

THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION IN THE DEFENCE POLICIES OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS

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Introduction

In the last few years, Europe's interest in the Mediterranean region and in the Middle Eastern and Maghreb sub-regions has been growing carefully but steadily. The Euro-Mediterranean conference which was held in Barcelona on the 27th and 28th November 1996 and the various other initiatives and follow-ups which the European Union, Weu, Nato and its member countries have developed since then demonstrates this and is setting the ground for a new and comprehensive political, economic and human Euro-Mediterranean partnership. Security related aspects have also been added to the menus at many negotiating tables, not so much because southern Mediterranean countries were keen to do this, but because there is a growing awareness in Europe that security and stability on its southern periphery are of fundamental importance for the whole continent.

This paper starts from three basic assumptions. First, despite the fact that there is now a general pessimism among those who favour deeper European political and military integration, the possibility still exists that at the current Intergovernmental Conference (igc) on European Union major progress could be achieved towards a *common defence policy* in addition to the existing Common Foreign and Security Policy (cfsp), and, beyond that, perhaps, towards a common defence in the future². However, looking at the various declarations released at the occasion of several Ministerial Councils of the European Union, weu, Nato and the osce in 1995 and 1996, it becomes evident that the debate about security in the Mediterranean and its implications for the development of a European security and defence identity (esdi) is still in a relatively early stage and far from being developed

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² see for example Laurence Martin & John Roper (eds): "Towards a Common Defence Policy", weu Institute for Security Studies, Paris, 1995.

properly. Although it is true that some progress has been made recently,³ Europeans are still far from a common and comprehensive assessment of all the potential challenges, risks and threats to their own security and stability which could in future arise from the Mediterranean region.

Second, and stemming from what has just been said, in the absence of a common assessment of potential threats, risks and challenges⁴ to their own security and stability, it will be very difficult for Europeans to decide over an appropriate collective or common political and/or military reaction to a potential crisis in the Mediterranean. The European involvement in Operation Desert Storm represents more of an exception rather than the rule in that regard, and the crises in Rwanda and Zaire tell us more about limitations and constraints rather than about the potentials for action. When it comes to an assessment of the security situation in the Mediterranean region in general and of its Eastern and Western subregions in particular, differences of view among Europeans continue to exist - both in terms of perceptions and in terms of proposals for policies. One way to look at this set of issues and its implications for European policy in the Mediterranean is by taking a closer look at the various *national* defence policies of European governments, because it is also there that some of the distinctions among governments are shaped and which will inevitably characterise the debate over collective or common European action in potential future crises in and around the Mediterranean region.

Third, there still is a tendency in both academic and political circles to perceive the evolution of the southern Mediterranean region and its implications for European security and stability in a distorted way. Potential dangers to the European continent are often overemphasised by some and underestimated if not ignored at all by others. This has for example been the case in connection with the assessment of the spillover resulting from the

³ For example in the European Union in the context of the follow-up initiatives to the Barcelona conference and the appointment of a special envoy of the European Union to the Middle East, in weu with the creation of Eurofor and Euromarfor, and in Nato in the context of the debate about the development of a European security and defence identity *within the Alliance*

⁴ 'Threats, risks and challenges' were introduced in Nato terminology for the first time at the end of the Cold War, when one had to find more effective diplomatic ways to describe the new and more relaxed relations between East and West. This terminology is also useful for an assessment of relations across the Mediterranean

internal situation in countries such as Algeria, Egypt or Libya, and the consequence of such divisions among Europeans often result in long and inconclusive discussions and rarely lead to some forms of common action.

It is for this set of reasons that the idea emerged for a paper analysing the defence policies of European Union member countries on the Mediterranean region in general and on the Maghreb in particular. In addition to the analysis of national defence policies, collective and common efforts of the European Union, *weu and Nato have also been addressed. One might ask why more attention was not given to other security institutions such as the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe or the United Nations which also play an important role in the region. The *osce for example has started a dialogue with some 'non-participating Mediterranean states' in December 1994, and at its summit in Lisbon on 2-3 December 1996 it decided to deepen this dialogue and to invite 'Mediterranean partners' to participate in its activities.⁵ Similarly, the United Nations too play a significant role in the Mediterranean region, and at present there are still military personnel present in various zones of the Mediterranean region, from the Western Sahara over Cyprus to the Middle East.⁶ However, both organisations are not analysed in more detail here because the aim of the paper is to concentrate on *European* perceptions and policies with regard to the region and because of the fact that neither the Osce nor the United Nations are as inherently linked to the process of *European* political and military integration as the Eu, Weu and Nato are since the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty⁷.

The paper looks at the defence policies of European Union member countries as well as of the Eu, Weu and Nato by concentrating on those aspects which have or could have implications for the security and stability in and across the Mediterranean. Because of technical and time constraints, and because of difficulties to get access to comparable material, only six countries were analysed in more detail: France, Germany, the United

⁵ Osce Lisbon Summit Declaration, 3rd December 1996

⁶ see for example the annual updates on "United Nations peace-keeping" published by the U.N.

⁷ this delicate relationship between the three institutions is for example evidenced by the fact that Weu is considered in terms of both a 'defence component of the European Union' and as a 'European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance'

Kingdom, Italy, Spain and Portugal. This list is insofar incomplete as it excludes not only Mediterranean countries such as Greece and Turkey but also several smaller Eu states such as the Benelux countries, Denmark and Ireland, as well as the 'Eu newcomers' Austria, Sweden and Finland. However, and despite these limits, the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the six countries are insofar representative as they have a major impact on the development of a collective or common European defence policy with regard to the Mediterranean. Finally, but only to the extent that this has been possible, the various sections on countries and institutions distinguish between (a) *what is said* in terms of perceptions and policies on the Mediterranean and the Maghreb and (b) *what is being done* when it comes to the planned restructuring of armed forces which could eventually be employed for various missions in the region. Although in some cases reference is made to the general evolution of policy since the early 1990s, both the section on countries and the section on institutions concentrate mostly on developments which have occurred during the last three years.

The Mediterranean and the Maghreb in the defence policies
of European Union member countries

France

More than twenty years after the last appearance of a White Paper on national defence in 1972, in March 1994 the French government presented a new *Livre Blanc sur la Défense 1994* to the public⁸. The new White Paper states that the prime objective of national defence policy is to defend French interests, which are further categorised into 'vital interests', 'strategic interests' and 'global interests': while 'vital interests' are mainly defined in terms of the integrity of the national territory as well as of its overseas departments and territories, 'strategic interests' can be defended through peacekeeping activities⁹ in and around Europe as well as through the maintenance of open channels for trade and communications. Finally, 'global interests' are more generally linked to the international role and responsibilities of

⁸Livre Blanc sur la Défense 1994, Union générale d'Éditions, Paris, 1994

⁹ the French expression 'maintien de la paix' does not only refer to Un-type traditional peacekeeping but also includes the possibility for peace-enforcement operations

France in the defence of human rights and democracy¹⁰. The Mediterranean and the Maghreb are explicitly mentioned in the section dealing with 'strategic interests', and the Livre Blanc states that these are linked to "le maintien de la paix sur le continent européen et dans les zones qui le bordent à l'Est et au Sud, l'importance stratégique du bassin Méditerranéen et du Moyen-Orient étant particulière"¹¹. The fact that the United Nations are explicitly mentioned only in connection with 'global interests' (but not with 'strategic interests') points to a French view that Paris should be able and free to decide over a national involvement in peacekeeping or other enforcement operations also in the absence of a prior mandate from the U.N. Security Council¹². This principle must obviously be applicable to all regions of the world, Mediterranean included.

In another section the Livre Blanc gives further indirect insight on how the Mediterranean region is perceived. Describing six different scenarios in which French armed forces could hypothetically be engaged in the future, the book distinguishes between:

- (1) regional conflicts which do not endanger vital interests,
- (2) regional conflicts which could endanger vital interests,
- (3) a threat to the integrity of overseas national territory,
- (4) the implementation of bilateral defence agreements,
- (5) operations in favor of peace and international law, and
- (6) the re-emergence of a major threat against Western Europe¹³.

The Mediterranean and the Middle East are explicitly mentioned as a "zone d'intérêt prioritaire" for scenario (1) in connection with 'strategic interests', and reference is made to both regions in connection with scenario (4), in which "la France conservera la capacité

¹⁰ the third category of 'global interests' is particularly linked to the fact that France is a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council

¹¹ Livre Blanc, op. cit., page 50; in this section particular reference is made to Algeria because of the growing French dependence on gas imported from that country.

¹² the Livre Blanc however adds that "le Conseil de Sécurité est la seule autorité internationale habilitée à décider de mesures de contrainte ou d'emploi de la force à l'égard d'un Etat, en dehors des actions de légitime défense individuelle ou collective relevant de l'article 51 de la Charte" (page 72)

¹³ Livre Blanc, op. cit., pages 109-118

d'agir seule"¹⁴, and with scenario (5), where a French contribution is only envisaged in connection with a United Nations or Osce mandate and within a multinational military context. Both the Mediterranean and the Middle East are explicitly mentioned in connection with scenario (2) dealing with regional conflicts which could endanger French vital interests: both French armed forces involved in peacekeeping operations in the region as well as French national territory could be put under risk if the regional conflict included a hostile state possessing nuclear weapons. However, the book adds that this scenario does not seem likely for the near-term future¹⁵.

Finally, it is worth noting that the current French government is less concerned about traditional defence-related missions and more about humanitarian missions and peacekeeping or peace-enforcement operations abroad. President Chirac has followed this up in 1996 by announcing a radical reform of the French armed forces which will, among others, replace the current conscript system with a professional army of 350.000 men after 2001 and build up a rapid reaction force that can be airlifted quickly to world trouble spots whenever and wherever needed¹⁶. France has also decided, together with Italy, Spain and Portugal, to set up a land force (Eurofor) and a maritime force (Euromarfor) which will be part of the forces answerable to Weu: although these new forces could obviously also be tasked with traditional common defence missions anywhere in Europe, it seems rather more likely that they will be particularly trained and equipped for peacekeeping and similar operations and that their primary area of operation will be in the Mediterranean. The French assessment of the growingly strategic importance of the Mediterranean is likely one major (although not the only) reason why France strained its relations with the United States in 1996 by proposing that Europeans should assume the prime responsibility over the allied southern command in Naples - an issue which is unlikely to be resolved before the planned Nato Summit in Madrid in July 1997.

¹⁴ Livre Blanc, op. cit., page 114

¹⁵ see Livre Blanc, op. cit., pages 111-112

¹⁶ President Chirac said that "nous aurons une armée qui sera au moins aussi efficace que l'armée anglaise", une des "meilleures du monde" (Agence France Press, 23 February 1996)

Summing up, one can say that, for both external and domestic reasons¹⁷, France perceives the Mediterranean in general and the Maghreb in particular not so much in terms of a potential threat against its vital interests, but rather in terms of an area where there might be further need for humanitarian missions, peacekeeping and other enforcement operations, possibly - but not *necessarilly* - under a mandate of the United Nations. French armed forces are already quite well prepared for potential operations in the Mediterranean region, both in terms of manpower and in terms of equipment, and it is evident that the current radical restructuring programmes will further enhance this readiness.

Germany

A few weeks after the appearance of the French Livre Blanc, in April 1994 the German Federal Ministry of Defence presented its own *White Paper*¹⁸. The paper distinguishes between two primary missions for the Bundeswehr in the future: first, contribute to international crisis and conflict management together with its allies and partners, and, secondly, be capable of defending Germany and the NATO area with adequate forces, together with its allies. Although the two types of missions are not ranked in terms of priorities, it is quite significant that humanitarian missions, peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations¹⁹ are mentioned in the first place, i.e. before traditional defence-oriented missions. The traditional German attention in terms of foreign and security policy towards Central and Eastern Europe, Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (Cis) is explained at large, but the sections dealing with the Mediterranean region are rather slim: here, the Mediterranean is only mentioned in relation to 'regional developments', together with India, China and Japan. The White Paper states that "developments in the Mediterranean basin play an essential role in the context of pan-European security and

¹⁷ for example because of the substantial Algerian and Maghrebi population living in France

¹⁸ White Paper 1994: The Security of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Bundeswehr now and in the years ahead, Federal Ministry of Defence, Bonn, April 1994 (abridged version); a full version, translated into french, was also published

¹⁹ the German White Paper makes a distinction between peace keeping, peace enforcement and peace making: the latter means ending a conflict 'through peaceful means' only, although it is not specified what that means. 'Peace making' has a different meaning in Weu for example, because it explicitly includes the possibility of peace-enforcement.

stability", and it points to the problem of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as well as to the fact that North-African countries are currently increasing their conventional arsenals. The recent Franco-German 'Common Concept' takes this up, adding that one of the objectives of their common security and defence policy will be "de préserver et de renforcer la stabilité du continent européen et des zones qui le bordent, y compris le bassin méditerranéen, ainsi que celle des espaces essentiels à l'activité économique et la liberté des échanges de nos pays"²⁰.

In 1994 the German government made clear that there are a series of international constraints for a German participation in humanitarian missions, peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations: "Germany will not employ armed forces unless it is engaged in combined action with allies and partners within the scope of a United Nations mission"²¹. Shortly after the publication of the White Paper, on 12 July 1994 the German Constitutional Court decided that, under the condition that parliamentary approval is guaranteed, the Basic Law (Grundgesetz) allows a participation of German armed forces in military operations outside the Nato area. The German government obviously recognized this decision, but Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel added that the possibility of a German participation in peacekeeping should not be overstressed: "Germany cannot and will not play the world's policeman and its military options will remain limited in factual and political terms"²². Minister Kinkel confirmed this view in February 1996, adding that Bonn was ready to contribute to U.N. rapid reaction forces which would have to fly to world troublespots at short notice, but that this contribution will be quite limited, trying "first of all to take part in the civil sphere, with minesweeping, medical care and psychological treatment"²³.

Probably because of a French input during the drafting process, the recent 'Common Concept' avoids the question whether a U.N. mandate will be a precondition for a

²⁰ the 'Concept commun franco-allemand en matière de sécurité et de défense' was reprinted in *Le Monde*, 30 Janvier 1997

²¹ White Paper, op. cit., page 12

²² *Nato Review* 5, October 1994, page 4

²³ Reuter news agency, 19th June 1996

Franco-German participation in peacekeeping operations, but it adds that such operations should not contradict with the principles of the U.N. Charta and of the European Union's common foreign, security and defence policy²⁴. However, despite the fact that there might be some degree of ambiguity in public declarations and statements, it seems rather unlikely that, at least for the next five to ten years, Germany would agree to participate in international peacekeeping operations in the absence of a prior mandate of the United Nations. Bonn's recent decision, in December 1996, to participate in the international NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegowina was taken because of the existence of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1033, and it would have been very difficult to have German forces participating in that operation in the absence of such a mandate. The chances and limitations for a German participation in potential future peacekeeping or peace-enforcement operations in the Mediterranean region will equally depend on such premises.

Coming to the question whether and how far German armed forces are well equipped and prepared for the new tasks and missions lying ahead and which could have implications for the Mediterranean region, the White Paper admits that, although the Bundeswehr can generally be said to have sufficient advanced equipment for the task of national defence, "what is still missing is an ability to participate effectively in international crisis management activities", and therefore "the immediate concern is one of establishing an appropriate national inter-service military crisis reaction capability"²⁵. The German government, which does not for example currently dispose over highly mobile and flexible rapid action forces, estimates that for future U.N.-mandated crisis management operations military forces and equipment will need to be suited for extra-European climatic and geographic conditions and that there will be need for mobility to deploy and support force contingents over long distances by sea and air. In February 1996 German Defence Minister Volker R  he presented a modernization plan for the German armed forces to the Parliament, emphasizing that between now and 2009 the equipment for crisis reaction forces will be completely modernised. Recently the announcement was made that, starting with 1st April 1997, the

²⁴ "contribuer, dans le monde,   la pr servation de la paix et de la s curit  internationale conform ment aux principes de la Charte des Nations unies et aux objectifs de la politique  trang re et de s curit  commune de l'Union europ enne", Le Monde, 30 Janvier 1997

²⁵ White Paper, op. cit., page 16

German army will dispose over an elite unit of 1.000 men which will be equipped with special weapons for the liberation of hostages abroad, and that in 1999 more than 37.000 soldiers will be available for a rapid reaction force²⁶.

Summing up, one can say that the major restructuring (or catch-up) process which is currently under way will no doubt put the German armed forces in a much better preparedness for future U.N.-mandated peacekeeping operations abroad. The Mediterranean region does not play a prominent role in current defence planning, but this does not mean that Germany would not be properly trained and equipped to participate in multinational operations in the region should there need arise. However, it is most likely that Germany would agree to such operations only under the condition that there is a prior mandate from the United Nations. Should this not be the case, one cannot exclude that this could also hinder the (at this moment quite remote) possibility for joint European collective responses, for example through the European Union, Weu or Nato.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom presents an annual report on current and planned commitments, capabilities and resources for its armed forces to both Parliament and a wider public opinion. As in previous years, the most recent *Statement on the Defence Estimates 1996* again distinguishes between three main defence roles for its armed forces:

- Defence Role One: ensure the protection and security of the United Kingdom and of Dependent Territories in the absence of a major external threat
- Defence Role Two: insure against a major external threat to the United Kingdom and its allies
- Defence Role Three: contribute to promoting the United Kingdom's wider security interests through the maintainance of international peace and stability"²⁷.

The Mediterranean region is mentioned in connection to Defence Role One because

²⁶ Agence France Press, 17th September 1996

²⁷ Statement on the Defence Estimates 1996 - Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Defence by Command of Her Majesty, London, May 1996, pages 106-109

of the fact that the United Kingdom retains a military presence in Cyprus (e.g. a Forward Mounting Base for (not specified) "operations in the Middle East and North Africa") and because of its responsibility for the defence and internal security of Gibraltar²⁸. Humanitarian missions as well as peacekeeping and other military enforcement operations abroad - and therefore potentially also in the Mediterranean region - are mostly mentioned in connection to Defence Role Three. It is also worth noting that, not surprisingly, the British government wants to be free to decide over a particular military operation on its own, i.e. also in a situation where there would be no prior U.N. consensus or mandate: "For some, the United Kingdom is likely to have to act alone. For others, operations are *likely* to be based on a multinational response, *probably* under United Nations auspices. The armed forces need to be able to produce a graduated range of military options (..) as circumstances demand"²⁹.

The *Statement on Defence Estimates* gives also a good overview over the preparedness of British armed forces, and it lists all exercises which were held in 1995, including those in the Mediterranean region: during that year the United Kingdom participated in six maritime, submarine, amphibious and air exercises along the northern shores of the Mediterranean basin, and it also held three separate exercises in Morocco, Cyprus and Egypt³⁰. Although a major restructuring programme (called 'Options for Change' and announced in 1990) was finally completed in September 1994, the defence equipment programme remains under review, and in August 1996 London announced that it will be forming a Joint Rapid Deployment Force capable of reacting to emergency situations worldwide. Additional decisions over important future projects contributing to improve the capability to deal with the challenges of the twenty-first century are expected to be announced soon³¹.

Generally speaking, and although the Mediterranean region and its Eastern and

²⁸ *ibid.*, page 107

²⁹ Statement 1996, *op. cit.*, page 109

³⁰ *ibid.*, pages 33 and 38

³¹ for example with regard to Eurofighter, new maritime patrol aircraft and new air-launched stand-off weapons; for further details see Statement 1996, pages 53ff; Atlantic News, Nr. 2840, 8 August 1996

Western subregions are not particularly emphasized in terms of declaratory policy, British armed forces are quite well prepared for both traditional and new types of potential missions in the area - most probably, although not necessarily, under a mandate from the United Nations³².

Italy

It is now more than six years that various governments have issued new versions of the new Italian defence model - the '*Nuovo Modello di Difesa*' - without succeeding to get it finally approved by both chambers in Parliament. Although there are a series of reasons why this never happened, the fact that several governments have succeeded one another did not facilitate the process. The former government of 'technocrats' headed by Prime Minister Lamberto Dini had stated since its inception in January 1995 that it would do all it could to get the new defence model finally approved by both chambers³³, but again without success. The task is now in the hands of the new coalition government headed by Prime Minister Romano Prodi, who took power after the general elections in Spring 1996, but it remains to be seen whether a final parliamentary approval will be achieved this time.

In the most recent unclassified document on Italian defence policy - the '*Aggiornamento del Modello di Difesa*' - the Mediterranean region is only mentioned in rather general terms, but there is no precise description of what kind of potential risks and challenges could stem from the region and how they could affect Italy's security and stability. However, as in most other European countries, in Rome too there is a general recognition of the new types of missions and challenges lying ahead and the resulting need to modernize national armed forces accordingly. A number of high-ranking militaries are increasingly

³² while in 1993 there were about 7000 British Service personnel engaged in various operations in support of United Nations Security Council resolutions around the world, in 1996 - mainly due to former Yugoslavia - this number has increased to almost 13.000, and this despite the warning that it would "be unrealistic for us to contribute to every operation which the United Nations undertakes, still less to be the largest contributor when we do take part. (...) We need to balance our involvement in peacekeeping against our other commitments" (Statement 1994, page 18)

³³ according to many observers, the two most important laws associated to the *Nuovo Modello di Difesa* are those dealing with the reform of the leadership and command structures as well as with the reform of the relationship between volunteers and conscripts

worried that the Army, Navy and Air Force will no longer be able to cope with the missions with which they are being tasked, and some rather strong statements in this sense were also made in public³⁴. The new government however remains determined to continue with the modernization programme despite all budgetary constraints, for example by equipping the aircraft carrier 'Garibaldi' with Sea Harriers, by replacing a part of its old and largely obsolete fleet of F-104s with more modern Tornados (which are leased for a period of 10 years from the United Kingdom in view of the acquisition of the new Eurofighter 2000) and by supporting the Future Large Aircraft project which would allow a rapid deployment of Italian troops and equipment also far away from national borders. In this context it is worth mentioning that decisions over a participation in peacekeeping operations and other types of missions are also affected by budgetary constraints, in particular because of the fact that, unlike in some other countries of the European Union, there is neither a specific mechanism nor a separate fund which provides the financing of these operations³⁵.

Despite all these constraints of a political and budgetary nature, Italy has nevertheless been able to contribute to a series of defence policy initiatives which could in future have implications for security and stability in the Mediterranean region. For example, since 1992 Italy participated in yearly trilateral exercises, together with France and Spain, which among others simulated the evacuation of civilians from an area of crisis somewhere in the Mediterranean³⁶. These exercises have paved the way for the decision announced in May 1995 to create a land force (Eurofor) and a maritime force (Euromarfor) which will be part of the forces answerable to Weu. Although it is true that neither the annual exercises nor the newly created land and maritime forces are exclusively linked to potential missions in the

³⁴ a former Chief of the Navy has stated in public that "in light of the current defence programmes, I should say, in all frankness and without exaggerating, that there is no future for the Navy" (Il Sole 24 Ore, 8 March 1995); a similar statement was made by the Chief of the Army, saying that, "reduction after reduction, we could also close this Army down" (Il Sole 24 Ore, 24 June 1995) (translation:rz)

³⁵ in a hearing in the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, the Italian Permanent Representative to the United Nations underlined this problem by disclosing that, because of these budgetary difficulties, Italy had not been able to send specially trained officers to neutralize Italian-made land-mines in Mozambique (Senate, Foreign Affairs Committee, 14 June 1995, page 32)

³⁶ these exercises were 'Farfadet 92' (held in France), 'Ardente 93' (held in Italy), 'Tramontana 94' (held in Spain), and 'Mistral 95' (held in France)

Mediterranean region, there is no doubt that Italy and the other partner countries (France, Spain and Portugal) consider the region as an area of priority in terms of potential future operations. Finally, it is also worth mentioning that, as other European partners, Italy too has signed a series of bilateral defence cooperation agreements with various southern Mediterranean riparian states (for example with Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt) which also touch issues such as military training and assistance, and that in 1980 Italy agreed to provide some kind of 'security guarantee' to the Republic of Malta in exchange for its independence and neutrality³⁷.

Summing up, there is no doubt that developments in and around the Mediterranean are followed by Italy with particular attention and that Rome is currently actively engaged in promoting a series of multinational initiatives (for example within the United Nations, the European Union, Weu, Nato and the Osce) aimed at increasing security and stability in the region. However, political instability and budgetary constraints have so far not facilitated the country's security and defence policy vis-a-vis the region, and it remains to be seen to what extent this will change under the new coalition government under the new Prime Minister Romano Prodi.

Spain

In May 1992 former Defence Minister Garcia Vargas presented the '*Directiva de Defensa Nacional 1/92*' to the Parliament. This document, which had been declassified for the first time and it still valid today, was the first and most important one of a series aimed at redefining the roles and missions of Spanish armed forces in the new post Cold-War environment³⁸. Although this process should have been concluded at some time in 1995 with

³⁷ however, it could be argued to what extent this 'security guarantee' would be binding in case of necessity: the agreement in fact states that, should the Maltese sovereignty, independence and neutrality be threatened, Italy would "consult (..) with the Government of the Republic of Malta" and "adopt any other measure, not excluding military assistance, it will consider necessary to meet the situation" (see Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana, no. 112, 23 April 1981, page 2673)

³⁸ other documents were elaborated in the following years, for example the '*Directiva de Defensa Militar*' in December

the adoption of a 'Plan Estrategico Conjunto' (a new longer-term oriented major defence policy document), cabinet reshuffles in the Socialist government in 1995 and 1996 and the political elections in Spring 1996 which brought to power a new center-right coalition headed by Prime Minister José Maria Aznar have delayed the parliamentary debate about its future defence policy for quite some time.

The *Directiva* distinguished between four main objectives of Spanish defence policy: 1. guarantee the sovereignty and independence of the country, 2. protect the population and (not further specified) 'vital interests' of the nation, 3. contribute to collective security and defence with Spain's allies, and 4. contribute to establishing peaceful relations with all nations, and in particular with neighbouring countries³⁹. The document however does not give much insight into how Spain would politically and militarily respond to a particular crisis situation in the Mediterranean, and neither do the various reassurances given by government officials that Spain does not perceive a military threat from the South⁴⁰. In any case, because of its geographic vicinity to North Africa and because of the existence of the two Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, there should be no doubt that the Mediterranean region as a whole will continue to play an increasingly important role in Spanish defence policy⁴¹.

Spain is among those Nato countries with a GDP percentage for defence expenditures

1992, the new 'Concepto Estrategico' in 1994, the 'Plan Norte' on the restructuring of the Army, also in 1994, and the 'Plan Estrategico Conjunto' in the Spring of 1995; the new government under Prime Minister Aznar has recently announced a new *Directiva* to be presented to Parliament during the first half of 1997

³⁹ see *Revista Espanola de Defensa*, nr. 52, June 1992 (annex)

⁴⁰ former Defence Minister Garcia Vargas has for example told Parliament that "estamos de acuerdo en que amenazas directas de caracter militar no existen" (Congreso de los Diputados, Comision de Defensa, 19 May 1992, page 13381); in a conference sponsored by the International Herald Tribune in Madrid in November 1996 the new Defence Minister Eduardo Serra has said that "we need to turn our eyes to the south after looking eastward for the past 50 years" - an expression which could be interpreted as a signal that Madrid is becoming more concerned about potential threats from the region.

⁴¹ former Defence Minister Garcia Vargas has for example told Parliament that the Spanish presence in this geographic area "no debe ser dividida diferenciando el Mediterraneo occidental del oriental, sino que ha de ser considerada como un espacio indivisible" (Congreso de los Diputados, Comision de Defensa, 19 May 1992, page 13363)

below allied agreed figures⁴². However, despite these budgetary constraints, in 1992 a Rapid Reaction Force was set up, and the Army, Navy and Air Force are currently in a process of reorganization which will provide them with equipment facilitating their participation in multinational contingencies, for example in the context of Nato and Weu. In the words of new Defence Minister Eduardo Serra: "Las amenazas y los riesgos que hoy tiene nuestra Patria exigen un ejército bien dotado, muy operativo, muy móvil, muy capacitado tecnológicamente y más reducido"⁴³. Madrid also participates, among others, in annual military exercises with France and Italy which led to the establishment of a land force (Eurofor) and a maritime force (Euromarfor) in 1995 and 1996 - forces which according to various analysts are likely to be used in future potential operations in the Mediterranean region. The new government headed by Prime Minister Aznar has announced in May 1996 that it is determined to continue this modernization and adaptation process, and it has for example proposed a gradual replacement of the conscript system with a professional Army by 2003, as well as a full integration into NATO's integrated military structures.

Summing up, Spain is still working on a new integrated force model which will facilitate pluriannual defence planning and allow a more transparent and contingency-oriented definition of its highly constrained defence budget. Madrid also suffers from a weak parliamentary majority which might not facilitate the reorganization process of its defence policy. Finally, and also because of this relative 'weakness' in terms of defence readiness, the Spanish government is supportive of policy initiatives by various multilateral institutions (for example the European Union, Weu and Nato) aimed at developing a stable and fruitful security dialogue with southern riparian non-member countries.

Portugal

In June 1994, the Portuguese Ministry of Defence presented a publication entitled '*A Defesa de Portugal 1994*' to a wider public opinion. In this document, the government gives a relatively wide definition of what defence means: defence here does not only relate to the

⁴² see Atlantic News, nr. 2681, 22 December 1994, annex, page 5

⁴³ Revista Espanola de Defensa, nr. 102, June 1996, page 13

traditional defence of the geographic boundaries of the national territory and dependent seas but also includes the pursuit of wider - although not further defined - 'national objectives'⁴⁴. The document further deals with 'new internal and international' missions: although humanitarian missions, peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations are explicitly mentioned⁴⁵, there is no hint to the question whether these operations would have to be agreed upon in the context of a United Nations mandate or whether Lissabon could decide to participate in such operations also in the absence of such a prior mandate.

The Mediterranean region in general and the Maghreb in particular are followed by the Defence Ministry with great attention. Portugal has signed several bilateral defence cooperation agreements with southern riparian countries, for example with Morocco in 1993 and with Tunisia in 1995. The *Defesa de Portugal* expresses particular concern because of "social, political and religious tensions" in the Maghreb⁴⁶, but the publication adds for clarification purposes that Portugal does not at this stage have any other interests except those of contributing to the development of regional security in the region⁴⁷. Portugal is in favour of a deeper foreign and security policy involvement of European institutions in the Mediterranean and Maghreb regions, and it is probably also because of this assessment that the decision was taken to participate - together with France, Italy and Spain - in the Eurofor and Euromarfor initiatives. Former Defence Minister Nogueira for example publicly suggested that a program similar to Nato's Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative should also be adopted for the Maghreb region - an issue which is also supported in similar terms by the

⁴⁴ see Ministério da Defesa Nacional: "A Defesa de Portugal 1994", Lisboa, Junho 1994, page 37: "defesa nacional (...) é um conceito amplo e consensual (...), por forma a manter e reforçar a segurança e a criar condições para prevenção e combate a quaisquer ameaças externas que, directa ou indirectamente, se oponham à consecução dos objectivos nacionais"

⁴⁵ "São tarefas de gestão de crises, de apoio à manutenção da paz, humanitárias e de cooperação, que se executam fora das fronteiras nacionais, por forças conjuntas ou combinadas, integradas ou no, em operações de organizações internacionais", in: A Defesa de Portugal 1994, op. cit., page 72; although peace-enforcement operations are not explicitly mentioned, the distinction between peacekeeping and peace-enforcement is made in the 1993 'Conceito Estratégico de Defesa Nacional' (page 9)

⁴⁶ "representam um factor de ponderação na vertente externa da política de defesa nacional", op. cit., page 48

⁴⁷ "não tem presentemente ali outros interesses que não sejam os de contribuir para o desenvolvimento e bem-estar das populações e para a segurança global da zona magrebina", in: ibidem, page 48

new Socialist government elected in 1995⁴⁸.

Despite the strong budgetary constraints which Portugal is facing together with most other European countries, some equipment of the armed forces seems pretty much at the end of its lifespan, and this is one of the main reasons why several expensive equipment programmes have so far survived the scissors. A Portuguese rapid action force, the 'brigada ligeira de intervenção', might be operative before the end of 1997, and other particularly costly equipment programmes will be the replacement of the three 'Albacora' submarines starting in 2001, a project strongly favoured by the Navy, as well as the renewal and augmentation of the Air Force's fleet of search-and-rescue helicopters and of F-16s⁴⁹.

⁴⁸ Fernando Nogueira: 'As opções e as razões de uma nova política de defesa nacional, in: Instituto da Defesa Nacional', in: Nação e defesa, Nr. 71, Julho-Setembro 1994, Lisboa

⁴⁹ one of the new government's defence priorities is the definition of a new five-year procurement programme to start in 1998; see interview with Defence Minister Antonio Vitorino, in: Defense News, 25th November 1996