

Towards a cooperative security system in the Mediterranean

Carlo Jean

Resumo

The geo-political boundaries of the Mediterranean vary according to two traditional points of view: one, is limited and only takes into consideration the waterside countries which have inherited the same cultural roots; the other is broad and considers it as single area between Gibraltar and the Gulf, including the Middle East.

With regard to the precise meaning of the concept of security in the Mediterranean, social, cultural and economic factors are emphasised and two main influences identified: one related to the Israeli-Arab peace process and another which favours the existence of cultural ties between the Latin countries and those of the Magrebe (expressed in formula 5+5 if Malta is included).

Next, the differences between American sensitivity, which emphasises the political-strategic nature of security, and European sensitivity, which concentrates more on the problem of social unrest and migratory fluxes, are highlighted.

Lastly, broad co-operation, under the auspices of NATO, is proposed within a PfM (Partnership for the Mediterranean) framework.

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

When discussing security in the Mediterranean, two terms need to be defined first: «security» and «Mediterranean». Security in the Mediterranean is mainly economic, social, cultural and identity-related. It is only marginally a military issue. Moreover, it is not homogeneous and revolves around several centres. Therefore, the principles that are used in a European context do not apply to security in the Mediterranean. There is no basis for a common security system in the Mediterranean. On the other hand, a cooperative security system, a «broad security» model attaching priority to the «soft», rather than to the «hard» aspects of security, is possible.

From the geo-political point of view, there are two different conceptions of the Mediterranean: one views the area as extending from Gibraltar to the Gulf, and the other confines in to the Suez Canal. Moreover, the area is sometimes considered as closely connected to Europe, that is, as a part of the European strategic space; some other times, as separate from it. In the latter approach, Northern Africa and the Middle East are viewed as «out-of-area» or marginal zones as against the hard core of European and Atlantic security.

Security in the whole Mediterranean basin is influenced by developments in the neighbouring regions: Sub-Saharan Africa, the Horn of Africa, Southern Asia and the former Soviet Union. Moreover, the conflicts in Bosnia and Kashmir – which the Southern Mediterranean countries also perceive as religious conflicts against Islam – have a strong impact on the whole Muslim world.

The problem of delimitating the Mediterranean area has acquired particular importance since also the United States began to consider it as marked by individual geo-political features. Its significance for European and global interests as well as for Euro-American relations is increasing.

1.1. The Broad Vision of the Mediterranean

In the broad vision, the Mediterranean is defined as an area extending from Gibraltar to the Gulf. This approach has the merit of taking into account the Middle East as a whole as well as the close links existing between the Gulf states and the Mediterranean countries of the Near East. After the end of the Cold War, and in view of Turkey's increasing activism in the Caucasus and Central Asia – as well as of the recent in Afghanistan, which directly involve Iran and Turkey – the area encompassed in this vision has tended to expand further eastwards.

This vision of the Mediterranean was adopted in the various Gulf state-financed development projects for the Northern Africa, in the Italian-Spanish proposal, at the September 24, 1990 Palma OSCE meeting, of a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM), and in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Economic Summit launched at the October 1994 Casablanca conference. It is also the dominant vision adopted by the US, in view of its engagement and interests in the Gulf.

From the US point of view, the Mediterranean traditionally is a communication link and the «place where the Gulf begins»⁽¹⁾. On the other hand, the creation of the US 5th Fleet in the Indian Ocean, the transfer of the Gulf area into the US responsibility sphere, the Kuwait war, which split the Arab world, and the expansion of the strategic space of the Gulf to the East and to the North-East may induce the US to take into consideration a «Near Eastern» area as distinct from a «Middle Eastern» area, and therefore to adopt a restricted vision of the Mediterranean.

The tendency to adopt a broad vision of the Mediterranean, however, is encouraged by the progressive transformation of the Arab solidarity concept a broader Islamic solidarity idea⁽²⁾. It remains to be seen whether the outcome of the 1996 Israeli election will revert this

(1) Jan O. Lesser. «Southern Europe and the Maghreb: US Interests and Policy Perspectives». RAND, Santa Monica (CA), 1996, p. 8.

(2) Fernanda Faria and Álvaro Vasconcelos. «Security in Northern Africa: Ambiguity and Reality». WEU Institute for Security Studies, Chaillot Papers No 25. Paris, September 1996. pp. 9 and ff.

tendency, prompting the Arabs to re-discover both their traditional enemy and the myth of Arab national unity.

1.2. The Restricted Vision of the Mediterranean

The restricted vision of the Mediterranean equates the area with the sea's geographic basin. In other words, it only encompasses the Mediterranean rim states, which supposedly share the so-called «Mediterranean culture». This definition was adopted at the Barcelona Conference and in the «dialogues» with the Mediterranean countries initiated by the Western European Union and NATO. Naturally, there are a few exceptions, especially as regards Mauritania's and Jordan's inclusion into the dialogues and the exclusion of Iraq (even though, in the Upper Middle Ages, Baghdad was one of the centres in which the Arabs preserved the Greek-Roman heritage), of Lybia and of the Balkanic states. The Adriatic sea is increasingly viewed as an internal sea between Italy and continental Europe, to which the Balkans belong from the geo-political point of view. As much is also proved, for instance, by the transfer of responsibility on IFOR II from CINCSOUTH to SHAPE.

A crucial role is played by Turkey which, in the post-Cold War period, has been redefining its interests and its very identity. When it entered NATO, Turkey was a more European state than it is today. Should the planned NATO enlargement fail to involve South-Eastern Europe, that is, Bulgaria and especially Romania, Turkey would be isolated in the Black Sea area, would be further alienated from Europe, may be induced to adapt a more autonomous policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia and might suffer negative repercussions policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia and might suffer negative repercussions as far as its domestic stability is concerned. The only Mediterranean states which will be able to enter the European Union in the future are Malta and Cyprus.

In the restricted vision of the Mediterranean, the traditional divisions between Maghreb and Mashrek and between the Western and the Eastern Mediterranean basin are viewed as outdated. In the past, the Maghreb was thought to be closer to Western Europe because it had

tighter economic and cultural links and was geographically nearer to it. The Eastern part of the basin, on the other hand, was dominated by American political and strategic presence, also because of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Moreover, there was a stronger German economic and political presence and, in some Cold War periods, it was sensitive to Soviet penetration and influence.

The idea of a united rather than fragmented, Mediterranean has derived from the peace process in the Middle East; from the disappearance of the Soviet presence, which has left no choice to the Arab countries but cooperating with the West; by Portugal's, Spain's and Greece's membership in the EU; and by Egypt's⁽³⁾ and, more recently, Israel's Mediterranean policies.

Besides the Barcelona Conference, this vision of the Mediterranean emerged in the Mediterranean Forum, a July 1994 Egyptian initiative in which eleven countries take part (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Turkey and Malta). It has also been influenced by increased European integration, by the prospects of CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy) and by the start of the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI), which should be implemented through WEU. Within the latter organization, France, Italy, Portugal and Spain⁽⁴⁾ have created EUROFOR and EUROMARFOR, multinational forces which are open for participation by other WEU member and associated states. Both forces are oriented to carry out the so-called Petersberg missions,⁽⁵⁾ not only in the Mediterranean but in other areas, too.

(³) Mohammed El Say Selim. «Mediterraneanism: A New Dimension in Egypt's Foreign Policy», Al Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, Strategic Papers No 27, March 1995; Fonad Ajomi «The Sorrows of Egypt», Foreign Affairs, Autumn 1995, pp. 72-88; Graham E. Fuller and Jan O. Lesser, «A Sense of Siege: The Geopolitics of Islam and the West», Westview Press/RAND, Boulder (CO), 1995.

(⁴) «Final Communiqué», WEU Lisbon Ministerial Conference, May 19, 1995.

(⁵) Declaration issued by the WEU Ministerial Council of June 19, 1992, named Petersberg Council, named Petersberg Council, which envisage 1992, named Petersberg Council, which envisage «Humanitarian and rescue tasks; peacekeeping tasks; task of combat forces in crisis management, including peacekeeping». It was followed by the Nordwijk declaration of November 14, 1994, in which WEU is entrusted with the role of building a Mediterranean dimension for the European defence policy.

Especially the Barcelona Conference has adopted a totally new approach, identifying precise objectives for the pan-Mediterranean dialogue – a free trade zone which should be created by 2010 – involving EU as a whole in the problems of Southern Mediterranean and connecting the politico-strategic dimensions to a more general context, in which economic as well as cultural and identity-related issues are taken into account. In Barcelona, in other words, «hard security» was linked to «soft security», within a global vision of security problems («broad security»).

The restricted vision of the Mediterranean also influenced the Partnership for Mediterranean (PfM) proposed by Italy at the October 9-10, 1995 Williamsbourg Atlantic Council. Within a political context which must still be defined, the initiative aims at promoting dialogue between NATO and the Mediterranean countries and at providing it with consistency, especially through a better definition of the dialogue's objectives. At present, its objectives are not wholly clear or, at least, have not yet been clarified, which has raised questions and suspicions. As a matter of fact, the Northern Mediterranean countries' security concept differs widely from that of the Southern Mediterranean ones – as opposed to what happens as far as Eastern Europe is concerned. If no long-term objectives are identified and harmonized with the Barcelona conference's ones, there is a risk that NATO dialogue may turn into separate dialogues, which would create new problems instead of solving the existing ones. Therefore, the crucial point is harmonizing the PfM and Barcelona's Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP).

1.3. Sub-regional Visions and Bilateral Relations

Beside the global conceptions – the broad and the restricted – there are sub-regional approaches to security in the Mediterranean. They are influenced by two main factors.

The first factor is the peace process in the Middle East. The process is mainly conducted by the United States and by the directly involved countries, gathered in the REDWG (Regional Economic Development

Working Group). The Spring, 1996 French intervention in the crisis in Southern Lebanon did not have concrete repercussions in this respect. Israel and the US fear that Europe's participation in the peace process would merely create further problems. Undoubtedly, European condemnations – voiced in particular by President Chirac – of the new Israeli government's policy do not facilitate Europe's acceptance as unbiased arbitrator between the Israeli and the Arabs. There are strong suspicions that Europe's criticism is aimed at currying favour with the Arabs rather than at entering the «controls room» of the peace agreements. At any rate, Europe's action leads to harsher Arab positions and creates difficulties to the US. Therefore, it is very unlikely that PfM may converge with EMP. At most, it may be hoped that they do not hamper each other.

The second factor leading to a sub-regional approach is that there are close relations between the Latin European countries and the Maghreb states. This relationship lays at the basis of the 5+5 dialogue between the five Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) countries and the five Western Mediterranean European countries (including Malta).

Sub-regional visions involving areas which are situated out of the merely geographic Mediterranean basin also include the Black Sea regional cooperation agreements and the failed Damascus Alliance of March, 1991. The latter was meant to become a kind of Middle-Eastern NATO, which would have established close links between Egypt and Syria and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Lastly, a network of bilateral relations is entertained by the United States and by individual European countries with the Southern Mediterranean states. More global approaches, such as the UMA process, aim at coordinating, harmonizing and absorbing these relations. UMA, which was created in 1989, gathered the two opposed groups of Maghreb states which had derived from the 1983 Tunis Brotherhood and Concord agreement signed by Algeria, Tunisia and Mauritania, and from the African Arab Union created by Morocco and Libya in Onjda, in 1984⁽⁶⁾. Although articles 14 and 15 of the Marrakesh Treaty, which established

⁽⁶⁾ Bruno Callies de Salies «Méditerranée: quelle politique vers les Etats du Sud?», Défense Nationale, février 1996, pp. 93-108.

UMA, lay down provisions for crisis and conflict prevention and management, the UMA Defence Council, created in 1990, has never met because of the Algerian and Lybian crises.

As African countries, the Maghreb states and Egypt are also members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), created in 1963. Originally, the organization envisaged the creation of political mediation and defence bodies (articles 19 and 20 of the institutional charter), which, however, were never established. At the 1993 Cairo conference and at the 1995 Addis Abeba conference, Egypt conference, Egypt tried to undertake a more incisive role within OAU, by proposing both the introduction of effective conflict-resolution mechanisms and a common doctrine for peace support operations in the whole continent⁽⁷⁾. Since the US is reluctant to intervene in Africa, following the outcome of the Somalia intervention, and Europe is not more eager to do so (although French activism in Africa has yielded 8 defence agreements, 25 technical agreements and 19 interventions in African countries in 1990-1995). OAU activities in peace support operations might be an interesting sector for military cooperation between EU/WEU, NATO and the Northern African states⁽⁸⁾.

2. THE ROLE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN IN WESTERN SECURITY

During the bipolar conflict, the Mediterranean remained strategically multi-polar and multi-centric. It was a place where different lines of cooperation and conflict met. There was a lack of cohesion both in its Southern and Northern rim. As much is proved by the real structure of NATO's Southern Region which. Differently from the Central Region, which was a multilateral institution, the Southern Region has always been mainly a forum for harmonization of the bilateral links between the US and Italy, Greece, Turkey, Spain, Portugal and also France,

⁽⁷⁾ Winrch Kühne, Guido Lenzi and Álvaro Vasconcelos, «WEU's Role in Crisis Management and Conflict Resolution in Suth-Saharan Africa». WEU Institute for Strategic Studies, Chaillot Papers No 22, Paris, September 1996, especially pp. 46 and ff.

⁽⁸⁾ Ibid. p. 15 and Christine Philippe, «Une force africaine d'intervention», Défense Nationale, octobre 1995, pp. 113-124.

rather than a really integrated structure. The East-West confrontation, however, did provide a common paradigm: containment of Soviet presence and penetration. The Mediterranean sea, basically, was viewed as a communication link between the West and the East and was dominated by NATO's naval a pivotal role for Western security interests: it was a bulwark against Soviet penetration in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East.

At the end of the Cold War, this paradigm vanished, and the conception of the Mediterranean on which it was based dissolved with it. The areas flanking or facing or facing the Alliance became geographically more linked to Europe and turned into a part of the Western strategic sphere, where NATO and WEU security and stability could be projected – if possible, with the approval and cooperation of the Southern rim states.

The Mediterranean is increasingly seen as a geo-political region with its own individuality, a «liquid continent» which is linked to Europe and which must be turned into an area of peace, stability and prosperity. To achieve this objective, peaceful coexistence must be established among countries which are marked by a notable lack of homogeneity and by mutual suspicions and distrust. Despite North-South divergencies, the sharpest conflicts exist among the Southern rim states and, especially, within them. However, confrontation also exist among the Northern states, especially regarding the Turkish-Greek dispute. Moreover, there is a remarkable demographic, economic and cultural diversity between the North and the South. Mutual perceptions are dominated by negative stereotypes – not only between the North and South, Christianity and Islam, but also between former colonies and colonizers and among the Southern Mediterranean countries.

As opposed to their approach to Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the US and Europe adopt different and sometimes diverging Mediterranean policies, rather than complementary ones^(*). Whilst Eastern Europe accepts the Western culture and politico-institutional systems and aims at integration into NATO and Europe, the South

(*) Robert Aliboni. «Institutionalizing Mediterranean Relations: Complementarity and Competition». *International Politik und Gesellschaft* No 3, 1995. pp. 90.99.

desires Western economic aid and cooperation but rejects its culture and political system. Whereas NATO and EU policies towards Eastern are convergent and multilateral, their Mediterranean policies are fragmented into a series of autonomous initiatives differing in motives and objectives.

For instance, the meaning attached to security in the Mediterranean differs widely. To the United States, it primarily means politico-strategic security. Economic security, that is, stabilization through development, has a secondary role. American attention focuses on the Gulf and on the Middle Eastern peace process.

To Europe, on the other hand, security has first of all a demographic significance. Priority is given to the prevention of mass immigration deriving from the ongoing economic crisis in Northern Africa, as well as of the expansion of terrorism in Europe and of organized crime in the Mediterranean. Whereas the European territory was shielded from the East-West conflict, it may be directly affected by possible conflicts in Europe, whose process of integration is proving very difficult. Frontiers are useless against such non-military threats. Therefore, since a Byzantine-like «grand strategy» based on separation and exclusion is unfeasible, there is tendency to adopt a Roman-like «grand strategy» based on integration.

The existing cultural, economic and demographic gaps, however, make this policy extremely difficult. Moreover, coordination with the US strategy raises further problems, as it has emerged more than once, especially as far as the peace process in the Middle East is concerned.

Lastly, to the Southern European countries the concept of security in the Mediterranean has many different meanings⁽¹⁰⁾. First of all, it is an economic, social and cultural problem at the same time. Southern Mediterranean countries are seeking a new international position, since the end of the Cold War has deprived non-alignment of any significance. The disappearance of the Soviet presence in the Mediterranean has limited their options. At present, they can only choose between marginalization and cooperation with the West. Endeavours to exploit

(10) Fernanda Faria and Álvaro Vasconcelos, «Security in Northern Africa: Ambiguity and Reality», *op. cit.*, pp. 2 and ff.

European-US divergencies in order to achieve room for manoeuvre and freedom of action are hampered – despite the lack of convergence of American and European interests – by the central role played by the US in the Mediterranean, by the deficiencies in Europe's political and strategic integration and by the different policies followed by the individual European countries. The two rims of the Atlantic are divided by wide divergences, as proved by the failure to invite the US to the Barcelona conference, by Europe's exclusion from the peace process in the Middle East, by the refusal of the European countries – with the exception of Italy and the Netherlands – to take part in the Bank and Forum whose creation was decided at the Amman MENA Economic Summit, and by US sharp rejection, at the Bergen Atlantic Council (September 25 and 26, 1996) of the French proposal to entrust the Command of NATO Southern Region to an European⁽¹⁾.

Euro-American relation in the Mediterranean are becoming crucial for the overall relation between the US and Europe, and will therefore affect the new Euro-Atlantic Alliance. The PfM initiative may provide an opportunity to better define the interests, objectives and policies of US and European relations regarding the Southern Mediterranean. It may also be an opportunity to develop a basic common policy and a new Euro-American «Mediterranean contract» based on common objectives and on role – and task – sharing. Such a clarification is essential for the South as well, which is presently uncertain and distrustful on the real objectives of Western cooperation proposals in the security sector.

The European Union, on the other hand, identified its long-term objectives at the Barcelona Conference. In fact the Action Plan, which was decided and entrusted to a Senior Officials Committee at Barcelona, and which should lead to a Mediterranean Pact within the framework of EMP, is developing rapidly, even though it takes into consideration only marginal and «soft» aspects of security, rather than «hard» ones. However, it remains to be seen how this initiative will be affected by the difficulties in the peace process in the Middle East.

(1) Joseph Fitchett, «U.S. and France Face Off on Control of NATO Southern Command», International Herald Tribune, October 2, 1996.

In Southern Europe, as already said, security problems in the Mediterranean are considered from a holistic perspective. Domestic security is perceived as closely linked to external security, identity-related problems and economic issues. In a sense, there is a similarity the security concepts which are currently under study in Southern Europe and the «Seguridad Nacional» visions which were developed in Latin America in the 1950s-1970s⁽¹²⁾. Territorial disputes play a role especially in the Middle East. On the other hand, the disputes among Morocco and Algeria, Western Sahara, Lybia and Chad on the Aovan strip, and between Egypt and Sudan on the Haibab triangle are marginal. In the area, priority is given to domestic security and to regional or sub-regional leadership issues, on which the local leader's attention is focused. From a Western point of view, such preoccupations may seem irrelevant, but for the Middle Eastern and Northern African leaders they are far from unimportant. Their domestic publics, in fact, regard power and success as evidence of divine support and therefore as a legitimization of the leaders' authority.

Anti-Western attitudes are not widespread within the ruling classes, who are well aware of their scarce freedom of action. However, they dominate in the masses, whose anti-Western feelings are manipulated by the opposition movements to build consensus for their radical political reforms, with which they seek support and power.

The Arab rulers, however, must increasingly keep into account the opinions of their domestic public, which are marked by negative stereotypes on the West in general and the US in particular. In politics perceptions are reality, and managing them effectively is crucial. A clear understanding of the developments, ideas and movements taking place in the different countries of the area is paramount. Otherwise, the NATO dialogue might even worsen the situation. This risk will be incurred if the NATO and WEU dialogue initiatives continue to lack clear objectives

⁽¹²⁾ This enlightening insight was given by Álvaro Vasconcelos at the meeting on «The Outlook For Cooperation Across the Mediterranean», organized by the International Affairs Institute in Rome, October 4-5, 1996.

and a deep knowledge of the situation. For instance, in spite of the rapid corrections by the Atlantic Council, the untactful remarks by NATO Secretary General Willy Claes⁽¹³⁾ had a disastrous effect they made the initiative seem based on the clash of civilizations concept⁽¹⁴⁾.

3. FRAMEWORK PARADIGMS

Since the end of the Cold War and of containment, various paradigms for a North-South cooperative security have been proposed: Islamism, terrorism, proliferation of mass destruction weapons, an armaments control regime like that implemented in Europe and a partnership for peace and development.

However, only the latter seems a viable basis for a well-structured cooperation between the West and the Southern Mediterranean countries, also in the security sector.

Islamism or better, Islamic radicalism, is viewed differently in the North and in the South. It is the South, there are no pluralist societies. In the short term, the West demands for pluralism, democracy, respect of individual rights, privatisation and free market as prerequisites for the granting of economic aid are destabilizing for all Southern Mediterranean political regimes, although they will have a stabilizing effect in the long period. A gap does not emerge between the ruling classes in the North and those in the South, but between the latter and their domestic public, who are enduring the severe Shocks of information revolution and globalization. The elites, which feel weak and delegitimized view the West as their only possible partner and saviour⁽¹⁵⁾. Therefore, rejection of any form of political Islam, even in its more moderate forms, is much stronger in the South than in the West. The ascent to government of the Welfare Party (Rafeh) in Turkey is interesting, in that

⁽¹³⁾ «NATO Chief Under Fire for Islam Remark», International Herald Tribune, February 15, 1995, p. 5.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Samuel Huntington, «The Clash of Civilizations», Foreign Affairs, Summer 1995, pp. 22-49.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Ghassan Salamé, «Appels d'empire – Intérences et résistances à l'âge de la mondialisation», Fayard Paris, 1996.

it will make it possible to verify the viability of a non-traumatic political change process which may result in the political integration of moderate Islamic movements. However, it must be kept in mind that the Turkish model cannot be transferred to other countries, since each of them has individual features and must be considered separately. Islam is not unites and homogenous. Speaking of an Islamic danger is just as oversimplified and arbitrary as speaking of a «Catholic danger».

Since the West support the ruling regimes, the opposition movements are anti-European. The West is distrusted and accused of being the cause of the difficulties met by Islam. It is decried for racism and for applying a double standard, especially as regards restrictions to immigration and discrimination against Muslim immigrants, and it is criticized for its delay in undertaking action in support of the Bosnian Muslims. Whilst preaching pluralism, the West does not accept ethnic and cultural pluralism. It supports free market, and yet it restricts agricultural and textile imports from the South.

On the other hand, the North views Islam as closely related to terrorism and uncontrolled immigration waves. Europe's demographic crisis makes it feel vulnerable or even threatened by the rapid population growth in the Southern Mediterranean. The Bosnian experience has destroyed the myth of multicultural societies.

Of course, these are only stereotypes, albeit partially justified. However, they are widespread both in the North and in the South, and may fuel conflicts.

In the eyes of the South, «dialogue» initiatives appear sterile and aimless. As a matter of fact, historically, cultural differences have never hindered peaceful coexistence and cooperation between the North and the South of the Mediterranean⁽¹⁶⁾. However, these forms of cooperation have always been based on the convergence of interests, and never on a dialogue between cultures and religions. Whilst interests allow for mediation and compromise, culture and religion are exclusive, in that they involve principles and values which cannot be renounced.

(16) Fernand Braudel. «Le Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II», vol. II. «Destins collectifs et mouvements d'ensemble». Colin. Paris. 1990 (1st edition 1949).

Secondly, *terrorism* cannot be a model for North-South cooperative security either, except than when it is connected with organized crime or relates to the spreading of political terrorism from the Arab countries to immigrant communities in Europe. In this case, terrorist activities target the European countries, which in their turn support South Mediterranean governments in their anti-terrorist actions. A North-South agreement in this respect was concluded at the Sharm Al Sheik World anti-terrorism conference of the Winter of 1996. However, the June, 1996 Cairo Arab League meeting claimed that terrorist actions were legitimate if they aimed at freeing territories under foreign occupation. Such a distinction cannot be accepted, at least formally, by Europe and especially by the US, since it would justify anti-Israeli terrorism and hamper the peace process in the Middle East. In spite of this, Interior Ministries in the North and in the South are stepping up cooperation because many terrorist organizations are transnational and some of them are not political but relate to organized crime, which everybody has an interest in destroying.

Thirdly, *proliferation* of mass destruction weapons is seen under different points of view in the North and in the South. The difference is due to Israel's nuclear weapons, whose elimination is considered by Egypt – and, at least implicitly, by other Arab states – as a prerequisite for their signing the Convention on chemical weapons, which they declined to do in 1993. Moreover, Southern Mediterranean countries consider missile proliferation as the one adequate measure to counter-balance Israel's technological superiority, since missiles provide deterrence capability with limited specialized manpower. Furthermore, these weapons are a pivotal «status symbol» in the competition for regional leadership in which many Arab leaders are involved, partly because achieving this objective would improve their domestic legitimization and consensus. The West must take the situation into account, to prevent its non-proliferation policy to be considered as an imposition which is not aimed at maintaining global security but at enabling the West to retain its military superiority and keep the Arab countries in a subordinate position. The creation of a Nuclear Free Zone with US strategic guarantees in the Middle East has been repeatedly proposed by Egypt and rejected by Israel, which is sceptical on the credibility of external

guarantees⁽¹⁷⁾. If its objectives are not sufficiently clear, any counter-proliferation measure by the North – which, on the other hand, is needed and may even be considered a duty – ⁽¹⁸⁾ will be perceived as a threat by the South Mediterranean countries.

An armament control and reduction regime like the one implemented in Europe is virtually unfeasible in the Mediterranean. The security problems in the area are only marginally military. They are primarily demographic, economic and social. From the purely military point of view, moreover, there is a marked fragmentation. There are no common defence institutions which would allow an approach similar to that adopted for the CSCE in Helsinki, not to mention the approach of the Vienna CFE negotiations. There are no parameters to define the armament levels which would guarantee a reasonable defence sufficiency, partly because the interest areas that the various countries which to take into consideration in armaments control and reduction agreements are different. For instance, whilst Egypt would consider a balance with Israel in the Near East (Egypt, Jordan, Israel and Syria) as acceptable, Israel, is dissatisfied by this geographical framework and wants to take into consideration the whole area, from the Gulf to Morocco. Even a positive outcome of the Middle East peace process would not suffice to solve the situation.

Only an external guarantee – in a particular, by the US – may be a basis for an armaments control regime, at least at a sub-regional level. However, considerable difficulties would remain. For instance, sufficiency levels which would be acceptable to all the involved parties are very difficult to define because in the South the armed forces have also a role in guaranteeing domestic security. External intervention provisions or military guarantees would play a mere subsidiary role in consolidating peace agreements, as is the case for UN Observers in the Middle East, UNIFIL in Southern Lebanon, MFO in the Sinai or the interposition forces in Cyprus. Such peace support operations, and namely 1st-generation peacekeeping operations, may be useful espe-

⁽¹⁷⁾ Amre M. Moussa, «A Nationalist Vision for Egypt», *Middle East Quarterly*, September 1996, pp. 61-68.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Gerald Yonas «Opinion of Last Resort – The US Needs a Credible Military Response to Proliferation», *Armed Forces Journal International*, August 1996, pp. 43-45.

cially for the Golan Heights, should an agreement be reached between Israel and Syria – which is unlikely, at least in the short period.

On the other hand, the prospects for rapid stability and balance in the Middle East seem increasingly less favourable. The change in Israel's policies is not merely due to the modification in the Israeli parliamentary majority⁽¹⁹⁾. Hopes for a solution to the conflict have stalled. Israeli-Palestinian coexistence will not be based on a marriage but on a divorce, and the latter will be acceptable only if the problem is extended to the whole Mediterranean area. In this respect, the exclusion of Europe from the peace process is unreasonable, since the peace process in the Middle East is bound to extend to the whole Mediterranean. Moreover, merely regional economic development, that is. REDWG-limited development, is increasingly unacceptable for the Arab countries, since Israel's economic, financial and technological superiority would consolidate its regional hegemony⁽²⁰⁾.

The only viable paradigm for a North-South security cooperation in the Mediterranean is the global and multi-dimensional approach of Barcelona: the *Euro-Mediterranean Partnership* (EMP). All the other initiatives, including NATO, WEU and OSCE dialogues (comprising the PfM), should be based on this process. The politico-strategic sector, which was taken into consideration in the first basket of the Barcelona Declaration, cannot aim at achieving ambitious short-term objectives. It is unthinkable to establish an OSCE-like regional collective security system in the Mediterranean. The only viable approach is the creation of a cooperative security system based on a few common rules and principles, similar to those listed in the Balladur Plan for Central and Eastern Europe and adopted by OSCE. Although the PfM may be based on some of the experiences of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) programme in non-NATO European countries,⁽²¹⁾ and especially

⁽¹⁹⁾ Richard N. Hopes. «The Middle East No More Treaties». *Foreign Affairs*, September-October, 1996.

⁽²⁰⁾ Bernard Reich. «The Art of the Impossible: Making Peace in the Middle East». *Mediterranean Quarterly*. Spring 1996. pp. 60-86.

⁽²¹⁾ Beniamino Andreatta, «The Political and Strategic Dimensions of the Euromediterranean Cooperation», paper submitted at the Al-Azhar University - Al Ahrum Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, Cairo, October 19, 1996.

on the Partnership for Peace project (PfP), its final objective must be the PfM. Only thus can a fruitful cooperation between the European and NATO approaches be attained.

4. A COOPERATIVE SECURITY REGIME IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

A cooperative security regime in the Mediterranean must primarily be based on a politico-strategic agreement between Europe and the United States, which should aim at identifying common objectives and policies and at devising a coordination system among the various institutions in order to prevent competition and conflicts from arising. If such an agreement were not developed, the risks of inconsistency and of NATO's being involved in South-South conflicts would increase.⁽²²⁾

Moreover, minimum «good behaviour» conditions for all the Barcelona countries must be negotiated, and initiatives must be devised to:

- increase mutual knowledge and transparency, through officer exchange programmes, visits by military delegations, presence of observers during exercises, study seminars of courses for strategy and security experts of the various countries;
- cooperate in the peacekeeping sector, at it is happening at present in IFOR Bosnia, in which also Egyptian, Jordan and Moroccan contingentes are included;
- develop a common doctrine on peace support operations and cooperate in equipping and training the forces, as it is being done with Eastern European countries within the NACC (North Atlantic Cooperation Council) and the PfP (Partnership for Peace) programmes;

⁽²²⁾ Caroline Faraj and Brooks Tigner, «NATO Extends Hand to Middle East Nations», *Defense News*, October 14-20, 1996, pp. 1 and 108.

- cooperate in the sector in which the armed forces support civilian authorities, such as civilian protection, ecology and the preservation of cultural heritage⁽²³⁾;
- cooperate in special sectors, such as air traffic coordination and search and rescue at sea.

In particular, Southern Mediterranean countries may participate in the WEU Humanitarian Intervention Task Force which was approved by the Madrid Ministerial Council of November, 1995. Moreover, NATO and WEU may provide support for the creation of a Maghreb task force for peacekeeping interventions or, possibly, of an African intervention force under the OAU – providing that it can ever be created⁽²⁴⁾.

Whilst a fairly extensive North-South cooperation system is possible in the conflict resolution sector, much more difficulties seem to arise in conflict and crisis prevention and in crisis management. At any rate, the creation of a Mediterranean free trade zone will step up Europe's ability to influence conflicts in the Southern Mediterranean by exerting economic pressures. On the other hand, the planned circum-Mediterranean infrastructure projects, especially in the energy sector, will increase interdependence and common interests among the Southern Mediterranean states, leading to greater integration of the South and, therefore, reinforcing the Europe-Mediterranean partnership. In fact, despite all efforts, the EMP currently seems a mere declaration of intents and a largely symbolic initiative.

As a matter of fact, there are no common institutions or even basic behaviour rules which can be accepted and verified by all the involved countries. Even the Mediterranean Pact outlined in the above-mentioned Action Plan is merely a project – rather than a plan or programme – which will be progressively implemented in a pragmatic way, according to circumstances.

⁽²³⁾ In this respect, there is a UNESCO-CASD agreement protocol within the «Culture of Peace» programme, which is being implemented with Egypt and is being launched with Jordan and Tunisia.

⁽²⁴⁾ Howard W. French, «The US Peace-Force Proposal: Africans Suspect It Conceals Indifference». *International Herald Tribune*, October 24, 1996.

However, the global approach adopted at Barcelona and EU's possibilities to achieve an economic leverage, as well as the implementation of multilateral political consultations, may prove comparatively effective in the short period, with the exception of more complex problems such as the Israeli-Palestinian and Greek-Turkish disputes, and the political destabilization they induce.

The various security initiatives launched by Western organizations should be harmonized within the larger context of the Atlantic Alliance. In particular, NATO initiatives ought the larger context of the Atlantic Alliance. In particular, NATO initiatives ought to be coordinated with the Barcelona Action Plan. What is needed is for NATO to develop a more coordinated with the Barcelona Action Plan. What is needed is for NATO to develop a more detailed project, that is, a PfM, which identifies objectives and possible cooperation initiatives, even though they require less commitment than the PfP. Speaking of security in the Mediterranean without mentioning the United States is like speaking of omelets without mentioning eggs. The American weight in the security sector, from both the points of view of its capabilities of external forces projection and of the quantity of its military any training aid, is immensely greater than the European. The security basket of the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean partnership would lack any concrete meaning if it were not coordinated with the US.

In conclusion, the PfM project may offer an opportunity for coordinating European and US initiatives in the Mediterranean area, and for adjusting the mainly military security institutions which were created in the Cold War to the new strategic environment, in which the military component is only an element – sometimes a marginal one – in global security.

Carlo Jean