

NATO Mediterranean Dialogue: Does it have a future?

Antonio Armada Vázquez



**Colección
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The NATO Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) is a cooperative security initiative that includes Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and Israel as NATO partners...



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ABSTRACT

The NATO Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) is a cooperative security initiative that includes Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and Israel as NATO partners. Since its inception, it has been gaining in relevance. Nowadays, although it has some problems, it plays an important role as a forum for political discussion and as a framework for practical cooperation enhancing security and stability in the Mediterranean region.

Considering the future trends, an improved MD will be essential to face the common challenges expected. The decision to enhance it is to be reflected in the new NATO Strategic Concept. However, given the lack of a common view on the Mediterranean amongst the NATO Allies, there is no guarantee that this decision will be taken.

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The NATO Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) is one of the many cooperative security initiatives that exist for the Mediterranean. The European Union (EU) launched the Euromediterranean Partnership that is more comprehensive and better resourced than the MD. The Organisation for the Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) leads the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation and even five EU Mediterranean countries have their own initiative (the so-called 5+5).

Moreover, there is a lack of coordination and division of labour amongst these ‘Western’ initiatives leading to competition, duplication of effort and redundancy. Additionally, progress in the MD depends on the Israeli-Palestine conflict. Due to its low profile, the MD achievements are not evident to observers. The MD is not considered NATO core-business and it is not very well known even amongst NATO countries. These circumstances lead some observers to wonder whether the MD is relevant, whether NATO will need it in the future or whether NATO’s limited resources should better be allocated to other purposes.

The aims of this Defence Research Paper (DRP) are to assess the actual relevance of the MD at present and to examine whether the MD will be needed in the future.

In so doing, this DRP will take an impartial stance towards both parts of the partnership when analysing the problems and progress of the MD. However, it will take a NATO perspective when assessing its relevance and future need.

This DRP will basically argue that the MD is a key initiative that, although already playing an important role in the security and stabilization of the Mediterranean, it is in the Alliance's interest to further enhance in order to get this tool best placed to address many of security challenges to come in the future. However, because of the diverging NATO members' views on the MD, its enhancement is uncertain.

To achieve its aims, this paper will be signposted as follows. This chapter will first outline the DRP's content. It will then define some key areas that need to be examined and the methodology followed in the research. Finally, it will define the limitations of its own scope.

Chapter II will provide the background and history of the MD that is necessary to understand its present state and possible evolution. It will highlight the 'Harmel report' as a watershed in the Alliance security understanding and as the root of all the NATO cooperative security initiatives. It will then outline the increasing significance of the Mediterranean at the end of the Cold War that led to the creation of the MD in 1994. It will signpost the successive MD enhancements throughout its evolution and particularly in the aftermath of the 11th September.

Chapter III will analyse the relevance of the MD at the present. First, it will assess the current relevance of the Mediterranean space to the security of NATO countries and why the Mediterranean matters. This question will be answered taking the so-called 'north perspective' (that is from Europe towards the south Mediterranean). Then, it will complement this view analysing the 'south perspective' (that means from North-African and Middle-East countries towards Europe). The emphasis will be placed on explaining how NATO is perceived by its southern partners. Afterwards, it will focus on the present reality of the MD balancing between the main problems that affect the development of the MD and its current achievements.

Chapter IV will examine whether NATO will still need the MD in the future. In so doing, it will analyse the future trends and predictions for the Mediterranean region and the suitability of the MD as a tool to manage some of the coming threats. The chapter will then predict three possible scenarios taking into account the lack of a common view on the Mediterranean amongst NATO members and the fact that the new NATO Strategic Concept (NSC) will need consensus to be agreed. Finally, it will speculate on the NSC contents related to the MD based on declaratory policy, the available information on the NSC drafting process and the current debates.

Finally, chapter V will gather the following conclusions drawn from the earlier analysis. Historically, the MD has evolved with the strategic context to serve NATO interests. The security of the Mediterranean region is closely linked with the security of Europe and consequently with NATO. The MD is not a panacea but it is a relevant tool to manage some of the challenges present in the Mediterranean. These threats are likely to increase in the future and the MD is well placed to deal with them provided that it is further enhanced. The future role of the MD is to be decided now and reflected in the new NSC. Conversely, there is no certainty that the MD will be promoted. However, in light of this the conclusion will be that NATO should invest in the MD.

For the purpose of this DRP, the Mediterranean is not just a geographical concept that refers to the Mediterranean sea, not even just to the countries that have coasts in this sea. The Mediterranean, though, has to be understood as a wider geostrategic region where different continents, cultures, races, political systems and societies meet and interact. This space includes countries that have no coast in the Mediterranean but influence and are deeply influenced by the events and dynamics present there.

In this sense, it is acknowledged that the MD is very selective and does not cover all the Mediterranean space countries, but few of them. However, the MD does not apply a restrictive concept of the Mediterranean since it does

include some countries that do not have Mediterranean waters, but do belong to the Mediterranean space, such as Jordan and Mauritania. This broad conception of the Mediterranean surprises some external observers that are unaware of the dynamics in the region.¹

Another area that needs to be examined is the so-called ‘south perspective’. It is key because the MD, as its name indicates, is supposed to be a ‘dialogue’. A dialogue has two directions, in this case ‘north-south’ (NATO towards MD partners²) and ‘south-north’ (MD partners towards NATO). To achieve effective communication each part has to understand the others perspective. This could sound glaringly obvious, however, as this paper will hint, too often NATO has either ignored the MD partners perspective or assumed it was the same as its own. This does not mean that NATO has to care only for MD interests, let alone give up its own interests, but NATO has to understand them in order to build a relationship based on mutual interests.

The methodology followed for the research of this paper has been mainly based on an extensive literature review, especially of the NATO official documentation and working documents, and academic papers on the issue. The research for specific areas not covered by the literature has been complemented with focused questions (via e-mails) and interviews with subject matter experts in these specific areas.

Given the length limitation of this paper the following issues have been considered secondary and consequently will either not be covered in great depth or fall out of the scope of this DRP: the history, evolution and interrelationship of the rest of the Mediterranean initiatives. The peculiarity of the national interests and perspectives of each of the NATO members and MD partners. The prediction for specific changes in the aims, format, roles of the MD and

1 In the same way that some objected in 1948 to the entrance of Italy in the North – Atlantic Treaty because ‘Italy is not in the North of Europe’ and ‘has no geographical connection with the Atlantic’. Minuto. ‘NATO and the Mediterranean’. MD IRS at NDC. Rome: 2001.

2 For the purpose of this paper, MD partners will refer to the countries belonging to the MD that are not NATO members.

its financial rules. The prospect for future enlargement of the MD. The similarities and differences between the MD and the rest of the NATO cooperative security initiatives such as the Partnership for Peace (PfP), the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), the NATO-Russia and NATO-Ukraine partnerships and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI).

This paper also has limitations on its content. These limitations are due to the requirement to use exclusively unclassified information and to the scarcity of MD partners official documentation made available to the broad public.³

³ This circumstance is due to domestic politics that will be explained in chapter III.

CHAPTER II

MD BACKGROUND

HISTORY AND EVOLUTION

Since its creation, NATO has been adapting its structures, policies and tasks to the changes in the strategic environment. One of the biggest changes in NATO policy was implemented as a result of the report ‘The Future Tasks of the Alliance’ presented in December 1967 by the Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel. The so-called *Harmel Report* recommended that ‘NATO should have a political track promoting dialogue and détente between NATO and Warsaw Pact countries’.¹

The Harmel policy helped to pave the way to improve the relationships with the Eastern European countries and ultimately contributed to the pacific end of the Cold War era and the subsequent transition.² The continuation and enhancement of this policy led to the creation of Security Cooperation Institutions and initiatives, such as the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1991 and the PfP in 1994.³

1 NATO PDD. ‘60 years of NATO’. Brussels: n.p., 2009. 3.

2 NATO. ‘The Harmel Report : full reports by the rapporteurs on the future tasks of the Alliance’.

3 Yaniz. ‘Las Iniciativas de Cooperación de la OTAN ante el Nuevo Concepto Estratégico’. RIE. January 2010. 3.

Since the London Summit of NATO Heads of State and Government (NHOSG) held in June 1990, the importance of the Mediterranean countries for Alliance security was highlighted during almost every North Atlantic Council (NAC) meeting, both at Ministerial and HOSG levels. Consequently, the need was identified to establish a dialogue with them and improve the cooperation to strengthen stability in the region.⁴

Even in the 1991 NSC, the direct relationship between security in the Mediterranean and security in Europe was stated thus: ‘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.’⁵

However, the strategic and political conditions to realise this renewed security interest for the Mediterranean into a concrete measure would not be met until the Brussels Summit in January 1994, when the NHOSG took advantage of the improvements on the Palestino-Israeli Peace process to make this proposal:

‘We reiterate our conviction that security in Europe is greatly affected by security in the Mediterranean. We strongly welcome the agreements recently concluded in the Middle East peace process which offer an historic opportunity for a peaceful and lasting settlement in the area. This much-awaited breakthrough has had a positive impact on the overall situation in the Mediterranean, thus opening the way to consider measures to promote dialogue, understanding and confidence-building between the countries in the region.’⁶

But, the Council in Permanent Session did not have at that time a clear idea of what to do to realise the concept.

4 NATO. ‘List of NATO’s Communiqués since 1990 Referring to the Mediterranean Region and/or NATO’s MD’. 2010.

5 NATO. ‘The Alliance’s New Strategic Concept’. Agreed by NHOSG at the Rome-Summit. 1991. Para12.

6 NATO OIP. “The Brussels Summit Declaration”. January 1994. NATO Handbook Documentation. Brussels: n.p, 1999. 326-334.

Six months later in the Istanbul Summit of 1994, the NAC reiterated the need to come up with ‘possible proposals ... to contribute to the strengthening of regional stability’.⁷ Finally, the MD was launched in December 1994 at the Brussels Summit.⁸

Contrary to what some authors believe,⁹ the MD was not originally open to every Mediterranean country. In fact, the contacts were established on a case-by-case basis between the Alliance and some Mediterranean non-member countries taking into consideration strategic and political factors. Thus, the first format chosen for the MD was limited and with a bilateral character. As a result, five countries were included to hold a permanent dialogue with the Alliance: Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.¹⁰

A year later, during the NAC meeting in December 1995, the MD was also extended to Jordan,¹¹ and three interconnected objectives for the MD were officially defined: to contribute to strengthening security and stability in the Mediterranean region, to achieve a better mutual understanding, and to foster transparency by dispelling misconceptions about NATO’s policies and objectives among Dialogue countries.¹² At this stage, the MD was just a mechanism to hold talks and political consultations on a bilateral basis and would remain so until 1997.¹³

In 1997 the MD was enhanced for the first time to improve its overall political visibility with the inclusion of a number of measures on the implementation and scope

7 Istanbul Summit Communiqué. 1994. Cited in NATO. ‘List of NATO’s Communiqués...’. 2010.

8 Brussels Summit Communiqué. 1994. Cited in Ibid.

9 ‘Originally, the partnership created by NATO was open to all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean. Some of them joined, while others chose not to.’ Razoux. ‘The NATO MD at a crossroads’. RP-35. NDC. Rome: 2008. 6.

10 Brussels Summit Communiqué. 1995. Para. 12. Cited in NATO. ‘List of NATO’s Communiqués...’. 2010.

11 Ibid.

12 NATO DD. *NATO Handbook*. Brussels: n.p., 2006. 230.

13 Yaniz. 2010. 4.

for its further development. To the political dimension, a new practical dimension was added. This was reflected in the MD Annual Work Programme that included a series of practical civil and military activities offered to the MD countries.¹⁴ Additionally, the NHOSG decided in the Madrid Summit to establish the Mediterranean Cooperation Group under the authority of the NAC. This new Committee has the overall responsibility for the MD.¹⁵

In 1997, the practical dimension of the MD became a reality. Nevertheless, the ‘1997 MD Work Programme’ (MDWP97) had just 60 activities,¹⁶ and like those in the MDWP98 and MDWP99, most of them were low-profile and adapted from the PfP Work Programme (PfPWP). These activities reached limited areas of cooperation. Furthermore, the preferences of the MD countries were not taken into account. As a result of these and other factors, the level of participation in these activities was very low.

The 1999 NSC (NSC99) recognized the promotion of ‘a wide-ranging partnership, cooperation and dialogue with other countries’ as one of its fundamental security tasks. It also reminded that ‘security in Europe is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean’. But, the real bolster that the NSC99 provided to the MD was its recognition as ‘an integral part of NATO’s co-operative approach to security’ that ‘provides a framework for confidence building, promotes transparency and cooperation in the region, and reinforces and is reinforced by other international efforts.’ In the NSC99, the Alliance committed itself to developing progressively the political, civil, and military aspects of the Dialogue with the ‘aim of achieving closer cooperation with, and more active involvement by, countries that are partners in this Dialogue.’¹⁷

14 NATO DD. 2006. 232.

15 Madrid Summit Communiqué. 1997. Cited in NATO. ‘List of NATO’s Communiqués...’. 2010.

16 Razoux, 2008, 2.

17 NSC99. NATO PDD. ‘Towards the new Strategic Concept. A selection of background documents’. Brussels, 2010. 40.

This official commitment, together with the fact that the NSC99 was openly published, helped the Mediterranean countries to appreciate the importance that NATO intended to give to the MD. It also fostered the internal improvement of the MD. For instance, the MD countries were at last offered the ‘opportunity for sharing views on the implementation and future development of the Dialogue’.¹⁸ Hence, in the subsequent MDWPs, the number and interest of the activities offered, as well as the areas of cooperation opened to the MD increased steadily. Evidence of this new impetus was the inclusion of Algeria, announced in May 2000.¹⁹

Another milestone in the evolution of the MD was marked by the terrorist attacks on the 11 September 2001.²⁰ The dramatic change in the strategic environment provided an added value to the relationships built with the Muslim MD countries.²¹ It also opened a new facet in the purpose and possibilities of the MD: the fight against this common threat, terrorism. This correlation was made clear in December 2001 with the statement: ‘We applaud the unambiguous stand taken by our MD partners, which have unreservedly condemned these attacks. We reaffirm our willingness to provide assistance ... to Allies and other states which are or may be subject to increased terrorist threats as a result of their support for the campaign against terrorism.’²²

In the following years, the political and practical dimensions of the MD were progressively boosted. This enhancement was reflected in the 2004 Istanbul Summit of NHOGS that constituted the biggest change in the MD evolution. As a result of the decisions taken,²³ the MD was elevated to a genuine partnership, the principles for its function and

18 Brussels Summit Communiqué. 1999. Cited in NATO. ‘List of NATO’s Communiqués...’. 2010.

19 Florence Summit Communiqué. 2000. Cited in Ibid.

20 ‘The events of September 11 have made [the MD] more important’. Minuto. 2001.

21 Kadry. ‘Assessing NATO’s MD’. NATO Review. No. spring 2004. 1.

22 Brussels Summit Communiqué. 2001. Separate Statement on terrorism. Cited in NATO. ‘List of NATO’s Communiqués...’. 2010.

23 During the same Istanbul Summit, the ICI was launched. This initiative will be explained in the next chapter.

development were laid down, new objectives were settled in addition to the generic MD aims, and some priority areas for cooperation were established.²⁴

The principles defined at Istanbul are still in force²⁵ and include amongst others the following: the nature of the relationship is to be mutually beneficial; the Dialogue is to be developed in close consultation with MD countries ('joint ownership'); it is to be responsive to MD countries interests and needs; progressiveness in terms of participation and substance with the possibility of self-differentiation while preserving the unity of the MD and its non-discriminatory character;²⁶ the need to focus on areas where NATO can add value and ensure complementarity with the ICI, as well as with other international efforts.²⁷

The MD 'new objectives' were much more demanding than previous ones and implied a higher political commitment for the MD partners. They included enhancing the political dialogue, to achieve interoperability among forces, developing defence reform and contributing to the fight against terrorism. Accordingly, priority areas of cooperation were identified to achieve these objectives. Some of these were: a better explanation of NATO transformation and cooperative efforts; promotion of military-to-military cooperation to achieve interoperability (through military exercises, education and training) to contribute to NATO-led operations;²⁸ promotion of democratic control of armed forces and transparency in national defence planning and defence budgeting in support of defence reform; combating terrorism including effective intelligence sharing and maritime cooperation especially through the framework of Operation Active Endeavour; contribution to

24 NATO. 'A more Ambitious and Expanded Framework for the MD'. Istanbul Summit of NHOSG, 2004.

25 Yaniz. 2010. 16.

26 These principles have been key to MD development. 'Non-discriminatory' means that all MD partners are offered cooperation activities on the same basis. 'Self-differentiation' means that Dialogue countries can choose the extent of their participation. NATO DD. 2006. 231.

27 NATO. 'A more Ambitious...' 2004.

28 These operations should be consistent with the UN Charter and 'could include non-Article 5 crisis response operations. NATO. 'A more Ambitious ...' 2004.

diminish the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) threat; cooperation in the field of border security, particularly related to terrorism, small arms, and illegal trafficking; and cooperation in civil emergency planning.²⁹

Another consequence of the Istanbul Summit was the further improvement of the political dimension of the MD. Until then, the consultations were made only at Ambassadorial level³⁰ with the bilateral format ('NATO members + 1'), but in Istanbul it was agreed to hold meetings also at ministerial and HOSG level, as well as at lower working levels in both formats bilateral and joint (NATO+1 and NATO+7). Since Istanbul, the political dialogue has gained both in regularity and substance. NATO Foreign Ministers met with their MD partners in December 2004, 2007 and 2008. Similarly the Defence Ministers and the Chiefs of Defence met regularly. As part of the political dialogue, high-level consultations, visits to MD countries and bilateral meetings between the NATO Secretary General (NATO SG) and MD officials are held frequently.³¹

It was clear that political and practical dimensions should proceed in parallel in a balanced manner. Therefore, the practical dimension was also further enhanced. On the one hand, the existing MDWPs were subsequently improved in the number and quality of the areas of cooperation and activities.³² As an illustration of the practical dimension progress, the MDWPs steadily increased from around 100 activities in 2004, to 794 activities³³ in 27 different cooperation areas in 2008. Approximately 85% of the activities were military cooperation activities and the rest were civilian cooperation activities.³⁴ Amongst these activities we can highlight the following: MD observers

29 Ibid.

30 Yaniz. 2010. 15.

31 NATO. 'Fact Sheet On The MD'. 2008. 2.

32 NATO. 'A more Ambitious...' 2004.

33 Yaniz. 2010. 16.

34 To know more about the MDWP structure, progress, areas of cooperation, kinds of activities, funding procedures and responsibilities see: NATO. 'MD Work Programme 2006'.

and participants in NATO military exercises, MD attendees to courses at the NATO School in Oberammergau and the NATO Defence College (NDC) in Rome, MD's port visits by NATO's Standing Naval Forces, mobile training teams in MD partners and counter-terrorist intelligence sharing seminars.³⁵

On the other hand, new cooperating tools were offered to the MD partners, such as the possibility of developing action plans and Individual Cooperation Programmes (ICP) tailored to each MD country's needs and preferences. The first countries to complete ICPs were Israel, Jordan and Egypt, but Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Mauritania are already preparing them.³⁶ Another cooperating tool offered is the access to NATO Trust Fund projects, which are intended to help NATO partners with the safe disposal of obsolete arms, landmines, munitions and unexploded ordnance.³⁷ Until now, Jordan has received two of these projects and the implementation of the third one was initiated on 19 November 2009.³⁸ Another cooperation tool opened to the MD partners was the NATO Training Cooperation Initiative, launched in 2006 for the modernisation of defence structures and the training of security forces.³⁹ Finally, another form of practical interaction between NATO and MD countries is the participation of MD forces in NATO-led operations. This has been the case for Egypt, Jordan and Morocco forces in the Implementation Force (IFOR) and the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and currently Jordan Forces in the Stabilisation of Afghanistan (ISAF).⁴⁰

35 NATO DD. 2006. 232.

36 Yaniz. 2010. 15.

37 Rasmussen, 'NATO, the Mediterranean and the broader Middle East region'. Speech NATO SG. Amman, March 2010.

38 Two projects dedicated to destruct obsolete explosives and another to finance the equipment to defuse the munition in Zarqa (Jordan). Yaniz. 2010. 16.

39 This Initiative foresees the increased participation in NATO training, the establishment of a Middle-East faculty at the NDC and the creation of a Security Cooperation Centre in the region. NATO. 'Riga Summit Declaration'. November 2006. Para. 17.

40 Rasmussen. Amman, 2010.

As it has been explained, the MD has evolved drastically from its inception as a mechanism for political consultation to its present partnership form. In the following chapter its current situation will be analysed.

CHAPTER III MD PRESENT

First, this Chapter will address the current relevance of the Mediterranean space to the security of the NATO member states. This will be done taking a ‘north perspective’.¹ Then, it will analyse the south perspective. Finally, it will focus on the present reality of the NATO MD in particular examining both the problems and the achievements of the initiative.

The Mediterranean matters for the Alliance primarily because, as the NATO official declarations have often stated: ‘security in the whole Europe is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean’.² In fact, we cannot separate one from another since a part of Europe is also Mediterranean. This link is constantly growing stronger

**The ‘north perspective’.
Why does the Mediterranean
matters?**

1 This section of the chapter provides a unifying ‘northern’ view on the Mediterranean, taking into consideration the general opinion of the NATO countries. This simplistic approach follows the RAND theory that there is a ‘convergence of security perceptions in the north’ that closed together the American, north European and southern European views. (Lesser, et al. *The Future of NATO’s Mediterranean Initiative: Evolution and Next Steps*. Washington: RAND, 2000.) However, as will be outlined later, there is no such formal agreed view amongst all the nations. There are two major historical approaches to the Mediterranean amongst the Allies: the South-European one and the US one. For their evolution and differences read: Sanchez. ‘United States, Europe and the Mediterranean’. IEEE (ed). *The Mediterranean in the new strategic Environment*. CE 125-B. Madrid: MoD, 2004. 23-44.

2 NATO. ‘List of NATO’s Communiqués...’. 2010.

along with the interconnectedness of our world and the transnational character of the new security challenges.

The enormous ‘cultural, religious, political and economic diversity’³ of this region, made of portions of three continents, gives the Mediterranean one of its main characteristics: it is an area of contrasts. These disparities are greater in a north – south direction than in a north-north or a south-south direction, stressing the distinction in the political dimension between a democratic, stable and integrated ‘north’ and a fragmented and intrinsically unstable ‘south’; and in the economic dimension between a rich and prosperous ‘north’ and a poor and ‘low-growing south’;⁴ and in the social dimension between a welfare ‘north’ and an unstable ‘south’.

It is accepted that, in general, the sources of insecurity in the ‘south’ are greater in number and relevance than in the ‘north’. This is especially true considering the domestic social, economic and political challenges that these countries face.⁵ Most of these internal challenges have a ‘synergistic effect’⁶ creating a vicious cycle where every problem reinforces the appearance and growth of the rest.

These challenges concern all of the Buzan’s security dimensions.⁷ They encompass amongst others: the slow or even negative growth of their developing economies; their lack of resources, especially water; their lack of democratisation and respect for human rights; the powerful influence of the military in their domestic politics;⁸ the uneven social conditions that favour the

3 Robertson. ‘NATO and the Mediterranean - Moving from Dialogue Towards Partnership’. Speech NATO SG at RUSI. London: 2002.

4 The Gross National Income (GNI) per capita in the EU Mediterranean countries is 15 times higher than in the Southern Mediterranean countries. Source: World Bank. 2010.

5 Lesser. 2000. 4.

6 Dokos, *Countering the proliferation of WMD in the Mediterranean: NATO and the EU options in the Mediterranean and the Middle East*. London: Routledge, 2008. 10.

7 These are Economic, Political, Social/Cultural, Environmental and Military dimensions.

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

‘spread of religious [Islamic] radicalism’⁹ that fosters domestic and transnational terrorism;¹⁰ organized crime; and the mismatch between their demographic explosion and their ability to provide jobs and good living conditions for their people. Therefore, the ‘security agendas’ in the southern countries are mainly driven by ‘internal security concerns’.¹¹ Nevertheless, the mentioned gap between population and resources increases the migration pressure towards Europe. This pressure is sometimes perceived as a ‘threat’ to European countries. Simultaneously, this migration also strengthens the linkage between the domestic security problems in the south and their repercussion in the European countries given the fact that currently more than 5 million immigrants from north African countries live in the EU.¹²

However, the southern countries are also confronted with other security challenges that are not purely domestic. Some of these are the ‘continued existence of regional conflicts’ especially in the south-south direction, not only the Israel-Palestine issue, that will be treated below, but also other north African disputes such as the ‘Western Sahara’ and the ‘Morocco-Algeria border dispute’ that endanger regional stability. Other challenges are the transnational crime nets (some of them dedicated to drug smuggling and illegal migration towards Europe) and the proliferation of WMD and of ‘sophisticated conventional weapons’.¹³

Another major security challenge that deserves special attention is the so-called ‘Islamic terrorism’. It affects especially the southern countries, but is perceived by the

9 Dokos, 2008, 10.

10 Especially in the case of the North African countries, the difference between domestic and international religious motivated terrorism is becoming harder to draw. For instance, a domestic terrorist group such as the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) in 2007 made an alliance with Al-Qaeda (AQ) and changed its name to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) extending the reach of its activities. Celso. “Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb: The ‘Newest’ Front in the War on Terror”, *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol 19, September 2008. 82.

11 Lesser. 2000. 4.

12 Dokos, 2008, 10-13.

13 Ibid.

northern societies as a ‘southern threat’ directed to them. Notwithstanding that, this constitutes a real threat to the European countries as can be confirmed by the fact that since 11 September 2001 at least 17 terrorist attempts to attack European targets have been plotted in Maghreb countries.¹⁴

The combination of these last two mentioned threats constitutes one of the potential threats that probably has a greater impact in the northern security perception, as expressed by the words of the NATO SG that ‘the most dangerous terrorists getting their hands on the most dangerous weapons.’¹⁵

Although there are other much more positive dimensions to the south-north security relationship, such as energy security, in which the south are interested as providers or transit countries and the north as consumers,¹⁶ the northern view of the southern Mediterranean is often restricted to the ‘perception of threats’. As Biscop pointed out, this negative perception ‘cannot be the basis for security cooperation and, as self-fulfilling prophecy, would only serve to alienate the southern Mediterranean countries from the West and increase suspicions and distrust’.¹⁷

A south perspective

A dialogue is a two-way communication. This paper would fail to explain properly both, the problems and achievements of WMD without having taken into account the south perspective. Additionally, it is essential to understand MD partners’ perspectives in order to be in the position to address their concerns and fears and make the dialogue more productive.¹⁸

14 Many of them have been prevented with the cooperation of MD countries. The NATO source prefers to remain anonymous.

15 Rasmussen, ‘NATO-UAE Relations and the Way Forward in the ICI’. Speech NATO SG. Abu-Dhabi, October 2009.

16 Europe consumes 80% of the energy produced in the Mediterranean. Martinez, ‘Iniciativas de Seguridad y Cooperacion en el Mediterraneo’, Monografia (ESFAS, 2008). 6.

17 Biscop, ‘Network or Labyrinth? The Challenge of Co-ordinating Western Security Dialogues with the Mediterranean’. Mediterranean Politics, Vol. 7, No.1, Spring 2002. London: Frank Cass, 2002. 105.

18 Dokos, 2008, 108.

At the end of the Cold War, there was a growing image inside NATO that the threat shifted to the south and the term ‘southern flank’ was used to refer to the Mediterranean.¹⁹ This ‘western²⁰ image’ was perceived by the north African countries as a security warning, above all bearing in mind the significant difference in terms of economic and military power between the Alliance and each of these countries.

For instance, the statement made by NATO SG Willy Claes [1994-1995] about a ‘threat from the south’,²¹ and above all the one he made following the events of September 11th claiming that ‘Islam has replaced Marxism-Leninism as the Alliance’s chief source of concern after the Cold War’²² have had a deep impact on the way ‘Arab governments and their peoples view the north.’

This perceived menace was also reinforced by the increased number of military interventions in which NATO members projected their overwhelming power, such as the US air strikes against Libya (1986), the 1991 Gulf War, the Bosnia and Kosovo operations. Additionally, the ‘psychological consequences of the events of 11 September 2001’ and its aftermaths in terms of the Global War on Terrorism made NATO’s southern neighbours very sensitive to every western reaction.²³

All this has provoked a broad extended view in the Arab societies. It is that the US, as well as Europe, are trying to ‘interfere in the internal affairs of Arab states and impose alien values on their societies’. Therefore, they perceive Muslim civilisation is threatened by Western influence. In their view, the new colonialist rationale that the north applies is that ‘the south is a piece of property’ that the

19 Minuto, 2001.

20 For the purpose of this DRP western refers to the northern Mediterranean plus North America.

21 Dokos, 2008, 18.

22 Caracuel. ‘The MDs in the European Security Architecture’. IEEE. 2004. 122.

23 This refers not only to interventions such as Iraqi Freedom in 2003, but also to declarations about stabilising ‘weak, failing and failed states’. They wonder whether the north includes them in these categories.

north has the right to dominate. This belief fosters the ‘anti-Western feeling in the south’.²⁴

In the case of the south Mediterranean states, this general Arab view has been complemented by a sense of isolation due to the evolution of the European institutions in the last two decades. During the Cold War ‘the north’ was perceived as fragmented and divided mainly between west and east. The south Mediterranean countries could ‘choose’ which side to support and they did not feel excluded. However, since the end of the Cold War the rapid development and integration of the economic, political and security institutions in the north has reinforced the perception of the ‘Mediterranean south slowly and systematically being isolated and excluded’. Some of the major changes have been the evolution towards an enlarged, strengthened and more integrated EU that pursues a Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP); the creation of cooperative initiatives such as the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) and the NATO PfP that has led to the enlargement of NATO towards the East; and the relative success of the Confidence Building Measures (CBM) in the OSCE framework and the ‘European investments in Central and Eastern Europe’.²⁵

Furthermore, these organisations coincide with a ‘divisive cultural line’ and their goals have been perceived in the south Mediterranean as a confirmation of Huntington’s clash of civilisation.²⁶ A ‘northern theory’²⁷ very well known in the south that, as a self-fulfilling prophecy, serves to increase the perceived threat in both sides and consequently the likelihood of a conflict (asymmetric in this case).

This threat was reinforced by the creation of military Forces such as the NATO Reaction Forces (NRF), the

24 Dokos, 2008, 18, 147.

25 Ibid., 17-18.

26 Ibid.

27 In most South views, all the actions made by the Western countries respond to the logic explained by Huntington in his book: *Clash of Civilisations*. Simon and Schuster: New York, 1997.

European Rapid Reaction Force, European Operational Rapid Force (EUROFOR) and European Maritime Forces (EUROMARFOR).²⁸ The case of EUROFOR and EUROMARFOR was especially significant because it was formed by north Mediterranean countries (France, Italy, Spain and Portugal) with a specific expeditionary and amphibious character to conduct ‘Petersberg-type’ missions ‘without excluding military operations under Article V of the modified Brussels Treaty’.²⁹

Moreover, the reasons for their creation were not conveniently explained to southern Mediterranean neighbours assuming that their missions could be ‘in anticipation of possible conflicts’. Of course, this provoked a great alarm and adverse reaction in the south. These reactions surprised the European countries who interpreted them as an example of misperceptions from the southern Mediterranean countries because these forces were for emergencies and ‘the southern countries could benefit from [their] assistance should the need arise and even take part in their activities’.³⁰ However, the south’s fears are fully understandable as Dokos illustrates: “When the creation of a rapid reaction force for possible action in north Africa and the Middle-East is planned, one should try to imagine how the creation of an equivalent Arab or Islamic force to deal with ‘emergencies’ in Europe would appear to Europeans”.³¹

Concerning NATO, it is still perceived by the general public in the Muslim MD countries as ‘a Cold War institution in search of a new enemy.’³² This image of NATO is further discredited as being the ‘military arm of US policy in the Mediterranean’³³ and therefore is closely associated with the US image they have. In the last decade, the US image in these north African societies has been undermined, above all, by its military intervention and presence in Iraq and

NATO’s image in the Mediterranean

28 Caracul. IEEE. 2004. 108.

29 Dokos, 2008, 18.

30 Lipkowski, cited in ibid, 147.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., 18.

33 Razoux, 2008, 3.

the US perceived support to Israel against the Palestinian and Arabs in general. Other NATO and US interventions in Muslim countries, although to a lesser extent, have also tarnished this image.

Conversely, the NATO and US interventions in favour of the Muslim populations in Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan have not been fully transmitted and explained to the wider society in these countries. Hence, NATO's image has not benefited from them.

This situation partially³⁴ explains the mismatch between the perceptions of the elites and the population in these countries. This gap is frequently illustrated with the contrast between the 'enthusiastic statements issued [by the MD partners' HOSG] during official visits by NATO delegations' and the fact that 'the visit is usually discreetly reported in the official press, but is not often widely relayed to the public, who tend to be critical of their country's links with NATO'. This negative NATO image affects its capability to play a 'constructive role in the region'.³⁵

But, the perception of the elites has also been influenced by the MD initiative itself. Although much has been done in this sense, as will be explained later, the mismatch between the Arab countries' expectations³⁶ and the real steps of the process have affected their views. Some of them perceive their expectations to have not been met.³⁷ This is partially due to the cultural difference between northern and southern views in the order of actions to be followed. For NATO countries stability is a prerequisite to political and economic development³⁸ and the political dialogue should be the first step to build confidence and cooperation. However, for some MD partners the economic development is a precondition for the security and

34 Other reasons are to be found in the dynamics of power in both, the international and domestic domains.

35 Razoux, 2008, 3-4.

36 Kadry, 2004.

37 Lemine. 'Áreas de Cooperación potencial entre la OTAN y sus socios en el Diálogo Mediterráneo'. *Seminario sobre Seguridad y Cooperación en el Oeste Mediterráneo*. IUGGM. Madrid: Doppel S.L., 2004. 188.

38 Navarro, "Palabras de Clausura del Seminario". IUGGM, 2004, 199.

within the security they prefer to start with the ‘difficult questions’,³⁹ especially those regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁴⁰

These elites also perceive their relationship with NATO as ‘a multi-bilateral discussion between a highly organised and capable Western institution’ and their individual countries.⁴¹ Therefore, they see it as imbalanced, ‘essentially one-track and frequently focused on security issues that highlight the deficiencies in their own systems’. So, they do not feel that their needs are sufficiently taken into account in relation to those of NATO. They also believe that NATO ‘does not always make enough effort to understand their mentality and their specificities.’⁴²

However, the MD partners’ do not constitute a homogeneous group of countries. Although a general difference could be made between Israel and the rest of the partners due to their Muslim character, every one of them has its singularities, challenges and specific security concerns (many of them in the south-south direction). Their commitment to the MD and expectations also vary significantly from one another.

Jordan is interested and highly committed to the dialogue,⁴³ mainly because as a small power in a very unstable region it considers that its own security and stability are essential for the international and regional stability, and vice-versa.⁴⁴ Algeria is also a very committed partner, mainly because it believes that its partnership and cooperation with the Alliance will foster its integration with the West and provide it with a high value intelligence exchange in the fight against its domestic terrorist challenge.⁴⁵ Morocco is a traditional western partner that has shown its commitment

39 Kadry, 2004.

40 Basly, “Panorámica Tunecina”. IUGGM, 2004, 153.

41 Dokos, 2008, 108.

42 Razoux, 2008, 7.

43 Spanish CHOD. ‘Nota informativa... OTAN-DM... terrorismo’. Madrid: 2005.

44 Al-Marashdeh, ‘La experiencia jordana en las Operaciones de Mantenimiento de la Paz’. IUGGM, 2004, 175.

45 NATO. ‘MILCOOP Background Brief: MD countries’ involvement...’ J5-MILCOOP. Mons, 2004. 1.

with its continuous contributions to NATO led operations,⁴⁶ political support for the NATO initiatives⁴⁷ and its increasing participation in cooperation activities. Egypt's political interest and practical commitment for the MD have been fluctuating in close relationship with the Israeli-Palestine conflict situation and other strategic factors.⁴⁸ Tunisia, though, shows a political 'low profile' in its interaction with the MD possibly motivated by domestic concerns. It also acknowledges its preference for the military bilateral relationships with some NATO members rather than within the MD framework.⁴⁹ Mauritania is not a very active partner but this could be due to its small administration and lack of resources, together with the fact that its precarious domestic security circumstances attract all its attention.⁵⁰

Finally, there is the unique position of Israel within the MD. On the one hand, Israel is very interested not only in enhancing the political dialogue⁵¹ with NATO and the rest of MD partners, but also in practical cooperation, especially in some areas.⁵² On the other hand, however, the Israeli perception of the MD can be 'critical'⁵³ sometimes complaining about the NATO approach to the Israeli-Palestine issues in which it expects to be more supported.

If the MD partners have such different views, why were they chosen and why were others excluded? Every one of

46 Also Jordan and Egypt have participated in NATO operations. The Morocco contribution, though has being the second biggest from the non-NATO countries in KFOR and EUFOR. NATO. *'Status Report on the Military Co-operation Programme (Draft)'*. C&RS. Mons, 2003.

47 NATO. 'MILCOOP Background...', 2004, 3.

48 For instance, it has refused to host NATO visits and it has been underrepresented in some important MD meetings. Ibid.

49 NATO. *'Training needs assessment of MD and ICI in support of NTCP'*. Visit report. Tunisia. May 2007. 1.

50 NATO. *'Training needs assessment of MD and ICI in support of NTCP'*. Visit report. Mauritania. April 2007. 2.

51 The NATO MD is one of the few frameworks that promote the dialogue and cooperation amongst the Mediterranean countries. Harel, 'Los programas de cooperación de Israel: Planes para el futuro'. IUGGM, 2004, 191.

52 The principal area for Israel is the fight against terrorism. NATO. 'MILCOOP Trip Report: Staff Talks with Israel'. J5-MILCOOP. Tel Aviv, 2004. 1.

53 Razoux, 2008, 4.

them believe that the reason they were chosen is for being ‘perceived to be a moderate, Western-looking, constructive (as defined by the West) participant in regional affairs’. Moreover, all of them maintain diplomatic relations with the rest, something that cannot be taken for granted considering the numerous conflicts that exist in the region.⁵⁴

Bearing in mind the different perceptions outlined, it is time to analyse the three main problems that the NATO MD faces: the impact of the Palestine/Arab-Israeli conflict, the lack of a common view on the Mediterranean amongst the NATO members and the un-coordinated existence of multiple initiatives for the Mediterranean.

MD Problems

It has already been mentioned that the improvements in the Palestine-Israeli Peace process in 1994 made possible the creation of the MD.⁵⁵ Since the very beginning, it was clear that such an initiative should include Israel as well as Arab countries. The inclusion of Israel was very significant, not just because it set the framework for Israel liaison with NATO, but above all for its ‘membership of a group that is predominantly Muslim.’⁵⁶ This circumstance is concurrently a significant weakness and strength of the MD. Here it will be analysed as a weakness.

The impact of the Palestine/ Arab-Israeli conflict

Every time the Middle East security situation deteriorates, as happened in August 2006 and December 2008, the political dialogue within the MD framework is affected.⁵⁷ This conflict is so central to the Arab perceptions that constitute the main argument that most MD countries made to justify their relative lack of enthusiasm in the initiative.⁵⁸ Logically, none of the leaders wants to be seen by their population as an active member of an organisation where Israel also sits, above all when this organisation belongs to NATO, which is perceived as a US tool.

⁵⁴ Dokos, 2008, 108.

⁵⁵ NATO OIP. “The Brussels Summit Declaration”. 1994. NATO *Handbook Documentation*. 1999. 326-334.

⁵⁶ Searight, (Searight.mark@hq.nato.int), Dec 17 2009, Re: NATO MD. E-mail to AArmada.jscsc@defenceacademy.mod.uk

⁵⁷ Yaniz. 2010. 14.

⁵⁸ Kadry, 2004. 1.

NATO is aware of these circumstances and prefers to diminish the level of activities of its practical cooperation programs when this tension arises, maintaining only low profile activities in order to keep the MD alive.⁵⁹ It is also recognised that many of the efforts and achievements of the MD are hampered by this conflict.⁶⁰ Although NATO in itself is not yet taking an active part in the Middle East peace process, it has an agreed position on the subject. This has been summarized by the NATO SG as the ‘attachment to a two-state solution, in which Israel and Palestine live side by side in peace and security’.⁶¹

*The lack of a common view on
the Mediterranean amongst
the NATO members*

However, not all the MD problems lie outside NATO. One of the main challenges is at the heart of the Alliance. The lack of a common view on the Mediterranean and consequently, the lack of consensus about what the MD is for. There is a wide array of diverging views depending on the particular member states’ security perceptions and the depth of knowledge and awareness about the Mediterranean issues.

The competition between national agendas of some key members interested in the Mediterranean region increases the rivalry amongst them. This does not help to provoke a healthy debate within the Alliance that deepens the understanding of the rest of Allies⁶² that are less aware of the relevance and complexity of this region.⁶³

Consequently, there is also a lack of consensus on the MD purpose. For some, it is to be just a ‘public relations effort’, some others see it as a ‘useful channel to discuss security questions’, and finally the more aware ones consider it as a valuable tool to increase NATO security, by addressing ‘the security concerns of the Mediterranean partners’.⁶⁴

59 Spanish MoD. “Visión Militar Española sobre las Iniciativas del Mediterráneo”. Madrid, 2004, 1.

60 Rasmussen. Abu-Dhabi, 2009.

61 Rasmussen. Abu-Dhabi, 2009.

62 Especially for the new Allies from central and Eastern Europe that have had less contact with the Mediterranean region.

63 Razoux, 2008, 3.

64 Dokos, 2008, 195.

The reality is that with the ‘weak support’ of some key allies,⁶⁵ the rest of the NATO members accept the premise that ‘a weak dialogue is better than no dialogue at all’.⁶⁶ As a result of this situation, the NATO MD initiative ‘does not receive enough publicity’ throughout the NATO space, avoiding a mature debate in the academic world that would certainly increase the need to promote this initiative. It is worth noting the scarcity of relevant academic publications related to the MD and the fact that even officials appointed in NATO posts are not aware of the existence of this initiative.

The third main challenge that the MD faces is the co-existence of multiple cooperative initiatives in the Mediterranean region without proper coordination. Only considering the ones that deal with security matters, there are in the north – south direction in addition to the MD: the EU sponsored ‘Barcelona process initiative’⁶⁷ also called ‘Euromediterranean Partnership’ that was launched in 1994 and was finally transformed into the Union for the Mediterranean⁶⁸ (UfM); the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation⁶⁹ founded in 1995 that deals with politico-military, economic and human dimensions; the “5+5” security and defence initiative created in 2000 that focuses in the West Mediterranean; and the NATO ICI launched in 2004. In the south-south direction, we have to add the African Union, the Arab League and the Arab Maghreb Union.

The un-coordinated existence of multiple initiatives for the Mediterranean

The main reason for the existence of such a wide number of security initiatives is that each of them is sponsored by and serves different international organizations, institutions or group of countries, each of them is directed to diverse members and partners and each of them has distinct aims, ways and means. The principal question

⁶⁵ Menotti, cited in: Dokos, 2008, 108.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Caracuel. IEEE. 2004. 102.

⁶⁸ EU. ‘Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean: Ministers meet in Marseille to endorse its working modalities and to agree priorities for 2009’. Brussels, October 2008.

⁶⁹ Caracuel. IEEE. 2004.. 124.

for the MD is whether duplication and redundancy can be avoided through ‘rationalisation of efforts.’ This controversy appears mainly related to the ICI and to the Euromediterranean Partnership.

Concerning the ICI although the approach is similar to the MD offering ‘channels for political dialogue and... practical cooperation’,⁷⁰ it is aimed at a different region, the broader Middle East and is based on a bilateral basis. Besides, it would not be easy for the ICI partners to join the MD (with the Israeli membership⁷¹), especially considering that the ICI initially had less success than expected and that the MD demands a greater level of commitment.⁷² Since 2004, just four countries have joined ICI: Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates;⁷³ although Saudi Arabia and Oman are currently showing some interest.⁷⁴ Additionally, the merging of both initiatives would imply the downplay of the MD provoking mistrust and disappointment amongst the MD partners and undermining the progress that the MD has achieved in its 16 years of existence.

Concerning NATO versus EU Mediterranean initiatives, their interactions have to be understood within the broader NATO-EU ‘cooperation-competition’ relationships and are linked with the rivalry between some key members interested in the Mediterranean region already mentioned. The argument that some voices raise is: since 21 of the 28 NATO members are also EU-members, and given that the EU has already put in place a ‘more comprehensive’⁷⁵ cooperating initiative in the Mediterranean that covers security aspects, NATO really does not need to invest in its own Mediterranean initiative.

However, this argument is either naive or has some vested

70 Rasmussen. Abu-Dhabi, 2009.

71 NATO. ‘Highlights of Strategic Concept Seminar 3’. Oslo, 2010.

72 Yaniz. 2010. 14.

73 Rasmussen. Abu-Dhabi, 2009.

74 NATO. ‘Highlights... Seminar 3’, 2010.

75 The Euromediterranean partnership includes more partner countries than the NATO MD (16 plus Libya as observer versus 7), has more dimensions (political, social, cultural, economic and security) and allocates more resources. Caracul. IEEE. 2004. 102-117.

interests, as Sarkozy's polemic announcement of the creation of the UfM, distinct from the Euromediterranean Partnership and excluding the EU-members that are not in the Mediterranean rim, hinted.⁷⁶

Therefore, most analysts agree that NATO is a distinct actor, which, although it has common interests with the EU, has its specific interests (one of which is to improve its image in the Mediterranean) that cannot be achieved by the EU Mediterranean initiative. Similarly, the EU initiative has a purpose on its own and cannot be replaced by others. Both initiatives are different in relation to their objectives, scope and partners. Both are 'useful and necessary, because each one brings added value to north-south understanding'. The key for a 'mutual reinforcing'⁷⁷ relationship between both initiatives is a better coordination to ensure their complementarity. This 'coordination' is to be based, to a certain extent, on a 'division of labour'⁷⁸ related to the areas of specialization. The EU could focus on addressing the future root causes of crisis in the long term, 'which are primarily economic and social'⁷⁹ and NATO could specialize in the field of military co-operation. This way both would benefit from the other's initiative and be in a better position to face the common challenges that the future will bring to both.

Another consideration could be made about the present lack of coordination between NATO and the EU. Apart from the 'negative consequences' and problems created in the operations where both are involved',⁸⁰ this friction rests 'momentum'⁸¹ to both initiatives because on the one hand, the southern partners ('particularly the north African states who are involved in both partnerships') do not

76 The announcement angered many EU-members and proved that, the rivalry for national interests and competition also exists inside the EU. This UfM has been ultimately incorporated as a further step in the evolution of the 'Barcelona process'. Behr, 'Sarkozy's Mediterranean union plans should worry Brussels'. EU-observer. 2007.

77 Dokos, 2008, 133.

78 Biscop, 2002, 105, 111.

79 Dokos, 2008, 133.

80 NATO. 'Highlights... Seminar 4', 2010.

81 Razoux, 2008, 1.

understand this rivalry that discredits both organisations, and on the other hand some of them take advantage of it to ‘push ahead their own agendas.’⁸²

MD Achievements

Notwithstanding the problems that the MD faces, it has to be acknowledged what spectacular progress and great achievements the MD has made in its 16 years of existence, above all, considering its precarious initial situation. Part of this progress has been signposted in chapter II. Today, the MD is not only ‘very important’ to NATO but also ‘to the 7 MD countries’.⁸³ As the NATO SG said: “The MD is clearly demonstrating its value as a forum for political discussion and as a framework for practical cooperation”.⁸⁴

Dispelling misconceptions

Considering the three objectives initially defined for the MD, it could be argued that the NATO initiative has ‘by and large fulfilled’ them.⁸⁵ MD has had a ‘positive response by all [NATO’s] Mediterranean partners’⁸⁶ and has contributed to some extent to ‘strengthening security and stability in the Mediterranean’. It has also achieved a ‘better mutual understanding’, and fostered ‘transparency by dispelling misconceptions’, although the deepening of mutual knowledge has been focused in the political elites and military officials, without being extended either to the wider societies of NATO or to the southern populations.⁸⁷

However, the MD has allowed its members to ‘liaise with NATO about matters of strategic importance’,⁸⁸ it has steadily increased the political dialogue ‘on a wider range of issues’ and ‘has really brought [NATO and MD partners] closer together.’⁸⁹

82 Ibid., 3.

83 Searight, 2009, E-mail to AArmada.jsesc@defenceacademy.mod.uk.

84 NATO OIP. ‘Foreign Ministers review progress in MD’. December 2008.

85 Razoux, 2008, 2.

86 Rasmussen. Amman, 2010.

87 Although it is difficult to assess accurately the MD’s impact in the northern and southern societies, the assumption is that it is very low in NATO countries and no impact in the MD partners.

88 Searight, 2009, E-mail to AArmada.jsesc@defenceacademy.mod.uk.

89 Rasmussen. Amman, 2010.

This political cooperation makes possible not only the ‘great progress’⁹⁰ in the practical dimension, as was initially understood,⁹¹ but also what has been defined as a ‘great contribution’ on the ‘new common threats’.⁹²

This is particularly significant given the specific composition of the MD group. Indeed, for some analysts the MD’s ‘greatest merit has been its creation of a framework that has brought the most unlikely interlocutors around the same table to discuss matters that were long considered taboo.’⁹³ This MD achievement is significant not only for the Israeli membership, but also because many of the Arab members ‘have ongoing issues between each other’ (i.e. Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania). The utility of the MD as a forum to improve the security in a south-south direction is highly appreciated by the MD partners. As someone observed: ‘Ironically, the current fight against AQ [Al-Qaeda] and Taliban has brought these MD countries together, as they are determined to be a spokesmen for the “good Muslim”, vice the bad Muslim.’⁹⁴

In fact, MD partners have actively promoted practical cooperation in the fight against terrorism. For instance, the first meeting to share ‘terrorism related intelligence’ and the suggestion to create an office dedicated specifically to intelligence distribution were Jordan’s proposals; and the most important ‘intelligence products’ provided to the NATO Intelligence Liaison Unit (ILU) until January 2005 were made by Algeria, Israel and Jordan.⁹⁵

At present, all the seven MD partners contribute to the fight against terrorism. They are suffering their own regional terrorist problems and some of these with a transnational

90 Ibid.

91 As explained in chapter II, the practical dimension was initially conceived as civil and military activities oriented to build confidence (CBM), such as observers in exercises, seminars, courses in NATO school, etc.

92 NATO OIP. ‘Strengthening MD by focussing on new common threats’. Algiers, 2010.

93 Razoux, 2008, 2.

94 Searight, 2009, E-mail to AArmada.jscsc@defenceacademy.mod.uk.

95 Spanish CHOD HQ, 2005, 1-5.

character. It is worth noting that the rise of AQ In Maghreb has contributed to the ‘ongoing bilateral and multilateral assistance between all seven MD countries to try and counter it’.⁹⁶ The importance of this contribution has been repeatedly acknowledged by NATO.⁹⁷

Another contribution that the MD countries are currently making against terrorism and to improve the security of maritime and air traffic in the Mediterranean is through the ongoing Operation Active Endeavour.⁹⁸ In this operation, MD partners ‘play an important role, assisting NATO with information and operational material.’⁹⁹ To increase the level of commitment to this operation, Morocco signed on 22 October 2009 a Memorandum of Understanding with NATO to take part in the operation with its navy and has posted a liaison officer to Naples HQ.¹⁰⁰

Intelligence cooperation has been made possible through the signature by the MD partners of the ‘NATO agreements for the security of classified information’ and the assignment of Military Attaches from MD countries to the Partnership Cooperation Cell, at the Strategic Allied Command Operations (SHAPE) in Mons, to facilitate the interoperability.¹⁰¹

Other threats that the MD is contributing to counter are ‘piracy, in connection to the NATO support to the World Food Programme’,¹⁰² maritime security in the Mediterranean,¹⁰³ and the conventional and WMD proliferation. Concerning the latter, the importance of influencing the elites should not be downplayed, because ‘even a marginal contribution to the reduction of the level of mistrust...

96 Searight, 2009, E-mail to AArmada.jscsc@defenceacademy.mod.uk.

97 ‘We have been very impressed by Jordan’s enormous knowledge and expertise, especially in many aspects related to the fight against terrorism’. Rasmussen. Amman, 2010.

98 NATO OIP. ‘Foreign Ministers... MD’, 2008.

99 Searight, 2009, E-mail to AArmada.jscsc@defenceacademy.mod.uk.

100 Yaniz. 2010. 16.

101 NATO OIP. ‘Foreign Ministers... MD’, 2008.

102 Ibid.

103 Razoux, 2008, 2.

among the elites of those states... would be a significant achievement'. This has a positive effect in both directions south-north and south-south.

Concerning the contribution of MD forces to NATO-led operations, the participation of Egypt, Jordan and Morocco forces in IFOR, SFOR and KFOR has already been mentioned.¹⁰⁴ But, recently it has been given special strategic importance with Jordan's involvement in the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan as part of the ISAF operation, to its contribution to the training and education of the Iraqi military and police forces and to its offer to assist 'with the training of Afghan National Security Forces'. It is expected that NATO will accept and formalise this offer soon. For the NATO SG, the engagement of Muslim countries in Afghanistan is 'a strong demonstration of the fact that the fight in Afghanistan is not about religion. It is a fight against terrorism' and adds a 'valuable cultural and religious awareness and expertise.'¹⁰⁵

To conclude this chapter, it could be summarized that there is ignorance on both sides towards each other. The south perspective is not very positive, although the MD has helped to correct distrust and misperceptions at the elite level (political and military), but much more is to be done. However, the MD has made great progress in its evolution despite the problems it faces and to some extent it is achieving its objectives and contributing to improve the security in the Mediterranean. Additionally, the MD is gaining practical relevance as a tool to confront the 'new common threats'. Therefore, it could be said that, at present, the MD is still relevant and needed by the Alliance. The next chapter will examine whether the MD will be necessary for the Alliance in the future.

104 NATO OIP. 'NATO Military Committee... trip to Morocco', 2010.

105 Jordan has trained more than 10,000 Iraqi military personnel and 60,000 police staff. Rasmussen. Amman, 2010.

CHAPTER IV MD FUTURE

This chapter will build on the future trends and predictions for the Mediterranean region made by prestigious institutions to analyse whether the MD will still be necessary in the future. It will also take account of the diverging views in NATO to predict three possible scenarios for the evolution of the MD. The new NSC will orient this evolution. Therefore, this chapter will speculate on the NSC's contents related to the MD based on the NATO SG's statements, the available information regarding preparatory works and the current debates.

The future of the Mediterranean

All the documents analysed agree on the trends for the next two or three decades. Concerning human factors United Nations (UN) current forecasts are that European populations 'are expected to shrink' and to age; whereas the north African populations will 'more than double within the next 40 years' and remain young. 'Were it not for migration', the European population 'would peak in 2020 and fall by 7 percent in the following three decades'.¹ Focusing just on the Arab MD countries they are maintaining fertility rates above three percent.²

1 UN. 'Human Development Report 2009. Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development.' UNDP. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 43.

2 Dokos, 2008, 14.

On the other hand, the economic trend foresees an increase in the difference between the Gross National Income (GNI) per-capita on both sides of the Mediterranean. The GNI per-capita in the EU Mediterranean countries would be 20 times higher than in the southern Mediterranean countries.³ The combination of these two factors will raise the migration pressure from south to north, and Europe will receive more south Mediterranean peoples. This migration will be promoted by the European scarce workforce and its need to further develop, particularly if the EU follows the UN Development Report 2009 recommendations that encourage the reduction of barriers to migration.⁴

The globalisation trend is also likely to continue bringing about an increase in the interdependency and interconnectedness of both sides of the Mediterranean. The dark side of this will be the increasing transnational character of the security challenges to be faced. Amongst the environmental challenges should be stressed the risk of pollution in the Mediterranean waters,⁵ and above all climate change that will increase the desertification of the southern shore and make food and water more scarce. The low human development could facilitate the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS. The resource disparities and different identities in the national and international spheres could also increase the likelihood of domestic and regional conflicts. The combination of all these factors in the southern part of the Mediterranean provoke what DCDC calls a 'Multiple Stress Zone', where the likelihood of instability is greatest.⁶

This risk is also identified in the NATO Multiple Futures Project (MFP). A project 'designed to support strategic decision makers', focusing 'on future challenges [until 2030], on their relative nature and gravity, and on what the

3 The delta is currently 15:1. Source: World Bank. 2010.

4 UN, 2009. 43.

5 The Mediterranean supports a sixth of global maritime trade with 75,000 ships a year and a third of European energy needs. This traffic is assessed to increase. Martinez, 2008, 5.

6 DCDC suggests that these circumstances 'could lead to Africa becoming a failed continent'. UK. *Global Strategic Trends 2007-2036*. DCDC. Shrivenham: 2007. 5, 80.

Alliance can do today to prepare for tomorrow.’ According to the MFP, the ‘instability and the weakness of others’ is a higher threat for the Alliance than ‘invading conventional forces.’ Interstate conflicts will remain likely and its consequences ‘may have a significant impact on Alliance security.’⁷

Similarly, for other relevant actors, the ‘key concerns’⁸ that will remain until 2025 will be the transnational terrorism and the proliferation of WMD. Moreover, most analysts believe that the combination of both is ‘one of the gravest dangers on the future’. Hence, the prevention of nuclear terrorism should constitute a ‘high priority for Western countries’, but it has been recognised that ‘the biggest hole in the massive effort [to prevent it] in the twenty-first century is ignorance about the psychology of terrorists’.⁹ The MD partners can provide a ‘valuable cultural and religious awareness and expertise’ to fill this gap.¹⁰

In line with this thought, the MFP recommends to increase the interaction with non-NATO nations and to strengthen cooperation with partners in order to ‘create opportunities for the Alliance to extend its role in enhancing security and stability.’¹¹ Doing so, NATO will be in a better position to ‘positively shape and influence ideas, values and events’. ‘Some of the most effective tools’ to counter threats will be by engaging in the battle of the narrative. In the Information era, NATO will have to ‘compete vigorously’ to communicate effectively and build support for its core mission, purpose and operations.¹²

Moreover, the MD should be instrumental in many of the so-called ‘potential roles for NATO’ which are those ‘areas in the future which the Alliance must commit to action

7 NATO. ‘Multiple Futures Project: navigating towards 2030. Finding and Recommendations’. ACT. Norfolk: 2009. 5.

8 US Government. *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World*. NIC. Washington: n.p., 2008. 68.

9 Dokos, 2008, 133-134.

10 Rasmussen. Amman, 2010.

11 NATO. ‘Multiple Futures Project: ... Recommendations’, 2009, 5.

12 Ibid. 7.

by either establishing a new role or adapting an existing one', such as 'adapting to the demands of hybrid threats', 'operating with others & building institutions', 'conflict prevention, resolution and consequence management' and 'counter proliferation'.¹³

Another MFP recommendation is to 're-evaluate the Alliance's various partnership mechanisms to ensure that partners are more closely involved in NATO's defence policy initiatives, especially with regard to the MD and ICI. This improved cooperation and collaboration with MD partners is 'necessary to create opportunities for the Alliance to enhance security and stability'.¹⁴

Taking into account the growing transnational character of future threats, coordination amongst nations and institutions will be essential to confront these threats. Therefore, cooperative security structures will be key to coordinate a common response to common threats.¹⁵ Regarding the challenges that could confront each side of the Mediterranean, the build up of good relationships, mutual understanding and trust will be fundamental to find solutions to reduce these challenges. In the Mediterranean region, NATO already has in place a tool that is working properly, this is the MD.

MD Future

It seems logical that the MD will have a key role to play in the expected future security environment. However, the MD evolution and future will be influenced by the political will of its members on both sides, and predominantly on NATO's proposal. Given the lack of a common view inside NATO towards the Mediterranean and the primacy of some national interests, it cannot be taken for granted that the MD will be further promoted to achieve its greatest potential.

13 NATO. 'Multiple Futures Project: navigating towards 2030. Final Report'. ACT. Norfolk: 2009. 49.

14 NATO. 'Multiple Futures Project:... and Recommendations', 2009. 11.

15 NATO. 'NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement: Analysis and Recommendations of the GoE on a New NSC.' Brussels, May 2010.

This lack of a common view is especially critical bearing in mind that the decision making process in NATO is based on ‘consensus’ and that ‘too often’ this consensus ‘gets used inappropriately by [NATO] members.’ There are 28 NATO member states and a negative vote is enough to stop a decision. Even in the case that a decision is reached, its implementation has often ‘been used to undermine the decision’, as NATO officials overtly recognise.¹⁶

The crucial moment

One of the most fundamental decisions that NATO takes is laid down in its NSC.¹⁷ Throughout NATO history, the different NSCs have reflected in which way the Alliance faced the various evolving threats and challenges it confronted. From a ‘purely defensive organization’ in the 1950s, the Alliance transformed itself into a ‘political instrument for détente’ in the 1960s, and then a ‘tool for the stabilization of Eastern Europe’ in the 1990s reflected in the 1991 NSC.¹⁸ The current NSC was issued in 1999, but since then radical changes in the security environment have occurred and new future trends have been identified.¹⁹

For this reason, in the Strasbourg – Kehl Summit (April 2009) the NHOSGs tasked the NATO SG to prepare a draft²⁰ of the new NSC so they can approve this Concept in November 2010 during the Lisbon Summit.²¹ The new NSC is to better define NATO’s own ‘role and

16 ‘The Alliance has earned the unfortunate distinction of making decisions but not implementing them.’ NATO. ‘Highlights... Seminar 4’, 2010.

17 Arteaga. ‘El Nuevo Concepto Estratégico de la OTAN’. RIE-ARI N2-2010. Madrid: 2010, 1.

18 NATO PDD. 2009. 8.

19 NATO. ‘Strategic Concept’. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-7D6E9C30-B6158BCD/natolive/topics_56626.htm, accessed 29-April-2010).

20 The drafting process has three steps: reflection, consultation and drafting. Afterwards, the negotiation phase amongst the Nations will take place. The first two phases have been developed by a Group of 12 Experts (GoE) led by Madeleine Albright. On 17 May, the GoE provided NATO SG the report: ‘NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement: Analysis and Recommendations of the GoE on a New NSC.’ Now, NATO SG will draft the NSC and submit it to NHOSG in September 2010.

21 NATO. ‘NATO Foreign Ministers hold talks on new Strategic Concept’. Tallinn: April 2010.

responsibilities in the emerging security landscape'.²² It seems that it will 'give direction and legitimacy to NATO in a global security environment'.

This means that, amongst other aspects, the future of the MD is being decided this year. However, the decision process is likely to bring the divergent views to the fore²³ and there is no certainty about the final results of the negotiation phase. Three different scenarios for the evolution of the MD are possible: First, the MD's relevance, aims and resources are downgraded. Second, the MD's profile is maintained with the current NATO level of commitment. Third, the MD is actively promoted and enhanced.

If the MD is downgraded, the logical result would be that the basic expectations of MD partners would not be met. This would cause disappointment amongst them and undermine the relationship that has been built. Mistrust would grow on both sides and the level of commitment and cooperation in tackling the common threats would be reduced, jeopardizing current achievements. This would place NATO in a very weak position to influence positively 'ideas, values and events' in the future challenging strategic environment. This would not only affect the MD countries, but also other regional non-NATO countries learning from the MD countries' experience. Consequently, the 'battle of the narrative' would be more likely to be lost and these southern societies would be more vulnerable to extremist influence.

If the MD is just maintained, most of the MD countries would be broadly content. The current relationship could be maintained with the same level of commitment and cooperation and the current achievements would not be undermined. However, NATO would miss the opportunity to prepare itself for the future by strengthening mutual trust and understanding and reinforcing the common action against most of the common threats as they increase. This option would also result in missed opportunities

22 Rasmussen. Abu-Dhabi, 2009.

23 IISS. 'A new strategic concept for NATO'. *ISS Strategic Comments*. Volume 15 Issue 10. December 2009.

to increase NATO leverage in the Mediterranean and its ability to spread security and stability.

Conversely, if NATO decides to actively promote the MD, by reinforcing the relationships, delivering according to the partners' expectations, addressing their security perceptions, investing resources, and enhancing the MD partnership itself, NATO would be in a better position to address some of the future threats. This option has to be based, of course, on the principle of mutual benefit. Apart from improving the current practical cooperation, this would give NATO the best opportunity to shape events in the future. It would improve NATO's image initially amongst the MD elites and ultimately in their societies, making it possible to achieve synergy in third countries. With this option the MD could develop its full potential. NATO and MD partners would get the most out of it. The MD would pay immediate dividends as well as dividends in the medium and long-term.

In order to give some light to the possible outcome in the new NSC, this paper will examine declared policy, trends in the current debate and trends in the preparatory work.

Cues for the NSC future decision

Focusing on the policy declared by NATO's most senior officials, it seems that the MD will be reinforced in the new NSC. In this sense, it is noteworthy that since the current NATO SG took office in August last year, he has declared many times that 'the development of stronger ties between NATO and its partners in the Mediterranean' is one of his key priorities.²⁴ Additionally, the NATO SG reaffirmed this personal commitment once the drafting process was in an advanced stage and he predicted 'considerable potential for an enhanced dialogue'.²⁵

This potential is often linked to the practical dimension focussing on the common interest to tackle the so-called 'new common threats'²⁶, but also to the political dimension as a forum 'where differences can be overcome and where

²⁴ Rasmussen. Abu-Dhabi, 2009.

²⁵ Rasmussen. Amman, 2010.

²⁶ Ibid.

ideas and thoughts can be exchanged in order to build security and peace in the Euro-Mediterranean zone'.²⁷

This favourable declaratory policy has also been reflected in the work of the Group of Experts (GoE) drafting the NSC, in which 'partnership is central to any realistic vision of NATO's future'.²⁸ The very fact that the MD countries have been formally invited²⁹ to contribute to this process could indicate that the MD will play a relevant role in NATO's future.

However, the optimistic and coherent political statements contrast with the controversial issues arising from the debate in the drafting process where opposing views compete. Most participants in the NSC development believe that the vision, structure and purpose of current partnerships 'are not clear' and 'need to be reassessed'.³⁰ However, a common approach to the various NATO partnerships is not facilitated either by the enormous differences between them (especially PfP, NATO-Russia and MD) in orientation, resources and aim, or by the 'wide differences'³¹ between NATO members' security perceptions, especially after the Georgian war in August 2008, as will be analysed later on.

These differences also reinforce the general perception that 'MD is a second class partnership' and as long as 'the region had no "Russia" to draw serious NATO attention', NATO will not care about stabilising the Mediterranean.³²

Moreover, NATO partners expressed the mismatch between what they expected from NATO and what they really get. They do not perceive the system as fair and 'mutually advantageous'. For them, 'NATO is actively seeking their contributions to current operations' but without a 'clear

27 NATO OIP. 'NATO Military Committee...'. 2010.

28 Albright Madeleine. 'Intervention in the third Seminar on NATO's Strategic Concept'. Oslo, 2010.

29 NATO OIP. 'Strengthening MD...', Algiers, 2010.

30 NATO, Oslo, 2010.

31 IISS, 2009.

32 NATO, Oslo, 2010.

strategic direction’ that serves a larger purpose, ‘such as fostering regional stability and understanding’.³³

In this sense, some would like NATO to increase the role of the MD as a regional security architecture that would have a positive impact on transversal security issues, such as the Israeli-Arab conflict or the Morocco and Algeria local conflict. This proposal is often perceived by others as an attempt to impose the so-called ‘liberal democratic values’ on the partners.³⁴ It also raises sensibilities concerning NATO’s approach to Security Sector Reform and its implication for some ‘regimes’ because ‘in the region, national security, the security of the regime and even the security of the ruling family are closely enmeshed’.³⁵ The opposing argument is that, if NATO seeks the spreading of democracy as a way to expand stability amongst its PFP partners, it should act accordingly with the MD countries; however, this argument does not consider the different natures of both partnerships, where, for instance, no MD country is meant to become a NATO member in the future.

To sort out the dilemma between spreading western democratic values and wanting to achieve the most beneficial practical gains from partners that are not fully democratic, many think that the future partnership should continue to be interest-based. But, it is also acknowledged that such relationships have more limits than a relationship based on shared values. This should also be explained to the partners so they know the limits of NATO cooperation and they do not form unrealistic expectations.³⁶

Conversely, NATO also believes that some partners deliver below NATO expectations.³⁷ For some, the principle of self-differentiation is the best way to decrease this mismatch between expectations and delivery on both sides, because it allows tailoring of the specific partnerships to distinct needs and interests. This principle, though, increases

33 Ibid.

34 NATO. ‘NATO 2020:...’ Brussels, May 2010.

35 NATO, Oslo, 2010.

36 NATO, Oslo, 2010.

37 NATO. ‘NATO 2020:...’, May 2010.

the internal differences amongst the partners of a given partnership, emphasizes the NATO individual approach to each country in a north-south direction and undermines the development of ‘a sub-regional dimension’ in a south-south direction. This principle also introduces ‘competition and rivalry among countries’.³⁸ For some partners, this rivalry is a negative element. However, for the more committed partners and for NATO itself, this principle helps to advance the partnership, not only in the NATO – MD country individual relationship (28+1), but also in the progress of the MD as a whole (28+7). Therefore, these two formats are not competing but complementing each other.

This could be illustrated with the Israel case. Israel values the MD as a transversal forum and has even expressed during the NSC drafting work that ‘Israel welcomes NATO’s engagement in the Middle East and cooperation on global security challenges’ demonstrating that Israel security doctrine that was based on ‘self-reliance’ is evolving to ‘embrace principles of security cooperation’. Within the new NSC, NATO MD could strengthen the Middle East peace process, and NATO has offered to ‘assist in implementing an agreement should one be reached, provided that it is requested by the parties and authorized by the UN Security Council’.³⁹ On the other hand, Israel also values the principle of self-differentiation and wants to deepen ‘its bilateral relationship with NATO just short of membership’. Both Israel and NATO are interested in increasing their practical cooperation towards new threats.⁴⁰

However, as suggested above, the Israeli approach to NATO can create rivalry and competition amongst the other partners. Hence the need for NATO to manage the tensions and sensibilities and to strike a good balance between ‘an umbrella of cooperation for all’, and the NATO relationship with each of them.⁴¹

38 NATO, Oslo, 2010.

39 This is one of the GoE’s recommendations. NATO, ‘NATO 2020:...’, May 2010.

40 NATO, Oslo, 2010.

41 Ibid.

In any case, there is a widespread belief that NATO ‘should explore ways to reassure the region about NATO’s intentions’ putting more emphasis on multilateral approaches and cross-cutting activities ‘to stabilize the region’.⁴² For this purpose, the GoE has recommended ‘to pursue an agreed statement of shared interests based on new and broader concepts of security, taking into account conventional and unconventional dangers, as well as political, economic, social and cultural issues.’⁴³

Another aspect where there is consensus is the need to have a comprehensive approach.⁴⁴ NATO has to develop relationships and better coordinate with the rest of the actors in the region.⁴⁵ This is particularly important with the EU, but it should also include others such as OSCE, African Union, the Arab League, the Arab Maghreb Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council to bolster collective security cooperation. Nevertheless, the MD and ICI should be kept as differentiated initiatives, although ‘there are commonalities’ between both.⁴⁶

Concerning future areas of cooperation, one that requires more attention is denuclearization and counter-proliferation, including ballistic proliferation.⁴⁷ This is another case where the national interests of key NATO members are opposed. The US wants to ‘begin the deployment of a revised US missile defence architecture in Europe and an enhanced forward-deployed naval presence in the [Mediterranean] region’⁴⁸ and wants to increase the measures to avoid the proliferation of WMD in the Mediterranean. Meanwhile, France is signing protocols to build nuclear reactors in Mediterranean countries such as Libya, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. The US see this French policy as too

42 Ibid.

43 NATO. ‘NATO 2020:...’, May 2010.

44 Rasmussen, ‘Speech by NATO SG at the Strategic Concept Seminar’. Helsinki, 2010.

45 IISS, 2009.

46 NATO. ‘Highlights... Seminar 3’. Oslo: 2010.

47 Ibid.

48 US Government. *The Quadrennial Defence Review Report*. Secretary of Defence. Washington: n.p., February 2010. 65.

risky because the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes could facilitate nuclear development for other purposes and make terrorist access to nuclear material ('a dirty bomb') more likely.⁴⁹

Another aspect of the preparatory work could suggest that the MD will be reinforced in the new NSC. The last and fourth of the guiding goals for the Alliance's future is 're-engagement with partners'. However, the other three are: first, 'reassurance on article 5 protections'; second, 'resilience for near article 5 threats' and third, 'shared responsibility for missions'.⁵⁰ The problem will lie in the real allocation of the Alliance's limited resources to each of these competing⁵¹ goals.

Obviously, most new NATO members from East Europe are more sensitive to the Russian threat and want to be protected against any potential aggression or political intimidation by Russia. This was the main reason why they joined the Alliance. They have been committed to NATO missions overseas, but they believe that 'such engagement distracts from the mission of collective defence and the credibility of NATO's Article V'. They also expected defence infrastructure to be built in their territory and that the investments would focus on 'capability requirements of territorial defence' rather than on expeditionary operations. This insecurity perception has been reinforced following the August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia, and the cyber-attacks that some of them have suffered affecting their infrastructure. Therefore, they want the new NSC to privilege the first two goals, reassurance on Article 5 protections and resilience for near Article 5 threats, at the expense of the other two, shared responsibility for missions and re-engagement with partners.⁵²

49 These conflicts of national interests affect the NATO common view on the Mediterranean, as a NATO source acknowledged (prefers to remain anonymous). This information is backed up in the specialised media. World Nuclear Association. 'Emerging Nuclear Energy Countries'. May 2010.

50 NATO. 'Highlights... Seminar 4', 2010.

51 IISS, 2009.

52 Article 5 states that 'an attack on one member state is considered an attack against all member states'. Ibid.

Meanwhile, other Allies see the future of the NATO-Russia relationship in a more constructive way. They understand that there is scope for practical cooperation and that it is better to work together to avoid a conflict rather than only to focus on how to fight it. They recognise the great contribution during the two last decades that the cooperative approach to security has made to the stabilisation of Europe and they see the potential added value that this experience⁵³ will provide to future security in a more globalised and interconnected world. As the NATO SG put it, ‘hard power is of little use if it cannot be combined with soft power. We have to understand that the only way forward is to coordinate and cooperate with others.’⁵⁴

In any case, the negotiation period will be key for the final content of the NSC. This is likely to reflect hard-won trades-offs on the priorities on ‘NATO’s functions, missions, capability needs and relations with others.’⁵⁵ The future of the MD will depend on these results.

⁵³ Yaniz, 2010, 1.

⁵⁴ Rasmussen. Helsinki, 2010.

⁵⁵ IISS, 2009.

NATO's 'raison d'être' has always been to provide 'security' to its members. However, how the concept of 'security' was understood, and consequently the way it was provided, has been evolving throughout its existence. This vision has been reflected in the different NSCs. In the 1950s and 1960s, security was quasi synonymous with 'defence'. Since the implementation of the 'Harmel report', a broader security was also provided through political dialogue and détente. The cooperative approach to security that the Alliance undertook at the end of the Cold War has been paying security dividends to NATO and serving NATO interests well.

In particular, the MD was created in 1994 just as a mechanism for political consultation at an ambassadorial level on a bilateral basis. However, the rapid evolution of the strategic environment and the increasing relevance of the Mediterranean space in the security of Europe, demanded the Alliance strengthen this mechanism to foster more transparency. Therefore, the MD was given a practical dimension in 1997 that increased in quantity and quality its activities in the years that followed. Nevertheless, the main purpose of these practical activities was just to build trust, until 'September 11th 2001', when NATO felt again the need to enhance the MD in both dimensions, political and practical. This was reflected in the 2004 Istanbul Summit

with the transformation of the MD into a partnership where the cooperative activities were more specifically linked to NATO security interests, such as practical cooperation on counter-terrorism, counter-proliferation, defence reform of MD countries, contribution to NATO-led operations, border security and illegal trafficking.

From a purely 'north perspective', NATO's security is closely linked with the security and stability in the south Mediterranean. The enormous political, economic, social and demographic differences between north and south, together with some 'south-south' conflicts and the domestic challenges that MD partners face, can produce instability and have direct repercussions to NATO members' security. Moreover, the spread of radical Islamic terrorism, the proliferation of WMD and both combined could represent greater threats to northern societies. The existence of a north-south security relationship is helping to counter effectively some of these threats.

However, in a 'south perspective' the view is rather different. The perceived menace comes from the north. The overwhelming northern power, in economic and military terms, is being applied to impose alien values on Muslim countries and their societies, fostering anti-western feeling. The constant growth and the political and economic integration in the north, especially during the last two decades, also increase the sense of isolation and exclusion in the south.

In particular, NATO has a negative image in north African societies. This is also due to the close association between NATO and the US, their military interventions in Muslim countries and perceived support to Israel against the Palestinian and Arabs in general. However, the NATO image is not so negative amongst the political and military elites of the MD partners, partially because the MD has been instrumental in changing their views, although much more is to be done.

Of course, the MD cannot cope with all the security challenges in the Mediterranean on its own. However, it

is also true that it has not reached its full potential. To some extent, this is due to the problems the MD faces itself. Given the MD composition, it is extremely sensitive to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Notwithstanding this, the main obstacles for the MD progress are in the north. On the one hand, the primacy of national interests for some NATO key members and the different security sensibilities and degree of awareness about the Mediterranean from others preclude the existence of a common NATO understanding of what the MD is for. On the other hand, the same national interests influence the various western organisations making coordination difficult between their security initiatives. This lack of a 'northern comprehensive approach' leads to competition and duplication of effort, above all between NATO and EU.

In spite of these difficulties, the MD has made great achievements, especially considering the precarious initial situation. The effect on the security and stability in the Mediterranean of building trust amongst the MD partners' elites should not be underestimated. The ability to discuss security concerns of each side of the Mediterranean and the practical cooperation to confront together the common threats such as terrorism, proliferation of WMD and piracy and the contribution to NATO ongoing operations is something that 16 years ago was unthinkable.

However, the potential economic, demographic, environmental, cultural and health issues that will confront both sides of the Mediterranean are expected to increase during the next two decades. Hence, the need to have in place a robust mechanism that allows both sides to discuss and deal with these challenges will also be at a premium. Moreover, the number and gravity of the threats that will be common to both sides, especially transnational terrorism and the proliferation of WMD, is also likely to increase. Therefore, the requirement for a common tool that makes possible the coordination of efforts to tackle these common threats will also endure.

Unfortunately, the current MD is not a panacea that can fulfil such demanding requirements. However, the MD

is the best available option NATO has to do it. Indeed, provided that the MD is further enhanced, it will be mutually beneficial to both sides and ideally placed to deal with the forthcoming challenges.

Nevertheless, the decision to enhance it for its future role cannot be delayed. It should be taken now and reflected in the new NSC. Otherwise, the MD will not be in a position to help NATO to ‘positively shape and influence ideas, values and events’ in the Mediterranean space and to effectively engage in the battle of the narrative to counter the future threats resulting in missed opportunities for NATO and for the security and stability of the Mediterranean.

Conversely, there is no certainty that the MD will be further promoted in the new NSC despite the fact that senior officials recognise its importance and the need to boost it in the NSC. The reason is that the aforementioned nations’ interests and wide differences in the NATO members’ security perceptions towards the Mediterranean will make consensus difficult on what should be the future of the MD.

However, in light of what this paper has considered, the decision that would best serve NATO’s interests in the future is to invest now in the enhancement of the MD.

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The NATO Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) is a cooperative security initiative that includes Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and Israel as NATO partners. Since its inception, it has been gaining in relevance. Nowadays, although it has some problems, it plays an important role as a forum for political discussion and as a framework for practical cooperation enhancing security and stability in the Mediterranean region.

Considering the future trends, an improved MD will be essential to face the common challenges expected. The decision to enhance it is to be reflected in the new NATO Strategic Concept. However, given the lack of a common view on the Mediterranean amongst the NATO Allies, there is no guarantee that this decision will be taken.

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