Dr. Sally K. Isaac is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the Political Science Department, Cairo University, teaching courses on International Relations Theories, Foreign Policy Analysis, and History of International Relations in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. She holds a B.Sc. in Political Science from Cairo University and a Ph.D. in International History from the University of Milan, Italy.

Dr. Isaac is a Middle East Specialist with publications on U.S.-Egyptian relations, Euro-Mediterranean relations and Egyptian foreign policy.

In addition to her teaching and research experience, Dr. Isaac has previously worked for USAID, Cairo; Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Cairo; MAEM-MENA Association, Italy; and has contributed to the Arab HDR 2009 and the Egypt HDR 2010.

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NDC FORUM PAPER

NATO Defense College
Collège de Défense de l'OTAN

NATO and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Security: Prospects for Burden Sharing

Sally Khalifa Isaac

Research Division • Rome March 2011

NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE
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Research Division
Division Recherche

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NATO Defense College Cataloguing-in-Publication-Data:
"NATO and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Security: Prospects For Burden Sharing"

ISBN 978-88-96898-02-4

(NATO Defense College "NDC Forum Papers Series")

Copy-editing: Maria Di Martino

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Copies of this NDC Forum Paper may be obtained directly from the
NATO Defense College, Research Division
Via Giorgio Pelosi, 1 - 00143 Rome, Italy
Fax +39-06-50 52 57 97
E-mail: m.dimartino@ndc.nato.int
Web site: http://www.ndc.nato.int

Printed and bound by
Deltamedia artigrafiche srl
Via Macedonia 10, 00183 Rome, Italy
Tel +39 06 700 2 444 - Fax +39 06 97 74 81 55

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Executive Summary

This paper was researched and written before the upheaval in the Arab world. It highlights many aspects of the limitations in NATO's relations with its Arab partners. It argues that the current settings governing NATO-Arab relations feature no concrete cooperation schemes.

The study offers some recommendations for a reinvigorated NATO cooperation with its partners in the MENA region as a whole, which are as follows:

1. NATO should exert more effort in highlighting the added value its partnership could bring to the security theatre of MENA. This is mainly achievable through public diplomacy channels. The emphasis therefore should be on the international multilateral status that distinguishes the Alliance from other key actors/security providers in the region. This effort is expected to raise the awareness of Arab NATO partners regarding the importance of maintaining and reinvigorating security cooperation with the Alliance, in a manner that helps internationalize their respective agendas.

2. In approaching the various security threats, mainly emanating from inside the region, the Alliance should be thinking of its Arab partners as *actual partners*. This implies that in considering NATO's potential involvement in the region with a view to ensuring security and stability, the Alliance should work to attract contributions from local partners. This entails a serious consideration of the abundant resources of local MENA partners, both economic and human, in prudent burden-sharing formulas.

3. As a consequence of the previous point, one of the important areas NATO should be focusing on is building the capabilities of its partners in the area so as to encourage and prepare them to take a fair share of responsibility for providing their own security.

4. In cooperation with its partners in the region, NATO should seek a clear identification of major security threats where security cooperation could be forged with *relevant* partners.

5. NATO should reconsider the two clusters through which it has approached MENA, i.e. the MD and the ICI. This division of the region inappropriately places the "Middle East", which is the most important security subsystem in MENA, as an indefinitely located entity between the Western Mediterranean and the Gulf.

6. NATO should constantly seek a cooperation formula with Saudi Arabia. The fact that Saudi Arabia turned down NATO's proposal of partnership in the framework of the ICI should not lead the Alliance to give up attempts to forge cooperation with this key regional actor. In this regard, the new Middle East formula – mentioned in the previous point – could present a new opportunity for re-approaching Saudi Arabia. This could even take place outside the traditional ICI cooperation framework, by seeking a more tailored arrangement to suit Saudi Arabia.

7. NATO should seek the regular involvement of high-ranking Arab officials, particularly Foreign and Defense Ministers, in its dialogue forums.

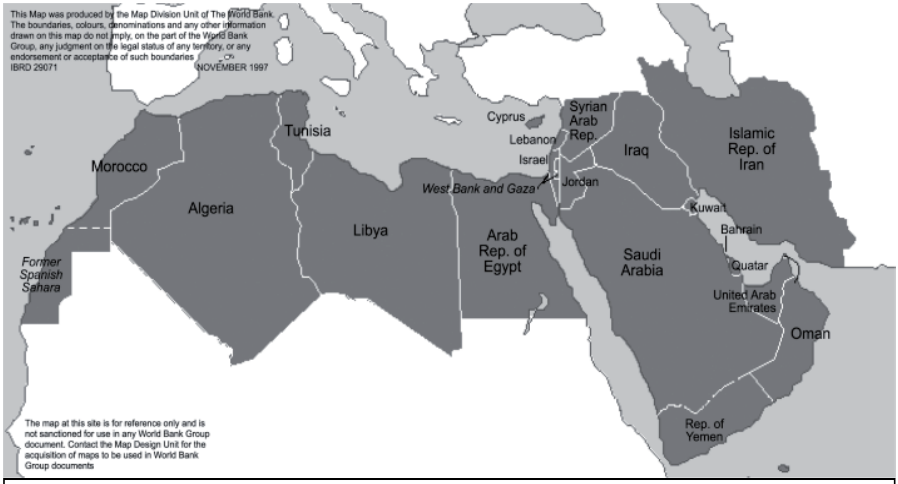
8. There should be a careful process of selection of Arab officials who do not directly represent their countries in the existing NATO dialogue forums regularly organized by the NATO Defense College in Rome, such as the Senior Course and the NATO Regional Cooperation Course. Promising officials and military personnel in line for promotion to senior positions should be included in these dialogue forums.

9. NATO should exert more effort in establishing direct personal relations with Arab leaders. Considering that institutions are understandably and undeniably weak in authoritarian regimes, the Alliance should be prepared for dealing with sensitive security issues with its Arab partners through the personalization of foreign relations. This is an effort that NATO has to undertake to complement the institutionalization of its cooperative relations in the region.

The main focus of the Alliance should be on security cooperation rather than promotion of democracy. The role and expertise of the Alliance are mainly security-related, and imprudent rhetoric on promotion of democracy could have security side-effects.

Introduction

There is a long-established convergence in the perception of security concerns between a large number of NATO member states – particularly the United States and Southern European Countries – on the one hand and many countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) on the other hand. This was behind the birth of both bilateral and multilateral platforms of security, political and military cooperation, with particular reference to the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI).[1]



MAP 1: Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region

These two NATO-born initiatives cover the entire MENA region with its main three security subsystems, namely North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf **(See Map 1)**. Nevertheless, security arrangements resulting from these platforms remain weakly identified and are associated with no tangible policy outcomes. Essentially, the wide array of security threats relevant to both NATO and local partners in MENA makes the insubstantiality of the MD and the ICI more visible than ever before. In addition, the low level of NATO engagement in the area and the fact that it is still completely up to local partners to decide on the form and level

[1] For further information on NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, see http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-517-EA59E-5A0290E2/natolive/topics_60021.htm? (accessed October 2010). For further information on NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, see http://www.nato.int/issues/ici/index.html (accessed October 2010).

ofoperation with the Alliance[2] have made many partners reluctant to take positive steps in enhancing these platforms. This actually raises many questions regarding the real impact of these partnership initiatives on security in both MENA and NATO, which inevitably brings the complexity of burden-sharing to the forefront of the MENA security agenda.

Neither NATO nor local MENA partners alone can confront the increasing assortment of security concerns emanating from inside the region. *Burden-sharing*, a term conventionally used by international relations scholars to discuss transatlantic security cooperation, is thus becoming more and more applicable to NATO's security cooperation with its partners in MENA. Indeed, sharing responsibility for security provision appears essential for both MENA partners and NATO. Given that almost all security risks emanate from the region or from individual countries within it, with all the implications these continuing risks have for their national security, the countries concerned must inevitably take a share in providing for their own security. On the other hand, the area is of vital strategic importance to many NATO countries (particularly the United States, which is *de facto* the leading actor in orchestrating any solution to the region's many problems, as well as many West European countries, especially those to the South); it thus becomes equally crucial for NATO to cooperate multilaterally with its partners and informal allies there to enhance security and stability in the region. This need is all the greater in that most security threats in MENA, both soft and hard, have a "transnational" effect which ultimately encroaches on the security of NATO member states.[3] Given that NATO and many of its partners and informal allies in the region share the same vision on these security risks, cooperation in sharing the consequent burden and responsibilities is mandatory. As Marina Ottaway puts it, "there are no solutions to any of the Middle East's problems unless the local players do more themselves".[4]

Against this background, the present study seeks primarily to answer a major question: what are the prospects for, and possible scenarios of, burden-sharing between NATO and its partners and informal allies in the MENA region? These include the MD partners, the ICI partners, and other pro-Western and informal U.S.

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[2] EuroArab Forum, (5 May 2010). MEDEA Report on the Lecture of Gabriele Cascone on "NATO and the Arab World: Why and How to Cooperate", Brussels, http://www.medea.be/files/EAF_NATO.pdf (accessed September 2010).

[3] Thanos P. Dokos (2003), *NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue: Prospects and Policy Recommendations*. Paper presented at 'NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue' organized by ELIAMEP and NATO's Office of Information and Press, 17-19 January 2003, p. 9.

[4] Marina Ottaway (December 2008), "Sharing the Burden in the Middle East", Policy Brief, Washington D.C., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/sharing_burden_middle_east.pdf (accessed September 2010).

allies such as Saudi Arabia.

In investigating prospects for burden-sharing, the study also focuses on many related questions. These include:

1. Should NATO continue approaching the MENA region in two clusters, the MD and the ICI countries, or is a different approach required to accommodate security needs? This question is all the more relevant if one notes that the security concerns of MD countries differ. The eastern MD countries – Egypt, Jordan, and Israel – are more concerned with developments in the Levant and the greater Middle East in general. This is why the study brings into focus the MENA region as a whole, as explained below in the "Scope of the study" section.

2. Are bilateral, multilateral or both types of security arrangements more fruitful for security needs, which type should be further promoted, and with which countries?

3. What are the benefits of the various NATO partnership initiatives, and how attractive are they to local MENA partner countries? This point is must be addressed, particularly with regard to local regimes which already enjoy close strategic relationships with the U.S., in order to move to point 4.

4. What are the prospects for burden-sharing – and specifically for involving Arab resources and troops – in potential future NATO operations in MENA?

There are four reasons for broadening the scope of the study to bring into focus the entire MENA area, instead of limiting it to MD partners alone.

First, with the exception of Egypt, the Levant and the Gulf states, the MENA region could be looked at as one strategic entity, despite the diversity of interests and concerns among the North African countries. Indeed, the historical, cultural, and socio-political ties between the MENA countries provide a strong rationale for grouping them as a region. However, this cultural, historical, and socio-political homogeneity does not warrant the view that the region stands out as a single unit in strategic and security terms. MENA encompasses at least three overlapping areas or security subsystems. These are Arab North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf, with few countries equally involved in the security affairs of more than one subsystem. Egypt is one example, given its importance in both North Africa and the

Middle East. Saudi Arabia, with its wealth and its religious leverage on the Sunni-majority Muslim world, is a key player not only in the Middle East and the Gulf but in the entire Arab MENA.

Second, two MD countries are not actually Mediterranean countries, in that Jordan and Mauritania do not have access to the Mediterranean. The rationale for their inclusion in the MD is arguably the strategic importance of Jordan as a pro-Western regime, and Mauritania's status as an Arab North African country. This consideration further reinforces the selection of the entire MENA region as the focus of the present study.

Third, Egypt, Israel and Saudi Arabia are key strategic players in the security affairs of the region in general and of the Middle East in particular. Egypt and Israel are MD partners and have long enjoyed the status of Major Non-NATO Allies (MNNA); Saudi Arablia, though an informal ally to the United States, decided not to join NATO's ICI. This is why the consideration of the MENA region as a whole broadens the prospects for multilateral approaches to regional security.

Fourth, NATO's security concerns in the Mediterranean area are limited by comparison with those related to the MENA region as a whole. For the West Mediterranean area, major security concerns revolve around European countries' preoccupation with illegal migration and the related potential for rising extremism, chaos and instability as threats to security. For Italy, France, Spain and Portugal, securing their two main energy supply routes (Trans-Med and Maghreb-Europe) from Algeria through Tunisia and Morocco is another security concern.[5] Understandably, promoting good governance while preserving the political stability of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco becomes a priority in relation to the previously mentioned security concerns. However, these concerns are not equally shared by the United States and other NATO members. NATO's security concerns are multiple and encompass a wide array of problems that are political in nature, as opposed to economic, social, demographic or environmental. Most of the crisis spots in the region which are considered of clear interest to NATO (and which are highlighted in many parts of this study) thus appear to be chiefly concentrated in the Middle East and the Gulf. The crises concerned have been a constant source of alarm for the security and stability of the MENA region at large, and are given a lot of attention at NATO.

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[5] See Mark H. Hayes (May 2004), "Algerian Gas to Europe: The Transmed Pipline and Early Spanish Gas Import Projects", James Baker III Institute for Public Policy-Energy Forum, *Geopolitics of Gas Working Papers Series*, *No. 27*, http://www.rice.edu/energy/publications/docs/GAS_TransmedPipeline.pdf (accessed October 2010)..

The study is divided into three main parts.

The first part emphasizes the actual existence of common security interests that the two parties share, despite the many difficulties in defining them exactly as "common". It also highlights the absence of a common strategic vision and language, still a core problem for effective security cooperation.

The second part examines NATO's potential as a security broker in MENA. Consideration is given to the Alliance's image problem, which is a serious weakness in approaching the wider Arab public, and the resources problem, which is particularly important when approaching the region's governments. This part of the study highlights the importance of multilateral collaboration for fulfilling security and stability ambitions.

Generally, these first two parts highlight many aspects of the limitations in NATO's relations with its Arab partners. The analysis in these two parts shows that the current settings governing NATO-Arab relations feature no concrete cooperation schemes.

The third part of the study attempts to explore how security cooperation between NATO and its Arab partners could possibly be reinvigorated. This final part offers some policy-oriented recommendations, both from bilateral and multilateral perspectives, that could eventually contribute to enhancing both NATO and MENA security. The main overall thrust of the study is highlighted here, with the objective of clearly identifying prospects for burden-sharing as a core priority.

CHAPTER ONE

Why Burden-Sharing? Common security interests exist despite the lack of a common strategic language and vision

Underlying all discourse on burden-sharing to accommodate regional security needs is the discussion of an indispensable prerequisite for any security cooperation. This is whether the two cooperating parties – NATO and its MENA partners – share common security interests. While such interests can be identifed, albeit with some difficulties in defining them exactly as "common", the absence of a common strategic vision and language is a persistent shortcoming. The first part of the study focuses on this paradox, with the aim of emphasizing common security interests and illustrating how the lack of a common vision and language challenges – but does not fully impede – security cooperation between the two parties. This first part of the study also explains the choice of the term "burden-sharing" in the context of NATO-MENA relations, instead of the related NATO terms like "Dialogue", "Initiative" and "Partnership".

1.1. Common security interests, but to what extent?

Broadly speaking, the majority of security considerations in the MENA region appear to be security considerations for NATO too. The most important are: the containment of Iran; the Arab/Palestinian-Israeli conflict; the political stabilization of Iraq; the repercussions of the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan; the upsurge of criminality and terrorism in the Sahel, favoured by the porous borders and the lack of cooperation between the Maghreb states;[6] and the rise of radical sub-national actors, adopting resistant foreign policies and threatening the stability of moderate MENA regimes as well as of the region as a whole. Many MENA countries have repeatedly identified these crisis spots as relevant security concerns and in some cases as both regional and national security threats.[7] It is important to note that this

[6] European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center (ESISC), (May 2010), "The Polisario Front and the Development of Terrorism in the Sahel", p. 3-4, http://www.esisc.org/documents/pdf/en/the-polisario-front-and-the-development-of-terrorism-in-the-sahel-469.pdf (accessed October 2010).

[7] For example see President Mubarak's Speech before the Egyptian Parliament at the Inauguration of the New Parliamentary Session, November 21, 2009.

shared perception of common security interests is confined to high-ranking politicians and decision-makers in friendly MENA regimes which have long succeeded in maintaining close political and strategic relations with the West in general and with the U.S. in particular. It is therefore not surprising that a senior Jordanian official, Ambassador Omar Rifai, should comment on NATO-Arab relations in the following terms: "We share the same beliefs and face the same challenges".[8] However, one major limitation to considering these security threats as "common" is that this perception of existing and potential threats is not equally shared by the bulk of the Arab public. A long history of Arab grievances lends support to resistant foreign policy agendas, such as that of Iran or Syria or even of radical sub-national groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon. A more explicit manifestation of this inconsistency in security perceptions perhaps appears in divergent Arab stances towards the rise of Iran. On the one hand, there is a prevailing consensus among governments in the Gulf and much of the Middle East that the greatest threat to their security as well as to the region's stability is the rise of Iran and its regional political agenda; on the other hand, the broader Arab public still looks with immense enthusiasm and support on Iran's intransigent foreign policy and admires its plans to develop nuclear weapons. As commented by political analysts, the ongoing U.S. plans to sell Saudi Arabia advanced aircraft and other weapons worth up to $60 billion as part of a strategic shoring up of Gulf Arab allies to face any military threat from Iran are "a striking reflection of a convergence between the strategic concerns of the U.S., Israel and conservative Arab states about Iran's nuclear ambitions and bid for regional influence".[9]

Another challenge that makes it rather difficult to label security interests as common is the lack of full consensus among and within either NATO or MENA on the identification of security threats. Achieving such consensus is indeed very difficult, because of the divergences of interests on both sides. In NATO, the South European countries and, to a lesser degree, other West and North European countries are preoccupied with rising extremism, chaos and instability originating from the south and the resulting potential for increased security risks. This is related in particular to illegal migration and the presence of sizable, assertive Arab Muslim communities in Europe. Soft security threats stemming from the underdevelopment of the Southern Mediterranean and the related demographic challenges are thus of major concern to a number of NATO countries. On the other hand, the U.S. has a major interest in hard security threats, concentrated mostly in the Middle East and the Gulf. The security of Israel, the economic stability of energy sources and the political stability of the region at large are its primary concerns. From a strategic

[8] Ambassador Omar Rifai's Lecture (September 20, 2010), NATO Defense College, Rome.
[9] Ian Black (13 September 2010),"Barack Obama to Authorise Record $60bn Saudi Arms Sale", Guardian, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/sep/13/us-saudi-arabia-arms-deal (accessed September 2010).

U.S. perspective, the Mediterranean is therefore perceived as a stepping stone to the Middle East and the Gulf. Consistent with this vision, the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) has for decades identified its *area of concern* to be the Red Sea, the Horn of Africa and South West Asia **(see Maps 2 and 3: USCENTCOM Area of Responsibility)**. This perception of the confines of the vital strategic area is further expressed by former U.S. Ambassador to NATO Nicholas Burns, who comments that "NATO's future, we believe, is East and South. It is in the Greater Middle East".[10] Finally, the new NATO members in Central and Eastern Europe have no security risks emanating from MENA and feel to a great extent irrelevant to developments there. Nevertheless, many of these new members look favorably on the MD and the ICI in their function as tools for building confidence and mutual understanding.

Within MENA, on the other hand, the Arabs in general – and the Levant in particular – consider Israel as their main security concern. Not only highly conservative or hostile Arab regimes, but also friendly or moderate ones have their own security fears regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this respect, Egypt and Jordan look at Israel's alleged strategy of establishing an alternative homeland for the Palestinians in Gaza and on the West Bank with great apprehension. On another front, the Gulf states and many Middle Eastern countries consider the political agenda of Iran, rather than its attempts to develop nuclear weapons, as their chief security concern. Similarly, these countries feel vulnerable to security threats as repercussions of the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. These issues are not perceived with the same urgency by the countries of the West Mediterranean, which are more concerned with economic and demographic challenges as well as with rising extremism as the main internal source of political instability. These three security subsystems within MENA are not only identified according to their specific security interests, but equally in relation to their distinctive socio-economic and geopolitical characteristics.

This divergence in interests within both NATO and MENA does not preclude the actual existence of "common" security interests between the two parties, affording clear prospects for cooperation and requiring that each party take a share in providing for its security. On the other hand, this scenario makes a comprehensive multilateral approach from NATO towards security issues in MENA as a whole rather difficult.

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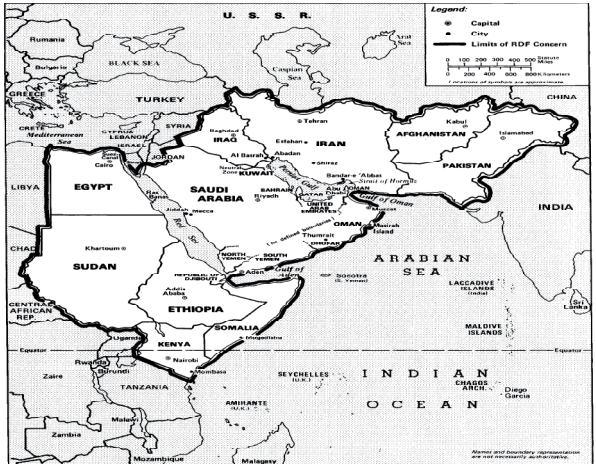
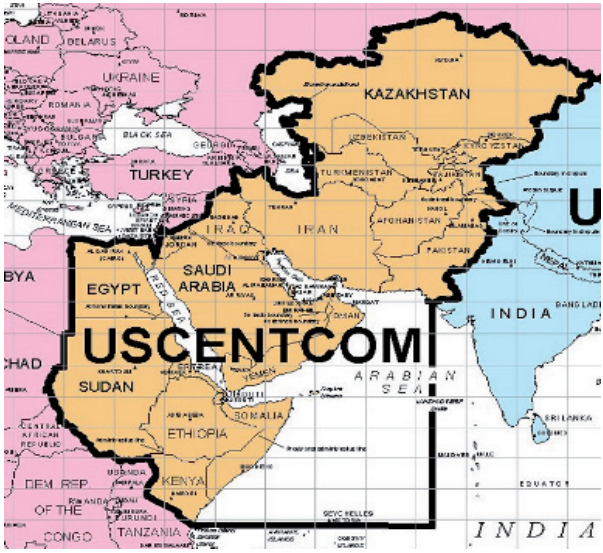
[10] Quote appeared in Fred Tanner (October 2004), "NATO's Role in Defense Cooperation and Democratization of the Middle East", *The International Spectator*, 39, 4, p. 105.





Map 2 appeared in Congressional Budget Office (May 1983), "Rapid Deployment Forces: Policy and Budgetary Implications", p. 10, http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/50xx/doc5057/doc07a.pdf (accessed September 2010).

Map 3 is available on: U.S. Department of Defense. http://www.defense.gov/specials/unifiedcommand/, (accessed: September 2010).

1.2. Lack of a common strategic language and vision

While common strategic interests between NATO and MENA exist, in the sense that almost all security issues in the MENA region are commonly shared by some MENA countries and some NATO countries at the same time, the real problem is the lack of a common strategic language and vision regarding how to handle security issues. Many Arab scholars correctly indicate that the terms used by NATO regarding its approach to MENA, namely "Dialogue" and "Initiative", are completely vague.[11] As one scholar bluntly puts it, "both Arab elites and the wider public are largely confused by terms such as 'dialogue', 'initiative' and 'partnership' and what they are actually going to produce in practical or policy terms".[12] More explicit and pragmatic concepts such as military cooperation and burden-sharing to accommodate security requirements are more appropriate and are, indeed, essential to the promotion of practical formulas for security and strategic cooperation.

It should also be noted that, while both NATO and MENA view certain actors or crisis spots as security concerns, there is a clear lack of a common vision on how to handle these concerns. For example, while the U.S. strategy to contain Iran concentrated for years on encouraging the Gulf countries to form an anti-Iranian alliance, these countries intimidated by growing Iranian power preferred to contain Iran by normalization of relations.[13] An even more obvious example is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which is to a large degree considered the root of all Middle East problems. Whereas the West in general raised the security of Israel over any other consideration, often identified terrorist groups with the Palestinian struggle and adopted a strategy based on maintaining the status quo, many Arabs made concessions and still focus on the need to uphold the rights of the Palestinian people. In brief, as Dokos notes, "the absence of a common political vocabulary and approach to security hinders the progress of a security dialogue with the Mediterranean countries and often contributes to misperceptions and misunderstandings on both sides".[14]

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[11] Abdulaziz O. Sager, "What do the Gulf Cooperation Council Want from NATO" in Ronald D. Asmus (Ed.), (2006). *NATO and Global Partners: Views from the Outside"*, Riga, Latvia, p. 18, http://www.gmfus.org/galleries/default-file/A4_AsmusEditor_d.pdf (accessed: September 2010).

[12] Mustafa Alani, (Spring 2005), "Arab Perspectives on NATO", *NATO Review*, issue 4. http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2005/issue4/english/art3.html (accessed September 2010).

[13] Marina Ottaway (November 2009), "*Iran, the United States, and the Gulf: The Elusive Regional Policy*", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, No. 105, p. 1. http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/iran_us_gulf1.pdf (accessed September 2010).

[14] Thanos P. Dokos, p. 23.

It is equally important to emphasize that there is not only a lack of a common strategic vision between the West and MENA in general; most importantly, there is no common strategic vision among Arab MENA countries either, even if the field is narrowed to NATO partners and informal allies in the region or, indeed, to Arab countries comprising MENA sub-regions – i.e. North Africa, the Middle East or the Gulf. The incompatibility among the interests of the various Arab MENA countries has historically worked as an obstacle to lasting alliances in the region.[15] This is a major barrier to successful multilateral political and strategic cooperation, making the intensification of bilateral ties the most appropriate course to follow in the short term. "Bilateral ties" are here taken to be those between NATO and individual MENA partners. This means prioritizing the relevance of single threats to individual MENA partners, as opposed to the geographical consideration of the entire MENA region in two blocks (i.e. the Mediterranean and the Gulf). In other words, what is actually needed is a *partnership of partnerships*.

[15] Mostafa Elwi Saif (16-22 November 2007), "Floating Alliances of the Middle East", Paper submitted to the Conference on Iran and Arabs: National Interests and external interventions, Egyptian and Iranian Perspectives, Iran, Tehran.

CHAPTER TWO

Prospects for NATO as a Security Broker in MENA

2.1. NATO's image in MENA: damaged, but potentially repairable

While NATO's track record in MENA is limited, its reputation among the Arab public at large has been greatly damaged. NATO's status as a military organization, perceived – at least in MENA – as controlled by the U.S., explains this. From an Arab perspective, NATO is viewed as the extension of the U.S. military in the region and its objectives and actions are thus observed with much suspicion and mistrust. As boldly stated by Alani, "Arabs tended to view NATO as a powerful, aggressive alliance committed to promoting the security and political interests of the West".[16]

There are, however, many factors and assets that NATO can build on, principally through public diplomacy, so as to target the wider Arab public and informal elites with a view to enhancing its profile in MENA.

One is the multilateralism that characterizes NATO, representing as it does an underlying opportunity through which the Alliance can promote a more independent profile. This is potentially possible, noting that the Alliance encompasses various European countries which seemingly have a decent record in adopting a somewhat different approach to MENA problems. Even with Europe's colonial legacy in MENA, the EU has succeeded in epitomizing a sort of multilateral moral leadership in the Southern Mediterranean through its role as number one donor for economic and development projects.

Another substantial factor is the legal status of the Alliance as an Inter-Governmental Organization (IGO). Objectively speaking, as an IGO, NATO indeed has a track record in complying with international law which is a far cry from the flagrant unilateralism of the U.S. Most analysts who have written on NATO's image continue to indicate that it has suffered greatly in the region as a result of the continuing impasse in the peace process. This is to a certain extent a valid argument. However, NATO is always emphatic that as an IGO it can intervene in the process

[16] Mustafa Alani, op.cit.

only subject to an agreement, a request from all parties and a U.N. mandate; this to a certain extent exempts NATO from blame. The Alliance's capability to make well founded public statements about what it can and cannot do to address the region's many problems, as well as why it cannot do more, is something it has to further invest in to enhance its profile and to ensure it is not thought synonymous with the U.S.

NATO's previous experiences in supporting Muslim populations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, together with its current involvement in Afghanistan to stabilize the region,[17] are all assets that the organization should emphasize through public diplomacy channels, rather than continuously complaining that they remain unappreciated by the Arab public.

2.2 How attractive is NATO as a security partner to local MENA partners and informal allies?

The main rationale for improving NATO's image, as explained in the preceding analysis, is to narrow the gap between the Alliance and the wider Arab public. This gap does not exist between NATO and friendly MENA regimes, which are authoritarian in character and have long maintained close strategic ties with the West. In practical terms, NATO's real problem – and only if the Alliance truly wishes to intensify its security cooperation in MENA – appears to be how it could represent itself as an attractive security partner to these friendly regimes. The image problem should not therefore occupy the Alliance's attention to the exclusion of possible substantive fields of cooperation with these *de facto* friends. In purely pragmatic terms, what NATO can offer to the security of the region and what it expects from its partners there are the core issues which should be the basis for any discussion aimed at identifying responsibilities and sharing the burden of security.

In 2004, when NATO sought to enhance the practical dimension of security cooperation with local MENA countries, it offered its MD and ICI partners the development of tailored bilateral security agreements through the so-called "Individual Cooperation Programmes" (ICPs). So far, six out of seven MD countries – all but Algeria – have developed their own ICPs with NATO; whereas no ICI country has yet developed an ICP but two of them have expressed an interest in doing do so.[18] This new bilateral level not only reflects NATO's correct understanding of

[17] Ibid.
[18] Personal Communication with a senior NATO official, NATO headquarter in Brussels, September 2010.

how tiring and challenging is the process of reaching consensus, whether among Arab countries or between these countries and NATO through the two multilateral forums of dialogue; it is also a substantial step towards enhancing practical security agreements with the Arab countries.

Although developed ICPs with MENA partners are classified, which does not permit a thorough assessment of this type of bilateral security arrangement, the declared activities which partner MENA countries can choose to include in their ICPs reflect a very modest added value that does not make NATO an appealing security partner for them. The variety of bilateral cooperation activities include: advice on defense reform, budgeting and planning; joint military exercises and related training activities; intelligence sharing and joint operations to combat terrorism; monitoring navigation to prevent the flow of WMD material and illegal trafficking in arms; and assistance with border security and monitoring.

In almost all these activities NATO is challenged by the existing military engagement and bilateral arrangements already in place between the U.S., in particular, and friendly local regimes. The main point to mention in this respect is the unchallengeable presence of the U.S. in the following areas:

- ***military aid*** to many countries in the region – particularly Israel, Egypt and Jordan, which are major U.S. allies in the Middle East and also the first three MD countries to develop ICPs with NATO. These three countries have long topped the list of U.S. military aid recipients worldwide. For decades U.S. annual military aid to Israel, Egypt, and Jordan has been estimated at around $2.5 billion, $1.3 billion, and $300 million respectively.[19] Apart from these long-established recipients, Iraq and Pakistan have also been high on the list of U.S. military aid beneficiaries in the past few years;

- ***military training***, with Egypt, Israel, and Jordan figuring prominently among the top ten recipients of U.S. military training;[20]

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[19] For Israel, see Jeremy M. Sharp (4 December 2009). "U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel", *Congressional Research Service*, RL33222, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf (accessed September 2010). For Egypt, see Jeremy M. Sharp (September 2, 2009). "Egypt: Background and U.S. Relations", Congressional Research Service, RL33003, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33003.pdf (accessed September 2010). For Jordan, see: Alfred B. Prados (26 April 2006). "Jordan: U.S. Relations and Bilateral Issues", Congressional Research Service, IB93085, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/IB93085.pdf (accessed September 2010).

[20] See the Federation for American Scientists website: http://www.fas.org/asmp/library/handbook/WaysandMeans.html (accessed September 2010).

▪ ***arms supply***, Israel, Egypt and many oil-rich Gulf countries – above all Saudi Arabia – being the U.S. top arms customers. It is also worth mentioning that, despite the cessation of U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia in 2003, the U.S.-Saudi military relationship continues to grow and is still the largest Foreign Military Sale (FMS) program in the world, financed by Saudi Arabia. These arms sales are actually viewed by the U.S. as legitimate Saudi defense requirements, which directly serve to enhance regional security.[21] Not only the classic allies in the Levant and the Gulf, but also many other friendly regimes in North Africa benefit from U.S. arms supply. For instance, according to the U.S. Department of Defense, in 2011-2015 Morocco is expected to receive 24 F-16 aircraft and associated equipment and services up to a value of $2.4 billion in Foreign Military Financing (FMF);[22]

▪ ***joint military exercises***, which have been taking place between many MENA countries and the U.S. on a regular basis ever since the early 1980s. Examples include the biannual "Bright Star" military exercises (organized mainly between the U.S. and Egypt, but with the participation of many countries from MENA and beyond); the annual U.S.-Jordanian exercises, codenamed "Infinite Moonlight"; the U.S.-Saudi exercises; and the regular bilateral U.S.-Moroccan military exercises;

▪ ***intelligence sharing*** has also been and remains a main feature of U.S. military and strategic cooperation with some MENA countries, most importantly Egypt, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. Intelligence sharing has been established as a main feature of bilateral security cooperation between Egypt and the U.S. since the Reagan administration's decision to move its Central Intelligence Agency headquarters in the Middle East from Lebanon to Egypt to operate from the U.S. embassy building in Cairo. This decision was taken after the killing of the CIA Station Chief, Robert Clayton, in the 1983 bombing of the U.S. embassy in Beirut.[23] At a later stage, Amman, Jordan, became the main CIA station in the Middle East. It is also important

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[21] Anthony H. Cordesman (April 1998). "USCENTCOM and its area of Operations: Cooperation, Burden Sharing, Arms Sales, and Centcom's Analysis by Country and Subregion", Center for Strategic and International Affairs, p. 15, http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/uscentcom2%5B1%5D.pdf (accessed October 2010).

[22] Carol Migdalovitz (3 February 2010), "Morocco: Current Issues", *Congressional Research Service*, RS-21579, p. 9, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21579.pdf (October 2010).

[23] *Al Ahaly* Newspaper, August 24, 1983.

to mention the U.S.-Moroccan cooperation in intelligence sharing, especially through Morocco's cooperation in the U.S. Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP);[24]

▪ ***physical military presence*** is another strong asset that the U.S. possesses to a greater extent than any other state in MENA. This is through the significant deployment of USCENTCOM personnel and equipment in a number of facilities in and around the region. The distribution of U.S. military bases in MENA countries – without counting military facilities close by in the Indian Ocean or in nearby countries, such as Turkey[25] – demonstrates assured and flexible military access to the region in time of crisis **(see Annex 1: U.S. Military Bases in MENA)**. In addition, one should not forget that the U.S. Fifth Fleet, which is headquartered in Manama, Bahrain, is permanently stationed in the Middle East with its area of responsibility in the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf. Also, the U.S. Sixth Fleet, headquartered on its command ship USS Mount Whitney, is permanently stationed in the Mediterranean Sea as the major operational component of Naval Forces Europe. It is worth mentioning here that the Sixth Fleet has both U.S. national and NATO responsibilities;

▪ ***Defense Institution Building (DIB)***, it being important to note in this context that the U.S. is currently preparing to undertake a huge DIB project in a number of MENA countries. The aim of the project is to enable friendly local regimes to build defense institutions that can meet an increasing array of threats to their national security as well as to the region's stability. This is to be achieved by professionalizing militaries and placing them under civilian control, as DIB is based on the assumption of civilian involvement in the formation and implementation of national security policies. The local regimes which have most eagerly embraced the principles of DIB and U.S. support for it are the closest allies of the U.S. in the region; they include Turkey and Israel and, among the Arab states, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and the GCC states.[26]

The key point to stress in this respect is that, while NATO is seeking to reinvigorate and deepen its partnership with MD and ICI countries, the U.S. is

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[24] Carol Migdalovitz, op.cit., p. 9.

[25] NATO has an Air Base in Turkey - Incirlik (*İncirlik Hava Üssü*) - that is located 5 miles east of Adana, Turkey's fifth largest city, and 35 miles from the Mediterranean Sea.

[26] Center for Civil Military Relations (September 2009), "Defense Institution Building in Egypt", Published Note on the Restricted Website of the Center for Civil Military Relations.

independently undertaking parallel projects to those offered by NATO. This situation creates an inconsistency which is reflected in the comment by Gabriele Cascone, Desk Officer at the Mediterranean Dialogue, Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and Contract Countries (MICC) Section in the Political Affairs and Security Policy (PASP) Division at NATO headquarters in Brussels, that NATO's "member nations are the most important 'competitors' of the alliance because most of the south and east Mediterranean countries have a number of bilateral agreements with a number of NATO member countries".[27]

Equally important to stress is the striking fact that, while the U.S. alone invests billions of dollars annually to maintain close security ties with MENA friends, NATO has financial constraints which allow it to allocate very modest funding to cooperation with its partners there. According to a senior NATO official, "the amount allocated for cooperation with eligible MD countries is very small and covers primarily the participation (travel, accommodation, meals, etc.) of a limited number of military and civilian personnel from MD countries in courses and other partnership activities included in the annual MD Work Programme".[28] This senior NATO official also adds that "there are no specific amounts allocated for individual ICPs. NATO simply provides some financial support for MD countries' participants in some of the activities included in their ICP".[29] Given this security cooperation scenario, one can readily conclude that prospects for security-related burden-sharing between NATO and local MENA partners are not promising. It is not so much a question of funding per se, as its significance in reflecting the Alliance's willingness to undertake – and actual level of – engagement in the region's security.

Nevertheless, NATO still offers greater added value to MENA partners than any other international actor. This is because the Alliance can bring together its partners in the region to discuss security issues multilaterally and is willing to give the benefit of its expertise. As previously illustrated, NATO's multilateralism and its legal status as an IGO are the two basic reasons why Arab MENA governments were encouraged to join the Alliance in multilateral dialogues. Also, these are pro-Western regimes which have enduring security and strategic bonds with the U.S.; it has thus been a matter of common sense for them to welcome NATO's dialogue initiatives. **Looking at NATO-Arab relations from this multilateral organizational perspective reinforces the view that Arab countries do have**

[27] EuroArab Forum, op. cit., 7.
[28] Personal communication with a senior NATO official, NATO Headquarter in Brussels, September 2010.
[29] Personal communication with a senior NATO official, NATO Headquarter in Brussels, September 2010.

an interest in keeping multilateral dialogue channels open with NATO in a necessary effort to internationalize their respective agendas.

Through the multilateral MD and ICI, NATO certainly offers collective platforms for exchanging views on security issues. However, the credibility of these multilateral forums as a source of tangible security outcomes is fundamentally challenged by three facts.

The first consideration is the inability of NATO to attract high-ranking officials (Foreign Ministers, Defense Ministers and Heads of States) to participate in these forums. It is worth mentioning that in the framework of the MD, launched in 1994, it was not until December 2004 that a meeting of Foreign Ministers was organized with the aim of celebrating the 10th anniversary of the initiative.[30] The first ever meeting of Defense Ministers was held in February 2006.[31] The ICI has to date held no formal meetings at the level of Foreign or Defense Ministers, let alone Heads of State.[32] The low level of representation in these multilateral meetings greatly undermines any prospects for reaching tangible security arrangements, or even a common vision on key security issues, especially if one considers the prevailing historical tendency of high-ranking decision-makers in Arab MENA to conclude agreements through the personalization of foreign relations.

The second factor limiting the credibility of NATO's multilateral forums is a question of proven diplomatic experience: it would be extremely naïve to expect Arab officials of any level to express openly in these multilateral forums – involving not only their Arab counterparts but also 28 NATO member states – how far they are willing to go in security cooperation with the Alliance.

The third consideration is the heterogeneity of interests among NATO members themselves, added to the financial constraints that the Organization is currently experiencing, which makes the process of reaching a multilateral consensus on the level of NATO's engagement in the region equally difficult.

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[30] North Atlantic Treaty Organization (8 December 2004), "NATO Celebrates 10th Anniversary of Mediterranean Dialogue", http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2004/12-december/e1208c.htm (accessed September 2010).

[31] North Atlantic Treaty Organization (8-9 February 2007), *Working Lunch with Defense Ministers of Allied and Mediterranean Dialogue Countries,* http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_7574.htm (accessed September 2010).

[32] Pierre Razoux (January 2010), "What Future for NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative", NATO Defense College, *Research Paper n. 55*, p. 3.

CHAPTER THREE

Prospects for Security Cooperation and Burden-Sharing

It has so far been argued that the many inherited deficiencies of NATO's current involvement in MENA through the MD and the ICI significantly undermine prospects for effective burden-sharing, and thus for enhancing security and stability in the region. Most importantly, however, in the current scenario there is to date no basis for speaking about NATO-MENA security cooperation as a concrete entity already in place. The analysis in the previous sections of the study has shown that low-level political representation and limited practical engagement are the two main factors reflecting the absence of real and tangible security cooperation between the two sides.

However, this is not to advocate the futility of future security cooperation between NATO and MENA. Taking into consideration the complexity of interests and security subsystems on both sides, NATO's limited resources for more substantial security arrangements, and the level of the Alliance's existing political and military assets in the region, the final part of the study will now attempt to focus on a number of opportunities for more enhanced collaboration schemes.

3.1 Approaching MENA: are MD and ICI the best options?

Bearing in mind the variety of security risks emanating from the region as well as its vital strategic importance, NATO's interest in developing cooperative security links with the entire MENA region appears politically and strategically discerning. However, approaching the region through two clusters, i.e. the North African countries (MD) and the Gulf countries (ICI), does not appear equally judicious. This division of the region misleadingly places the "Middle East", actually the most important security subsystem in MENA, in an indefinite intermediate position between the Mediterranean and the Gulf. From a strategic security perspective, Egypt, Jordan and Israel – three fundamental MD partners – are main actors in the Middle East security theatre. Perhaps Egypt considers itself, alone among the MD partners, strategically and politically important in the Levant while at the same time blighted by the same soft security problems as the Western

Mediterranean. However, these three countries are all equally concerned with any security arrangement or political development taking place in the Levant and the Gulf as in the Mediterranean – if not more so. It might be argued that they are part of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the focus of which the EU has clearly restricted to the Mediterranean with the Middle East peace process at the core of its political dimension. Against this background, it seems well justified to include the countries of the Levant in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

NATO, on the other hand, is a security organization concerned with the entire MENA region. It needs to find a new formula for approaching MENA, allowing it to accommodate the Middle East as a relatively autonomous strategic entity. This would also create a new opportunity for the Alliance to bring in Saudi Arabia, which has so far remained outside ICI. This course offers great potential because, although Saudi Arabia is not only a leading actor in the Gulf but also enjoys great political and economic influence among Arab Middle Eastern countries, and is a key actor to be consulted on many of the Middle East's priority concerns – for example, the fight against terrorism (especially in terms of curbing financial support to terrorism), mediation in the peace process, stabilization of Iraq and Lebanon, and the attempt to influence developments positively in Afghanistan and Pakistan.[33] The role of Saudi Arabia in containing Iran, now the main security threat on the Middle East/Gulf scene, is particularly important. According to Paul Salem, Saudi Arabia, as the leader of the Sunni-majority Muslim world, has played a significant role through the Arab quartet – with the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Egypt – in addressing the problem of Iranian and Syrian influence. In addition, Saudi Arabia adopts a positive stance on Turkey's new leading role in the region and "encourages its engagement in the Arab Levant in order to help counterbalance Iranian influence".[34] NATO's short-term priority should thus be to find ways to accommodate Saudi Arabia, preferably in this new Middle East sub-regional formula. This could even be achieved outside the traditional ICI cooperation framework, seeking a tailored arrangement with Saudi Arabia; the latter's decision not to join NATO's partnership initiative does not mean that the Alliance should dismiss other attempts to forge cooperation with this important actor.

The Middle East should be receiving more attention from NATO's decision-

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[33] Christopher Boucek (29 June 2010), Obama and Abdullah-Reaffirming Strategic Ties, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=41071 (accessed September 2010).

[34] Paul Salem (June 2010), "Building Cooperation in the Eastern Middle East", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,* Carnegie papers number 24, p. 11, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cooperation_east_mideast.pdf (accessed September 2010).

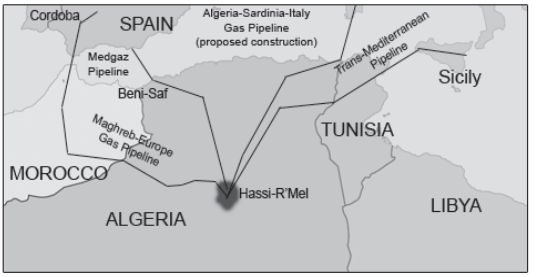
makers, who should not accept the relegation of this important area is to an ill-defined intermediate position between the Mediterranean and the Gulf. By the same token, the West Mediterranean, a security sub-region which differs noticeably from the rest of MENA, should be looked at in a different perspective.

In stressing the importance of this point, it is again appropriate to emphasize the clear divergence of security threats, in relation to the differing economic and geopolitical characteristics of MENA's three security subsystems. This means that NATO should adopt tailored security approaches to each of the three. Perhaps the main distinguishing feature among these three security sub-systems is the presence of hard security issues in the Gulf and the Levant, as opposed to soft security issues in North Africa and the West Mediterranean. This means that, while the use of hard or smart power remains an option in the Middle East and the Gulf, soft power is still the most suitable approach in the West Mediterranean.

The soft security threats peculiar to the West Mediterranean must be tackled by non-military means. Security dilemmas in this particular sub-region are admittedly related to political factors, but their non-political roots are even more important. This is one crucial distinction between the West and East Mediterranean as security subsystems in MENA. The socio-economic situation of the countries in the West Mediterranean accounts to a large extent for their security needs and makes the area stand out as a coherent security subsystem completely different from the troubled areas of the Middle East and the Gulf. Throughout Arab North Africa security threats are related to deteriorating economic conditions, ecological degradation and the demographic challenge of a massive population increase, with a youth bulge unmatched by the societies of southern and western Europe **(see Annex 2: Selected Demographic Indicators for North and South Mediterranean Countries)**.[35] The massive advance of Islamization in Arab North Africa, the presence of a sizable and assertive Arab Muslim community in an aging Europe, and the geographic proximity between the two shores of the Mediterranean are key factors that explain why illegal migration is seen as one of the major security concerns for most West European NATO members.

Another potential soft security risk for most South European countries is

[35] For more information see: Antonello Cabras (16 June 2010), "The Implications of the Youth Bulge in Middle East and North African Populations", *NATO Parliamentary Assembly*, http://www.nato-pa.int/default.Asp?SHORTCUT=2166 (September 2010). See also: Carlo Masala, "Demographic Pressure and Ecological Restraints: the Case of the Mediterranean", in Kurt R. Spillmann and Joachim Krause (Eds.), (1999). *International Security Challenges in a Changing World*, North South University Library, http://library.northsouth.edu/Upload/International%20Security.pdf (accessed September 2010).



MAP 4: Gas Pipelines Trans-Med and Maghreb-Europe.
Source: Business Monitor International: http://store.businessmonitor.com/article/273162 (accessed: Oct 2010)

the growing dependence on energy sources from North Africa. Algeria alone, through the Trans-Med and Maghreb-Europe gas pipelines, provides over half of the imported gas that flows into South Europe. Major importers are Portugal, Spain, France and Italy **(see Map 4).** According to Kingston Energy Consulting and Prospex Research, future prospects for North African gas export capacity are estimated at 47% of anticipated European imports and 28% of European demand by 2020.[36] South Europe's growing dependence on the vast and relatively cheap gas reserves of North Africa, especially of Algeria, Egypt and Libya, makes access to these energy sources an increasingly important security issue. The EU is therefore promoting economic liberalization and trade reforms in these countries, through various programs of Mediterranean development and aid. As part of this effort, the EU has been and is still eager to establish the Euro-Mediterranean region as a free trade area.[37] Europe's energy concerns become more visible when considering the radicalization sweeping across these North African societies and threatening the political stability of pro-Western regimes there. The issue of energy security therefore further entraps Europe in the dilemma of how to cope with two contradictory security requirements: the need to promote good governance, which is considered part of a long-term solution to many of the area's economic, social and demographic problems, and at the same time to preserve the political stability of these South Mediterranean regimes for the sake of energy security as well as for their geopolitical significance.

How NATO can deal with such differing security challenges, especially in the framework of the MD, is one of the three issues addressed in the following section. What must be stressed here is the diversity of security threats from the Middle East to the Western Mediterranean. In this respect, it appears more appropriate for NATO to reconsider its multilateral rapprochement with the Mediterranean countries in such a way as eventually to accommodate the specificities of different security environments in the West Mediterranean and the Middle East.

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[36] Kingston Energy Consulting & Prospex Research (December 2004), "*North Africa-An Energy Source for Europe?*", p. 1-2, http://www.kingstonenergy.com/nagas1204.pdf (accessed October 2010).
[37] Ibid, 3.

3.2 Reconsider the level of engagement: how to cope with the challenge of limited resources?

The previous analysis illustrates that NATO's current level of security engagement in MENA, whether on multilateral or bilateral basis, is particularly modest. In addition, the problematic scenario of NATO-MENA cooperation makes it pointless to argue that NATO can increase this level of engagement in the short term on the sole basis of its resources and political assets in the region. Three main issues should thus receive greater attention in the strategic thinking of NATO's decision-makers. These are set out in the following subsections.

3.2.1 Capitalizing on existing political assets: more coordination among relevant NATO countries is required

In his study "The Ultimate Test Case: Can Europe and America Forge a Joint Strategy for the Wider Middle East?", Everts maintains that despite the very different interests guiding U.S. and European policies in the broader Middle East, a robust and innovative joint U.S.-European strategy is both possible and necessary.[38]

There is an urgent need for more coordination between the U.S. and European countries to tackle the variety of threats in MENA that not all NATO countries deem relevant. Coping with this apparent divergence in threat perceptions, which is coupled with the problem of limited resources, requires that NATO capitalize on the long-adopted, though tacit, "division of labour" among the Alliance's members with regard to who does what in MENA. The U.S. and the main European powers have long differed in their security perceptions and approaches to MENA's numerous problems. Following these different policy lines, one can conclude that the two sides of the Atlantic have partially succeeded in affirming their status as major powers in MENA, but each with its respective strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of the U.S. are its strong multifaceted military presence throughout MENA; its unmatched relationship with Israel, which means that the U.S. holds almost all the strongest diplomatic cards in the Middle East; and the political leverage it enjoys in the Gulf, as the region's main security provider. Its main weaknesses are the excessive U.S. emphasis on hard power and the blatant unilateralism it has unmistakably embraced, particularly after the September 11 attacks. While Europe does not enjoy the same strategic influence as the U.S. in MENA, its strengths there make transatlantic

[38] Steven Everts (2004), "The Ultimate Test Case: Can Europe and America Forge a Joint Strategy for the Wider Middle East?", *International Affairs*, *80*, 4 (The Transatlantic Relationship), p. 665-666.

security cooperation a greater necessity than ever before. Through multilateral action and greater emphasis on soft power tools as a proper long-term solution to the underlying cultural, social, economic and political causes of conflict, the EU has gradually achieved considerable success in becoming a widely accepted key player in all aspects of the region's affairs. As the number one donor in the area (if one discounts U.S. military assistance to a number of Mediterranean countries), the EU is steadily including the South Mediterranean in its sphere of influence. Unlike the traditional U.S. hard-power tools, the socially and economically oriented European approach is seemingly the most likely to succeed in long-term management of the ideological confrontation that seems dominant in Arab-Western relations. It should be noted that the EU's increasingly recognized moral stature in the region is partly a result of U.S. lapses there. It should also be stressed that greater coordination between the U.S. and the EU through NATO is urgently required, while each of the two powers can still cope with certain security challenges on its own. Overall, however, the U.S. alone or NATO with its traditional approaches seem to be capable of achieving little for the security of MENA. The realpolitik approach, founded on the traditional use of military tools, seems no longer to be working in an area where identity, culture, history, and nationalism set the scene for communication with the West in general.

For security requirements, the Alliance thus needs to coordinate more, whether on a multilateral or a bilateral basis, with the EU and with individual European countries which share specific security interests in the region. The previous remarks about each side's strengths and weaknesses indicate that, despite the apparent competition between the U.S. and Europe in the Mediterranean, cooperation and coordination between the two *de facto* Mediterranean powers through NATO is actually possible. The two parties seem to balance and complement each other. The EU alone is not capable of maintaining the security of the Mediterranean without the strong political presence and abundant strategic assets of the U.S. in the area. On the other hand, the U.S., perhaps because it does not see the South Mediterranean's demographic and economic issues as security priorities, seems reluctant to play a more vigorous role in the area. This means that, if NATO is serious about a Mediterranean security dialogue, a deeper level of cooperation between the two sides of the Atlantic is a prerequisite. NATO should therefore work to ensure that it fulfils its brief as a "Global Partnership"[39]. This implies a clear strategy that pinpoints what individual NATO members can do on their own, what the EU can do on its own, and on what issues all parties should cooperate through NATO.

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[39] Steven Everts, op.cit., 665.

In practical terms, a first step for effective transatlantic cooperation in MENA is to agree on a specific set of priorities in the area requiring joint actions. Such agreement seems possible, noting that both the U.S. and the main European powers are, in broad terms, paying attention to the same crisis spots. The U.S. under the Obama administration is still concentrating on Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran as its chief security priorities. To a certain degree, this has had repercussions on many European powers' foreign policies. Recently expressed German, French, Italian, and British concerns regarding these three areas, as well as their marked interest in the Gulf region as a whole and their concrete actions in approaching the Gulf,[40] indicate a convergence in current U.S. and European security perceptions. On the other hand, the Obama administration has from the outset been working hard to revive the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, even if the real likelihood of a major breakthrough seems limited. This is another important security issue in which Europe is continually striving to establish a role for itself. In broad terms, the same convergence of views is equally apparent in many other security issues, such as combating terrorism and stabilizing Iraq.

Generally speaking, transatlantic openness and cooperation would have a direct positive effect on NATO's image in MENA. As explained in the second part of this study, the multilateral nature of European leadership is an important asset for the Alliance to build on with a view to improving its posture in Arab MENA. Only by putting more resources in public diplomacy activities will NATO be able to capitalize appreciably on this soft political asset.

In more specific terms, more determined U.S.-European cooperation would significantly boost NATO's efforts in a number of present security concerns, such as the political stabilization of Iraq, the Arab-Israeli peace process, the war against terrorism and containment of Iran.

The political stabilization of Iraq is one of the most important issues requiring U.S.-EU cooperation through NATO, particularly after the withdrawal of U.S. forces in August 2010. At the time, many politicians and analysts predicted the imminent destabilization of the country as the Iraqi security vacuum would be

[40] Ana Echagüe underlines the European competition in defense cooperation with the Gulf countries by highlighting a number of facts: 1) the recently signed "strategic partnership" between Germany and the UAE; 2) the French acquisition of a military base in the UAE; 3) British Defense Secretary Bob Ainsworth's declaration that the UK intends to "maintain a substantive military presence in the region"; 4) Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini's statement that Italy has begun to step up its presence in the Gulf after a period of absence. For more details, see Ana Echagüe (March 2010), "Change or Continuity? US Policy Towards the Middle East and its implications for EU Policy", Spain, Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), *Working Paper no. 95*, 10.

exploited by insurgents and terrorists.

Although NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I)[41] worked for more than two years to train the Iraqi national police,[42] the Iraqi security forces do not yet seem ready to take charge of the country and much effort is still required. At the same time, NATO is currently doubtful that there will be enough funds to continue its training work in Iraq as the mission in Afghanistan demands increasing resources. According to the NTM-I, lack of funds would lead to considerably fewer opportunities to assist the Iraqi security institutions.[43]

The security scene in Iraq therefore offers an opportunity for NATO-EU cooperation. The EU has already expressed its interest in a united, democratic and stable Iraq in many ways. Early in 2004, an informal European Task Force in Iraq was launched with the aim of assessing possible EU involvement in the political reconstruction of the country.[44] Since 2003, the EU has provided Iraq with approximately one billion Euros in reconstruction and humanitarian assistance.[45] Most importantly, while still with little impact, in 2005 the EU established a Rule of Law Mission for Iraq (EU JUST-LEX) to train Iraqi police officers outside the country. The Union decided to renew the mission in March 2009 and broadened its scope to include in-country activities.[46] It now appears the right time for committed NATO-EU cooperation in Iraq. Perhaps this cooperation could take the form of a joint NATO-EU mission, in an equation bringing together the Alliance's security expertise with the EU's abundant resources and socio-economic expertise to stabilize the country and help its reintegration into the regional security system.

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[41] NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) has been running since 2004, when it was set up in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1546 and at the request of the Iraqi Interim Government.
For more information on NTM-I, see North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO's Assistance to Iraq", http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_51978.htm

[42] NTM-I launched a project in October 2007 to train Iraqi national security forces. The project is prepared and carried out by an Italian Carabinieri Training Unit. For more information on the NTM-I, see: "NATO Training Mission – Iraq: Tactical Size, Strategic Impact", http://www.jfcnaples.nato.int/ntmi/articles/2010/article_33_10.html (Accessed: October 2010).

[43] Ibid.

[44] Martin Ortega (January 2004), "*What Future Role for the EU in Iraq?*", EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), http://www.iss.europa.eu/nc/actualites/analysisbooks/select_category/31/article/what-future-role-for-the-eu-in-iraq/ (accessed October 2010).

[45] European Union External Action-Iraq, http://www.eeas.europe.eu/iraq/index_en.htm (accessed October 2010).

[46] Justin Vaisse and Sebastian Gräfe (23 April 2009), "What Europe Can Do for Iraq: A Blueprint for Action", Center on the United States and Europe at Brookings, *US-Europe Analysis Series*, p.2, http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/papers/2009/0423_iraq_vaisse/0423_iraq_vaisse.pdf,(accessed October 2010).

Some scholars have even gone so far as to suggest that the EU's role should make it possible to "Europeanize the existing NATO military/gendarmerie mission in Iraq and combine it with the existing EU JUST LEX mission".[47] A joint NATO-EU mission in Iraq would actually be able to do more than the EU or NATO can do alone. Such a mission could broaden the scope of activity to include a greater range of security aspects than at present. These could include supporting the development of the Iraqi legal system, training Iraqi personnel from the Ministries of the Interior and of Justice, assisting the Iraqi government in setting a strategy to accommodate the return of refugees, engaging in diplomatic efforts to help reintegrate Iraq into the regional security system, and participating in an international effort to settle Iraqi border disputes in the Kirkuk area and other disputed territories.[48]

If well planned for with Iraqi officials, a NATO-EU working group to stabilize Iraq would have great potential to attract significant contributions from local Arab MENA partners in a balanced burden-sharing formula. These partners, particularly in the Levant and the Gulf, feel equally threatened by a destabilized Iraq and would be eager to help stabilize the country by offering both economic resources and human expertise. This prospective Arab contribution is crucial and is further developed in the following paragraphs, as well as in subsection 3.2.3.

The peace process in the Middle East is another important security issue that requires U.S.-EU cooperation, achievable through NATO. Apart from the need to coordinate U.S.-European diplomatic efforts in the various aspects of the Arab-Israeli peace process, cooperation between the two powers could pave the way for an eventual NATO mission in the occupied Arab territories. While the feasibility of such a mission is debated among Middle East experts, the realization of a NATO mission in Palestine appears to be both possible and feasible under certain conditions, and with a potential contribution of Arab resources and troops. This proposal of a feasible NATO peace-keeping operation in Palestine, in particular, is further developed in subsection 3.2.3.

Combating terrorism is another important area of security where NATO has keenly been trying to play a significant role but with little impact. The reasons why this role remains limited are complex and varied. They are mostly related to the many deficiencies that undermine the Alliance's capabilities of competent

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[47] See the recommendations of the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Ibid, p. 4.

[48] Ibid, p. 4-5. See also Daniel Korski and Richard Gowan, "The EU, So Far", in Heinrich Böll Foundation (Ed.), What Can Europe Do in Iraq? Recommendations for a New U.S.-European Cooperation, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, *Publication Series on Democracy, Volume 11*, p.75-84, http://ecfr.3cdn.net/8f41ada7f30f8bbe13_izm6bxp1z.pdf (accessed October 2010).

intelligence sharing, whether among NATO members themselves or between the Alliance and its MENA partners. Future prospects of a reinvigorated NATO role in fighting terrorism are largely subject to a greater degree of openness and information sharing within the NATO framework.

Much of the literature on this point argues that there has always been and still is a considerable degree of openness and information sharing on a bilateral basis between NATO members, albeit outside the NATO framework. Intelligence cooperation across the Atlantic on Middle Eastern terrorism, in particular, started early in the 1970s through many intelligence sharing systems like those codenamed "Kilowatt" and "Megaton".[49] Again in the 1970s, what is now the European Union created the still operational "Berne Group", which brings together the security services of all member states to collect, share and disseminate intelligence on organized crime and terrorism threats.[50]

Nowadays, the real problem of transatlantic cooperation in intelligence sharing appears to be the highly institutionalized NATO with its emerging consensus problems, particularly evident with the enlargement process to the East. According to De-Nevers, "U.S. strategy documents suggest that NATO's deeply institutionalized, consensus-based model is not the U.S. preferred approach for multilateral cooperation in the war on terror".[51] Many other issues continue to challenge transatlantic intelligence sharing; these include the divergence in U.S. and European views on the importance of military intelligence; the huge technological gap between the U.S. and Europe, which still poses a chronic problem for interoperability; and the unwillingness of the U.S. and of many European countries to accept large-scale multilateral data sharing, largely because of European perceptions of privacy and sovereignty.[52]

Irrespective of these considerations, NATO's own contribution of raw intelligence is minimal. The main NATO unit responsible for digesting intelligence among all the allies, all NATO partners, and all contract countries is the Terrorist Threat Intelligence Unit (TTIU). The TTIU has a permanent staff of around seven,

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[49] Richard J. Aldrich (2004), "Transatlantic Intelligence and Security Cooperation", *International Affairs*, *Vol. 80*, *No. 4*, p.738.

[50] James Igoe Walsh (April 2009), "Security Policy and Intelligence Cooperation in the European Union", *Paper prepared for the biennial meeting of the European Union Studies Association*, Los Angeles, p. 2, http://www.unc.edu/euce/eusa2009/papers/walsh_12C.pdf (accessed November 2010).

[51] Renée De Nevers (Spring 2007), "NATO's International Security Role in the Terrorist Era", *International Security,* Vol. 31, No. 4, p.39.

[52] See Ibid, p. 24-45. See also Richard J. Aldrich, op.cit., p. 732-737.

plus a limited number of experts and analysts on loan from nations;[53] it is in practice a forum for joint analysis of non-classified information.[54]

Given this not very encouraging background, Aldrich suggests that in order to enhance transatlantic efforts in combating terrorism a division of labor between the EU and NATO is needed. To this end, NATO could focus on military intelligence while the EU could dedicate more effort and expertise to law enforcement and improved security.[55] However, in combating terrorism it remains equally important to achieve greater openness between the U.S. – as the main intelligence-sharing partner of almost all pro-Western regimes in MENA – and the more vulnerable (and therefore particularly active) Southern European countries. All these parties should be more open to sharing necessary information with NATO, at least on a case-by-case basis, on issues related to arms trafficking, illegal migration, and the mobility of radical Islamists, where NATO can possibly play a role. The issues of narrowing the technological gap to enhance transatlantic interoperability and of achieving greater consensus among the 28 NATO members would remain challenging, with potential for positive long-term outcomes.

Containing Iran:

More determined political cooperation between the U.S. and Europe through a joint transatlantic strategy for containing Iran would spare the Alliance a huge security burden that it seems unready to accept. Such cooperation should obviously not impinge on the security interests of other Arab NATO partners, particularly in the Gulf).[56] Accepting Iran's growing regional role and trying to integrate it into a balanced relationship with other key actors in the Gulf and the Middle East appears to be both the most prudent and feasible outcome at the moment.

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[53] John Kriendler (March 2006), "NATO Intelligence and Early Warning", Conflict Studies Research Center, p.2, www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/.../06(13)JK.pdf (accessed October 2010).
[54] Renée De Nevers op.cit., p.46
[55] Richard J. Aldrich, op.cit., p.733.
[56] Still, Arab countries are worried of a possible compromise between the West and Iran, in which case the latter's influence would increase in the Gulf and the Middle East in return for relinquishment of its nuclear ambitions.

3.2.2. An existing opportunity: actual military assets of individual NATO countries in MENA

One of the basic assets in any security-related and strategic cooperation is ensuring an adequate military presence in regions of vital interest, and securing timely military access to crisis spots.

Although NATO cannot afford this military presence as a result of financial constraints, the existing assets of individual member states – most importantly those of the U.S. – compensate for this. As previously outlined, the heavy deployment of U.S. military in MENA through the USCENTCOM facilities, and of the Fifth and Sixth Fleets in the Gulf and the Mediterranean, assures access to the region in time of crisis. Not only U.S. assets, but also those of other individual European countries, should be considered here. One notable example is France's "Peace Camp", its first military base in the Gulf region, opened in May 2009 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed al-Nahayan, the UAE President, described this as "an important pillar of our foreign policy because it helps the stability in the Gulf region".[57] Although many officials claim that the facility serves to improve commercial relations between France and the Gulf countries, the acquisition of "Peace Camp" has been largely viewed in the West as a necessary military asset that should help meet the strategic challenge from Iran.[58]

These existing assets include not only physical military facilities, but also the soft security assets of many individual NATO members, including intelligence sharing and other security arrangements that they have had with friendly MENA regimes for decades. However, in peacetime or when there are no operations in place, these individual NATO members share relatively little information with NATO as a multilateral organization. Even when operations are in progress in these countries, the U.S. in particular – as the principal Western power in the area and in NATO – do not share information with other NATO countries not involved in these operations. As Schake puts it, "the U.S. does not want to share intelligence with, or have its operational choices constrained by, states that are not directly involved in the operations".[59] From a practical perspective, this secrecy appears understandable

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[57] *France Opens UAE Military Base*, Al-Jazeera News Network, 26 May 2009. http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2009/05/20095266227614925.html (accessed September 2010).

[58] Edward Cody (27 May 2010), "First French Military Base Opens in the Persian Gulf", *The Washington Post*, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/26/AR2009052602994.html (accessed September 2010).

[59] Kori Schake, "Constructive Duplication: Reducing EU reliance on US military assets", London, Center for European Reform, p. 4, www.cer.org.uk/pdf/cerwp12_cd.pdf (accessed September 2010).

if one considers the minimal relevance of some security threats in MENA to many NATO members, and hence the problem of reaching consensus on such matters within NATO, as well as the sensitivity of the bilateral arrangements which give individual NATO states access to the information concerned. If these were revealed, the stability of the friendly MENA regimes involved would be seriously at stake. The important point to underscore in this regard is that, even if NATO does not have a place in this complex security picture in peacetime, this does not imply that a crisis or a situation calling for intervention would necessarily prove disastrous for the Alliance.

Capitalizing on this, NATO would be perceptive enough to concentrate on cooperation spheres where it can have a comparative advantage rather than enter to no avail into a competitive relationship with individual NATO members. Again, broad military training projects and regular military exercises do not seem the most prudent course by which the Alliance can seek to foster security cooperation with local MENA partners. It is simply because the Alliance has no resources to put into such activities that they are perceived as meaningful. NATO could actually consider capitalizing on huge military training projects and military exercises conducted by the U.S. in many MENA countries, by involving locally trained officers in operations such as border monitoring or in bolstering of security arrangements. In another respect, the Alliance appears to have a relative advantage in Crisis Management – a specific area where it can afford limited and specifically targeted training for selected MENA partners.

It remains important to underline that the main sphere in which NATO as an IGO can present itself as an independent actor, and where it would enjoy an unmatched advantage, is in promoting a multilateral dialogue in various MENA security subsystems. On the one hand, this multilateral dialogue would help NATO to enhance its posture in the region. On the other hand, it would help bridge the gap between NATO and MENA countries in terms of working towards consensus on basic security concepts and issues. Finally, it would help these local partners to clearly identify their interests and eventually reach a common vision that they would be willing and able to share multilaterally. It is simply a question of deepening the perception of mutual interests and stressing the rationale for cooperation. Yet the current settings for multilateral dialogue between NATO and MENA do not allow these objectives to be attained. Against this background, Section 3.3 of this study focuses on the current problematic status of multilateral cooperation in the framework of the MD and the ICI.

3.2.3. NATO-MENA burden-sharing: Arab resources and troops in potential NATO operations in MENA

Another important asset that the financially constrained Alliance should not overlook is the massive financial and human resources of local partner countries in MENA. This greatly enhances NATO's ability to act in the region.

While some Middle East scholars have advocated the value of sending a NATO-led security force to the Middle East for peace-keeping between the Palestinians and the Israelis,[60] other scholars consider that such an operation would be doomed to failure.[61] In this respect, Gaub indicates that NATO is not currently ready to take on this kind of mission in Palestine, for many reasons. The most important is the problem of resources. On the basis of previous successful NATO missions in Bosnia and Kosovo, Gaub concludes in a feasibility study that a successful NATO mission in Palestine would "need forces ranging from 43,700 to 76,000 men, including the police forces. Of these, between 16,100 and 28,000 would patrol Gaza and between 27,600 and 48,000 the West Bank".[62]

These calculations and considerations on NATO's ability to act in the region would change significantly if the Alliance simply acknowledged the available financial and human resources of its local partners in MENA. Indeed, a NATO mission in Palestine would have great potential for success if the Alliance considered engaging the relevant Arab actors, most importantly Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, in a prudent formula of burden-sharing attractive to all parties.

As NATO often states, it cannot intervene in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict unless there is an agreement in place, a request from all parties and a UN mandate. Looking at the question in these terms, Arab partners would be supportive of such an agreement and would be willing to put their abundant resources and troops[63] into a mission to ensure peace and a just settlement of the dispute. If Arab governments enthusiastically sent their forces to liberate Kuwait in a U.S.-led operation in 1991 and if some, like the UAE, have assigned troops to serve under NATO forces in Afghanistan, then Arab governments would surely agree to put their resources and

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[60] See Steven Everts (2004), Op.cit., p. 671. See also: Steven Everts (29 July 2003), "Why NATO must Keep the Mid East Peace", *Financial Times.*

[61] See Florence Gaub (March 2010), "NATO: Peacekeeping in the Holy Land? A Feasibility Study", *Research Paper n. 57*, NATO Defense College, Rome.

[62] Ibid, p. 10.

[63] For detailed information on military capabilities (in terms of manpower and military equipments), see The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance 2010: The Annual Assessment of Global Military Capabilities and Defence Economics*, London, Routledge.

troops into a NATO peace-keeping or peace-building mission in Palestine.

The same logic should underpin all possible future NATO interventions in the region. Apart from the previously mentioned cases of Iraq and Palestine, the unstable situation in Lebanon is considered another potential future security threat that could require NATO-Arab cooperation. For any operation that serves the security interests of all relevant parties (i.e. NATO and local Arab partners), there should thus be some formula for burden-sharing to accommodate certain security needs. As seen earlier, possible examples include a potential peace operation in South Lebanon; border monitoring tasks, such as between Egypt and the Gaza Strip; or possible future NATO efforts in stabilizing Iraq. As such issues are significant to the national security of many local Arab partners, it is expected that these countries would be ready to take a share in providing for their own security. In addition, NATO's willingness to invite and welcome Arab contributions to its potential missions in MENA would actually materialize the convergence of security perceptions between the two parties and enhance the Alliance's posture in the region. This analysis implies that one of the important areas NATO should be focusing on is building the capabilities of its partners in the area, so as to encourage them to take a fair share in providing for their own security.

3.3. The problematic status of NATO-MENA multilateral forums: the need to involve high-ranking officials and invest in public diplomacy

As explained, NATO's inability to attract high-ranking officials from Arab MENA (Foreign Ministers, Defense Ministers and Heads of State) to participate in its two multilateral forums of dialogue – MD and ICI – greatly undermines the effectiveness of these initiatives and their potential to produce coherent policy outcomes.

Some scholars consider that the difficulty of attracting these high-ranking officials is related to the marked tendency of the states concerned to personalize foreign relations rather than to work though institutions.[64] This is indeed a real obstacle to lasting cooperation, especially when the internal political stability of certain key friendly MENA regimes – such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia – seems at stake. Yet, taking into consideration that institutions are understandably weak in these authoritarian regimes, the West in general, with its democratic structures and IGOs, should be prepared to address sensitive security issues with these states through the personalization, rather than the institutionalization, of foreign relations. Not only

[64] Pierre Razoux, op.cit., p. 7.

current Arab policy makers but also their potential successors could be included. Strengthening personal relations and direct contacts with leading Arab officials remains a fundamental feature of Arab governments and a practical challenge for the West, which finds such an approach hard to share. This issue will be further developed in subsection 3.5, which examines the urgent need to focus on maintaining the political stability of friendly authoritarian regimes rather than advocate democracy and human rights there. What is more important here is to recognize that trying to construct cooperative ties with local institutions in these countries is to a certain extent a waste of effort with very low potential for sustainability. This is because the democratic election of potential opposition forces in these countries, whether from the Islamists or the military, does not necessarily imply that they are going to rule democratically or enhance the role of institutions or rule of law. The example of Hamas in the occupied Palestinian lands is a case in point.

All this implies that including low-ranking officials in NATO-MENA multilateral forums is not expected to yield any tangible policy outcomes or enhance consensus on basic security concepts and issues. Who are the participants in these forums, to what extent they participate formally or informally in the policy-making process and how much they influence it are all crucial questions that NATO has to assess in constructing these multilateral dialogue forums. Regular meetings of Foreign and Defense Ministers – or at least of delegations that formally represent them – are necessary steps. There should also be a careful selection process for Arab officials who do not directly represent their countries in some NATO dialogue forums, such as the Senior Course and the NATO Regional Cooperation Course (NRCC) which are regularly organized by the NATO Defense College (NDC) in Rome. In this regard, promising officials and military personnel who are viewed as future holders of senior positions should be included. Equally important and parallel to these meetings, regular direct contacts/visits between NATO top officials, including the Alliance's Secretary General, and Heads of State of local MENA partners remain essential for strengthening ties, improving understanding, and reaching tangible outcomes.

While involving high-ranking officials of MENA in these forums appears a necessary way to bolster multilateral security forums, public diplomacy seems to be equally indispensable for approaching the wider Arab public in order to enhance the image it has of the Alliance. Indeed, improving the Alliance's image should be viewed as an indispensable element in promoting the official forums of multilateral dialogue.

There is widespread ignorance in MENA of what NATO is doing in the

region and what are its objectives. It is surprising that, although MD was launched in 1994, it remains largely unknown not only to the bulk of the region's public but even to many of its academics. The media and public diplomacy should be used more to approach the Arab public and informal elites, so as to enhance understanding of NATO's objectives, capabilities and limitations in providing the region with security and solving its problems. An important practical example of how public diplomacy could be used is the organization of public lectures by NATO's high officials, particularly the Secretary General, in various important locations in Arab MENA. Addressing the Arab public on the objectives and modalities of collaboration between the Alliance and its Arab partners for specific security issues could contribute significantly to the success of such schemes. Multilateral dialogue forums and public diplomacy would ultimately work as vital Confidence-Building Measures, narrowing the gap between NATO and its local partners as well as enhancing NATO's image in general.

3.4. Enhancing Bilateral Cooperation

3.4.1 Seek clearly defined bilateral security arrangements

Further construction of practical bilateral cooperation schemes in the form of ICPs between NATO and single MENA partners will certainly help keep direct communication channels open between the two sides. However, after more than sixteen years of the MD and six years of the ICI, the current bilateral arrangements seem modest and insufficient. While the classified status of ICPs means that it is hard to assess bilateral cooperation thoroughly in qualitative terms, the lack of funding for declared bilateral fields of cooperation greatly undermines their effectiveness.

Nevertheless, in some cases NATO was able to forge bilateral cooperation even before developing an ICP. Despite the debate on how successful the cooperation experience had proved, in October 2009 NATO signed a Tactical Memorandum of Understanding (TMOU) with Morocco for a Moroccan contribution – ranging from information exchange to contribution of naval and air assets – to NATO's Mediterranean anti-terrorism mission, Operation Active Endeavour (OAE).[65] The point to underscore here is that such specific formulas of strategic and security cooperation, where certain MENA partners are linked to defined NATO security arrangements, appear more functional, practical and feasible. If well planned for,

[65] See Allied Maritime Component Command Naples (22 October 2009), "NATO and Morocco Sign Agreement On Operation Active Endeavour", http://www.afsouth.nato.int/organization/CC_MAR_Naples/PressReleases/CC-MAR/pressreleases09/NR_20_09.html (accessed September 2010). See also: Allied Maritime Command Naples, Operation Active Endeavour: http://www.afsouth.nato.int/organization/CC_MAR_Naples/operations/ActiveEndeavour/Endeavour.htm (accessed September 2010).

this type of specific cooperation could be considered a short-term way to break the stagnation in NATO's relationship with MENA partners; a first step towards further cooperation through more inclusive bilateral ICPs; and an immediate procedure to enhance the Alliance's posture as a guarantor of security in the area. Possible examples of this type of agreement are further commented on in the next subsection.

3.4.2. The question of how to seek practical security activities where NATO enjoys a comparative advantage

Another important point raised earlier in this study is how NATO should cope with the need to seek more practical activities on the bilateral level while still enjoying a comparative advantage. NATO's added value is relatively visible on the multilateral level, whereas it remains vague and obviously limited on the bilateral level. Activities like joint military exercises, military training and defense institution building, for instance, represent a real challenge for the financially constrained Alliance to enjoy comparative advantage in.

Given the limited degree of openness between the U.S. and NATO with regard to the huge parallel U.S. military projects in many parts of MENA, NATO must draw up a map of crisis spots where it can conclude bilateral security agreements with relevant local partners. As has been mentioned, the TMOU with Morocco appears to be a good example of how intelligence sharing and use of naval and air assets can be clearly linked to a specific NATO operation like the OAE. Consistent with this clearly defined approach to strategic thinking, NATO could set up more pragmatic bilateral security arrangements with many MENA partners so as to address a clearly defined map of security issues. Examples include:

- significant contributions, in terms of both intelligence and forces, of MD partners to NATO's OAE in the Mediterranean Sea;

- use of Egyptian expertise and forces in monitoring the Egypt-Gaza Border;

- taking advantage of the recently established U.S. radar facility in the Negev region of Israel for intelligence sharing and early warning;

- further developing cooperation with Western Mediterranean partners with a view to fighting criminality and terrorism in the Sahel;

- seeking security contributions of MD and Gulf partners in potential future

NATO operations in Palestine or Iraq, as explained earlier.

3.5. Avoiding undesirable security side-effects as a result of promoting democracy in MENA

A last point that this study will focus on is the problematic relationship between promoting democracy and maintaining the political stability of MENA. The paradox here is that the two declared objectives are in practice contradictory.

Although promoting democracy has not been explicitly on the agenda in NATO-MENA relations, it is one of the Alliance's declared objectives in relation to the Partnership for Peace (PfP) countries,[66] and has been repeatedly announced by NATO officials as the "best answer to terror".[67] Promotion of democracy also remains one of the declared objectives of the U.S. and the EU in the region – both allocate huge annual funding to democratization projects in many MENA countries. These projects are administered by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the EU delegations in individual MENA countries, UN donor organizations, or other donor institutions of individual European countries.

The point is that there have always been limitations and security impediments that hinder a genuine advocacy of democracy in MENA, because of the political and strategic importance of friendly authoritarian regimes there. For decades, maintaining the stability of these regimes has been considered a major priority as a way of preserving the stability and security of the area. An explicit manifestation of this first appeared in the Kirkpatrick Doctrine, elaborated by Jean Kirkpatrick, U.S. ambassador to the U.N. in the 1980s. This Doctrine states that the U.S., for the sake of security and strategic considerations, should be more concerned with maintaining the political stability of friendly authoritarian regimes than with the promotion of democracy and human rights in the areas concerned.[68] The actual conduct, rather than the rhetoric, of the U.S. and of many Western European countries in recent decades shows that this doctrine has been the implicit basis for their relations with

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[66] See: Jos Boonstra (May 2007), "NATO's Role in Democratic Reform", Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Dialogo Exterior (FRIDE), *Working Paper no. 38*.

[67] NATO official website (10 March 2005). "Democracy Best Answer to Terror, says NATO Secretary General", http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2005/03-march/e0310a.htm (accessed September 2010).

[68] See Jeane Kirkpatrick (1982), *Dictatorships and Double Standards: Rationalism and Reason in Poli tics*, New York, Simon and Schuster. See also Jeane Kirkpatrick (1985), *The Reagan Doctrine and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Washington D.C., The Heritage Foundation and the Fund for An American Renaissance.

these friendly regimes. Many scholars have repeatedly underscored the political pressure exerted by Western governments on their aid missions working to promote democracy in these countries, so as to preserve their political stability. For instance, according to Denis Sullivan, "the White House and American Embassy in Egypt have often backed the Egyptian government's position, overriding their own AID mission office in Egypt. They have long adopted the view that political stability is primary and Egypt should not be pushed too far too fast".[69]

On the other hand, promotion of democracy in MENA is widely construed as an attempt to impose Western structures and values on Arab societies. Although these structures and values are becoming more and more universal, rather than merely Western, in the era of globalization, they are still viewed as part of a Western plan to dominate the region and to intervene in the domestic affairs of Arab countries. A compounding difficulty is that the West does not seem ready to accept the results of democracy in Arab societies. Hamas is just one example of this.

What kind of governments democracy would breed in MENA, what are the prospects for sustainable democracies in the area, and to what extent the West in general and NATO in particular is prepared to deal with this kind of government are, therefore, fundamental questions to examine when advocating and funding promotion of democracy in MENA. An important issue in promoting democracy is thus the ability to foresee how security arrangements could be maintained and rearranged with new "democratic" governments, even if these are Islamist. Of course, not all Islamic groups oppose the West and they would actually in most cases be likely, once in power, to conform to the rules of the practically unipolar international system. In such a scenario, they would enjoy limited room for maneuver and their radical agendas would prove contrary to their national interests. These lessons of both past and present should offer the Alliance useful insights into its relations with Arab MENA. Equally, these lessons pose further challenges to Alliance members in how to achieve a prudent equilibrium between their *democratic values*, which are necessary to articulate their plans for further security cooperation to their own peoples, and their *security interests*, which are evidently tied to the existence of friendly authoritarian regimes in the wider MENA region.

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[69] Denis Sullivan, "Bureaucracy and Foreign Aid in Egypt: The Primacy of Politics", in, Ibrahim M. Oweiss (Ed.) (1990). The Political Economy of Contemporary Egypt, Washington D.C., Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, p. 150.

Conclusion

The analysis in the previous sections demonstrates that prospects for solid security cooperation between NATO and its Arab MENA partners *under the current settings* of cooperation are very limited. Low representation on the political multilateral level and weak engagement on the practical bilateral level, added to the financial constraints of the alliance, are three major factors that evidently reveal the current absence of any tangible security cooperation between the two sides. In fact, many key MENA partners were themselves reluctant to advance security cooperation with NATO because of the modest added value the Alliance seems to be bringing to the regional security theatre.

Nevertheless, the above analysis also shows that with more thought about what the Alliance is willing to do in the many security concerns it shares with its MENA partners – in terms of both concrete objectives and policy outcomes – there is prospectively great potential for attracting significant contributions from local Arab MENA partners in a balanced burden-sharing formula. These partners, particularly in the Levant and the Gulf, consider many of the ongoing security issues in the region as relevant to their own national security; they would thus actually be eager to contribute their abundant economic resources and/or human expertise to potential future NATO efforts to bring security and stability to the region. As has been highlighted, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the stabilization of Iraq and the war against terrorism are three main examples. To date, it is readily apparent that obtaining this kind of contribution, which is the core point of the present study, is still absent from NATO's strategic thinking in its security cooperation with its Arab partners.

On the other hand, Arab countries should be more willing to engage with the Alliance, both bilaterally and multilaterally, benefiting from its international multilateral posture in a necessary effort to internationalize their causes. Certainly, the Alliance partnership, in terms of security, is unlikely to substitute bilateral security and strategic ties they have with individual NATO members, particularly the U.S. However, it appears both rational and discerning for these Arab countries to realize and correctly distinguish between the benefits of cooperation with various key international actors. These include single NATO countries, the EU and NATO, as the most important international security organization.

With the aim of reinvigorating security cooperation between the two sides – NATO and its Arab Partners – there is a need to achieve a balanced combination

of military and non-military resources. This appears mandatory in order to manage the variety of soft and hard security threats emanating from the region as a whole with its various security subsystems, from the Western Mediterranean to the Middle East and the Gulf. The *realpolitik* approach, resting on the traditional use of military tools, seems no longer to be functioning in an area where identity, culture, history and nationalism increasingly set the scene for communication with the West in general. In this regard, NATO should reconsider the two clusters through which it has approached MENA, i.e. the MD and the ICI. This imprudent division of the region inappropriately places the "Middle East", which is the most important security subsystem in MENA, as an indefinite space between the Western Mediterranean and the Gulf. A new formula to accommodate the Middle East would also create a new opportunity for the Alliance to bring in Saudi Arabia, which has to date remained outside the ICI. The West Mediterranean, a security sub-region with a wide range of soft security threats, should likewise be handled with a more tailored security approach. In this respect, the Alliance's capability to approach each of the MENA sub-regions properly and forge tangible security cooperation with its various partners there is significantly dependent on a greater degree of transatlantic openness and coordination. This should be developed through a clear strategy that plainly identifies what individual NATO members can do on their own, what the EU can do, and what are the issues that all parties should be cooperating on through NATO to address properly.

Annex 1

U.S. military bases in MENA

SITE	COMPONENT	NAME NEAREST CITY/DESCRIPTION
BAHRAIN		
NSA Bahrain	Navy Active	Manama
NSA Bahrain-Aviation Unit Muharraq	Navy Active	Al Jufayr
NSA Bahrain-Banz Wrhs Compound	Navy Active	Al Jufayr
NSA Bahrain-Dependent School	Navy Active	Al Jufayr
NSA Bahrain-Mina Sulman Pier Area	Navy Active	Al Jufayr
OTHER SITE(S) : 3		
EGYPT		
Naval Medical Research Unit Three Cairo Egypt	Navy Active	Cairo
OTHER SITE(S): 1 [1*]		
KUWAIT		
OTHER SITE(S): 1 [2•]		
OMAN		
Thumrait MAP	Air Force Active	Salalah
OTHER SITE(S): 3		
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES		
Jebel Ali Port	Sea and Air Base	Dubai. The base is crucial to US naval operations, as it is the only harbor in the Gulf deep enough to
Al Dhafra	Air Base	berth an aircraft carrier. The base supports US Air Force operations through critical logistics and facilities.
OTHER SITE(S): 1		
QATAR		
Al Udeid	Air Base	West of Doha. The Al Udeid Air Base is host to a forward headquarters of United States Central Command, and home to No. 83 Expeditionary Air Group RAF and the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing of the USAF
ISRAEL		
The Negev Facility		US Radar facility in the Negev.
The Port of Haifa		Base used by US military to maintain facilities of the US 6th Fleet.
IRAQ		
Green Zone		Baghdad Area
Camp Falcon-Al-Sarq		Baghdad Area
Camp Victory – Al Nasr	Air Field	Baghdad Air Field
Camp Anaconda/Balad	Air Base	West of Baghdad
Camp Taji		Taji
Taqaddum	Air Base	Central Iraq, 47 km west of Baghdad
Camp Fallujuh		West of Baghdad
Al Asad	Air Base	About 120 miles west of Baghdad
Camp Speicher		Tikrit Area (Northern Iraq)
Al Qayyara : Ibid and also: Embassy of		Mosul Area - 50 Miles southeast of Mosul
the UAE in	Air Field	Mosul Area
Camp Marez		Kirkuk Area
Camp Renegade		Between Irbil and Kirkuk
Unknown Name	Air Base	14 Miles southeast of Nasiriyah
Al Talil		4 Miles from the Iranian border near the Iraqi town
Patrol Base Shocker - Badrai		of Badrah

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* This base is probably the Egyptian sea and air base at Ras Banas on the Red Sea. According to a Congressional Budget Office study, the United States spent 91 million dollars in 1983 to construct the facility as one of five main U.S. facilities for the deployment of U.S. Rapid Deployment Forces. Legally, the Ras Banas facility remains an Egyptian base because no written agreement with the U.S. has been signed. Source: Congressional Budget Office (May 1983). "Rapid Deployment Forces: Policy and Budgetary Implications", p. 60. http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/50xx/doc5057/doc07a.pdf (accessed: November 2010). Information derived from: Military Construction Authorization Fiscal Year 1983, S. Report No. 97-440; and Military Construction Authorization Act, 1983, H.R. Report No. 97-525.

♦ This base is probably the Camp Arifjan base, a vast logistics base for the U.S. military in the desert south of the Kuwaiti capital. See: Reuters (28 October 2010). "Kuwaiti court upholds acquittals in U.S. base plot", http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE69R2UW20101028 (accessed November 2010).

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Annex 2
Selected Demographic Indicators for North and South Mediterranean Countries

Table 1: South Mediterranean Countries:

Country	Population (1000s) Y 2010	Population Growth Rate (%) Y 2010-2015		Population Aged 0-14				Population Aged 15-24				TOTAL Population Aged 0-24			
				Y 2010		Y 2015		Y 2010		Y 2015		Y 2010		Y 2015	
				(1000s)	(%)	(1000s)	(%)	(1000s)		(1000s)	(%)	(1000s)	(%)	(1000s)	(%)
Algeria	35,423	1.45	2.26	9,560	27,0	10,157	26,7	7,246		6,468	17.0	16,806	47.5	16,625	43.7
Egypt	84,474	1.66	2.68	27,149	32,1	28,519	31,1	17,030		16,268	17.7	44,179	52.3	44,787	48.8
Jordan	6,472	1.44	2.81	2197	33,9	2,252	32,4	1,322		1,341	19.3	3,519	54.3	3,593	51.7
Libya	6,546	1.79	2.47	1,970	30,1	2,104	29,4	1,133		1,139	15.9	3,103	47.4	3,243	45.3
	3,366	2.07	4.07	1,320	39,2	1,411	37,8	676		740	19.8	1,996	59.3	2,151	57.6
Morocco	32,381	1.17	2.26	9,078	28,0	9,204	26,8	6,376		6,086	17.7	15,454	47.7	15,290	44.5
Occupied	4,409	2.87	4.50	1,962	44.5	2,133	41.9	879		1,053	20,7	2,841	64.4	3,188	62.6
Tunisia	10,374	0.96	1.82	2,370	22,8	2,392	22,0	2,001		1,756	16.1	4,371	42.1	4,148	38.1

Table 2: Selected North Mediterranean Countries:

Country	Population (1000s) Y 2010	Population Growth Rate (%) Y 2010-2015	Total Fertility Y 2010-2015	Population Aged 0-14				Population Aged 15-24				Population Aged 0-24			
				Y 2010		Y 2015		Y 2010		Y 2015		Y 2010		Y 2015	
				(1000s)	(%)	(1000s)	(%)	(1000s)	(%)	(1000s)	(%)	(1000s)	(%)	(1000s)	(%)
France	62,637	0.40	1.85	11,518	18,4	11,574	18,1	7,649	12.2	7,510		19,167	30.6	19,084	29.9
Germany	82,057	-0.17	1.34	10,955	13,4	10,277	12,6	9,172	11.2	8,328		20,127	24.6	18,605	22.8
Greece	11,183	0.14	1.41	1,589	14,2	1,585	14,1	1,185	10.6	1,115	9.9	2,774	24.8	2,700	24.0
Italy	60,098	0.17	1.41	8,516	14,2	8,507	14,0	5,886	9.8	5,794	9.6	14,402	24.0	14,301	23.6
Portugal	10,732	0.10	1.39	1,630	15,2	1,582	14,7	1,172	10.9	1,129		2,802	26.1	2,711	25.2
Spain	45,317	0.82	1.56	6,772	14,9	7,371	15,6	4,710	10.4	4,517	9.6	11,482	25.3	11,888	25.2
UK	61,899	0.52	1.85	10,748	17,4	10,942	17,2	8,147	13.2	7,978		18,895	30.6	18,920	29.8

Source:

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List of Abbreviations

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DIB	Defense Institution Building
EU	European Union
EU JUST LEX	European Union Integrated Rule of Law Mission for Iraq
FMS	Foreign Military Sale
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
ICI	Istanbul Cooperation Initiative
ICP	Individual Cooperation Programme
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organization
MD	Mediterranean Dialogue
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MICC	Mediterranean dialogue, Istanbul cooperation initiative and Contract Countries
MNNA	Major Non-NATO Ally
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDC	NATO Defense College
NRCC	NATO Regional Cooperation Course
NTM-I	NATO Training Mission – Iraq
PASP	Political Affairs and Security Policy
PfP	Partnership for Peace
RDF	Rapid Deployment Forces
SDI	Strategic Defense Initiative
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
TMOU	Tactical Memorandum of Understanding
TSCTP	Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership
TTIU	Terrorist Threat Intelligence Unit
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USCENTCOM	United States Central Command