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ARMS AND SECURITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION: REDEFINING THREATS AND OPTIONS

by Jed C. Snyder

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INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War and the erosion of the alliance system which defined East-West competition for four decades, has forced nations to explore new frameworks to address emerging security requirements.¹ The Mediterranean countries are among those in search of new relationships and alignments. While that task is being addressed by virtually all states, an acute sense of urgency is attached to the search among Mediterranean nations.²

The demilitarization of the East-West competition has shifted attention toward long-dormant but simmering inter- and intra-state rivalries which could present security threats affecting entire regions. The current crisis in the Balkans is an obvious example. With this shift in attention will also come a slow but certain transformation in regional political-military balances as new security challenges surface and new alignments evolve over time to address them.

With the decline in relevance of the superpower nuclear balance as a barometer of global strategic relations, the state of the superpower nuclear balance has also become less relevant to the security of allies who benefitted from what Albert Wohlstetter referred to as the "delicate balance of terror." As a result, the constraints on the use of military

¹ **The views presented in this paper are the author's and should not be attributed to the National Defense University, the U.S. Department of Defense or any other agency of the U.S. Government.**

² **Parts of this paper are drawn from an earlier presentation to a conference on "North Africa: Current Policy Trends and Challenges" co-sponsored by the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) of the U.S. National Defense University (NDU) and the Government of Tunisia, held in Tunis in May, 1994.**

force and of weapons of mass destruction which were to a large extent imposed by the U.S.-Soviet nuclear standoff, have been loosened and in some cases removed altogether.

The Mediterranean nations are exploring the new security environment of the post-cold war world and assessing the instruments available to secure their position in what NATO and the West had generally regarded as a peripheral strategic theatre. Yet, the security approach of the Mediterranean Alliance members and the non-NATO states in the region will have an increasingly important affect on how security challenges are defined and how options are explored by the individual nations. The Maghreb nations -- Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya and Mauritania -- face a very different set of security dilemmas than, for example, those which occupy the NATO nations of the Eastern Mediterranean. The nations of the northern Mediterranean littoral define their security in terms opposite to those of the southern littoral states facing them. Finally, the Levant countries (which for strategic purposes should be considered as Mediterranean region nations) are now engaged in an Arab-Israeli peace process which could transform the Middle Eastern security environment in ways which would affect the entire Mediterranean area but which may be regarded as distant by the NATO states in the Western Mediterranean who have openly questioned whether the Alliance continues to serve their changing *national* security concerns. In sum, orthodox definitions and approaches to Mediterranean security will fail to recognize the transformation of the region or the need to assess the security needs of each of the Mediterranean's sub-theaters independently.

While the Mediterranean region is vast, there is at least one security challenge faced by all of the region's nations - the escalation of conventional and nonconventional

arms races. The proliferation threat eclipses other (admittedly serious) emerging regional concerns which have security implications: population growth; economic distress; demographic imbalances and the potential for mass intra-state migration; radicalization of Islamic political movements, and instability in adjacent regions. None of these threats, however, seem likely to be immediately susceptible to treatment by traditional security regimes or measures, whereas the proliferation threat is susceptible only to such measures.

The standard geographic truism, that the Mediterranean serves as a bridge linking Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa explains the region's variable and indistinct security circumstance. To a large extent, Mediterranean security is hostage to the political-military relations of countries located on its fringes - on the northern and southern littoral, in the Levant and the Persian Gulf, and notably of late, in the Balkans.

None of the emerging Mediterranean threats identified above can be described as traditional security concerns. Even the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), while not a new phenomenon, had not been an urgent security issue for most nations (including the United States) until the early 1980's. Until relatively recently, "vertical proliferation" (the expansion of strategic weapons possessed by the U.S. and Soviet Union, and to a lesser extent by China, France and Great Britain) consumed the energies and attention of governments and defense research communities to a far greater degree than the secondary strategic problem of "horizontal proliferation" (the spread of nuclear weapons beyond the group of acknowledged nuclear weapons states).

The U.S. commitment to Mediterranean security since the second World War has been epitomized by cold war symbols of military power - NATO's Southern command (AFSOUTH), the uninterrupted presence of the U.S. Sixth Fleet and a network of military installations supporting bilateral and multilateral security guarantees. How and whether the United States will: bolster or reduce; reassess, restructure, realign or withdraw from that commitment will directly affect the regional security environment and thus the strategic choices that Mediterranean countries make. Clearly, this will vary dramatically from one regime and nation to another, but the effect of changes in the U.S. presence in and approach to the region on both radical and moderate states must be regarded as a primary contributing factor in the defense and security orientations and calculations of virtually all of the Mediterranean states. The key difference is that these calculations must now be evaluated in the context of a state of non-Soviet/American confrontation.

In what has generally been regarded as the first post-cold war military crisis, U.S. regional leadership succeeded during the Gulf War in cobbling together an effective military and political response to a regional hegemon without the specter of Soviet intervention. Although Iraq's aggression against Kuwait was the most immediate provocation for the U.S.-led retaliation, the specter of a nuclear-armed regional hegemon provided the sense of alarm among most U.S. analysts. It is questionable whether the U.S. reaction would have been quite so vehement if the proliferation concern had not been a significant factor.

The Gulf war against Iraq displayed the determination of an allied coalition led by the United States to address blatant security threats of the classic variant - invasion by a rogue state unimpressed by the bounds of international law. Yet, it is unlikely that such a classic military campaign, which brings together a broad Western-aligned coalition characterized by unity of purpose and political solidarity, will materialize again.

The only overwhelming contemporary threat to regional security which might bring about a concerted response effort is the specter of WMD proliferation. As the diffusion of military technology continues and the security dilemmas of smaller states in a new and uncertain security environment increase, the attraction of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons will likely be enhanced.

This paper will examine the problem of WMD proliferation in the Mediterranean region. The assessment will be made within the context of shifting regional political-military balances and the need to revise the security approach of the NATO and non-NATO nations in the region.

II. Proliferation, Deterrence and Regional Security

It is likely that as the value of nuclear weapons for superpowers decreases, the attraction of "going nuclear" for smaller states will increase. This, of course, contradicts the hope and expectation upon which the entire nuclear non-proliferation regime was founded - that superpower disarmament would act to encourage nuclear aspirants (often referred to euphemistically as Third World countries) to seek alternative security paths.

That expectation was misguided from the start. The theory that the security behavior of large states would ipso facto affect or perhaps determine the actions of smaller states ignored the critical distinction of superpower security imperatives vs the security needs of emerging regional powers. The complaint of many non-nuclear weapons states was (and is) that the NPT nuclear members have not done enough to disarm themselves and therefore these nations had no legitimate claim to lecture non-signatories on the strategic value (or moral force) of non-proliferation.

This specious argument only betrayed a difficult nuclear truth which the founding fathers of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) are now reluctant to recognize - that while cold war possession by the superpowers of large nuclear arsenals could act to discourage smaller states from acquiring such weapons, in the absence of an atmosphere of East-West confrontation, atomic arms were ultimately going to be viewed by smaller states as weapons of war rather than solely as instruments of deterrence. The instability which has characterized the early post-cold war era reinforces the validity of this.

With the end of the cold war, those allies who have benefitted from the extension of superpower deterrents must rethink the foundation of their security. It is now unlikely that the United States will be called upon to exercise its nuclear commitments to its NATO allies since the source of the threat facing these nations has virtually disappeared. This situation could encourage nuclear programs by states (or regimes) who see an opportunity to quickly achieve the status of regional superpower. As two prominent analysts have recently argued, "extended nuclear deterrence has, at all times, been seen as a straightforward anti-proliferation device where allies were concerned."¹

Yet, that circumstance was dependent almost entirely on the presence of an overwhelming nuclear threat which influenced the security calculations of not just the patron state and its beneficiaries, but virtually all states involved in the international security system itself. With the evaporation of that threat, a significant risk to the stability of the international system seems to have been removed. Ironically, that risk was so horrendous to contemplate that it is doubtful whether many leaders took seriously the possibility of global nuclear crises escalating from superpower confrontations. What is more appreciable is the possibility of regional nuclear crises caused by the ambitions of aspiring regional hegemones such as those who reside in Baghdad, Algiers, or Tripoli.

A prominent regional security concern created by the possibility of new nuclear powers is the comparatively primitive level of command and control for nascent nuclear forces. Smaller states are unlikely to command the resources for robust and secure nuclear deterrents and will therefore be tempted to erect small, vulnerable first-strike forces in an effort to achieve regional military superiority. Lack of geographic depth, short warning times, comparatively few delivery systems, the increasing sophistication of adversaries' conventional arsenals, non-redundant communications systems and civil-military rivalries for control of nuclear weapons, all contribute to the concern over how the forces of emerging nuclear powers will be developed and controlled in peacetime, crisis and in war.² Such forces could invite preemption from adversaries who conclude that the window of opportunity to erase the security advantage gained by such weapons is small.

Efforts by nations to develop nuclear weapons over the period of the last two decades have generally not stressed transparency, but opacity. Whereas the first

generation of nuclear states proceeded to build nuclear arsenals in the open, the second generation of nuclear aspirants have generally chosen to conceal their programs. The principal reason for this preference seems obvious - the expectation that the exposure of non-NPT covered military nuclear programs would stigmatize the state and invite international ridicule and possibly military retaliation by neighbors or other threatened nations. Yet there is a more subtle and strategic reason for the opaque choice - preservation of military and security options which might be foreclosed by a transparent strategy.

An opaque nuclear program -- defined as officially unacknowledged and unproven through explosive tests or other means -- can confer strategic benefit. The uncertainty attending such a program forces potential aggressors to assume a worst case scenario and therefore could discourage attack by anything other than an overwhelming use of force, which would exhaust a small state's military resources. Yet as Iraq learned in June 1981, uncertainty can also encourage preemption if the attacker has high confidence that the program has not yet reached the operational stage, and the risk of retaliation is low. In Israel's case, the uncertainty shrouding its nuclear program stems not from Israel's status as there is no doubt that it possesses nuclear weapons. Rather, Tel Aviv has refused to publicly incorporate its nuclear capability into its political and military policies.³

In some cases, the refusal to acknowledge nuclear status over a period of time has become irrelevant in policy terms, as the state in question is regarded as having de facto nuclear status. Israel is the most extreme example of this variant. Israel has also refrained from making nuclear threats, even during crises which could have imperiled the

state's survival. Uncertainty can also encourage attack if the suspected state is regarded as a political renegade and therefore a danger to the region's security. An interesting hypothetical question is whether Israel will ever represent that danger to the Arab states and if so whether the more radical countries of the Middle East, would, if they possessed the capability, attempt to de-nuclearize Israel by force.

III. EMERGING SECURITY TRENDS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

In evaluating the potential challenges to security in the Mediterranean region,⁴ four sets of issues can be identified: (1) non-military threats to stability; (2) the diffusion of military power and weapons proliferation; (3) multilateralism and collective security, and (4) the evolving U.S. role in Mediterranean security.

o Non-Military Threats to Stability

Long dormant ethnic and nationalistic ideologies have now risen to the surface to challenge the post-war paradigms that have defined inter-state relations for nearly five decades. National borders throughout the Mediterranean are no longer sacrosanct and are increasingly seen as obstacles to realizing the full benefit of deeply held ethno-nationalist aspirations among many peoples, including: the Kurds in Turkey; the Basques in Spain; the Moslems, Croatians, Slovenes and Serbs in the former Yugoslavia, the

Sahrawis in the Western Sahara; the inhabitants of the Spanish enclaves in Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco, and the Palestinians.

All of these ethno-nationalist disputes are internal to the Mediterranean region but effectively outside of the jurisdiction of the Western Alliance, in that NATO was not designed to address issues of internal stability or trans-national disputes. While the Alliance has often acted to contain rivalries between and among member nations (e.g. the Greek-Turkish dispute), these problems are beyond its *raison d'être*. It is therefore difficult to imagine how NATO, even if significantly restructured and reoriented, could effectively address the range of ethnic and national disputes that have surfaced since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

A second regional challenge to stability is the emerging demographic patterns in Southern Europe and the Middle East, and the management of population growth. There is an increasing problem of emigration from poorer states (in the Middle East and North Africa, principally) to the more affluent Economic Union (EU) nations on the Mediterranean's northern littoral. The rate of population growth is highest among the poorer regional states -- Morocco, Algeria, Egypt and Turkey. If current trends continue, the EU nations could constitute a minority of the Mediterranean populace by the beginning of the next century. This could reduce the influence of the more affluent Mediterranean states in planning for the region's security, as their political clout is reduced.

Emigration trends have already served as the catalyst for creating alliances among rightist political parties throughout Europe (most successfully in France and Germany).

They have exploited fears of an uncontrolled flood of disaffected and generally unskilled laborers into economies already stressed by prolonged recession. Increases in the flow of Albanian immigrants to Italy and of Algerians to France have fueled renewed political debate in Paris and Rome over future immigration regulation.

The Italian decision to deploy a logistics brigade to Albania in 1992 to stem the tide of immigrants following the fall of the Soviet-era Albanian Communist regime suggests that Italy sees a role for its military in managing the immigration issue. It also illustrates the potential for Mediterranean nations to act unilaterally -- and outside an alliance umbrella -- against threats to their *national* security. Unilateral action by states contributing to the NATO southern command (Allied Forces Southern Europe - AFSOUTH) could threaten NATO's solidarity, particularly in a crisis when allied cohesion would be especially important.

The potential for radical regime change in North Africa (particularly in Algeria and Tunisia) raises the prospect of mass migration toward the Northern littoral countries, creating an unwelcome and destabilizing refugee flood. Should the host nations decide to interdict these refugees using national naval forces, for example, the NATO Commander in Chief of Allied Forces Southern Europe could face a situation where a significant component of the AFSOUTH naval order of battle has been diverted from its normal peacetime mission. In this case, a refugee situation could create a military problem for the Alliance and thus for the U.S.

Disaffection by increasingly large segments of the population in less affluent societies over the failure of regimes to govern effectively has kindled political radicalism.

Among Moslem countries, this has materialized most notably among those militant Islamic political groups adopting rejectionist political programs, who seek through both peaceful and violent means to capture governing authority. Professor I. William Zartman, a noted specialist on Africa, describes the rise of Islam in North Africa as a means to "give an ideological and organizational expression to the urban and lower middle classes left homeless by the ingrown political parties."⁵

The attraction of Islamic fundamentalism as a justification for radical political change, particularly during the current period of transition, has grown among a number of Middle Eastern countries, most notably in Algeria, but also in Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan. The point should be stressed, however, that militant political Islamic groups do not constitute a monolithic unified movement. Nor are all of the adherents of Islamic fundamentalist doctrines militant. There is at least one conspicuous example of a fundamentalist Islamic regime cooperating with the West - Saudi Arabia.

Whether Islamic revival movements will grow in strength among the North African littoral states (Algeria in particular; such parties are outlawed in Tunisia and Morocco) is a subject of debate among experts. William Zartman (who notes that "there is no single, united Islamic movement in any North African country") expects the movements to split as they assume a more active role in national politics.⁶ Regardless, it is doubtful that the movements will soon be strong enough to force overt anti-Western foreign and defense policies. In several cases, Islamic parties have achieved impressive electoral results over the last several years (in Egypt, Jordan and Algeria, for example), without steering a fundamentalist course that immediately threatens the stability of the regime or the region.

Radical Shi'ism of the Iranian variety has not swept the region as some had feared, and with the exception of Lebanon (where rival Amal and Hizballah elements compete for the allegiance of the Shi'a community) there has been virtually no export of Shiite revolution. Bitter rivalries between leaders of the Sunni and Shi'a movements have further retarded the spread of militant Islamic political groups.

In a number of Muslim countries, secularized elites in the military and the governing bureaucracies oppose radical fundamentalist takeovers. This was the case in Algeria where the military prevented the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) from coming to power by cancelling a second round of national elections, in which the FIS would have won a commanding majority. This setback has not, however, halted the FIS efforts to increase its influence among the Algerian public. The FIS remains a political force to be reckoned with in Algeria and therefore could still conceivably engineer a regime change. Indeed, the cancellation of the second round of elections seems to have had the effect of making the FIS a more militant movement. Two noted scholars have concluded that the politically repressive policies of the governments of Tunisia, Egypt and Algeria have emboldened the fringe elements of certain Islamic movements. "To the Islamist troops, the way the results of the elections were dismissed has underlined the poor credibility of the democratic discourse held both by the regimes and their foreign supporters. Inside the movements, it has therefore given more power to the backers of radicalization.⁷

Finally, Arab nationalism, which still has residual strength (although it was dealt a serious blow by Saddam Hussein's behavior toward Kuwait and the subsequent Gulf

War), has moderated the appeal of radical Islamic political movements. Ironically, Arab solidarity in the Gulf War provided a political boost to some pan-Arab sentiments.

While it would be simplistic and inaccurate to adopt a monolithic approach to assessing radical Islamic political movements, it is difficult to imagine that a pro-Western position would be part of their platform.

One immediate effect of Islamization in the Mediterranean will be to decrease the willingness of North African and Middle Eastern governments to cooperate militarily with the West in planning or implementing Mediterranean military operations. The institutional mechanisms for such cooperation will be critical to national decisions on whether and how to pursue military planning with the West. Multilateral mechanisms that serve to dilute the political risk of associating with the United States, for example, may be more attractive for our Western Mediterranean friends. The inherently anti-Western character of fundamentalist Islam could over time influence more moderate Islamic or even secular Arab regimes toward rejection of pro-Western stances on security. Consequently, should the United States adopt an aggressive policy against a radical Arab regime, it could lose some support among more moderate Arab and Islamic states. As an example, concern for Islamic sensitivities inclines the secular regimes in Algiers and Cairo to criticize the possibility that the West may again use force against Colonel Qaddafi in Libya.

Some regional governments have demonstrated concern over the negative image and impact of Islamic opposition movements and have attempted to cooperate in tracking their activities. In January 1993, for example, at a meeting of the Arab League Council of Interior Ministers, Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria announced an agreement to cooperate

in combatting these movements and to share intelligence on radical Islamic organizations.⁸

Western concern that a Mediterranean government could be seriously challenged or overthrown by militant Islamic opposition has been heightened by events in Algeria. The current crisis in Algeria has its roots in a series of initiatives from 1989-1991 designed to open the country's political system to a more democratic and pluralistic model. The immediate provocation for political and economic reforms was a series of food riots in late 1988. Algerian President Chadli Bendjedid hoped that freer political expression would encourage economic development and greater Western investment. Algeria had been governed by one party since its independence from France in 1962 - the National Liberation Front (FLN) and since 1965 by army officers who were instrumental in securing Algeria's independence. At the time, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), which supported a government ruled by Islamic Law rather than by a secular constitution, was legalized as a legitimate political party in opposition. At the time, Tunisian and Moroccan leaders expressed skepticism of Benjadid's reforms, believing them to be ill-planned. His Maghreb neighbors believed that he was moving too far too fast, and that the result would destabilize Algerian society.⁹

During municipal elections in 1990, the FIS was victorious in over half the contests. During parliamentary elections in December 1991, the FIS won 188 out of a total of 430 seats and seemed certain to gain a majority in the second round.¹⁰ The army forced a cancellation of the second round, however, and President Benjadid resigned as the

military instituted a state of emergency. The country would be governed by a Higher State Council, installed by the Algerian military.

There have been few significant changes in the Algerian leadership since the resignation of President Benjadid and the assumption of power by the army-backed government. On January 30, the Defense Minister, Liamine Zeroual (a retired General), replaced a collective leadership as President. His appointment is to last for a "transition period" of three years at which time the nation is expected to hold general elections. General Zeroual, a former Chief of the Armed Forces, is the fourth Algerian head of state in just two years.¹¹ Zeroual's biggest challenge will be to end the violence which has taken more than 2,000 lives in two years.¹²

The picture of Algeria's current military capability is unclear, chiefly because the current regime has provided little data on the state of its armed forces. The principal problem for the military is force modernization. Nearly all of its arms and military equipment had been provided by the Soviet Union, totalling more than \$ 10 billion in the post-independence period. According to a recent report for the U.S. Congress, from 1986-1989, Algeria received \$ 2.3 billion in arms from the Soviet Union, and \$ 400 million in arms from Russia in 1990-1993. During the latter period, the Soviet Union (succeeded by Russia) was the only arms supplier to Algeria.¹³ Algeria's large appetite for arms contributed significantly to accumulation of debt which had reached nearly \$ 30 billion by 1993.

The most concerning aspect of Algeria's military program is its interest in weapons of mass destruction. Its nuclear research facility at Ain Ouserra includes a Chinese-built

and supplied 15 Megawatt reactor, which while comparatively small (civilian power reactors are on the order of 300 megawatts) could produce sufficient fissile material for nuclear weapons within 3-4 years if run without interruption. It is highly unlikely that this facility (because of the reactor's size and configuration) was designed for civilian power-generation. In addition, the facility is protected by SA-5 surface-to-air missiles.¹⁴

One cannot draw conclusions about North African security perspectives from a reading of Algerian motives. The states of North Africa are distinctly different in political, economic, and societal terms, which has frustrated efforts of these governments to integrate their countries into a loose confederation through the Arab Maghreb Union, referred to by its French acronym (UMA). Established in 1989 by Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania, the UMA has sought a heightened regional dialogue among the Maghreb states and with neighboring powers as well. It has increased its contacts with other multinational organizations, founding the 'Five Plus Five' Grouping which brings the UMA members together with the four Western Mediterranean EU nations -- France, Italy, Spain Portugal -- and Malta.

With the exception of Libya, the North African states have invested more heavily in defensive weapons than in power projection forces, reflecting their general proclivity toward protecting rather altering the regional military balance and the political status quo.

o The Diffusion of Military Power and Weapons Proliferation

The end of the Cold War has created a new security dilemma, particularly acute for smaller states: whether to invest in alliance security relationships or to seek security

through independent military programs. In the past, these choices were not regarded as mutually exclusive, but in the evolving strategic environment, national leadership may increasingly perceive them as such. This is due in large part to the unifying threat and its replacement by a number of diverse threats, which are not interpreted uniformly by the members of the old Alliance structure. Further, the superpowers no longer act as regional security patrons to the same degree as they did during the cold war period.

The emerging military balance in the Mediterranean will present the NATO Alliance with new military missions, although continued contribution to Alliance programs by some NATO members will be problematic. The key security challenge in the region, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, is likely to fall outside of the Alliance's purview. While there is some prospect that NATO members may cooperate within the formal Alliance structure to address the WMD threat, the NATO imprimatur could act to deter broader cooperation either for reluctant NATO members or non-members.

There is little prospect that pending regional arms control proposals will get a sympathetic hearing in the region, largely because of a growing belief that arms control is unlikely to increase regional security. New generations of weapons' technologies will likely be far more attractive than regimes designed to control them.

The most urgent security concern for the Mediterranean region is undoubtedly the threat posed by the slow but certain spread of WMD systems to states whose leaders may have different inhibitions against using them than those with which we became familiar in the Cold War. There are two types of proliferation threats facing the region:

(1) the development of *indigenous* military programs designed to build either the

launchers or develop the warheads to deliver chemical, nuclear, or biological payloads over substantial distances with increasing accuracy;

(2) the acquisition from outside suppliers of ballistic missiles and the technologies required to adapt them for regional use.¹⁵

The spread of WMD systems appears to have been slower than predicted. The pace of proliferation may suddenly rise, however, because of the increasingly covert nature of many military programs. Great confidence has been placed in the past in the ability of the non-proliferation regime (the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, NPT, and the systems of safeguards implemented and monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA) to monitor programs of its signatories effectively. A combination of factors, however, including Iraq's nearly successful program to deploy nuclear weapons in contravention of the NPT (which it signed) and IAEA safeguards (to which it subscribed), and the current crisis over North Korea's refusal to adhere to the NPT regime, to which it is also a signatory, have effectively eroded confidence in the ability of the regime to detect, let alone, deter acquisition of a military nuclear capability. There is now reason to doubt the effectiveness of the NPT/IAEA system which was developed nearly three decades ago when proliferation incentives were much less attractive than they are today.¹⁶

A full discussion of the changing motivations for aspiring proliferants is beyond the scope of this article.¹⁷ It is the author's contention that an effective strategy to deter, retard and counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is unlikely to be achieved unless greater attention is paid to changing regional security motivations which

propel aspiring proliferants toward development of these weapons. This is likely to mean reduced reliance on global arms control accords which by definition must rely upon a least-common denominator approach, often catering to the concerns of those states who would utilize the accord as a shield to protect covert military programs. An argument can be made that Iraq saw the NPT and IAEA system as a means of protective cover for their nuclear weapons effort. It is difficult to conceive of a more cynical use of arms control.¹⁸

Beyond Iraq's (and North Korea's) manipulation of the international non-proliferation regime is the issue of whether reliance on broadly gauged arms control accords as a security instrument is anachronistic. In the Mediterranean, for example, virtually all of the region's states have signed the NPT and have accepted IAEA safeguards (including Syria, Libya, Iran and Iraq; only Israel and Algeria have not), yet nearly all of the states pursuing either covert ballistic missile programs or WMD initiatives (which have been publicly identified by the U.S. Director of Central Intelligence) are located in this region.¹⁹

There appears to be little potential for cooperation among Mediterranean nations on non-proliferation, let alone a more pro-active counter-proliferation stance, as enunciated by the Clinton administration.²⁰ The countries of greatest concern (Iraq, Iran, Libya, and Algeria) have all developed covert programs, some in violation of existing agreements. Israel's nuclear program remains of great concern to the western Mediterranean nations and is seen as compromising efforts to stem proliferation of nuclear technologies throughout the region.

-- A Possible Proliferation Scenario²¹

Proliferation would pose particular dangers for U.S. and NATO interests and, therefore, must be considered by American policymakers. A possible scenario would be the covert development of nuclear, biological or chemical (NBC) weapons by an Iraq-like regime in a state where a radical Islamic government has come to power. The worst-case scenario of an anti-Western government acquiring weapons of mass destruction has usually focused on the implications of a radical Middle Eastern regime whose leadership is hostile to U.S. interests, pursuing programs to develop nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. Among such potentially radical regimes, a fundamentalist Islamic government raises the most alarming prospect. The regional trend is toward more militant Islamic political movements. This trend, linked with internal and external ethnic and confessional strife, ambitious and hegemonic leaders, territorial disputes, and the penchant for holding the West responsible for the ills besetting the region, could well be a catalyst for some of the regional states in seeking to acquire these weapons.

Concern has been expressed among some quarters in the West over an "Islamic bomb." The concept had its origins in the 1970s, when the first indications of a Pakistani nuclear program surfaced. Although there is a real threat that a militant, radical Islamic regime such as that in Iran could seek to develop WMD systems to spread its revolutionary political doctrine, the notion of an "Islamic bomb" per se is probably misleading. For example, Pakistan's desire for a bomb was based on its confrontation with India (which had already developed nuclear weapons), not on its Islamic doctrine. Moreover, alarm over Islamabad's clandestine effort was muted since President Zia's

government was closely allied with the United States in its efforts to expel Soviet forces from Afghanistan, and because of India's close relationship with the Soviet Union. Proliferation as a policy concern was therefore subordinated to regional security priorities and political imperatives. In addition, it was widely felt in the U.S. Government and among the community of independent analysts that Pakistan's nuclear program was directed principally against the Indian effort, rather than toward the U.S. or its allies (i.e. Israel) or as a result of Islamic doctrine. Nevertheless, the possibility that another regional government less friendly to the U.S. and less supportive of American foreign policy objectives could covertly develop WMD systems, was highlighted.

Anticipating the spread of WMD systems within the Mediterranean region is only half of the policy issue for the United States. A fundamental problem for Washington is how to neutralize Israeli nuclear capability as a motivation and justification for other regional states to acquire a similar capability. The more delicate crisis question may be how to restrain Israeli tendencies toward preemptive military action against aspiring regional nuclear weapons states, or worse, how to react to an Israeli "fait accompli." This would be particularly difficult in cases where Washington determines that Israeli action is either not warranted or politically more costly than any benefit from extinguishing a burgeoning covert program.

The prospect of a nuclear-armed Mediterranean state, allied with one of Israel's historic enemies, has preoccupied Israeli defense and security planning for decades. Israel's preemptive air strike against the Iraqi nuclear installations at Tuwaitha in June

1981 illustrated Tel Aviv's determination to act unilaterally when it perceives generally that its security interests are threatened.

Should Israel learn of a covert WMD program, the pressure for it to act preemptively before the United States has an opportunity to assess the situation would be considerable. The U.S. might then find itself in a difficult position, particularly if it interposes itself between Israel and a nuclear-armed Islamic state. Should the FIS come to power in Algeria and continue that nation's pursuit of a nuclear weapon, the pressure on Washington to take remedial action to prevent Tel Aviv from pre-empting could become irresistible.

The scenario might not end there, particularly if a covert weapons capability is acquired by a regime sympathetic to terrorist tactics. It would be prudent to consider the planning requirements should U.S. commanders in Southern Europe be asked to take additional precautions to protect American installations in the Mediterranean against the threat of a nuclear-armed terrorist organization that was attempting to resist American pressure by itself pressuring an allied government to remove U.S. military facilities. One measure, which over time could have a deterrent effect on aspiring proliferants, would be the construction of an anti-tactical ballistic missile (ATBM) system which could lessen the appeal of acquiring a tactical nuclear capability. The Theatre High Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) system now under development by the United States could provide effective theatre-wide coverage against medium and intermediate-range ballistic missiles now being developed by several nations in the Mediterranean region.

ATBM does present a promising cooperative opportunity for Mediterranean nations, including the North African states. A regional consortium to finance the deployment of such a system linking the Eastern and Western Mediterranean basins, for example, deserves consideration. NATO members would be likely to support such a regional ATBM net, as it is endorsed in the Alliance's New Strategic Concept and in MC 400.

o Multilateralism and Collective Security

The Mediterranean nations, like virtually all of Europe, are struggling with the transition between the Cold War and an uncertain future security environment. They are considering a range of institutional alternatives to NATO. Decisions regarding how the Mediterranean states choose to organize for collective security will be based upon four assumptions:

(1) the absence of a well-defined and urgent security threat around which the Mediterranean states can structure a defensive security alliance;

(2) the expectation of significant withdrawals of American forces from Central Europe and the assumption that America will become increasingly reluctant to use military force anywhere in Europe;

(3) the vague but politically attractive notion that a new confederation of European states could deal with a range of threats to their security through a network of regional associations, and

(4) the expectation that European security will be essentially a "peacekeeping" or "peacemaking" mission, rather than one which emphasizes deterrence of conflict and border defense. Therefore, the argument goes, NATO will become inappropriate to the postwar European security structure.

Most discussions of how to transform NATO or of how it might be replaced or supplemented by other multinational institutions including new regional associations like the Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM) are infused with the same ambivalence regarding the American security role in Europe during the Cold War. Here, many Southern Europeans do not differ markedly from their Central European and Nordic counterparts. Those institutional alternatives which, some argue, are more suited to cooperative and consultative approaches (i.e. CSCE, EU, WEU) in the new security environment would marginalize or effectively eliminate a U.S. role. The ambivalence lies between the European desire to assume a defense posture (though not necessarily an adequate defense budget) independent of the United States and wishing to have the U.S. guarantee their security. In the emerging security environment, without the Soviet threat, this tension cannot be ignored and alternatives which promise security without dependence on the United States will appear to Europeans to be increasingly attractive.

There has been some discussion of emerging multilateral groupings within the Mediterranean (i.e. CSCM, UAM, the Group of Nine), the lack of progress on moving these initiatives forward toward the adoption of concrete security planning illustrates the political fragmentation of the region. Simply stated, there is no security identity among

the Mediterranean nations and, thus, less chance for the creation and sustainability of a cooperative multinational security regime.

The post-cold war environment is likely to widen political-economic cleavages in the Mediterranean basin, rather than narrow them. As these states seek solutions to national security concerns, historic rivalries are likely to resurface which will also highlight divergent approaches to regional security priorities. Therefore, it will be difficult to craft regional groupings that strengthen the link between the Western and Eastern Mediterranean in addressing increasing tensions between the northern and southern littoral nations. The Maghreb countries, for example, are unlikely to oppose a continued NATO security role in the region, but will see it as largely irrelevant to their security concerns: growing militant Islamization; low rates of economic growth, and the flight of potential future business and government leaders.

The Eastern Mediterranean nations will be principally concerned with the spill-over of regional conflicts, sustaining the Arab-Israeli peace process, and the potentially incendiary ethno-nationalist trends among the five Turkic-speaking nations of Central Asia and the Caucasus regions. The Azeri-Armenian conflict over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan and the continuing civil war in Tajikistan are examples. The former holds the potential of a clash among Russia, Turkey and Iran while the latter could lead to renewed Russian involvement in Afghanistan.

All Mediterranean nations share an historic (if subliminal) suspicion of outside powers that is likely to affect their national security calculations. This is evident even among two of the closest U.S. allies in the Mediterranean: Turkey and Italy. Recent

electoral events in both countries have added to the uncertainty regarding the future of bilateral security ties with the U.S. and continued strong allegiance to the Western Alliance. While the victorious rightist coalition of the Forza Italia, Lombardy League and neo-Fascist parties could move the Rome government closer to Washington, the resulting governing coalition is likely to be too fragile to raise new proposals for increased defense cooperation with the U.S. The focus on this new government is likely to be its political survival and management of the sprawling "*Mani Pulite*" scandal which has implicated literally hundreds of Italian parliamentarians and political leaders including a number of former ministers and five former Prime Ministers.

U.S. access to bases in Italy could be critical during a crisis as the earlier operations against Libya illustrated. The context in which Washington requests such access has strained even the closest bilateral security ties. The sensitive distinction of "NATO" vs "non-NATO" contingencies has provoked heated debate on a number of occasions, most notably during the Achille Lauro incident where American fighter aircraft sought to force the landing at the Italian air base at Sigonella, of an aircraft carrying suspected terrorists. The image of the U.S. military dictating terms to the Italian government remains fresh in the minds of many Italian politicians. Installations in Italy and Turkey are ideally located for operations in the Middle East and Persian Gulf, a fact which the U.S. government is careful not to over emphasize.

The embrace of multilateralism has been greeted with less enthusiasm by those states who see their security threatened by a weakening of the NATO guarantee and, by extension, a less engaged bilateral security tie with the United States. Turkey is an

example. The majority of Turks believe they are less secure in the post-cold war world than was the case at the height of the Cold War. A combination of factors, including: the de-emphasis of NATO in Southern European security discussions; the expectation of a reduced U.S. presence in and commitment to Europe's security; lack of Western resolve in addressing the Balkan crisis; and an increasingly visible and aggressive Russian military presence in the Caucasus region, suggest to Turkey that its ironclad links to NATO and the West are more fragile than they have been in several decades.

This circumstance occurs just as Turkey is attempting to define a new role for itself in Europe as well as in the Middle East and Asia. There have been serious setbacks to this objective, however, including: the initial derailment of Turkey's application for EU membership; the ouster of a pro-Turkish President in Azerbaijan (and his replacement with a decidedly anti-Turkish figure in Gaidar Aliev); Ankara's inability to organize sufficient financing for a large investment program for Central Asia; a serious dispute with Russia over peacetime jurisdiction of the Turkish Straits (stemming from Turkish fears of economic and environmental crises over transit of Central Asian and Caucasus oil and gas); Turkey's alarm over Russian proposals to lift the limits on military forces deployed on its flanks (possibly overturning a series of CFE agreements); local election victories in Istanbul and Ankara for a potentially militant Islamic political party, and increasing militancy and violence from Turkey's Kurdish population in the country's southeast corner, inflamed (the Turks believe) by Ankara's continued support and participation in the 'Provide Comfort II' multilateral operation to aid the Kurds of Northern Iraq.²²

In sum, the Turks believe their regional identity should be of greatest value to the

West just as Turkey seems to be marginalized as an important player in both Europe and the Middle East.²³

o The Evolving U.S. Role in Mediterranean Security

NATO's Mediterranean members generally recognize that they must share the security burden in the region more equitably in order to preserve the U.S. strategic commitment to the area. While the tension between the two is recognized, most observers of the region argue that this formulation will be the best prescription for addressing what is fast becoming the U.S. dilemma globally, reducing forward presence while continuing to exert substantial regional influence and power. In considering the range of security organizations that could replace or supplement NATO, the central question remains how to create such a structure without marginalizing or eliminating the U.S. role.

The Mediterranean nations recognize that their security choices are less stark than their Central European colleagues generally believe. There is no immediate necessity to erect new security alliances in Southern Europe, because no imminent American departure from the Mediterranean is expected. It should be noted that alternatives are, nonetheless, being explored. The desire to establish a CSCM, for example, illustrates the search among Mediterranean nations for security alternatives appropriate to the region should domestic pressures in either Europe or the U.S. result in a reduced American military presence beneath what is regarded as adequate.

This assessment is also colored by the assumption that a withdrawal of American air and ground units from the Mediterranean theatre would have less impact on the region than it would elsewhere in NATO due to the fact that the U.S. military presence in the region is heavily naval (the current U.S. air contribution to the *Deny Flight* operation in Bosnia, notwithstanding). Although withdrawing ground forces traditionally sends a more direct political signal than does the removal of air and naval forces, with the exception of the reinforced U.S. battalion in Vicenza (part of the Allied Command Europe -- ACE -- Mobile Force), there are no ground units assigned to AFSOUTH.

It is also generally recognized by nations in the region that the strategic cost of a total withdrawal would be immense for the U.S. because the Mediterranean is a key basing hub for U.S. naval forces, affecting power projection capabilities in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea. The AFSOUTH nations assume that a Mediterranean withdrawal would have a devastating ripple effect throughout the Middle East, weakening the perception of American commitments to key regional allies with whom we have conducted a very successful military campaign in the Gulf War. In addition, military leaders in the countries of the region understand that U.S. defense planners would be reluctant to remove the Sixth Fleet from the Mediterranean because of the flexibility of naval forces generally. The Sixth Fleet is understood to perform a wider range of deterrent missions geographically than other U.S. units deployed in Europe. The perception that the strategic reach of the Sixth Fleet has protected Mediterranean interests beyond simply supporting NATO's Central region strategy gave it considerable political importance in the Middle East. In addition, the flexibility of naval forces (e.g. rapid projection of air power

over a wide area where access to land-based facilities may be in doubt), reinforces their attraction as an instrument for stability in a highly volatile region.

There is reason to question, however, how tolerant of an American naval presence the southern littoral states will remain in the future. In the absence of a well-defined threat, justifying continued naval deployment (including base access and host nation support) solely on the basis of "insurance" against unspecified contingencies will not be sufficiently persuasive to all of our friends and allies. A countervailing incentive, however, could develop in the event of heightened concern over the threat posed by acquisition of WMD systems by Algeria and Libya.

CONCLUSION

For much of the post-cold war period, the Mediterranean was defined almost exclusively in East-West terms, simplifying the problem of identifying Western allies and adversaries. With the transformation of Europe's security circumstance and a new debate on security identity for most of the region's nations, a search has begun for new security options and allegiances. Very few of the Mediterranean's Western-oriented nations have found replacements, substitutes or offsets for the reduction in NATO's power and political authority. Indeed, that search has exposed a range of new inter-state security concerns which have limited the ability of the Mediterranean nations to form a genuine partnership, either on security questions or matters of economic and social policy.

One of the few security challenges on which a consensus approach seems

possible -- containing the proliferation of mass destruction weapons -- is unlikely to be addressed in a unified fashion, since neither NATO nor its collective security competitors can muster sufficient political or military authority to act in concert. While the Mediterranean nations debate the optimal bureaucratic structure for their future security, the threat of WMD proliferation grows without any indication that it can be stopped or even effectively managed.

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NOTES

1. See George H. Quester and Victor A. Utgoff "U.S. Arms Reductions and Nuclear Nonproliferation: The Counterproductive Possibilities," Washington Quarterly, Volume 16, No. 1 (Winter 1993), p. 135.
2. For an excellent discussion of these problems, see Peter D. Feaver, "Command and Control in Emerging Nuclear Nations," International Security, Volume 17, No. 3 (Winter 1992/93), pp. 160-187.
3. Avner Cohen and Benjamin Frankel, "Opaque Nuclear Proliferation," in Benjamin Frankel (ed.) Opaque Nuclear Proliferation: Methodological and Policy Implications (London: Frank Cass, 1991). p. 25.
4. For a discussion of Mediterranean security issues see Ian O. Lesser, Mediterranean Security: New Perspectives and Implications for U.S. policy. (Washington: RAND Corporation, 1992).
5. I. William Zartman, "15/21: The Maghrib into the Future" in I. William Zartman and Mark Habeeb (eds.) Polity and Society in Contemporary North Africa (Boulder: Westview, 1993) pp. 246-247.
6. Ibid.
7. Francis Burgat and William Dowell (eds.) The Islamic Movement in North Africa (Austin, TX: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas, Austin, 1993), p. 306.
8. Clyde Mark, Islamic Reform Movements in Middle Eastern Countries, Congressional Research Service, Report to Congress, March 15, 1993, pp. 6-7.
9. The Tunisian Islamic Party, the Ennahda, was outlawed in 1989 as was its Moroccan counterpart, the Al Adal Wal Ihsan.

10. Carol Migdalovitz, CRS Report for Congress, "Algeria in Crisis: Situation Update" (Washington, D.C. Congressional Research Service, March 15, 1994), p. 1.
11. "Algeria Appoints A New President" New York Times, January 31, 1994, p. A-3.
12. For an excellent discussion of the origins of the current situation in Algeria, see Claire Spencer, "Algeria in Crisis," Survival, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, Volume 36, No. 2 (Summer 1994), pp. 149-163.
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17. For discussions of emerging proliferation threats and changing security motivations, see Robert D. Blackwill and Albert Carnesale (eds.) New Nuclear Nations (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1993; Wolfgang H. Reinicke "Cooperative Security and the Political Economy," in Janne E. Nolan (ed.) Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century (Washington: Brookings Institution), 1994.

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18. For a summary of the author's earlier work on the Iraqi nuclear program, see Jed C. Snyder "The Road to Osiraq: Baghdad's Quest for the Bomb" Middle East Journal (Volume 37), Autumn 1993.
19. This point was made by the author in an earlier article. See Jed C. Snyder "Proliferation Threats to Security in NATO's Southern Region," Mediterranean Quarterly (Volume 4, Number 1), Winter 1993, pp. 102-119.
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21. The RAND corporation has held a series of simulations examining WMD proliferation scenarios in several regions, including the Mediterranean/Middle Eastern theatre. See the report, by Marc Dean Millot, Roger Mollander and Peter Wilson (eds.) "The Day After..." Study: Nuclear Proliferation in the Post-Cold War World (Washington, D.C. RAND Corporation, 1993, Three Volumes).
22. For a discussion of some of these issues, see Stephen J. Blank, Stephen C. Pelletiere and William T. Johnson, Turkey's Strategic Position at the Crossroads of World Affairs, U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, December 1993.
23. See Philip Robins, Turkey and the Middle East (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, Council on Foreign Relations, 1991).

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