup>18</sup>

This demographic imbalance creates immigration pressures. There are approximately six million immigrants, primarily from North Africa, residing in European countries.<sup>19</sup> The stagnant economies of the southern Mediterranean region and rapidly increasing unemployment encourage migration towards Europe.

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<sup>17</sup> Ormanci, p.17.

<sup>18</sup> Ormanci, p.17.

<sup>19</sup> Ormanci, p.17.

The migration issue also has a psychological aspect since it creates a feeling of insecurity in European societies. European countries believe that migration poses severe economic and social challenges to their internal security and stability. Moreover, this migratory pressure from the South has helped right wing and nationalist forces strengthen their hold in European politics. These nationalist and sometimes even racist tendencies may produce ethnic conflicts within Western European societies. This is another collateral threat to European security.<sup>20</sup>

## **E. ENERGY SECURITY**

Stability in the southern Mediterranean region is directly linked to European energy security. Energy trade statistics show how vulnerable Europe is to any disruption in the flow of energy. Approximately 65 per cent of Europe's oil and natural gas imports pass through the Mediterranean.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the resources of the southern Mediterranean countries provide approximately 40% of the oil and natural gas needs of Europe.<sup>22</sup>

North Africa provides around 25 percent of Europe's natural gas consumption. In southern Europe, dependence on gas imports from the southern Mediterranean region is far higher. Spain relies on Algeria for approximately 40 percent of its gas supply.<sup>23</sup> The figures show a similar dependence on oil imports from the southern Mediterranean region. For instance, 31 percent of Italy's oil imports come from Libya.<sup>24</sup> These figures clearly indicate that the flow of oil and gas from the southern Mediterranean region is crucial for Europe's energy security.

The most important element in the energy equation is not oil, but gas. Oil travels by ship and can easily be directed from one destination to another. Unlike oil, gas generally travels through pipelines, which require huge investments in fixed structures. Moreover, once they are built, pipelines tend to determine geopolitical and geo-economic concerns. Two major pipeline

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<sup>20</sup> Ormanci, p. 18.

<sup>21</sup> Alberto Bin, "NATO's Mediterranean Dimension," in Bo Hultdt, Mats Engman, and Elizabeth Davidsson, eds., *Euro-Mediterranean Security and the Barcelona Process* (Stockholm: Swedish National Defense College, 2002), p. 268.

<sup>22</sup> Ormanci, p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> Bin, p. 268.

<sup>24</sup> Further details on Italy's energy dependency on southern Mediterranean region is available online at <http://energytrends.pnl.gov/italy/it004.htm> <08.04.2003>

routes link the southern Mediterranean region with Europe: the Trans-Med pipeline links Italy and North Africa and the Trans-Maghreb pipeline supplies Algerian gas to Spain and Portugal via Morocco. The Trans-Maghreb pipeline also reaches other NATO countries such as France, Belgium and Germany. These two lines link up with the European gas distribution system.<sup>25</sup>As gas continues to be a highly valued source of energy, projects aimed at increasing the export capacities of existing pipelines and building new ones are underway. The Libyan-Italian underwater gas pipeline project between Libya and Sicily is intended to be finished by 2004. Another gas line project, called Medgaz, would connect Algeria to European markets via Spain. In addition to these major projects, several other gas projects related to other southern Mediterranean countries are underway.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Abdenour Keramane, *Energy Issues in the Mediterranean Region* (Translated from French to English by Candace Paula Ibbotson), *Euro-Mediterranean Security and the Barcelona Process*, p. 95, *Strategic Yearbook 2003*, Swedish National Defense College, Stockholm, 2002

<sup>26</sup> Keramane, p. 97.

### III. NATO'S MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE

Since the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, NATO has made both conceptual and functional changes to adapt itself to the new security environment. The conceptual change concerned the definition of NATO's security functions. NATO has undertaken operations in support of collective security while keeping collective defense as its core function. As a result of this conceptual transformation, NATO has assumed new functions extending beyond its traditional sphere of activity. The Mediterranean Dialogue is a part of NATO's extension beyond its original purposes. According to a summary published by the Alliance, "The aim of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue is to promote a better mutual understanding and confidence, as well as good and friendly relations across the Mediterranean. In addition, it helps correct misperceptions in Mediterranean Dialogue countries on NATO's policies and goals and it represents NATO's contribution to Mediterranean stability and security."<sup>27</sup>

#### A. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ALLIANCE AND NATO'S APPROACH TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

The North Atlantic Treaty, signed on 4 April 1949, established the Alliance as a collective defense organization.<sup>28</sup> The concept of collective defense was enshrined in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. In Article 5, the Allies agreed "that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all."<sup>29</sup> Ever since, Article 5 has constituted the basic guideline for NATO defense planners and strategists. Article 6 of the North Atlantic Treaty, with its amendments, specifically defined Article 5's geographic area of application. Article 5 and Article 6 of the North Atlantic Treaty show that the

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<sup>27</sup> NATO Official Website available online at <http://www.nato.int/med-dial/summary.htm> <03.07.2003>

<sup>28</sup> For further theoretical discussion on the collective defense aspect of NATO, see David Yost, *NATO Transformed—The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001), pp. 6-8.

<sup>29</sup> "The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area." Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, Washington D.C., 4 April 1949. The full text of the North Atlantic Treaty is available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/treaty.htm> <08.01.2003>

Allies limited their strategic vision to the Euro-Atlantic region during the Cold War period. The imminence of the Soviet threat compelled the Allies to focus their efforts on Alliance territory within the context of collective defense. As a result, the periphery and regions “out of area” stayed on the margins of NATO decision-making.

Key events in 1989-1991—“the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of Communist governments in East-Central Europe, the unification of Germany, and the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union”—marked the end of the Cold War and the beginning of NATO’s adaptation to the new security environment. During this adaptation process, the Allies have given the Alliance new roles in addition to its traditional core mission of collective defense. One of the most significant new roles has been “cooperation with former adversaries and other non-NATO countries.”<sup>30</sup> In other words, promoting peace and stability through cooperation became one of the Alliance’s goals.

The Allies confirmed their intention to undertake activities beyond NATO’s traditional borders and its traditional mission of collective defense in the 1991 Strategic Concept. The Allies entitled Part III of the 1991 Strategic Concept “A Broad Approach to Security.” In Part III of the 1991 Strategic Concept, the Allies declared that this broad approach encompassed “three mutually reinforcing elements of Allied security policy; dialogue, cooperation, and the maintenance of a collective defense capability.”<sup>31</sup> Institutional adaptation immediately followed the conceptual adaptation. The day after the publication of the 1991 Strategic Concept, in the Rome declaration of 8 November 1991, the Allies created the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) to promote a more institutional relationship of consultation and cooperation on political and security issues with former Warsaw Pact countries.<sup>32</sup> The NACC’s limitations, however, led the Allies to establish Partnership for Peace (PfP).

On 11 January 1994, Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council “decided to launch an immediate and practical program that will transform the relationship between NATO and participating states. This new program goes

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<sup>30</sup> Yost, p. 72.

<sup>31</sup> North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 7 November 1999, par. 24. It should be noted that some published versions of the 1991 Strategic Concept do not number the first paragraph. This paragraph appears as par. 25 in publications that do not number the first paragraph.

<sup>32</sup> The NACC consisted of meetings of representatives of the invited states with NATO officials. The full text of the Rome Declaration of the Alliance is available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b911108b.htm> <08.03.2003>

beyond dialogue and cooperation to forge a real partnership—a Partnership for Peace. We invite the other states participating in the NACC, and other CSCE countries able and willing to contribute to this program, to join with us in this Partnership.”<sup>33</sup> PfP, by including states from the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in addition to former Warsaw Pact countries and former Soviet republics, marked the beginning of a new chapter in NATO’s effort to institutionalize a cooperative approach to security. Finally, the Alliance’s 1999 Strategic Concept elevated partnership into a “fundamental security task” in order “[t]o promote wide-ranging partnership, cooperation, and dialogue with other countries in the Euro-Atlantic area, with the aim of increasing transparency, mutual confidence and the capacity for joint action with the Alliance.”<sup>34</sup> The 1999 Strategic Concept thus clarified the place of partnership in the Alliance.

NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue should be mentioned in this context.<sup>35</sup> In the early 1990s, NATO’s cooperative security efforts focused on East-Central Europe due to the need to deal with the consequences of the end of the Cold War. However, as indicated in the 1991 Strategic Concept, immediately after the end of the Cold War, the Allies concluded that “The stability and peace of the countries on the southern periphery of Europe are important for the security of the Alliance.”<sup>36</sup> During the period from the publication of the 1991 Strategic Concept to the official launch of the Mediterranean Dialogue in December 1994, the intention to pursue more extensive cooperation with the southern Mediterranean countries had been mentioned in several NATO documents.<sup>37</sup> On 1 December 1994, the North Atlantic Council declared that NATO was prepared “to establish contacts, on a case-by-case basis, between the Alliance and Mediterranean non-member countries with a view to contributing to the strengthening of regional

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<sup>33</sup> Declaration of heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council (The Brussels Summit Declaration), 11 January 1994, par. 13, Brussels, Belgium available online at <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b940111a.htm> <08.03.2003>

<sup>34</sup> North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 24 April 1999, par. 10, available online at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm> <10.09.2003>

<sup>35</sup> Yost, p. 75.

<sup>36</sup> North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 7 November 1999, par. 11. The 1990-1991 Gulf War was an eye-opener for the Alliance at a time when the Alliance efforts focused on East-Central Europe. Par. 11 of the 1991 Strategic Concept makes specific reference to 1991 Gulf war and “the build-up of military power and the proliferation of weapons technologies in the area, including weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles capable of reaching the territory of some member states of the Alliance.”

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, North Atlantic Council-Foreign Ministers/M-NAC-1(93)-38, par. 11, 10 June 1993, Athens, Greece; North Atlantic Council-Heads of State and Government/M-1(94)3, par. 22, 10-11 January 1994, Brussels, Belgium. Also see North Atlantic Council-Foreign Ministers/M-NAC-1(94)46, par. 29, 9 June 1994, Istanbul, Turkey.

stability.”<sup>38</sup> From that time on, the membership and the scope of the Mediterranean Dialogue have expanded. In sum, the Mediterranean Dialogue has been considered a key instrument in support of the Alliance’s overall strategy of cooperative security, built upon partnership, dialogue and cooperation.

## **B. THE EVOLUTION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE**

During the Cold War, the Mediterranean formed part of the southern flank of the Alliance in the official NATO concept, because the Allies focused on the containment of the Soviet Union. As a result, the area received subordinate attention from the Alliance. Nevertheless, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria, the increasing concern about WMD proliferation, and the precarious social and economic situation in the southern Mediterranean countries prompted European countries to increase their level of attention to the southern Mediterranean region. However, this shift of attention towards the southern Mediterranean region differed among the European countries. In the early 1990s, southern European countries such as Italy and Spain lobbied hard for NATO to devote more attention to the southern Mediterranean region, whereas northern European countries wanted the Alliance to focus on central and eastern European countries. Although the initiation of the Alliance’s partnership with selected southern Mediterranean countries was to take five years, NATO first declared its interest in improved relations with countries of the southern Mediterranean region in the 1991 Strategic Concept.

The Allies also wish to maintain peaceful and non-adversarial relations with the countries in the Southern Mediterranean and Middle East. The stability and peace of the countries on the southern periphery of Europe are important for the security of the Alliance, as the 1991 Gulf War has shown. This is all the more so because of the build-up of military power and the proliferation of weapons technologies in the area, including weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles capable of reaching the territory of some member states of the Alliance.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> North Atlantic Council-Foreign Ministers Meeting/M-NAC-2 (94) 116, par. 19, 1 December 1994, Brussels.

<sup>39</sup> North Atlantic Council, 7 November 1991, par. 11, available online at <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b911108a.htm> <03.07.2003>

At the January 1994 Brussels Summit, the heads of state and government decided that NATO would play a greater role in strengthening regional stability and tasked the North Atlantic Council in Permanent Session “to continue to review the overall situation” and to develop appropriate measures to this end.<sup>40</sup> At their Brussels meeting in December 1994, NATO Foreign Ministers gave this general commitment to Mediterranean dialogue concrete shape by agreeing to “establish contacts, on a case-by-case basis, between the Alliance and Mediterranean non-member countries with a view to contributing to the strengthening of regional stability.”<sup>41</sup>

The December 1994 Brussels meeting of the North Atlantic Council was therefore a landmark in the development of the Alliance’s approach to the Mediterranean region. As a result of the December 1994 decision, on 8 February 1995 the North Atlantic Council in Permanent Session invited Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia to participate in the initial round of the Mediterranean Dialogue. In November 1995, Jordan was invited to join the Dialogue too. Algeria joined the Dialogue in 2000.

Initially, there was some ambiguity within the Alliance about the aims and the scope of the Mediterranean Dialogue. This largely stemmed from the fact that the Alliance’s efforts were still primarily focused on the countries of central and eastern Europe. NATO officially initiated the PfP on 10 January 1994, almost a year before the Mediterranean Dialogue was launched. The former received more emphasis for several reasons, as noted above. However, it is worth noting that the success of PfP was source of satisfaction for the Alliance and later proved to be crucial in the adaptation of the Alliance to the new security environment. In other words, the Alliance’s interest in pursuing the Mediterranean Dialogue was reinforced by the success of PfP. At a time of intense debates about the future functions of NATO and the elaboration of the conceptual and practical arrangements for cooperation with former adversaries and other non-NATO countries in the CSCE, the Allies did not have many resources to devote to the Mediterranean Dialogue. During this initial period (1994-1997), the political dialogue was limited to meetings between the NATO Secretariat’s International Staff and the embassies of the Mediterranean Dialogue countries. In parallel to the low profile of the political dialogue, few practical activities were organized.

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<sup>40</sup> NATO Communique, North Atlantic Council-Heads of State and Government/M-1(94)3, 10-11 January 1994, par. 22, Brussels, Belgium available online at <http://nato.int/med-dila/comm.htm> <03.07.2003>

<sup>41</sup> NATO Communique, North Atlantic Council-Foreign Ministers meeting/M-NAC-2(94)116, 1 December 1994, par. 19, Brussels, Belgium available online at <http://nato.int/med-dila/comm.htm> <03.07.2003>

However, after the Allies gained confidence that PfP was properly established, they began to improve the political and practical dimension of the Mediterranean Dialogue. There are three signposts in the further development of the Mediterranean Dialogue: the establishment of the Mediterranean Cooperation Group (MCG) at the Madrid Summit in July 1997, the Washington Summit of NATO Heads of State and Government in April 1999, and the Prague Summit of NATO Heads of State and Government in November 2002.

The establishment of the MCG extended the scope of political dialogue in three ways. First, the Alliance had a permanent body dealing with the Mediterranean partners. Second, the MCG allowed the Alliance's member states to become directly involved in bilateral (19+1) consultations with each of the Mediterranean partners. Third, by providing access to an Alliance body operating under the North Atlantic Council, the MCG increased the visibility of the Alliance in the eyes of the Mediterranean partners.

As mentioned earlier, the Washington Summit of NATO Heads of State and Government in April 1999 elevated "partnership" into a "fundamental security task" in the 1999 Strategic Concept.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the 1999 Strategic Concept moved the Mediterranean Dialogue to center stage by citing it in the section entitled "Partnership, Cooperation, And Dialogue"<sup>43</sup> along with the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, Partnership for Peace, the NATO- Russia Founding Act, and the NATO-Ukraine Charter.

The Prague Summit of NATO Heads of State and Government in November 2002 is a landmark in that Alliance leaders approved a package of measures to upgrade the Mediterranean Dialogue. At the Prague Summit, Alliance leaders made the following declaration:

We reaffirm that security in Europe is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean. We therefore decide to upgrade substantially the political and practical dimensions of our Mediterranean Dialogue as an integral part of the Alliance's cooperative approach to security. In this respect, we encourage intensified practical cooperation and effective interaction on security matters of common concern, including terrorism-related issues as appropriate, where NATO can provide added value. We reiterate that the Mediterranean Dialogue and other

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<sup>42</sup> North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 24 April 1999, par. 10.

<sup>43</sup> Paragraphs 33-38 of the 1999 Strategic Concept are put under the headline of "Partnership, Cooperation, And Dialogue".

international efforts, including the EU Barcelona process, are complementary and mutually reinforcing.<sup>44</sup>

Additionally, at the Prague Summit, the Alliance leaders approved an official document entitled “Upgrading the Mediterranean Dialogue Including an Inventory of Possible Areas of Cooperation.”<sup>45</sup> This document declares that “strengthening and deepening of relations between NATO and Mediterranean Dialogue countries is among the highest priorities for the Alliance.”<sup>46</sup> The special emphasis upon “intensified practical cooperation and effective interaction on security matters of common concern” indicates that the Prague Summit Declaration dispelled any ambiguities regarding the place of the Mediterranean Dialogue in NATO’s agenda.

### **C. PRINCIPLES AND MODALITIES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE<sup>47</sup>**

First of all, the Dialogue is expansive in that it has no restrictions in terms of participation and content. The number of Dialogue countries has increased from five to seven. At the moment, key countries such as Libya and Syria are not members of the Dialogue. However, the policy of the Mediterranean Dialogue concerning membership leaves the door open for these countries. As to the content, the Dialogue has made considerable progress. Political discussions have become more frequent and more intense. The number and the diversity of cooperative activities have increased significantly. That is, the Dialogue is open-ended and flexible.

Second, the Dialogue is essentially bilateral in structure, in that it brings each of the participants and the Alliance together in a 19+1 format. This principle has proved extremely important since the countries in the region have diverse security needs and cooperation cultures.

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<sup>44</sup> Prague summit declaration, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Prague on 21 November 2002, par. 10, available online at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm> <08.12.2003>

<sup>45</sup> “Upgrading the Mediterranean Dialogue Including an Inventory of Possible Areas of Cooperation,” Official document approved at the Prague Summit of NATO Heads of State and Government, November 2002, available online at <http://www.nato.int/med-dial/upgrading.htm> <08.12.2003>

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, par. 2. Alberto Bin makes the same point in his 2002 book chapter. “The strengthening and deepening of relations between NATO and the Mediterranean Dialogue countries is now considered among the highest priorities for the Alliance.” See Alberto Bin, “NATO’s Mediterranean Dimension,” p. 276.

<sup>47</sup> The discussion in this section has benefited from the book chapter by Alberto Bin, “NATO’s Mediterranean Dimension,” p. 268.

It is, therefore, hard to bring such diverse interests into a multilateral forum. Besides, this NATO approach has proved extremely valuable since it has made the Dialogue less vulnerable to regional crises such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Nevertheless, the Dialogue allows multilateral discussion as well by bringing the Dialogue countries and the Alliance together in a 19+7 format.

Third, all of the Mediterranean partners are offered the same basis for cooperative activities and discussion with NATO. This non-discriminatory approach allows the participant countries to specify the extent of their cooperation. This adds more flexibility to the content of the Dialogue, and it is extremely valuable for dispelling misperceptions about NATO. Moreover, NATO is bringing Arab countries and Israel together in the same forum through the Mediterranean Dialogue. By doing so, the Mediterranean Dialogue helps to dispel the mistaken impression—in particular within political and bureaucratic circles in Arab governments—that Western countries always tend to support Israel against the Arabs.

Fourth, the Dialogue is complementary, as stated in NATO's basic texts.<sup>48</sup> It is intended to reinforce other international efforts to establish and enhance cooperation with southern Mediterranean countries such as the EU's Barcelona Process and the efforts by the Western European Union (WEU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). This prevents duplication and avoids waste of limited resources. The Allies attach great importance to the implementation of the principle of complementarity and mutual reinforcement in developing the Dialogue. This does not exclude, however, the possibility of closer coordination among various international organizations playing a role in the region.<sup>49</sup>

Fifth, activities within the Dialogue essentially take place on a self-funding basis. This has been regarded as a stumbling block in the way of further participation in NATO activities by the Mediterranean Dialogue countries. Notwithstanding the principle of self-funding, several exceptions have been made. For example, in 2002, the participation of Mediterranean Dialogue countries in military programs “was supported for the first time by a Dialogue-specific military

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<sup>48</sup> See, for example, North Atlantic Council, Heads of State and Government Meeting/M-1(97)81, par. 13, 8 July 1997, Madrid, Spain. Also see North Atlantic Council, Washington Summit Communique, par. 29, available online at <http://www.nato.int/med-dial/comm.htm#970529> <08.04.2003>.

<sup>49</sup> Jette Nordam, Head of NATO Multilateral and Regional affairs in NATO's Political Affairs Division, “The Mediterranean Dialogue: Dispelling Misconceptions and Building Confidence,” *NATO Review*, WEBEDITION No.4-July-Aug.1997 Vol.45-pp.26-29, available online at <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1997/9704-06.htm> <03.06.2003>

budget.”<sup>50</sup> The self-funding principle has sparked discussion among Alliance decision-makers. The official document approved at the Prague Summit of NATO Heads of State and Government in November 2002 dedicated a specific chapter to the funding issue.<sup>51</sup> The Allies concluded that NATO may exceptionally grant financial assistance in support of Mediterranean Dialogue partners’ participation on a case-by-case basis. Moreover, this document states that “The possibility of using a trust fund mechanism to assist MD [Mediterranean Dialogue] countries to support specific activities could be explored.” However, the document specifies the limits of the trust fund mechanism: “Similarly to other NATO trust fund mechanisms, these activities should be project-based and sponsored by at least one NATO member and one MD [Mediterranean Dialogue] country.”<sup>52</sup> These discussions related to funding have already led to action. The MCG announced that “NATO Military Authorities have a dedicated Mediterranean Dialogue Military Budget to support the programme and facilitate the participation of Mediterranean Dialogue partners which request financial assistance, to attend military activities.”<sup>53</sup>

#### **D. DIMENSIONS OF COOPERATION**

The Mediterranean Dialogue has two mutually supporting dimensions—political and practical. The objective of the Mediterranean Dialogue is primarily political: “to contribute to regional security and stability, achieve better mutual understanding and dispel any misconceptions about NATO among Dialogue countries.”<sup>54</sup> These misconceptions largely stem from a lack of understanding about the transformation of the Alliance in the southern Mediterranean countries. The myth that NATO is in search of new enemies is widespread throughout the southern Mediterranean region. For this reason and others, the Allies need to address the security concerns of the Mediterranean partners. To better achieve this aim, the Alliance has developed a practical dimension as well.

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<sup>50</sup> Alberto Bin, “NATO’s Mediterranean Dimension,” p. 274.

<sup>51</sup> Upgrading the Mediterranean Dialogue Including an Inventory of Possible Areas of Cooperation, Chapter IV.

<sup>52</sup> Upgrading the Mediterranean Dialogue Including an Inventory of Possible Areas of Cooperation, Chapter IV, par. 3.

<sup>53</sup> 2003 Mediterranean Dialogue Work Program (MDWP), p. 11, available online at <http://www.nato.int/med-dial/2003/mdwp-2003.pdf> <08.16.2003>

<sup>54</sup> Upgrading the Mediterranean Dialogue Including an Inventory of Possible Areas of Cooperation, Chapter I, par. 3.

## **1. The Political Dimension and the Mediterranean Cooperation Group (MCG)**

The political dimension of the Dialogue has consisted of regular bilateral political discussions. These discussions provide the opportunity for extensive briefings on NATO activities, including the Alliance's programs of external outreach and partnership, its internal adaptation and its general approach to building cooperative security structures. In turn, Mediterranean partners are invited to share their views with NATO. The political aspect is the most important feature of the Dialogue, because it directly serves the Dialogue's aim of mutual confidence building and dispelling misperceptions.

Initially, the Dialogue was limited to meetings between the NATO Secretariat's International Staff and the embassies of the Mediterranean Dialogue countries. At their Summit in Madrid in July 1997, NATO Heads of State and Government decided to establish a new committee on the Mediterranean, the Mediterranean Cooperation Group (MCG). The MCG operates under the authority of the North Atlantic Council, and it is responsible for conducting the Dialogue activities as well as for the bilateral political discussions with individual partners. The MCG normally meets at the level of political advisors from each member state's delegation at NATO Headquarters. Following a North Atlantic Council decision in October 2001, bilateral and multilateral consultations are held at the level of ambassadors. However, the MCG continues to provide the framework for regular intra-Alliance discussions relevant to the Mediterranean Dialogue.<sup>55</sup> These discussions take place once a year. However, in principle, additional meetings can be held on an ad hoc basis.

The establishment of such a permanent group was important for the institutionalization of the Dialogue. The Mediterranean Cooperation Group has served as a separate body to deal with the Mediterranean Dialogue issues. Until the establishment of the MCG in 1997, the Alliance's Political Committee had had the responsibility for the Mediterranean Dialogue. Thus, the participant countries had been restricted to contacts with NATO officials, whose latitude for political discussion is limited. Within the MCG, however, the political advisers of the

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<sup>55</sup> Alberto Bin, "NATO's Mediterranean Dimension," p. 271.

participant countries have been directly in touch with the NATO member nations' representatives.<sup>56</sup>

## **2. The Practical Dimension**

NATO has developed a practical dimension to bolster the political dimension of the Dialogue. Cooperation activities are laid out in an annual Work Program. The Mediterranean Dialogue Work Program (MDWP) was first established in 1997. The annual MDWP is usually prepared by the NATO Staff and is based on inputs received from relevant NATO bodies as well as Mediterranean Dialogue countries. Once agreed by the North Atlantic Council (NAC), the annual MDWP is submitted to the Mediterranean Dialogue countries for their consideration and comments before its actual implementation. The MDWP includes activities concerning information, civil emergency planning, science and the environment, crisis management, defense policy and strategy, small arms and light weapons, global humanitarian mine action, protective security, combating terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, defense support, defense reform and defense economics. Moreover, the annual Work Program includes a specific Mediterranean Dialogue Military Program (MDMP).<sup>57</sup>

Information sharing is the key component of the MDWP since the major aim of the initiative is to facilitate mutual understanding between the Alliance and the Mediterranean Dialogue countries. NATO has therefore supported conferences and seminars for representatives from Mediterranean Dialogue countries. Besides opinion leaders, journalists and academicians, participants in these informational activities have included senior politicians and bureaucrats. Another important step in the informational domain has been the establishment of NATO Contact Point Embassies in Mediterranean Dialogue countries. That is, the embassy of a NATO member country represents the Alliance in each Mediterranean Dialogue country. A similar system has been successfully operating in Central and Eastern European partner countries since

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<sup>56</sup> Pedro Moya, NATO's Role in the Mediterranean, Draft General Report Presented to the Mediterranean Special Group of NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 25 August 1997, p. 11, available online at <http://www.nato-pa.int/archivedpub/comrep/1997/ap245gse.pdf> <11.03.2003>

<sup>57</sup> This information is taken from the 2003 MDWP. The 2003 MDWP is available online at <http://www.nato.int/med-dial/2003/mdwp-2003.pdf> <08.16.2003>

1992. The program has been fully operational in Mediterranean Dialogue countries since January 1999.<sup>58</sup>

The practical cooperation includes a substantial military aspect. On 29 May 1997, the North Atlantic Council decided to open selected military activities to Mediterranean Dialogue partners. Since then, the Military Program (MP) has focused mainly on educational and training activities offered annually to Mediterranean Dialogue countries. The MP activities may be divided into three categories: (1) courses at the NATO School in Oberammergau, (2) courses and academic activities at the NATO Defense College in Rome, and (3) specific activities conducted by the two NATO Strategic Commands.<sup>59</sup> These commands were known as Allied Command Europe (ACE) and Allied Command Atlantic (ACLANT) until June 2003, when the former became Allied Command Operations and the latter became Allied Command Transformation.

The NATO School in Oberammergau has opened PfP courses to participation by Mediterranean Dialogue countries since 1997.<sup>60</sup> The majority of the academic and research activities organized by the NATO Defense College in Rome are open to the participation of Mediterranean Dialogue partners. The NATO Defense College in Rome offers courses to high-ranking military officers of the Mediterranean Dialogue countries. These courses are intended to enhance their understanding of the policies and activities of the Alliance. Furthermore, the NATO Defense College runs a specifically tailored program for Mediterranean Dialogue partners, including fellowships, workshops, and an annual International Research Seminar co-sponsored by a defense institute from one of the Mediterranean Dialogue countries.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Abdel Momen Said Aly and Muhammed Kadry Said, NATO & South in the Mediterranean in Search Of a Concert for Moderation, Cooperation and Peace, International Seminar “From Dialogue to Partnership. Security in the Mediterranean and NATO: Future Prospects”, Rome, Italian Parliament, 30 September 2002 available online at <http://www.nato.int/docu/conf/2002/c020930/c020930b.pdf> <03.09.2003>

<sup>59</sup> This classification belongs to Alberto Bin. See Alberto Bin, “NATO’s Mediterranean Dimension,” p. 274.

<sup>60</sup> These courses include crisis management, peacekeeping, multinational forces, civil-military cooperation in civil-emergency management, conventional arms control implementation and environmental protection.

<sup>61</sup> For further information see the NATO Defense College’s official website at [www.ndc.nato.int](http://www.ndc.nato.int) <08.16.2003>

The MP also includes specific activities conducted by the two NATO Strategic Commands.<sup>62</sup> Since July 2001, Dialogue countries have been eligible to participate with troops in selected NATO/PfP military exercises such as search and rescue, maritime security, medical evacuation, peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance. Moreover, three of the Mediterranean Dialogue countries—Egypt, Jordan and Morocco—have already cooperated militarily with the Alliance in the NATO-led peacekeeping operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.

Furthermore, military representatives from the 19 NATO nations and the Mediterranean Dialogue countries come together at the Mediterranean Dialogue Military Consultation Meetings. The Consultation Meetings are held twice a year at the NATO Headquarters in Brussels, in a multilateral format with the 19 NATO nations and the 7 Mediterranean Dialogue countries.<sup>63</sup> It is noteworthy that in this forum Israel and a number of Arab countries come together to discuss military-related matters.

Some collateral benefits might be expected from these military activities—for instance, improving civil-military relations in southern Mediterranean countries. These exchanges and combined operations give the Alliance an opportunity to contribute to the democratization of the

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<sup>62</sup> “[A]ctivities conducted by the two NATO Strategic Commands...include in-country training opportunities by the Alliance’s Mobile Training Teams (MTT) in areas such as NATO Terminology, Public Information, and Crisis Response Operations; the possibility for Dialogue countries to observe NATO/PfP military exercises, to tour NATO military bodies, and to take part in staff officer exchanges with NATO; and calls by the NATO Standing Naval Forces (Standing Naval Force Mediterranean/STANAVFORMED, Standing Naval Force Atlantic/STANAVFORLANT, Mine Countermeasure Force South/MCMFS) at ports in the Dialogue countries.” Alberto Bin, “NATO’s Mediterranean Dimension,” p. 274. However, at their meeting on 12 June 2003, Alliance Defense Ministers agreed on the design of a new streamlined military command structure. At the strategic level, therefore, since June 2003 there has been only one command with operational responsibilities, Allied Command Operations commanded by SACEUR. It will perform the operational duties undertaken previously by ACE and ACLANT. [http://www.nato.int/issues/military\\_structure/command/index-e.htm](http://www.nato.int/issues/military_structure/command/index-e.htm) <08.17.2003>

<sup>63</sup> “The International Military Staff is responsible for organizing the Mediterranean Dialogue Military Consultation Meetings and the exchange of visits both at a senior and staff level. The Consultation Meetings are held twice a year at the NATO Headquarters in Brussels (Belgium) and in a multilateral format with the 19 NATO nations + 7 Mediterranean Dialogue countries. The last meeting was successfully held on 14 March 2003. We had 22 officials from all seven MD countries together with NATO members and Defense Attaches serving in Contact Point Embassies on an equal basis for open discussion and an exchange of views on the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue military co-operation. Generally speaking, the overall aim of these meetings is to discuss together better ways to strengthen our military co-operation and meet both NATO and Mediterranean Dialogue nations’ expectations. They give Mediterranean Dialogue partner military authorities not only first hand information on the content of the program but also a taste of the NATO working atmosphere, which is essential in building confidence. As far as the visits to Mediterranean Dialogue countries are concerned their purpose is to brief Mediterranean Dialogue military decision-makers on the military aspects of NATO, on activities currently available for their participation and to solicit their specific objectives and priorities for additional Mediterranean Dialogue military activities to be included in the next Military Program.” 2003 MDWP, p. 9. NATO Standardization Agency activities could be considered within the informational aspect of the Military Program. In 2001, for the first time, Mediterranean Dialogue countries were invited to attend a meeting of the Environmental Protection Working Group and some of them are already participating in the Submarine Emergency and Rescue Working Group.

armed forces in these countries by stressing the importance of civilian and democratic control of the military.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, courses related to defense management and economics may help the Mediterranean Dialogue countries optimize their defense budgets. At the same time, the Mediterranean Dialogue countries can help NATO countries gain a better understanding of issues in North Africa and the Middle East.

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<sup>64</sup> Moya, p. 12.

## **IV. OTHER INITIATIVES CONCERNING THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION**

The Barcelona Process of the European Union (EU) is the main non-NATO European initiative concerning the Mediterranean region, and it has a larger number of participants than NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue. Until now, the contribution of the EU to security in the southern Mediterranean region has been mainly political and economic, focused primarily on improving the economic and social underpinnings of stability.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has a Mediterranean Dialogue with modest discussion programs, including a security component. However, the OSCE initiatives do not involve practical substantive cooperation.

The Western European Union (WEU) has pursued a Mediterranean Dialogue with some practical exchanges and exercises in planning and crisis management. The transfer of certain WEU activities to the EU has, however, stalled the WEU's Mediterranean Dialogue.

The Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (Mediterranean Forum), initiated by France and Egypt, functions as a strictly regional institution of intergovernmental dialogue. The major weakness of the Mediterranean Forum is its lack of concrete cooperation activities. In addition to the aforementioned initiatives, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Summits are briefly discussed.

### **A. THE BARCELONA PROCESS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU)**

The EU's Mediterranean partnership, the most ambitious cooperation scheme in the region, was launched in Barcelona in late 1995. It has a larger membership than NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue: Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, the Palestinian National Authority, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey. It also has a wider scope of cooperation than NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue.

The EU's scheme of cooperation with Mediterranean countries has adopted the basket approach. It consists of three baskets: the first holding the political and security issues, the second containing the social and cultural issues, and the third devoted to the economic issues.

The economic basket is by far the most developed of the three. This underlines the EU's basic approach to the Mediterranean—that is, the EU is concerned primarily with economic security.<sup>65</sup> This fact also makes clear why the European Union is reaching out to its southern neighbors. The EU offers what the region needs most: economic cooperation.

Until now, the contribution of the EU to security in the Mediterranean region has been mainly political and economic, focused primarily on improving the economic and social underpinnings of stability in North Africa. However, the EU alone cannot carry the entire burden of building new relations with “the South.”<sup>66</sup> The first reason is that in “hard security” matters, the EU does not have sufficient capabilities. The second reason is that the EU does not include key countries such as Turkey and the United States. The United States has a well-established tradition of relations with the countries in the region, especially Israel and Egypt. Turkey, as a secular and democratic country, also has been involved in bilateral and multilateral relations with the countries in the region. Turkey's strategic partnership with Israel is one of the most promising of the bilateral ties. Moreover, Turkey has cultural ties with the region, and could serve as a mediator in developing confidence and mutual understanding.

The aid and investment aspects of the Barcelona process—always modest in comparison to programs aimed eastward and the EU's own cohesion spending—will face new pressures as the EU budgets come under greater scrutiny. The political-economic landscape in Europe seems unlikely to support high levels of assistance across the Mediterranean.<sup>67</sup> It should also be noted that two of the members of the EU's Mediterranean partnership are expected to become members of the EU in May 2004—Cyprus and Malta.

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<sup>65</sup> Joffe, p. 3.

<sup>66</sup> Rina Weltner-Puig, “The Changing International Context of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: The Impact of the Twin Enlargement Process of the EU and NATO on the Mediterranean Region,” p. 15, available online at [http://selen.uab.es/\\_cs\\_iuee/abstracts/weltnerpuig.htm](http://selen.uab.es/_cs_iuee/abstracts/weltnerpuig.htm) , <03.06.2002>

<sup>67</sup> Rina Weltner-Puig, p. 15.

## **B. THE MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)**

The OSCE's involvement in the Mediterranean region began with the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. The chapter on "Questions relating to Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean" of the Helsinki Final Act stated the conviction of the participants "that security in Europe is to be considered in the broader context of world security and is closely linked with security in the Mediterranean as a whole, and that accordingly the process of improving security should not be confined to Europe but should extend to other parts of the world, and in particular to the Mediterranean area."<sup>68</sup> At the same time, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, which was renamed the OSCE in 1994) declared its intention "to promote further contacts and co-operation with the non-participating Mediterranean States in other relevant fields."<sup>69</sup> After the promulgation of the Helsinki Final Act, the non-CSCE Mediterranean states were invited to make oral and written contributions to subsequent CSCE meetings. Moreover, expert meetings were held on economic, environmental and cultural issues.<sup>70</sup>

The 1994 Budapest meeting of the CSCE Heads of State or Government was the turning point for the CSCE's approach to the Mediterranean region. In Budapest, the CSCE decided to establish an open-ended Contact Group meeting at the expert level to further enhance interactions with Mediterranean Partner Countries—Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. The deliberations of the Contact Group provide an opportunity for participating OSCE states and the six Mediterranean Partners to maintain dialogue by gathering around the same table to discuss and exchange ideas on a number of issues pertinent to countries on both sides of the Mediterranean.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, since 1995, annual Mediterranean seminars have been held. These seminars are the backbone of the OSCE's dialogue with the Mediterranean Partner

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<sup>68</sup> "Questions relating to Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean," Helsinki Final Act, available online at <http://www.osce.org/docs/english/1990-1999/summits/helfa75e.htm> <03.08.2003>

<sup>69</sup> "Questions relating to Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean," Helsinki Final Act.

<sup>70</sup> A number of expert meetings were held on Mediterranean issues mostly relating to the economic, environmental, scientific, and cultural fields, to which the Mediterranean States were invited to participate: Valetta, 1979; Venice, 1984; Palma de Mallorca, 1990. More information on these meetings is available online at <http://www.osce.org/docs/english/expertmedie.htm> <03.07.2003>

<sup>71</sup> More information is available at <http://www.osce.org/ec/meetings/index.php3> <08.20.2003>

Countries. The partners are also invited to meetings concerning all three baskets of the OSCE: the political-military, economic, and human dimensions.

Another important aspect of the cooperation between the OSCE and the southern Mediterranean region is the participation of the Mediterranean Partner Countries in OSCE field activities. In June 1998, the Permanent Council adopted a decision providing for representatives of the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs) to make short-term visits to the OSCE Missions, and to include observers sent by partners in the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) election monitoring or supervision operations. The OSCE Secretariat and the ODIHR respectively drew up modalities for the participation of the MPCs. All but one of the MPCs participated in a workshop in Sarajevo in May 1999 organized by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some of the Mediterranean Partner Countries have also participated in election monitoring activities organized by the ODIHR.<sup>72</sup>

The OSCE can play an important role in fostering cooperation in the region, especially in its areas of comparative advantage. The OSCE deals with a wide range of security-related issues, including arms control, preventive diplomacy, confidence- and security-building measures, human rights, democratization, election monitoring, and economic and environmental security. Moreover, the OSCE's relatively low profile makes it less vulnerable than some other international institutions to the persistent tensions in the Middle East.<sup>73</sup> However, the OSCE's focus has primarily been on relations among its member nations. Therefore, the OSCE is unlikely to substantially increase its involvement in the Mediterranean region.

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<sup>72</sup> The OSCE is currently running 19 missions and field activities located in south-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. They work on the ground to facilitate political processes, prevent or settle conflicts, and promote civil society and the rule of law. Further information on OSCE field activities is available online at [http://www.osce.org/field\\_activities/](http://www.osce.org/field_activities/) <08.20.2003>

<sup>73</sup> Ian Lesser, Jerrold Green, F. Stephen Larrabee, and Michael Zanini, *The Future of NATO's Mediterranean Initiative: Evolution and Next Steps* (Santa Monica, California: Rand, 2000), p. 40, available online at <http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1164/> <10.09.2003>

### **C. THE MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE OF THE WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION (WEU)**

The WEU Dialogue began in 1992 in order to exchange views on Mediterranean security and defense issues. Currently the WEU Dialogue includes Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia. The Dialogue has taken place between WEU representatives and officials and Mediterranean partner ambassadors in Brussels. Political talks have been supported by seminars on Mediterranean security, occasional briefings by the WEU military staff and planning cells, information seminars involving military staff from WEU and Mediterranean partner countries, and visits to the WEU satellite center in Torrejon, Spain. Mediterranean partner representatives have also been invited to observe military exercises conducted by the WEU.

The WEU's Mediterranean Dialogue was interrupted when the EU took over certain WEU activities were transferred to the EU. The process, which began with the EU's Cologne Summit in June 1999, stalled the WEU's Mediterranean Dialogue. However, there are discussions underway to revitalize the dialogue initiated by the WEU and incorporate it into the EU's Barcelona Process.<sup>74</sup>

### **D. THE FORUM FOR DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN (MEDITERRANEAN FORUM)**

The Mediterranean Forum was formed on the initiative of Egypt and France. Its first meeting was held in Alexandria on 3-4 July 1994, when the Mediterranean Forum came into being with the participation of Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey. At the outset, three working groups were created: the Political Working Group, the Economic and Social Working Group, and the Cultural Working Group. During the Political Working Group meeting in Tunisia in April 1996, it was decided that the Senior Officials Meetings ought to be merged with the Political Working Group and that the

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<sup>74</sup> For further information see the report presented to the WEU assembly by Mr. Yañez Barnuevo, Rapporteur, on behalf of the Political Committee at [http://www.assembly-weu.org/en/documents/sessions\\_ordinaires/rpt/2002/1806.html](http://www.assembly-weu.org/en/documents/sessions_ordinaires/rpt/2002/1806.html) <03.07.2003>

Economic and Social Working Group ought to be merged with the Cultural Working Group and renamed the Economic Working Group.<sup>75</sup> The Mediterranean Forum is a strictly regional institution of inter-governmental dialogue. There is a rotation of the Presidency every year and at the end of each Presidency a Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting is held. Senior Officials of the Mediterranean Forum hold 3 to 4 meetings every year. There are also expert level meetings. Seminars and workshops are held regularly on topics of common interest.

The eleven members of the Mediterranean Forum continue to hold regular ministerial meetings on regional issues. In its sessions the Forum has discussed the Middle East Peace Process, terrorism, organized crime, and economic and cultural cooperation.<sup>76</sup> The major weakness of the Mediterranean Forum is that to date it has neither produced concrete cooperation activities nor shown any intention to do so. This explains the fact that it has neither a permanent secretariat nor any funds. Therefore all activities are supported by the state or states wishing to engage in a seminar or meeting and the functions of a secretariat are performed by the coordinator of the term Presidency.<sup>77</sup> Some observers regard the absence of Israel from the Mediterranean Forum as another weakness, given the Forum's interest in the Middle East Peace Process.

## **E. MENA (MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA) SUMMITS**

Between 1994 and 1997, the World Economic Forum organized four yearly summits to encourage private sector investment in countries of the Middle East and North Africa. The MENA summit conferences began in the political afterglow of the Oslo Peace Process. The idea, devised by the U.S. administration, was to create economic interdependencies between Israel and the Arab states, promote personal contacts between the two sides and foster trade, investment

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<sup>75</sup> This information has benefited from a summary of the Mediterranean Forum published by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, available online at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ar/mediterraneanforum.htm> <04.06.2003>

<sup>76</sup> Lesser et al., *The Future of NATO's Mediterranean Initiative: Evolution and Next Steps*, p. 38.

<sup>77</sup> This information has benefited from a summary of the Mediterranean Forum published by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, available online at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ar/mediterraneanforum.htm> <04.06.2003>

and development.<sup>78</sup> Conferences were supported by a permanent secretariat, and participants agreed in principle to the establishment of a MENA development bank. Continuing tension in the Middle East prompted the World Economic Forum to postpone all MENA activities indefinitely. The last MENA Summit was held in Doha, Qatar, at the end of 1997. All major Arab states—including Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Syria—boycotted the Summit to protest Israeli policies on the West Bank. The fate of the Secretariat, the MENA Development Bank, and indeed the entire initiative remains unclear. The MENA Summits are not a security initiative per se, but they are security-related to the extent that they are aimed at expanding the constituency for peace in the region, as well as fostering stability through development. <sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Colin Mackinnon, The MENA Summit Conference in Doha: Two Views, January/ February 1998, pp.20-22, available online at <http://www.washington-report.org/backissues/0198/9801020.htm> <10.09.2003>

<sup>79</sup> Lesser, et al., *The Future of NATO's Mediterranean Initiative: Evolution and Next Steps*, p. 38.

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## **V. CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR NATO'S MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE**

The Alliance's Mediterranean Dialogue faces at least six challenges on the way to further enhancement.

First, NATO has developed a comparative advantage in "hard security" matters such as collective defense and peacekeeping operations. However, NATO obviously has neither a political mandate nor the capabilities necessary to handle the "soft security" issues predominant in the southern Mediterranean region, such as immigration and energy security.

Second, the Alliance's interactions with Mediterranean Dialogue countries are primarily bilateral in a 19+1 format. However, greater multilateral efforts might offer a more effective way to handle complex issues such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

Third, the perceptions in the Arab world of Mediterranean-focused European and Euro-Atlantic initiatives in the southern Mediterranean countries constitute a significant stumbling block in the way of mutual dialogue. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict further reinforces these misperceptions and complicates multilateral cooperation efforts.

Fourth, given the diversity of the political agendas and structures involved in non-NATO European initiatives towards the Mediterranean region, the coordination of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue with the other initiatives is bound to face recurrent political and practical impediments.

Fifth, the increasing divergence between US and European perceptions of various international issues, particularly in the Mediterranean region and the Middle East, may critically affect the fate of European initiatives in the Mediterranean region as well as the future of the Mediterranean Dialogue itself.

Finally, enhancing the political dimension of the Mediterranean Dialogue, particularly in light of decisions at the NATO Prague Summit in November 2002, is bound to pose greater challenges for Alliance decision-makers.

## A. HARD SECURITY VS. SOFT SECURITY

One of the imminent challenges NATO faces is the nature of the security issues in the Mediterranean region. During the Cold War, NATO was dedicated to collective defense, and its primary purpose was the containment of the Soviet Union. Therefore, NATO developed a comparative advantage in “hard security” issues. However, diverse “soft security” issues such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and illegal immigration dominate the Mediterranean security environment. NATO obviously does not have a political mandate or the capabilities necessary to handle such issues, except for certain counter-terrorist activities that involve military forces.

However, NATO’s infrastructure, which has been modified to meet the requirements of a changing security environment, has proved to be effective in dealing with some soft security threats. Operation Active Endeavor could be considered an example of a “hard security” operation producing significant “soft security” results as well. Operation Active Endeavor<sup>80</sup> was first launched on 26 October 2001 to monitor shipping in the eastern Mediterranean as one of eight measures undertaken by NATO to assist the United States in the campaign against terrorism. In February 2003, NATO decided to expand these operations to include escorting Allied commercial and civilian vessels traveling through the Straits of Gibraltar. Activities conducted under the auspices of Operation Active Endeavor include deterrent presence, surveillance and inspection of suspect vessels in the Eastern Mediterranean in international waters, and escorting designated vessels transiting the Straits of Gibraltar.<sup>81</sup> Operation Active Endeavor “has had a direct impact on the trafficking of arms and drugs and [has contributed to] an estimated 50% decrease in illegal immigration into Europe.”<sup>82</sup>

Another important aspect of the “hard security” vs. “soft security” discussion is related to the expectations of the Mediterranean Dialogue countries. Many of these countries are

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<sup>80</sup> Operation Active Endeavor is part of the NATO action that followed the invocation of Article 5 on 12 September 2001. Operation Active Endeavor operations are performed through rotation of NATO’s Standing Naval Forces: Standing Naval Force Mediterranean (STANAVFORMED) and Standing Naval Force Atlantic (STANAVFORTLANT). More information is available online at <http://www.afsouth.nato.int/operations/Endeavour/Endeavour.htm> <08.18.2003>

<sup>81</sup> NATO Contribution to Maritime Security (Adapted from a presentation given to the the Royal United Services Institute in London on 30 June 2003 by Vice Admiral Ferdinando SANFELICE di MONTEFORTE, Italian Navy, Commander NATO Naval Forces Southern Europe and Commander NATO Active Endeavor), available online at [http://www.afsouth.nato.int/transcripts/2003/TS\\_02\\_03.htm](http://www.afsouth.nato.int/transcripts/2003/TS_02_03.htm) <08.18.2003>

<sup>82</sup> More information is available online at <http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2003/08-august/e0806b.htm> <08.18.2003>

preoccupied with intra-regional security issues, which are predominantly hard security issues. Their primary aim is to learn from NATO-organized activities to add more value to their own military structures. This basically stems from the Mediterranean Dialogue countries' perception that NATO is a military organization.<sup>83</sup>

## **B. BILATERALISM VS. MULTILATERALISM**

Dialogue countries are primarily bilateral in structure (a 19+1 format). Nevertheless, the Dialogue also allows for multilateral meetings on a regular basis (a 19+7 format). Conceptually, the multilateral approach is the most rewarding vehicle for solving regional problems.<sup>84</sup> However, because of the diversity of the problems in the region, gathering the Mediterranean Dialogue countries in a multilateral forum would be difficult to manage politically. This might reveal the differences among the Alliance members (and among the Mediterranean Dialogue countries) on some sensitive issues, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Multilateralism would nonetheless be the proper approach to handle complex issues such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. This issue is not only a NATO issue but also a source of major concern for many of the Mediterranean Dialogue countries. Therefore, it might prove valuable to bring the Mediterranean countries together in a common forum concerning the WMD proliferation issue.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, NATO does not have the luxury of pursuing a completely multilateral approach. The best solution to this dilemma would be to enhance the combined use of bilateral and multilateral approaches.

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<sup>83</sup> Ormanci, p. 20.

<sup>84</sup> Speech by Senator Giovanni Lorenzo Forcieri, President of the Italian Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, at the International Seminar "From Dialogue to partnership in the Mediterranean and NATO: Future Prospects," Rome, Italian Parliament, 30 September 2002, p. 2, available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/conf/2002/c0200930/c020930d.htm> <03.06.2003>

<sup>85</sup> Moya, p. 11.

### **C. PERCEPTIONS OF THE WEST IN THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION AND THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT**

Perceptions of the West in the southern Mediterranean region are predominantly haunted by the colonial legacies of the past. In a region in which little is known about NATO, the Alliance's growing out-of-area dimension and its outreach activities are widely misunderstood. An Egyptian commentator's reactions to NATO's 1999 Strategic Concept constitute a good example of this misunderstanding.<sup>86</sup> According to Kasim El-Gawhary of *Al-Ahram Weekly*, "Just in time for NATO's 50th birthday, heads of the Alliance states signed the most offensive strategic document in the organization's history. Known as the 'New Strategic Concept' and released on 24 April, the text reads as a license for world-wide interventionism." Moreover, it is hard to know the image of NATO in the eyes of the public. Although most of the southern Mediterranean countries are not true democracies, public opinion still plays an important role, especially concerning relations with the West and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

NATO operations taken in conjunction with the US-led war on terror have enduring implications for the image of NATO in the southern Mediterranean region. The ongoing US-led military operations against terrorist targets in Afghanistan and the US-led war in Iraq are widely perceived as a Western onslaught on Muslim countries. Most of the 19 NATO Allies have had forces directly involved in Operation Enduring Freedom, the ongoing US-led military operation against the Taliban and the Al Qaeda terrorist network in Afghanistan. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) had been under the command of NATO members since its deployment in December 2001. ISAF I (December 2001-June 2002) was commanded by the United Kingdom, ISAF II (June 2002-February 2003) by Turkey, and ISAF III (February-August 2003) by Germany and the Netherlands. In August 2003, NATO formally assumed the command. As for the occupation of Iraq, NATO is currently assisting the Polish contingent in Iraq and may provide assistance on request to other NATO or PfP members participating in the post-war stabilization of Iraq.

The inclusion of Israel in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue further complicates the issue since mass public views of the West in the southern Mediterranean region are closely linked to

<sup>86</sup> Al-Ahram Weekly columnist Karim El-Gawhary begins his article about the 1999 Strategic Concept with this statement. For the full text of the article, see, for example, Karim El-Gawhary, "NATO bill of rights", *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 27 May-2 June 1997, Issue no. 431, available online at <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/1999/431/in2.htm> <08.17.2003>

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. People in various southern Mediterranean countries see Israel as an expression of Western influence.<sup>87</sup> The Israeli-Palestinian conflict prevents Israel and the Arab countries from cooperating in the framework of collective organizations, as indicated by the suspension of the MENA summits.<sup>88</sup> In this context, NATO's bilateral approach to cooperation makes the Mediterranean Dialogue less vulnerable to political side effects stemming from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Furthermore, any war on terrorism is bound to cover terrorist organizations fighting against Israel. Given the fact that some of these terrorist organizations enjoy strong public sympathy in Muslim lands, it may be hard to include southern Mediterranean countries in some aspects of the U.S.-led war on terror.

Security cooperation with NATO might have some unintended implications for the already unstable Arab governments of the southern Mediterranean region. Such cooperation reinforces the governments in many respects. However, if mismanaged and not bolstered by well-planned public information programs, such cooperation could in some circumstances contribute to the destabilization of some governments. Accusing the governments of pursuing pro-Western policies is a well-known tactic of anti-government radicals. In sum, a well-planned public information program should accompany any development related to the Mediterranean Dialogue.

#### **D. COORDINATION WITH OTHER INITIATIVES**

Currently, there are two other major institutional initiatives under way to establish cooperation in the Mediterranean: the EU's Barcelona Process and the OSCE's Mediterranean Dialogue. The other initiatives are either inert or non-institutional like the Mediterranean Forum and the Middle East Peace Process. The EU and OSCE initiatives remain disparate. Clearly, large overarching institutional frameworks for the Mediterranean region are unrealistic. However, better coordination of existing initiatives is imperative to maximize the benefits of sustained dialogue, cooperation and transparency.

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<sup>87</sup> Roberto Aliboni, "Strengthening NATO-Mediterranean Relations: A Transition to Partnership," p. 3.

<sup>88</sup> See p. 39.

NATO countries that have the potential to strongly influence security in the Mediterranean include Turkey and the United States. Besides being a geopolitical actor located in close proximity to actual or potential instability and risk areas, Turkey has cultural and trade ties with the Arab countries in the region. Moreover, Turkey has developed a strategic partnership with Israel. Turkey, as the only Muslim country in the Alliance, may make the image of NATO softer for the Muslim Arab members of the Mediterranean Dialogue. In case of any intra-Mediterranean crisis, the inclusion of Turkish military forces might avert possible tensions in the predominantly Muslim societies of the countries of the region. As for the United States, it has developed special relations with many of the Dialogue countries since the 1950s. These strong bilateral ties might be adapted to fit in the Dialogue context, in particular for the purposes of political dialogue. Moreover, the United States has the military assets that would make some aspects of practical cooperation more feasible.

It is clear that neither NATO nor the EU alone is capable of dealing with the scope and the diversity of the Mediterranean region. There must be a division of labor, as some high-ranking NATO officials have suggested. For example, the NATO Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Alessandro Minuto Rizzo, has said that, “Since the current problems in the region are mainly socio-economic in nature, it is logical that the EU should be in the vanguard of those fostering co-operative relations in the Mediterranean. The EU offers what the region probably needs the most: economic cooperation.”<sup>89</sup> In this regard, NATO should look to the areas in which it has a comparative advantage—crisis management and military activities of mutual interest such as military education, staff officer training, and border security.

This division of labor and enhanced cooperation are imperative for the success of NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue. Further development of the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) in cooperation with NATO may also make such coordination more useful and acceptable. This kind of cooperation would necessarily require a certain degree of transparency between the EU and NATO. Additionally, this division of labor should be institutionalized by regular NATO-EU meetings and briefings to prevent possible duplications or inconsistencies in policy.

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<sup>89</sup> Presentation by the NATO Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Alessandro Minuto Rizzo, “NATO and the Mediterranean,” presented at the Mediterranean Dialogue International Research Seminar, NATO Defense College, Rome, 24 November 2001, available online at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s011124a.htm> <11.03.2003>

## **E. DIALOGUE IN THE TRANSATLANTIC CONTEXT**

The transatlantic relationship is a major determinant of the entire political landscape in the Mediterranean region. As noted earlier, a challenge facing NATO is the increasing divergence between US and European perceptions on various international issues, particularly in the Mediterranean region and the Middle East. The Iraq crisis in early 2003 is a noteworthy example of this trend, except that it revealed intra-European differences as well as US-European differences. Nevertheless, the US attitude will critically affect the fate of any European initiative in the Mediterranean region. In other words, transatlantic differences further complicate the calculus of Western diplomacy in the southern Mediterranean region.

US policy in the Mediterranean region is based on pivotal states like Israel, Morocco, and Turkey. In contrast, except for the former colonizing powers, European countries tend to see the Mediterranean as a single region. This is the idea behind the multilateral character of the EU's Barcelona Process. Given the diversity of interests in the region, US policy in the southern Mediterranean area prefers a selective approach to multilateral diplomacy. As a result, the United States sees some multilateral schemes in the Mediterranean region as distracting and risky, notably in light of the conflicts in the Middle East.<sup>90</sup>

After the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, unilateralism gained prominence in US foreign policy-making. Given the fact that NATO was initially seen as of marginal relevance to the military dimension of the struggle against terrorism and threats posed by non-state entities, the United States could not be expected to support NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue with great enthusiasm in the context of war on terror. However, after having been assured of NATO's relevance in the campaign against terrorist threats, the United States is likely to look for other means of fighting terrorism. At that point, more U.S. enthusiasm for Mediterranean Dialogue activities might be expected. The United States has to date maintained a position parallel to that of its NATO Allies with regard to the Mediterranean Dialogue. However, further enhancement of the Mediterranean Dialogue would demand more resources and US support.

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<sup>90</sup> Lesser, et al., *The Future of NATO's Mediterranean Initiative: Evolution and Next Steps*, p. 13.

## F. ENHANCING THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF THE DIALOGUE

At the Prague Summit in November 2002, the Allies decided “to upgrade substantially the political and practical dimensions of our Mediterranean Dialogue as an integral part of the Alliance’s cooperative approach to security.”<sup>91</sup> Since then the enhancement of the Mediterranean Dialogue has gained more attention in NATO. Despite these assertive declarations, official NATO statements related to upgrading the Mediterranean Dialogue do not go beyond the further exploitation of existing structures. The Alliance’s Mediterranean Dialogue needs further enhancement in its political and practical dimensions as well as further employment of existing structures.

Since the primary aim of the Mediterranean Dialogue is political, any enhancement should begin with the political dimension of the Dialogue. The southern Mediterranean states have resented the unilateral nature of the decision-making process in which they seem to be the objects of NATO’s Mediterranean security policy, not participants consulted with a full say on how matters related to the region’s security should be addressed.<sup>92</sup>

Discussions about establishing a Mediterranean Dialogue Partnership (MDP) on the model of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace have gained some support. Yet, some NATO experts have doubts about the feasibility of such a scheme. Any step towards an MDP has much to learn from the EAPC and PfP experiences. Above all, the political dimension of the Mediterranean Dialogue is relatively weak compared to that of the PfP. The spine of the political dimension consists of discussions and meetings between the Mediterranean Dialogue countries and the Alliance. However, the planning processes related to such meetings are evidently not institutionalized enough to produce the desired results. For instance, the planning process of the Mediterranean Dialogue Work Program (MDWP) has limited provisions for mutual involvement. According to NATO sources, the MDWP is “usually prepared by the NATO Staff and is based on inputs received from relevant NATO bodies as well as Mediterranean Dialogue countries. Once agreed by the North Atlantic Council, the annual MDWP is submitted to the Mediterranean Dialogue countries for their consideration and possible

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<sup>91</sup> North Atlantic Council, 21 November 2002, par. 10, available online at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm> <03.07.2003>

<sup>92</sup> Ormanci, p. 21.

comments before its actual implementation.”<sup>93</sup> Greater active involvement of the Mediterranean Dialogue countries in the planning process might promote more beneficial results and be more effective in accomplishing the Alliance’s purposes.

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<sup>93</sup> See 2003 Mediterranean Dialogue Work Program, p.1, available online at <http://www.nato.int/med-dial/2003/mdwp-2003.pdf> <10.10.2003>

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