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POLICY**

**NATO'S MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE:  
PROSPECTS AND POLICY  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**CONFERENCE**

**NATO's MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE  
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## NATO's MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE

There is general agreement that because of the complexity of problems in the Mediterranean, no single initiative can address both the longer-term and proximate sources of instability in the region. Only a combination of institutions and policy tools can produce most of the desired results.

Complementarity is the key word and each organisation should concentrate its efforts on fields where it has a clear comparative advantage and something constructive to offer as a contribution to the solution of the problems in the Mediterranean region. In other words, we should look for the “added value”. We must ascertain the capabilities of each organization in order to achieve the most efficient division of labour and avoid duplication of effort. The best means of preventing many future crises in the Mediterranean is to address their root causes before the situation reaches the crisis stage. Because most of the problems are of a socio-economic nature, the European Union is the best actor to deal with these problems and ensure that they do not escalate into major crises requiring military action. The EU approach may, in the medium- to long-term, be more efficient because it is comprehensive, while NATO, by nature, cannot deal with socio-economic problems.

But NATO also has a potentially significant role to play. Although the EU may be more acceptable to some countries, especially when the problem is of a socio-economic nature, NATO is perceived as more credible when it comes to hard security issues. Therefore, the role of each organization has to be determined on a case-by-case basis.<sup>1</sup>

Focusing on NATO, the central issue is, of course, the future of the Alliance's Mediterranean Dialogue.<sup>2</sup> What is NATO's comparative advantage and specific contribution to Mediterranean security? What should be the future objectives? Can it achieve those objectives in its current form? What changes need to be made? What would a “road map” about its next stages look like?

An extremely important issue is the real value of the Dialogue for the Mediterranean Partners, in addition to its “public relations” dimension. It can be argued that Mediterranean Dialogue is a useful starting point and that its central contribution in its current and somewhat minimalist format is probably that of providing a “light” and yet formal –i.e. institutionalized”– channel for an exchange of ideas and proposals. Furthermore, public relations and “peaceful offensives” can be good for regional stability by marginally improving the political climate. Yet, it is argued that the much more demanding goal of building partnerships should be kept distinct from the ongoing effort to improve mutual understanding.

It is correctly argued by Roberto Menotti that the Mediterranean Dialogue “lacks the virtue of clarity of purpose: the logic of the exercise is flexible enough to allow for “learning by

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<sup>1</sup> There is also mounting confusion about roles and agendas, a situation which could be described as “dialogue fatigue”. Furthermore, disenchantment with aspects of cooperation in one *forum* (e.g. the EMP) can easily affect the climate in other settings, including the NATO initiative (a kind of domino effect).

<sup>2</sup> The proposals outlined in this paper constitute a synthesis of a number of excellent studies in an effort to draw a short- and medium-term roadmap for the initiative. More specifically: Ian Lesser, Jerrold Green, Stephen Larrabee, Michele Zanini, *The Future of NATO's Mediterranean Initiative. Evolution and Next Steps*, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica 2000; Roberto Menotti, *NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue initiative: Italian Positions, Interests, Perceptions, and the Implications for Italy-U.S. Relations*, Final report, NATO Individual Research Fellowship 1997-1999; Richard Whitman, *Securing Europe's Southern Flank? A Comparison of NATO, EU and WEU Policies and Objectives*, Final report, NATO Individual Research Fellowship 1997-1999; Gareth Winrow, *The Role of NATO's Mediterranean Initiative*, Garland Publishing, Inc. New York and London, 2000.

doing”, but fails to provide consistent guidelines to participants or prospective participants. This is both the strength and the weakness of the initiative. On the one hand, constructive ambiguity may be required to keep the parties interested in the dialogue; on the other hand, a talking shop may also generate some frustration especially if it encourages frank discussion of controversial issues while failing to offer strong incentives to reach compromises and make firm commitments”.<sup>3</sup>

Regarding the initiative’s objectives, a very penetrating analysis by RAND Corporation concluded that “in order for the Mediterranean Dialogue to succeed, attempts must be made to reconcile a history of distrust between the Middle East and the West. This can be accomplished if NATO rigorously defines what it wants the dialogue to accomplish and then invests adequate resources to educate opinion-makers in the dialogue countries about its goals. It must also confront the challenge of close interaction with states that are politically, culturally, historically and economically quite different from NATO’s core membership. The goals of the dialogue must serve the needs of both sides. Thus, close attention must be paid to what the Middle Eastern and North African states want from the dialogue, as well as to NATO’s ability to marshal adequate resources to make this an appealing policy option for the governments of these states. NATO must also take pains to make clear that the dialogue is sponsored by the organization in its entirety and not just certain members of it”.

From a NATO perspective, the Alliance’s Mediterranean Dialogue, and more generally, its strategy towards the Mediterranean region should focus on areas of comparative advantage for the Alliance: hard security issues and defence-related cooperation. Such a strategy would have four basic elements:

- (1) understanding better the South’s strategic perceptions;
- (2) informing the partners about its concerns and plans in order to clear misperceptions (on both sides);
- (3) influencing the perceptions of elites;
- (4) promoting military and intelligence cooperation whenever feasible and realistic.

The main, and perhaps more feasible, objective of the Mediterranean Dialogue is to improve NATO’s image in the Mediterranean South. In this context, NATO’s Office of Information and Press has embarked on a public information campaign targeting Opinion leaders of Mediterranean Dialogue countries. While NATO has appropriated some funding for public information activities, the amount of money has been relatively modest and not sufficient to conduct a large outreach effort that could significantly affect perceptions in the dialogue countries.<sup>4</sup>

The major problem in this context is American support for Israel. NATO, in the eyes and minds of the “Arab street” (but also many officials) is a U.S.-led alliance (which, after all, is an accurate perception). Any American “mistake” almost automatically burdens NATO as well. Therefore, as long as there is no solution to the Palestinian problem, any public relations effort by NATO would almost *a priori* have limited objectives and expectations and rather mediocre results.

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<sup>3</sup> Menotti, p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Lesser, Green, Larrabee & Zanini, RAND, 2000, p. 47.

<b>TYPE OF ACTIVITY</b>
Educational courses and visits
Civil emergency planning
Increase participation of the of the Dialogue countries in CEP activities related to Disaster management
Translate and disseminate key NATO materials and documents into Arabic
Develop and strengthen ties to research and defense institutions in the dialogue countries
“Low cost” confidence-building and transparency measures: for example, the notification of future military activities, discussion of a code of conduct for military activities & exchange of information among military staff
Invite Dialogue countries to send observers to large-scale NATO exercises
Sponsor fellowships and exchanges for researchers from Dialogue countries at major institutes in NATO countries dealing with defense and security matters
Increase support for visits to NATO by key opinion-makers from the Dialogue countries, especially journalists, academics and parliamentarians
Encourage greater participation in the courses, especially peacekeeping courses at the NATO School in Oberammergau
Move toward practical, PfP-like defense related activities (Mine clearance, SAR, evacuation, humanitarian and refugee control operations, etc.)
Reinforce the nongovernmental dimension and consider establishment of a NATO Mediterranean defence studies network
Consider establishing a crisis prevention and confidence-building network for the Mediterranean
The Alliance needs to ensure that its political and military strategy in the Mediterranean is closely harmonized. <sup>5</sup>
Air and maritime SAR
Give the Initiative a parliamentary dimension by embracing the NATO Parliamentary Assembly’s well-established Mediterranean Dialogue. <sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Efforts to enhance NATO’s power projection capabilities could create new anxieties and fears among the dialogue countries and inhibit efforts to intensify cooperation with them. Thus, it is important that any changes in NATO’s military strategy and command structure be carefully explained to these countries ahead of time to reduce the chances of misperception and misunderstanding. (Lesser, Green, Larrabee & Zanini, RAND, 2000, p. 100-101) According to Whitman, this is the central ambiguity in NATO’s Mediterranean policy: for the non-NATO member state partners dialogue is in progress whilst other measures are being undertaken which seem directly threatening, such as the reconfiguration of NATO forces for the Mediterranean and NATO’s non-proliferation strategy. (Whitman, p. 14)

<sup>6</sup> Lesser, Green, Larrabee & Zanini, RAND, 2000, p. xiii-xiv.

A number of analysts have also advocated a PfP-type programme for the Mediterranean partners. Although one can hardly disagree with the general principle, it should be noted that the Mediterranean region possesses its own specific dynamics and security challenges. The European model of cooperative security, with all its conditionalities, can be proposed to, but not imposed upon the Mediterranean region. Although some elements of NATO's PfP initiative, which was quite successful in Central and Eastern Europe, may be applicable to the Mediterranean, the relative heterogeneity of the region would require specifically tailored solutions. Additionally, proponents of the PfM idea will have to resolve the issue of how to deal with different degrees of interest in military cooperation among the dialogue countries.<sup>7</sup>

It has also been argued that cooperation between the armed forces of Mediterranean countries for non-traditional military purposes should now be promoted. Potential areas of cooperation would include natural disasters, control of sea-lanes, illicit traffic of all kinds, intelligence cooperation against terrorism, police cooperation against transnational crime<sup>8</sup>, civil reconstruction and eventually crisis management and peace support operations.

Indeed, peacekeeping has frequently been mentioned as an area of possible cooperation between NATO and its Mediterranean partners. However, it could be argued that the difficulties NATO has faced in acting as the military arm of the UN in the management of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia would pale in comparison to those NATO will be confronted with in case of peace support operations in the Mediterranean region. Moreover, its potential roles are bound to be further complicated by the continuing anti-NATO bias of some Arab countries.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, issues of democratization create a difficult dilemma for NATO (and the EU). Should NATO promote democratization in these countries? To what degree should the legitimacy of political elites be a concern of NATO? It is correctly pointed out that most of the individual rulers and elites in North Africa and in the Middle East tend to be more knowledgeable of, and more sympathetic to, the West than are their publics. These governing elites are concerned about a possible serious challenge to their authority from a popular movement, most probably inspired by radical Islamist forces. This fear, if not obsession, with societal security places obstacles in the path of democratization and creates a dilemma for governments in Europe and the U.S. NATO officials would not wish to be perceived as helping to shore up unpopular and illegitimate, but at the same time pro-Western, governments in the southern Mediterranean and in the Middle East. Yet, clearly NATO policy-makers would not be at ease if radical Islamist groups were swept to power in these states through free and open elections.<sup>10</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following list addressing political and military issues is far from comprehensive:

- ◆ Countries across the Mediterranean should be treated as full partners in any security arrangements in which they are involved or concerned;<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Menotti, p. 5-6 ; Winrow, p. 185; Lesser, Green, Larrabee & Zanini, RAND, 2000, p. 52.

<sup>8</sup> See for instance, Alessandro Politi, *European Security: The New Transnational Risks*, Chaillot Papers 29, Paris, WEU-ISS, October 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Maurizio Cremasco, "Fifty Years of NATO in the Mediterranean: A Historical Review" in Coccia, p. 65.

<sup>10</sup> Winrow, p. 73.

<sup>11</sup> Vasconcelos, p. 9.

- ◆ The spread of political and militant Islamist movements in the Arab and the Muslim world is an undeniable fact. Islam as a political force in the Muslim world will play an important role in shaping relations between Europe and the southern Mediterranean countries. Therefore, the West should seek to better understand the political culture of Islam and cease to demonize this religion;
- ◆ The alliance needs an outreach programme for both partner and selected non-partner countries along the Mediterranean. While these countries are unlikely to become NATO members, their security will increasingly impinge on broader Alliance interests.<sup>12</sup> It should be clear from the beginning, however, that cooperation with non-partner countries will be very limited under present circumstances;
- ◆ The Mediterranean region possesses its own specific dynamics and security challenges. The European model of cooperative security, with all its conditionalities, can be proposed to, but not imposed upon the Mediterranean region. Although some elements of NATO's PfP initiative, which was quite successful in Central and Eastern Europe, may be applicable to the Mediterranean, the relative heterogeneity of the region would require specifically tailored solutions;
- ◆ Topics for cooperation should be acceptable to the partners and workable in practice. No progress can be achieved without the active participation and contribution of NATO's Mediterranean partners. It cannot be a one-sided process;<sup>13</sup>
- ◆ Dialogue activities continue to be conducted on a self-funding basis. If NATO's Mediterranean Initiative is to succeed, NATO will have to devote greater financial resources to it;
- ◆ It is argued that NATO should address the dilemma of deepening its activities with partners, or expanding the scope of the initiative geographically (otherwise, it is argued, it might inadvertently draw a new dividing line). However, it can be argued that because there are hardly any candidates that currently meet the criteria, expanding the dialogue's membership without the necessary preconditions might create serious problems and inhibit further progress. Therefore, the emphasis should be on deepening the Dialogue, while, at the same time, keeping the door open for new partners;
- ◆ Countries with an interest in more active engagement should be able to pursue the Initiative within a more flexible framework. In short, cooperation should be developed on a case-by-case basis.<sup>14</sup>
- ◆ It may be wiser to focus attention to emerging, younger elites. In other words, to invest on the future. Although one cannot afford to ignore the present leadership, it may be unrealistic to expect a significant change of attitude vis-à-vis NATO and the West. Educational

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<sup>12</sup> Asmus, R., Larrabee, S., Lesser, I. «Mediterranean Security: New Challenges, New Tasks». *NATO Review*, No. 3, May 1996, p. 31.

<sup>13</sup> It appears that so far there is a tendency for NATO officials to lead the discussions while the representatives of the non-NATO Mediterranean countries appear to assume a more passive and reactive role. (Winrow, p. 33)

<sup>14</sup> It was suggested by RAND that NATO should: (a) Adopt a regional approach to military cooperation; (b) Let interested partners participate in activities on a "variable geometry" basis to allow a more ambitious agenda (c) Strike a balance between bilateral and multilateral approaches; and (d) Promote the incremental development of the initiative. (Lesser, Green, Larrabee & Zanini, RAND, 2000, pp. xiii, 46, 75, 92-96).

opportunities should be offered to young intellectuals, officers, parliamentarians, government and NGO officials and journalists from partner countries.<sup>15</sup>

- ◆ Officials in the West should be mindful of the problem of “conditionality”. For instance, they may insist that certain conditions such as political reform be met before Western economic aid is extended to a particular country. Economic sanctions may even be threatened in an effort to encourage democratization. Arab public opinion would most probably react vehemently by claiming that the West was seeking to impose its values on their societies.<sup>16</sup>
- ◆ In addressing WMD and missile risks, it will be important to engage Dialogue states that are themselves exposed --perhaps most exposed— to WMD use around the Mediterranean.<sup>17</sup> An exchange of information, to be accompanied by a frank dialogue on proliferation and terrorism issues might also greatly facilitate intelligence, police and even judicial cooperation to combat terrorism in general (and prevent NBC terrorism).

This section concludes with four suggestions about military matters:

First, the alliance must continue to prepare itself for potential military setbacks while ensuring that its actions do not appear hostile ensuring. This dilemma will likely increase as NATO’s planning for non-Article 5 operations matures.<sup>18</sup>

Second, NATO should be prepared to deal with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, without, however, exaggerating this threat. NATO should avoid the impression that it is searching for a new “*raison d’etre*”; some might conclude that the alliance was trying to replace the old Soviet menace with a new combination of Islamic fundamentalism and weapons of mass destruction. This could unnecessarily antagonize and isolate the Islamic or the Arab world and become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Third, offensive counter-proliferation action presents significant political and military problems and should be seen as an option of last resort. Defensive measures, such as theatre missile defences are more feasible both politically and militarily although they may be less efficient and have a higher economic cost.

Fourth, the threat of terrorism involving the use weapons of mass destruction constitutes a more serious risk to Western states, including the United States, than a ballistic missiles attack by a rogue state. The best chance to prevent such incidents is to work with the states in the region (especially in the field of intelligence).

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<sup>15</sup> In this context, the role of the Atlantic Treaty Association network could play an important role in promoting closer ties between the citizens of NATO member countries and those of Mediterranean partners and building bridges through dialogue and cooperation in order to put aside the mistrust. At the October 1999 ATA General Assembly with the participation of French President Chirac and NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson, ATA changed unanimously its statute in order to welcome associations from MD countries under the status of “Observer Members”.

<sup>16</sup> Winrow, p. 92.

<sup>17</sup> WMD issues, for Egypt and other Arab Dialogue states, are seen first and foremost through the lens of the strategic competition with Israel. European and American WMD concerns, by contrast, rarely focus on Israeli programs, concentrating instead on the risky combination of proliferation and unstable or aggressive regimes. Israel’s unconventional capabilities are no more of a concern to most Western observers and policymakers than the nuclear arsenals of Britain or France. Many in the Dialogue states view this as evidence of a double standard. (Lesser, Green, Larrabee & Zanini, RAND, 2000, pp. ix & 27)

<sup>18</sup> It is argued that if in fact such missions do become a priority for the Alliance, the «procurement of systems by member states to facilitate regional intervention will be required, possibly giving the Alliance an offensive posture in the eyes of some Mediterranean countries». (Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, p. ix.)

## CONCLUSIONS

The Mediterranean remains a fragmented and highly unstable region. Problems of political, economic and social modernization in the Mediterranean and the Middle East are becoming even more complex because of the continued existence of traditional security problems: regional conflicts. The main issue of concern is the Israeli-Palestinian problem, but there are additional flashpoints such as Iraq.

Despite the alarmist predictions of some analysts, which are becoming fashionable because of events in the United States and subsequently in Afghanistan (and it is almost certain that there will be new phases in the “war against terrorism”), there is no direct military threat (in the form of “clash of civilizations”) from the South towards the North, in the Mediterranean region. Terrorism, religious extremism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction constitute a threat as much to the southern Mediterranean regimes as to NATO and the West. Furthermore, most security challenges and problems in the Mediterranean are of a non-military nature and therefore cannot be dealt with by military means. Indeed, the multi-dimensional character of the security environment in the Mediterranean suggests a need for a comprehensive vision of security and a holistic problem-solving approach.

Although the European Union seems to be the best actor to deal with these problems and ensure that they do not escalate into major crises requiring military action, NATO also has a potentially significant role to play. Although the EU may be more acceptable to some countries, especially when the problem is of a socio-economic nature, NATO is perceived as more credible when it comes to hard security issues. Therefore, the role of each organization has to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

As the most active and powerful military organization in the Mediterranean basin, NATO has the capacity to influence the patterns of relations across and around the basin.<sup>19</sup> The greatest challenge for Western institutions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to expand the world of stability. More specifically for NATO, the main task for the Alliance in various crisis regions (such as the Mediterranean, the Balkans, etc.) is to provide a framework of regional stability by “containing” military conflicts, thus creating a suitable environment for other organisations (such as the EU) to address economic, social and other problems and challenges.

Regarding the Alliance’s Mediterranean Dialogue objectives and future prospects, the following remarks can be made:

1. Despite its ambition to become the guarantor of stability in regions around Europe, the Mediterranean is not yet very high in NATO’s agenda. It is unclear whether this will change. There are opposing trends in this context. With NATO’s coming next round of enlargement, several new countries will join the Alliance. They would be rather indifferent to security developments in the Mediterranean. Despite NATO’s recent cordial rapprochement with Russia, they would still be concerned about the Russian Bear. On the other hand, war against international terrorism and the threat of the proliferation of WMD are the highest American and (to a significant extent) NATO priorities.

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<sup>19</sup> Blank, p. 95. The security environment around the Mediterranean basin and beyond will be strongly affected by, and will also affect, the process of NATO adaptation. (Lesser, p. 43) A changing NATO is one of the key influences on the strategic landscape and among the most important factors in the future of the Initiative. (Lesser, Green, Larrabee & Zanini, RAND, 2000, p.viii)



2. There are several obstacles to cooperation in the Mediterranean. Perhaps the most important is the existence of the Arab-Israeli conflict frustrates efforts to explore cooperative arrangements in CSBM and arms control fields. One should also mention that some of the rivalries and conflicts in the region are overlapping with out-of-region antagonisms and conflicts, complicating even more the efforts for conflict resolution and co-operation); And the lack of homogeneity between the North and the South and of shared values (like in the case of the CSCE/OSCE), where states despite their ideological differences had strong historical and cultural links. In addition, as already mentioned, there are great differences in the level of development, the size of states and their military capabilities;
3. There is general agreement that because of the complexity of problems in the Mediterranean, no single initiative can address both the longer-term and proximate sources of instability in the region. Only a combination of institutions and policy tools can produce most of the desired results;
4. The role that NATO officially claims for itself is auxiliary to that of the EU, as clearly pointed out by then Secretary-General Solana: “To help stabilize the Mediterranean region and build a peaceful, friendly, economically vibrant area is ... a major strategic objective for all Euro-Atlantic institutions. The EU must take the lead, yet NATO, too, can lend a helping hand”;<sup>20</sup>
5. The Euro-American relationship is a major determinant of the entire political landscape in the Mediterranean region. A challenge facing NATO is the increasing divergence between American and European perceptions on the various international issues, particularly in the Mediterranean and the Middle East.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, U.S. attitudes (and policies vis-à-vis the region) will critically affect the future of the initiative.
6. In the eyes of European and Mediterranean non-member states, NATO is perceived as militarily more powerful and efficient than the EU. However, the EU is perceived as less “aggressive”, perhaps because of its membership. In fact, U.S.’s non-membership to the EU may in some cases be a disadvantage, although in other cases may be an advantage. Last, but certainly not least, Mediterranean partners perceive the EU not only as their main trading partner, but also as the only credible source of developmental aid (EU’s “soft” power);
7. NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue, and more generally, its strategy towards the Mediterranean region should focus on areas of comparative advantage for the Alliance: hard security issues and defence-related cooperation. NATO’s primary task in the Mediterranean will be to intervene during a regional crisis and, under certain circumstances, to deal with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Its secondary activities would include, among other, cooperation initiatives such as the Mediterranean Dialogue;

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<sup>20</sup> Menotti, p. 9; A conclusion shared by RAND which acknowledges the central role of the EU in the longer-term stability of the Mediterranean. (Lesser, Green, Larrabee & Zanini, RAND, 2000, p.xii)

<sup>21</sup> Sidi Brahim Ould Mohamed, “NATO: Half a Century in the Mediterranean. A Mauritanian View” in Coccia p. 109.

8. It is argued that the real value of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue as a confidence-building device is only likely to be realized in a true multilateral format.<sup>22</sup> With the current state of affairs in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, however, the prospects for multilateral activities (including Israel) are rather poor;<sup>23</sup>
9. The main, and perhaps more feasible, objective of the Mediterranean Dialogue is to improve NATO's image in the Mediterranean South and to inform the partners about its concerns and plans in order to clear misperceptions (on both sides). In this context, it will continue to be addressed only to the elites, not the general publics;
10. Even a marginal contribution to the reduction of the level of mistrust toward the "West" among the elites of those states and –a much more difficult task—their societies, would be a significant achievement.<sup>24</sup> In this context, NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue is a useful tool of preventive diplomacy and a potentially important CBM.<sup>25</sup> However, it cannot evolve into a partnership and one has to be conscious of this limitation;
11. U.S. policy vis-à-vis the Middle East and the Muslim world is a major factor. NATO, in the eyes and minds of the "Arab street" (but also of many officials) is a U.S.-dominated alliance (which, after all, is not an inaccurate perception). Any American "mistake" almost automatically burdens NATO as well. Therefore, as long as there is no solution to the Palestinian problem, any public relations effort by NATO would almost *a priori* have limited objectives and expectations and rather mediocre results;
12. The West's best chance to prevent NBC terrorism is to work closely with the states in the region (especially in the field of intelligence);
13. Western policies with regard to political reform, human rights, and civil military relations may severely constrain the scope for cooperation and may make dialogue on these issues difficult. On the other hand, can NATO (or the EU) remain indifferent about the autocratic record of some Mediterranean partners' governments? Only very skillful policies would get NATO and the West out of this "lose-lose" situation.
14. There is a very lively debate under way concerning Europe's new defence identity. Whatever the final outcome of this long-term process, we cannot afford to "europeanize" Mediterranean security efforts. The U.S. has what it perceives as vital interests in the Mediterranean, and so does the EU. Therefore, both the EU and the U.S. must remain involved and work together to protect their interests and project stability. The critical question is "what are the modalities of cooperation and the division of labour". Nor we can afford to "northernize" Mediterranean security. The active participation of countries in the southern rim of the Mediterranean Sea is absolutely necessary if cooperation efforts to succeed in the long term. Otherwise, the whole exercise will remain one-sided and utterly futile.
15. **Finally, attempting to answer the question "Is NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue useful or irrelevant?"** after September 11, 2001, one easily concludes that although one

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<sup>22</sup> Lesser, Green, Larrabee & Zanini, RAND, 2000, p. 20.

<sup>23</sup> So far, it was a rare exception when NATO (or the WEU) managed to organize a multilateral meeting or activity.

<sup>24</sup> Menotti, p. 8, 15 & 17.

<sup>25</sup> Winrow, p. 2.

should have rather limited expectations, the Initiative is clearly useful as a confidence-building measure.

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