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NATO and North Africa: Problems and Prospects

ADOLF CARLSON

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Imagine the following news release:

TRIPOLI--An American naval task force has clamped a tight blockade on this North African city, and soon will begin a heavy bombardment calculated to reduce hostile fortifications and warships. This task force is the third launched by the US Navy. The first two failed due to a lack of resources, a result of budgetary constraints imposed by a cost-cutting Congress.

The President, facing heavy congressional criticism for his North African policies, has pledged that this latest effort will be the beginning of the end for the hostile regime in Tripoli. That regime has taken control of most of North Africa and has subjected the United States and European powers to a decade of extortion and terrorism.

The American public is particularly concerned with the fate of the crew of a US Navy frigate. These American sailors have languished in one of Tripoli's hellish prisons for a year after their ship ran aground while pursuing an enemy warship.

A hypothetical, futuristic scenario? Hardly. This account describes events that occurred in the year 1803, during the administration of Thomas Jefferson.[1] In the popular memory of American military history, other events have overshadowed the war between the United States and Tripoli. And as with the memory of its military history, in the American conception of its future security other concerns likewise overshadow the significance of North Africa. If, however, there is any validity to George Santayana's warning that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," then the American experience with North Africa in the early 19th century is an episode we should strive to recall in order to avoid repetition.

This article explores present-day security issues pertaining to North Africa. It traces the background of those issues and outlines their current framework, concluding with recommendations for NATO military policy that will reduce the risks of confrontation and enhance the potential for a security partnership with the North African region.

The Historical Dimension

There was a time, many centuries ago, when the North African littoral was an extension of European culture. In the third century, North Africa was incorporated into the Roman Empire. When Christianity became the official religion of the Empire, North Africa became integrated into the larger unity of Roman Europe by culture, values, and beliefs. The Mediterranean Sea at that time was truly "Mare Nostrum" ("our sea"), a maritime highway connecting culturally similar communities on the southern European and northern African coasts. Then, in the seventh century, Islam spread throughout North Africa, completing the conquest of the region by the year 710. From that point on, language, religion, and culture no longer united North Africa and Europe. The Mediterranean could no longer be described as "our sea"; rather, it became one of the world's great cultural barriers, marking the frontier between the Greco-Latin Christian culture of Europe and the Arabic Muslim culture of North Africa.

For more than a thousand years, the history of this region has been a litany of struggle as each of the two cultures has endeavored to become dominant. This strife has given the Mediterranean Sea a strategic significance out of proportion

to its size. In the words of the American strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan:

Circumstances have caused the Mediterranean Sea to play a greater part in the history of the world . . . than any other sheet of water of the same size. Nation after nation has striven to control it, and the strife goes on. Therefore a study of the conditions upon which preponderance in its waters has rested, and now rests, and of the relative military values of different points upon its coasts, will be more instructive than the same amount of effort in another field.[2]

In the modern era, the struggle to dominate the Mediterranean and North Africa was the prerogative of European powers. In April 1797, for example, Bonaparte wrote to the French Directory, "The day is not far off when we shall appreciate the necessity of seizing Egypt, in order really to destroy England." [3] The following summer, in July 1798, Bonaparte led an expeditionary force to subdue Egypt, but he soon learned that the defeat of the Mamelukes could not guarantee French rule in North Africa if a hostile power dominated the Mediterranean. The next month the British navy caught the French Mediterranean fleet at Abukir Bay near Alexandria, and, in a couple of hours, destroyed it. British naval superiority in the Mediterranean was more decisive than Bonaparte's land victories, and the French were forced to withdraw.

The Napoleonic wars created the conditions under which the pirate rulers of the Barbary States arose at the beginning of the 19th century, leading to the intervention of US forces described at the beginning of this article. The post-Napoleonic European balance of power provided the context for the European conquest of North Africa. Between 1815 and 1914, European powers established their hegemony: Spain and France in West Africa and Morocco, France in Algeria and Tunisia, Italy in Libya, and Britain in Egypt.

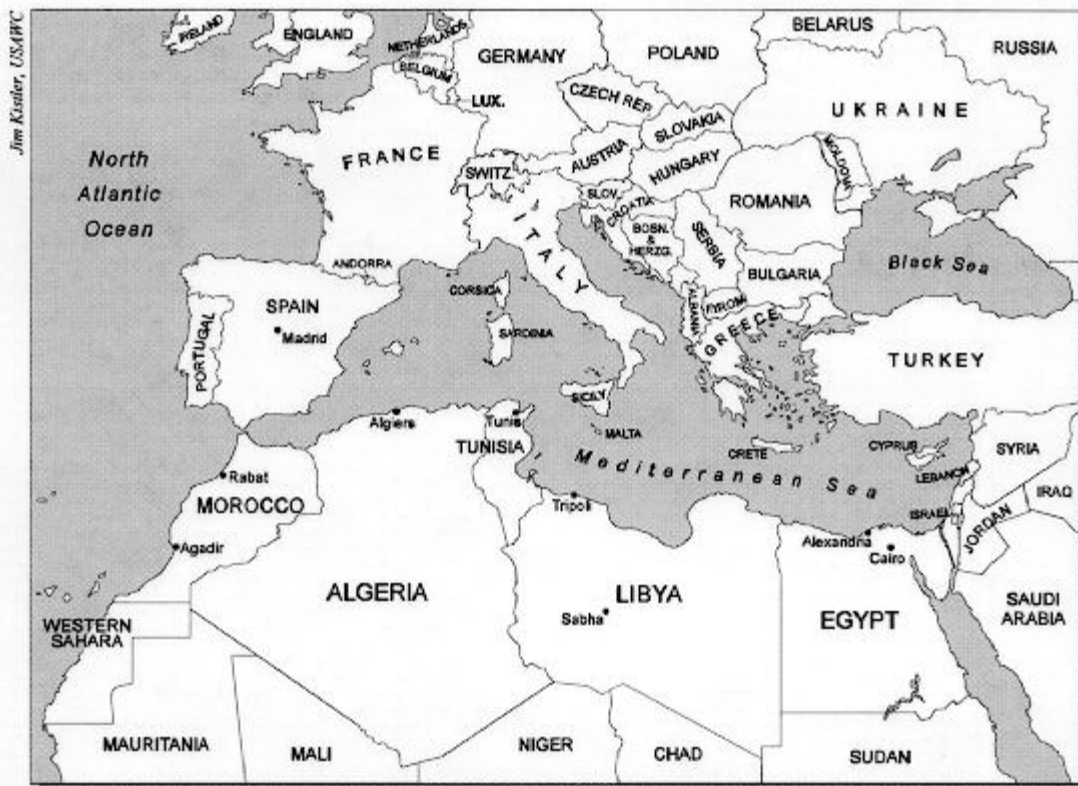


Figure 1. North Africa and the Mediterranean Basin.

The European rivalry for dominion in North Africa would influence the major crises of the 20th century. In the summer of 1911, for example, the German government dispatched the warship *Panther* to the Port of Agadir, on the Atlantic coast of Morocco. The ensuing crisis with France brought the world to the brink of war, a point where, in the words of Winston Churchill, "It is so easy to lose one's balance . . . a touch, a gust of wind, a momentary dizziness, and all is precipitated into the abyss." [4] But for the grace of providence, a miscalculation associated with the Moroccan crisis of 1911 would be remembered as the spark that set off the World War rather than the Bosnian crisis

three years later.

During the Second World War, Great Britain understood the importance of domination of the Mediterranean and North Africa. Whichever side, the British or the Axis, gained control over this region would displace the other as an imperial power. Subsequently, even during the dark days when the security of the British Isles was in question, Churchill would argue: "The British domination of the Mediterranean would inflict injuries upon an enemy Italy which might be fatal to her power of continuing the war. All her troops in Libya and in Abyssinia would be cut flowers in a vase." [5]

Twentieth-century political developments in North Africa were greatly influenced by the tendency of European colonies to develop their own political identities. These were sometimes at variance with policies in the home countries. The Spanish Civil War, for example, began as Spanish army fascists launched operations from Spanish Morocco. French resistance to the Vichy regime found a refuge in North Africa, as did the opposition to the Fourth Republic in the late 1950s. It is perhaps ironic that the behavior of European inhabitants of North African colonies set an example of political opposition that would eventually result in the independence of these colonies from European rule.

Upon granting independence to their North African colonies, European powers attempted to install indigenous governments that would be well disposed to their former colonial masters. These attempts were frequently counterproductive. Charismatic leaders, who drew strength from their anti-Western orientation, overthrew pro-Western regimes. The first emerged in Egypt in 1952, as Gamal Nasser rose to power by displacing the rule of Egypt's decadent King Farouk. A similar development occurred in Libya in 1969, when an officers' coup led by Colonel Muammar al-Qadhafi overthrew the monarchy of King Idris.

In Algeria, the independence movement was too strong for the former colonial ruler, France, to choose the nation's leaders after independence. Algeria's Ahmed Ben Bella had impeccable anti-French credentials. Ben Bella was, however, French educated, and had fought with the French army during World War II. Consequently, during his rule there was a dialogue between Algeria and France. In 1965, however, the army commander, Houari Boumediene, overthrew Ben Bella. At this point Algeria became a leader of developing countries and adopted policies that were often critical of the West.

The emergence of an independent North African political identity does not necessarily, of course, imply a perpetuation of rivalry with the West. It remains to be seen whether the North African peoples will evolve into capable partners or powerful rivals of the Europeans in the Mediterranean. What these trends do suggest, however, is that North Africa continues to be a region the West cannot afford to ignore.

Population As a Risk Factor

A 1997 French study on Mediterranean security suggests a correlation between population trends and the dominance of the European or African side of the Mediterranean. In the year 1000, the high point of Moslem influence in North Africa and Europe, the populations of the two regions were roughly equal, with a slight advantage on the North African side. By the 13th century, the European population was greater by a 3:1 ratio. This advantage grew to 5:1 by 1850, and between 1850 and 1900, the high point of European colonization, the European countries of the Mediterranean had a combined population of 90 million, compared with 18 million on the North African side. By 1950, population trends began a reversal, a 2:1 ratio (140 million on the European side, 70 million on the North African side) characterizing the age of decolonialization. In 1985 the populations were roughly equal at 180 million, and by 1993 the North African population had grown bigger than the European, 194 million to 184 million. According to United Nations estimates, by the year 2000 the North African population will exceed that of Mediterranean Europe 270 million to 200 million, and by 2025 the figures will approach a 2:1 ratio in favor of the south, 370 million to 200 million. [6]

Whether or not the shift in population implies a shift in power, the burgeoning North African population has been recognized as a potential risk in its own right. Rapid population growth in underdeveloped areas leads to unregulated immigration, and Europe's Mediterranean nations are concerned about the effects of an influx of North African immigrants. Among the undesirable consequences of unregulated immigration are the rise of an already high rate of unemployment in Europe; an increase in racial and religious tensions; terrorist activities, either directed against the

host government or intramural terrorism transported from the countries the immigrants left; and drugs and drug-related crime, as a youthful population of unemployable immigrants finds itself with too much idle time, too little opportunity, and no way to obtain drugs other than crime.[7] Risks such as these arising from the south shore of the Mediterranean have already caused some commentators to refer to North Africa as the "Mexico of Europe." [8]

NATO's leadership recognizes the risk of unregulated immigration. A 16 April 1997 report of NATO's Special Mediterranean Group (GSM), cites an "immigration explosion" as the "principal fear" among the public in European countries.[9] This report goes on to say:

The Alliance as such has no means of eliminating the economic and social ills that afflict the countries on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean, ills that are among the root causes of the instability in the region. NATO can do no more than provide for responses to the consequences of this instability in terms of operations to evacuate nationals of member nations in the event of escalating violence or anarchy in a particular country, to prevent large-scale influxes of refugees by sea, or emergency aid when groups are endangered.[10]

Some Allied countries are dissatisfied with this attitude, suggesting that it signifies a washing of the hands of the Mediterranean's main concerns. The French, in particular, are prone to blame the United States for a lack of interest. The French view American membership in NATO as a means for the United States to intrude into European affairs, wanting to play a role commensurate with its power, but only in regions like the eastern Mediterranean where its interests are paramount. It is up to the Europeans themselves to address the concerns of western North Africa. France, with "an essential role to play in the Mediterranean," supported by Spain and Italy, must resolutely endeavor to align US and European policies without compromising European interests. The French see themselves as the Allied nation which must exert the leadership to convince other Europeans of the necessity of such policies.[11]

But measures to address the risks posed by immigration do not fit easily within NATO's perception of itself. There is no question that control over immigration is a European security interest, and Article 4 of the NATO treaty obliges member nations to "consult" when the security of any member nation is threatened. The treaty requires no collective defense action, however, when interests are threatened but not subjected to attack. According to Article 6 of the treaty, collective defense applies only when the territory, forces, vessels, or aircraft of a member nation come under attack in Europe, North America, the Atlantic Ocean north of the Tropic of Cancer, or in the Mediterranean.

In large measure, then, it is unrealistic to expect NATO to act in the face of nonmilitary risks. Coordination of immigration laws and customs practices and an enlightened strategy of investment and development seem much more relevant to the immigration problem than anything NATO might do, and such policies are more in line with the functions of the European Union (EU) than NATO. Indeed, immigration from North Africa may be a good example of one of those risks the European foreign and defense ministers had in mind at the 1991 Western European Union Council of Ministers when they described the "European level of security," of concern to European countries but not to the United States.[12]

The Military Risk Factor

There is, however, an emerging risk in the Mediterranean in which US and European interests are clearly aligned, and in response to which the provisions of the North Atlantic Treaty would undoubtedly apply, and that is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their long-range delivery systems. A 1996 RAND study concludes: "Within ten years, it is possible that every southern European capital will be within range of ballistic missiles based in North Africa or the Levant." [13]

In the area of ballistic missile development, Libya currently leads the countries of North Africa, a possible recognition that Libya's conventional military potential falls short of Qadhafi's aspirations. Libya leads the region in ballistic missiles deployed, chiefly in the form of 80 Scud-Bs, with a 300-km range.[14] Of particular concern is the Libyan effort to develop a longer-range (950 km) missile known as "Al Fatah." [15] Libya has also shown a willingness to use ballistic missiles against Western targets. In 1986, in response to the US bombing of Tripoli, Libya launched two Scuds in an unsuccessful strike against a US Coast Guard facility at Lampedusa, an Italian island located midway

between the Tunisian coast and the island of Malta.[16]

Furthermore, Libya is also the North African country most heavily committed to the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction. Libya's nuclear aspirations have a long, well-documented history. Though Libya has no known uranium, it has since the 1970s attempted to purchase the materials required for nuclear weapons from China, Pakistan, India, the Soviet Union, Belgium, Argentina, and Brazil.[17] Qadhafi has called upon Arab states to acquire nuclear weapons, despite Libya's obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.[18] In addition to its efforts to acquire a nuclear capability, Libya has developed a successful chemical weapons program. The chemical weapons production facility at Rabta is believed to be one of the world's largest, capable of producing 1.2 metric tons a day of mustard and nerve gases.[19] Poison gas is believed to be stockpiled near Tripoli and at Sabha, 750 km to the south.[20] Libya reportedly used chemical weapons during its 1986-87 war against Chad.[21]

While Libya's ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction may pose an immediate threat, Algeria may be the greatest potential threat over the long term. Algeria today is the country faced with the most serious prospects of anti-Western instability driven by Islamic fundamentalism. In the short term this instability has caused Algeria, once noted for its assertiveness in international affairs, to turn its attention inward. If Islamic forces rise to clear dominance, however, Algeria has the potential to become a leading source of concern for the security of the Mediterranean region, from the North African and the Southern European perspectives.[22]

Algeria has no history of chemical warfare or ballistic missile research, but since 1989 it has been involved in nuclear research in collaboration with China. Algeria operates two reactors, one developed in conjunction with the Argentines called "ARR-1," and the other, designated Es SALAM, in conjunction with China. The CIA has estimated that these reactors give Algeria the capability to produce three kilograms of plutonium every year.[23] Algeria is a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and as such is obliged to submit to inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Nonetheless, the secretive nature of collaboration raises concerns about Algeria's long-term nuclear intentions. If the Chinese connection leads to the acquisition of ballistic missiles, these concerns will become still more serious.[24] In a May 1993 interview, an unidentified Algerian diplomat said ominously, "In ten years time there will be two countries in Africa which are taken seriously by the United States--South Africa and Algeria--both will be nuclear powers." [25]

A third state that cannot be discounted for its potential to develop ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction is Egypt. Egypt's chief interests concern its standing among other Arab and Muslim countries. It is a country of significant military resources and potential leadership, but its ties to the West and its participation in the Camp David peace process have resulted in a great deal of internal and external retaliatory pressure. Should the Islamic opposition rise to power in Cairo, a prospect which may be more remote than in Algeria but which still is within the realm of possibility, the effect on proliferation of missiles and weapons of mass destruction could be immense.[26]

It would be wrong, of course, to characterize the entire North African region as uniformly hostile to the West. Instability and proliferation threaten Western-oriented North African countries even more than they threaten European countries. Two countries in particular, Morocco and Tunisia, find themselves caught in the middle. Both run risks because of their economic ties and political dialogue with the West. The last traditional monarchy in the region, Morocco relies on Europe for roughly 65 percent of its trade.[27] Morocco is pursuing cooperative agreements with southern European governments concerning access to markets in exchange for controls on the movement of labor.[28] Tunisia, the most westernized and developed country in the region, does about 75 percent of its trade with Europe, and some 500,000 Tunisians work abroad, most in France.[29]

Both Morocco and Tunisia are justifiably worried about growing European animosity deriving from cultural prejudice compounded by resentment toward immigrants. Morocco has expressed its concern about European xenophobia toward the nations of the Maghreb, and the mistreatment of Tunisian immigrants in Europe is a recurring theme in the Tunisian press.[30]

The Western Response--A Divergence of Rhetoric and Action

Both the Western European Union (WEU) and NATO have noted the potential threat from North Africa. The October 1991 issue of *NATO Review* discusses NATO's relations with the countries of the Mediterranean, citing the dialogue of

the so-called "4+5 Group" (Portugal, Spain, France, and Italy [Malta later joined this dialogue], plus Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya).[31] This initiative was the result of a French proposal tabled by President Mitterand during the Marrakech conference of 1991. The conference also marked the beginning of the so-called Arab Maghreb Union, which provides a forum for collaborative dialogue on the North African side.[32]

A May 1993 report of the WEU's Technological and Aerospace Committee expressed the view that:

Islamic fundamentalism can in fact become a potential security risk for Europe when it is combined with a complex of inferiority vis-à-vis the technical superiority of the western world Studying the lessons of the last part of the Second World War today, countries which do not have the aircraft to conduct a strategic bombing campaign might adopt the less complicated and less costly alternative of an indiscriminate missile attack.[33]

The WEU report recommended the creation of a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM), similar to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). The report also advocated the "installation of a multilateral safety belt" to protect Europe from "instability and crisis prevalent among the countries of the southern shore of the Mediterranean," and "bilateral cooperation between various western countries and countries of the south." [34]

NATO institutions oriented on the problem of Mediterranean security include the Senior Politico-Military Group on Proliferation and the Senior Defense Group on Proliferation.[35] The first of these high-level groups is responsible for the political and preventative aspects of NATO's "approach" to dealing with proliferation, the second for "considering how NATO's defense posture can support NATO's non-proliferation efforts but also provide protection should those efforts fail." [36] Closely associated with those efforts is the work of the NATO Air Defense Committee, which since 1992 has been investigating requirements for ballistic missile defense against threats around the periphery of the Article 5 area, leading to the concept of "extended air defense/theater missile defense." [37] A policy framework adopted at the June 1995 ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Council stated that NATO must employ both political and military capabilities to "discourage WMD proliferation and use, and if necessary, to protect NATO territory, populations, and forces." [38]

NATO's official pronouncements concerning the potential threat from North Africa have paralleled but been more measured than those of the WEU. In February 1995, NATO foreign ministers initiated a dialogue with Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Mauritania, and Tunisia. This move came as a result of French, Italian, and Spanish pressure to concentrate on instability in the Mediterranean in part to offset what these countries viewed as a "lopsided" emphasis on the part of the United States and Germany to fill the security void in eastern Europe.[39] As *The Washington Post* reported, NATO sources identified a "clear consensus among military experts that the most immediate security dangers to the Alliance stem from the Mediterranean basin and not from Eastern Europe." [40] These same officials described the envisioned dialogue as taking the form of "discussions with the governments involved about what they see as the major threats to regional security" and "what forms of cooperation they might explore with the Alliance." [41] NATO was quick to point out the limits of that cooperation, however. A program along the lines of the "Partnership for Peace," prescribing exercises, training, and collaboration in anticipation in future NATO membership, was described as "premature." [42]

For a time, European governments seemed to pursue these proposed initiatives with remarkable enthusiasm. In March 1995 the *Washington Times* reported that "plans for a new air defense system to protect Europe against ballistic missile attacks from North Africa reflect the seriousness with which Western strategists view rising Islamic militancy." [43] The *Times* quoted a "European security source" as saying:

Western Europe is under threat and must develop weapons and strategies to counter it. For the past two years, the main concern among NATO's military strategic experts has been the southern threat [to include] Islamic extremism, demographic pressure, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them. [44]

The *Times* went on to describe the Medium Air Defense System (MEADS), which complements the advanced Patriot

air defense system to provide a combination of low- and high-altitude air defense coverage.[45]

As it turned out, the *Times* article was unrealistically optimistic on the subject of MEADS. As *Military Technology* later reported, MEADS lost most of its momentum when it became evident that the participating nations had incompatible operational requirements.[46] *Military Technology* concluded: "It should be appreciated that no conceivable amount of technical, industrial, operational, and financial problems and difficulties would be enough to stop MEADS--provided that there is a general political will backing it." [47] The comments of the *Washington Times*' "European security source" notwithstanding, that will appears to be lacking.

Subsequent developments have proceeded along divergent lines, with discord arising between eastward-oriented NATO countries (such as the United States and Germany) and southward-oriented NATO countries (such as France, Italy, and Spain). France had proposed a trilateral air and naval force at the November 1992 ministerial meeting of the WEU to respond to Mediterranean contingencies, and at the May 1995 ministerial meeting this force was expanded to include a ground component.[48] Soon after the three countries signed the agreement to establish this force, Portugal applied for and was accepted as a participant.[49] In addition, France has taken the lead in the development of a range of military capabilities which had been the province of American forces. Examples include advanced air defense, electronic command and control and radar systems, and airborne surveillance, all being developed as a result of collaboration between France and Israel.[50] France also leads the effort to establish a European system of surveillance satellites, most notably the "Helios 1A" military satellite, which was launched in July 1995 as a result of a cooperative effort among France, Italy and Spain.[51] In themselves, of course, these efforts pose no threat to the United States and could be viewed as a welcome European contribution to its own regional security. In the context of the current Franco-American debate on NATO leadership, however, these developments take on a different significance, suggesting a French longing to return to the days when the Mediterranean was "a region where French foreign policy should hold sway." [52]

Given the divisive nature of the dialogue, it is perhaps not surprising that the proceedings of 1997 lacked some of the enthusiasm of the previous two years. In anticipation of NATO's 1997 summit in Madrid, Secretary General Javier Solana called for "moving further ahead on our Mediterranean dialogue" as one of six major summit issues.[53] Secretary General Solana's expectations of progress were, however, rather modest. He called for "good, strong and friendly relations across the Mediterranean" by means of a dialogue which would "complement other international efforts, such as ones carried out by the EU, OSCE, and WEU." [54]

In a complementary article written for *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Secretary General Solana reiterated the need for NATO to build on the work already done by the EU and the WEU, citing specifically the Mediterranean dialogue with the Maghreb countries and the proposal for the Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean.[55] At the same time Secretary General Solana bemoaned the Western tendency toward pessimism in this region,[56] and called for stability and confidence-building through dialogue. He stopped short, however, of calling for a Mediterranean version of a Partnership for Peace on the grounds that "simply extending the Partnership for Peace and its activities to Mediterranean dialogue partners would lose the nuances and sensitivities on which the present dialogue is based." [57]

Perhaps the final word describing NATO's current attitudes toward the risks emanating from the Mediterranean came in a 16 April 1997 report of conclusions drawn from a December 1996 meeting of the Special Mediterranean Group. This report concedes that NATO "must respond to the risks of a more military nature that are emerging in the region," [58] but then downplays those risks. Describing the previously cited RAND study as "alarmist," [59] this report characterizes the danger of proliferation in the Mediterranean as "a south-south" risk, "not aimed at the north." [60] While the report goes on to recommend a number of sensible steps in dialogue and diplomacy, it cautions that "the Alliance can hardly go beyond the concerted action already handled satisfactorily . . . in the international fora without hampering the operation of those fora." [61] NATO, the report adds, ought not to pursue the installment of missile defense systems because the majority of member nations regard "the risk as relatively low when set against the prohibitive cost." [62] Considering that "only the United States has the means required to install high-performance missile defense systems" and that within the United States "enthusiasm seems to be waning," [63] the prospect of a meaningful military response seems remote. The use of military resources should be limited, the report recommends, to "improving ways of warding off possible threats . . . in the context of peacekeeping or peace restoration

operations."[64]

A Proposed Way Ahead for Military Preparedness

There seems to be an element of wishful thinking or, perhaps more accurately, whistling in the dark concerning these complacent assessments. If the most Westward-oriented of the Maghreb countries, Tunisia and Morocco, were to fall into the hands of hostile regimes, either through military conquest or religious-sponsored subversion, the immediate danger to Europe might not increase. Clearly, however, the risks of instability, hostility, and proliferation would have advanced much closer to Europe's Mediterranean coast and sea-lanes, which the United States has declared to be major interests. Thus, a second order effect of a "south-south" conflict is a danger aimed directly at regions where NATO's Article 5 guarantees apply.

Further, the military capacity of the threatened countries would be inadequate in a "south-south" conflict. As the figure below illustrates, their problematic neighbors in key indices of military power outclass both Morocco and Tunisia, especially if the threatening countries were ever to enter into coalition.[65]

	Algeria	Libya	Egypt	Morocco	Tunisia
Men of Military Age	6.1 million	1 million	11.1 million	4 million	1.79 million
Total Armed Forces	124,000	65,000	450,000	196,000	27,000
Tanks	890	985	3700	724	84
Combat Aircraft	181	420	572	89	44
Short-range Missiles (FROG-7)	--	40	12	--	--
Long-range Missiles (Scud-B)	--	80	9	--	--

Figure 2. Indices of power in North African countries.

If, as NATO claims, the security and continued good relations of Westward-leaning North African countries is an Allied interest, policies to maintain this security must have a military dimension as a matter of urgency and priority. As Admiral T. Joseph Lopez, Commander in Chief of NATO's Allied Forces Southern Region (AFSOUTH), has expressed it: "No other NATO headquarters has the need to address stability risks with a sense of immediacy as does AFSOUTH."[66]

As a modest first step, NATO's Defense Group on Proliferation should consider what measures would stabilize the region without compromising the security of friendly states. A survey of missile defense requirements would be a good place to start. An extended missile defense warning line, established as a cooperative NATO-North African initiative, might go a long way toward signaling potential enemies that NATO will not be caught unawares and assuring friendly countries that NATO will do more than pay lip service to their security requirements.

Such an initiative would fundamentally alter the relationship between NATO and participating North African countries, requiring a reciprocal partnership between them. In this regard, it is unfortunate that the Partnership for Peace program instituted with eastern European countries has been identified with eventual NATO membership. A true "partnership" between the Alliance and non-member countries is more vital today than ever before. The North Atlantic Treaty makes no provision for the guarantee of a non-member nation's security, but in reality NATO could not stand idly by while friendly North African countries were overrun any more than it could if the new eastern European democracies were attacked. A statement that a change of frontiers or of governments in the region would be viewed as a grave development to Mediterranean security would lend stability to a region where NATO cannot evade certain obligations anyway.

Of course, neither the most technologically advanced air defense measures nor the most enlightened diplomacy can overcome completely the uncertainties and challenges of ballistic missile defense. The only capability that would

surely deter the type of rogue regime that would entertain the idea of attacking a non-offending country is the clearly apparent capability to intervene with decisive force. Hence, the ultimate partnership would be operations of a NATO combined joint task force (CJTF), including the participation of indigenous forces, to deter a threat or to defeat an enemy should deterrence fail. Planning for this type of partnership may be premature, but it is not too early to begin a process of military-to-military contacts to build confidence and establish relations.

The multinational force discussed by the WEU, with its French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese components, might serve as a suitable instrument for CJTF planning. There is a danger here, however, that non-participating members will appear to be unconcerned or uncommitted to the goals of Mediterranean stability and security. Unlike other security and stability issues under discussion, the proliferation threat is not a peripheral concern to NATO--it is a core strategic issue. Accordingly, NATO's political leadership must exercise care that a military force resulting from a southern "coalition of the willing" still represents the collective will of the Alliance as a whole. It is difficult to conceive of an effective deterrent of any type which does not include forces from, and represent the determination of, the United States. An American appreciation for southern European views on North African questions is essential to maintaining the solidity of NATO.

Conclusion

NATO's North African policies for the next century require a military dimension. This dimension should be engineered in an atmosphere cleansed of cultural prejudice, and should involve the United States and the southern European powers in a constructive collaboration. It should also capitalize on the progress made by European Union economic and diplomatic initiatives, but aspirations in these areas must not overshadow a realistic view of military risks and capabilities. Most important, it must actively seek to overcome the stigmas that continue to characterize the north-south relationship if it is to achieve the trust required for stability.

NATO's member countries are already pledged to such goals. Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty obliges members to contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations, strengthen free institutions, bring about better understanding, and promote conditions of stability and well-being. To deny that those lofty aspirations apply outside of Europe and North America, or to pretend that non-white, non-Christian people do not share them, would be unworthy of history's most successful and most enlightened international security organization.

NOTES

1. This account is based on the version in Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski's *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America* (New York: The Free Press, 1984), p. 100.
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3. J. C. Herold, *The Age of Napoleon* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 67.
4. Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), p. 33.
5. Winston Churchill, *The Gathering Storm* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1948), p. 415.
6. Pierre Garrigue, "La Mediterranee: frontiere entre les civilisations ou trait d'union entre les peuples?" *ATHENA* 1997, 2e semestre (Paris: Institut des Hautes Etudes de Defense National, 1997), p. 32.
7. "L'Union europeenne et la Mediterranee: perceptions, dynamiques et strategies," *ATHENA* 1997, 2e semestre (Paris: Institut des Hautes Etudes de Defense National, 1997), pp. 76-77.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
9. Pedro Moya, "NATO's Role in the Mediterranean" (<http://xs4all.freenet.keiv.ua/NATO/related/naa/docu/1997/ap115gsm.htm>), p. 2.

10. Ibid., p. 5.
11. "L'Union europeenne et la Mediterranee: perceptions, dynamiques et strategies," p. 105.
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