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Research Paper

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Editorial

Un an après le sommet d'Istanbul, la vie internationale a repris son cours stratégique heurté. Au Sud du continent européen les événements souvent tragiques se succèdent, notamment au Moyen-Orient: va et vient au Liban et en Syrie, évolutions combinées de l'autorité palestinienne et du gouvernement israélien, désordres irakiens, tensions iraniennes, etc. En Méditerranée, la vie n'est pas non plus un long fleuve tranquille et la querelle sahraouie a repris de la vigueur.

Les mesures adoptées pour renforcer le Dialogue méditerranéen (MD) et lancer l'Initiative de Coopération d'Istanbul (ICI) en juin dernier s'inscrivent désormais sur ce fond de tableau perturbé et évolutif. Pour détailler les conditions d'application et renforcer la pertinence de ces entreprises, les chercheurs du collège les plus impliqués dans les dossiers du "Sud" ont associé leurs analyses.

Laure Borgomano-Loup, examine le devenir du Dialogue méditerranéen de l'OTAN qui, dix ans après son lancement, un an après sa revitalisation, mérite plus que jamais l'attention de ses 33 partenaires et réclame sans doute une nouvelle perspective. Le mérite de sa contribution est de rétablir une certaine forme de continuité géopolitique dans ce dialogue et de poser clairement la question de l'emboîtement des formats MD et ICI. En réintroduisant la géographie (et derrière celle-ci, les logiques culturelles et stratégiques), elle échafaude des perspectives utiles pour la rationalisation et l'efficacité des différents programmes de coopération que l'OTAN offre à ses partenaires du Sud.

Carlo Masala et Peter Faber, quant à eux, concentrent leur attention sur le format de l'ICI et montrent que dans le climat évolutif du Moyen-Orient, il conviendrait maintenant que la stratégie de l'Alliance s'affine progressivement. Ils proposent trois formules possibles et ce faisant esquissent une sorte d'état final de coopération dont la définition a manqué à Istanbul il y a un an. A ces considérations sur la stratégie à adopter, ils ajoutent des propositions très concrètes pour valoriser le cadre actuel dans le domaine de la coopération bilatérale, dans le domaine de la coopération multilatérale régionale et enfin en matière de diplomatie publique.

Ces réflexions des chercheurs les plus avisés du Collège de Défense de l'OTAN en la matière veulent contribuer à prolonger l'effort accompli il y a un an par les nations de l'Alliance pour repenser les partenariats à développer avec le sud du continent européen.

Jean DUFOURCQ, chef de la branche Recherche

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NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative: Prospects for Development

Laure BORGOMANO-LOUP¹

Quelles sont les perspectives d'évolution du Dialogue méditerranéen de l'OTAN et de l'ICI? Comment articuler leur logique de façon à les dynamiser mutuellement? En prenant en compte deux paramètres clés -d'une part les avantages comparés des instruments bilatéraux et multilatéraux, d'autre part le champ géographique de chaque programme- cet article propose plusieurs scénarios possibles. Dans tous les cas, il plaide pour une approche davantage géopolitique, moins institutionnelle et pour l'élaboration de cadres sous-régionaux de coopération.

At the Istanbul Summit in June 2004, NATO launched a new security cooperation initiative, aimed at a vast area including the countries of North Africa and the Middle East. On that occasion NATO decided to upgrade its cooperation with the seven Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) countries to the level of a more ambitious partnership. The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), a bilateral political dialogue, is open to countries that up to now have been absent from the NATO agenda; it is primarily aimed at individual members of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The Mediterranean Dialogue, a ten-year-old political and military security cooperation programme, consists of bilateral and multilateral components. Since the ICI does not have a clearly defined geographical area, it does not rule out, in principle, participation by current Mediterranean Dialogue members. Similarly, the new MD does not rule out extension, on a case-by-case basis, to other Mediterranean partners.²

It is not the purpose of this article to review the context in which these two policies were formulated, or to repeat subsequent explanations by NATO authorities of their

distinct but complementary features.³ Our objective is to study possible ways of developing these two types of cooperation, individually and in synergy. In each of the programmes we will examine the comparative advantages of bilateral and multilateral components on the one hand, and issues related to the geographical boundary on the other.

1. Prospects for developing the Mediterranean Dialogue

1.1 Bilateral and multilateral components

The MD proposes meetings and working groups on a 26+1 and 26+7 basis, and since the Istanbul Summit has envisaged development on a 26+1 basis of Individual Cooperation Plans, enabling cooperation programmes to be tailored to each country. In the security field, the multilateral system strengthens confidence between partners along two axes, North-South and South-South. The bilateral system strengthens confidence solely on the North-South axis. These two systems are not necessarily compatible. If not implemented wisely, they could conflict with each other. If improved North-South relations are restricted to selected MD countries, this could engender mistrust among Southern partners. It is easy to foresee this happening in Algeria and Israel, for example. In the Maghreb, Algeria is now the most dynamic MD partner, thanks to two winning cards: hydrocarbon wealth and its fight against Islamic terrorism. Its activism could arouse the mistrust of its neighbours, particularly Morocco, with whom it has difficult relations over the Western Sahara.⁴ Israel, on the other hand, has to a great extent used its bilateral relationship with the United States as the main

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² See A more Ambitious and Expanded Mediterranean Dialogue, Policy Paper 9 July 2004, accessible at the following address: <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/2004/06-istanbul/docu-meddial.htm>

³ See the excellent fact sheets on the NATO website: *ICI Reaching out to the broader Middle East*, <http://www.nato.int/issues/ici/index.html>. See also the official document, *ICI Policy Document*, 9 July 2004, <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/2004/06-istanbul/docu-cooperation.htm>; see also the record of the decisions taken at Istanbul and an explanatory note: "What are the differences between the NATO MD and the ICI?" at: <http://www.nato.int/med-dial/home.htm>

⁴ For example, the Summit of Heads of State of the Arab Maghreb Union, the AMU, which was to be held on 25 and 26 May 2005, was cancelled because of Algerian and Moroccan differences over the Western Sahara.

framework of its external relations and as its guarantee of security. For some time now, it has been trying to strengthen its European ties at the expense of its Middle Eastern connections. The prospect of NATO membership, or, at the very least, a privileged bilateral dialogue, is on its strategic agenda, as a number of signals have indicated.⁵ A bilateral Mediterranean Dialogue would better serve its immediate security interests, but at the risk of arousing the mistrust of all its Arab neighbours and undermining the credibility of their cooperation with NATO.⁶

Lastly, internal development of the MD raises the issue of NATO security objectives in the region: should the aim be to contain potential instability or to participate in the establishment of a regional security framework? It is clear that bilateral components are enough to achieve the first objective, and necessary but not enough to achieve the second. Unless a clear decision is made, the MD will remain at a standstill.

1.2 Should the MD's geographical area be expanded?

From a geopolitical standpoint, the MD is divided into two distinct areas: the Maghreb and the Mashrek.⁷ In both cases some partners are excluded from the MD for political reasons: Libya, Syria and Lebanon. Moreover, despite Arab rhetoric about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict being "central" to security matters, both areas have specific security concerns which do not overlap completely. Lastly, the strategic importance they have for the Allies is not only different but varies for European and US allies.⁸ In conditions such as these, the MD's geopolitical rationale is fragile. This to some extent explains why it has not had a significant impact on regional security.

A good way of developing the MD, therefore, would be to restore a coherent geopolitical framework through the creation of two sub-areas, Maghreb and Mashrek, and the inclusion of countries that so far have been excluded. The MD's final framework would therefore be very similar

to that of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. This would mean a clearer added value in terms of security for NATO, enabling it to specialise in areas where the European Union does not wish to intervene.

In this way, use of the bilateral and multilateral components would be tailored to the aims of each individual policy, which would itself be tailored to each sub-area. Indeed, the comparative advantages of bilateralism and multilateralism are inseparable from the geopolitical conditions in which they are implemented. As William Diebold stresses, it is the quality of the relationship (whether bilateral or multilateral) that matters, not the number of its partners.⁹

2. Prospects for developing the ICI

2.1 Limitations of the bilateral approach

In its strictly bilateral, non-mandatory approach, the ICI is very like the Mediterranean Dialogue when it was first created: a 26+1 dialogue framework designed to build confidence along the North-South axis. However, the broader Middle East has suffered enormous structural political and strategic fragmentation. In an area beset with rivalry and various types of internal and external conflict, the bilateral approach is certainly the most prudent one, but could also raise the specters of conspiracy and double talk. Lastly, by choosing to treat the members of a single institution - the Gulf Cooperation Council - on an individual basis, NATO is sending out a message that is difficult to decipher:¹⁰ is this the first step towards institutional relations between the GCC and NATO, or is it, as some people suspect, a ploy designed to create divisions within the GCC? Again, the aim of the initiative is ambiguous. Whose security concerns are we talking about? The North's or the South's? Where do these concerns converge? How can these weakened regimes be prevented from exploiting their bilateral relationship with NATO to remain in

⁵ See fifth conference of the Herzliya Centre for Security Studies, 13-16 December 2004, Israel; <http://www.herzliyaconference.org/Eng/>, and the NATO Secretary-General's visit to Israel in March 2005.

⁶ How should we view Israel's security? Note that, as far as the Pentagon is concerned, Israel comes under EUCOM, not CENTCOM, which covers 27 Middle Eastern countries and the Horn of Africa.

⁷ Namely, Mauritania, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt, Israel, Jordan.

⁸ Thus the Palestinian issue has only a distant effect on the Maghreb, although the countries of the Maghreb face common risks of destabilisation: African immigration, and economic and environmental problems. The Mashrek countries of the MD, on the other hand, mainly have to face the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and a greater risk of violent Islamic destabilisation. Both areas have to face the same political and economic problems related to the "bad governance" of their regimes and Western economic policies, which are not very favourable to their development. On the contrasting views of Americans and Europeans on the Mediterranean, see Jean DUFOURCQ: *L'intelligence de la Méditerranée*, Research Paper No. 2, NATO Defense College, Rome, April 2004.

⁹ For further analysis of this topic, see John Gerard Ruggie (editor), *Multilateralism matters: the theory and praxis of an institutional form*, Columbia University Press, New York, USA, 1993.

¹⁰ Speaking in very general terms about the Gulf countries would have amounted to an open invitation for Iran and Iraq to join the ICI. A subliminal message is also addressed to Saudi Arabia, a partner that is still necessary but a source of problems.

power? How can we avoid raising expectations that cannot be satisfied, especially as regards the security guarantees that all States in the region need?¹¹

That is why, while maintaining an initially bilateral approach, it is important for NATO cooperation to have as its final objective the establishment of a regional entity, or better still, several sub-regional entities. However, it is uncertainty about the geographical area, rather than the bilateral nature of the relationship, that is the problem.

2.2 Developing an undefined geographical area

The tensions and contrasting opinions among allies concerning the Greater Middle East project have been resolved by resorting to a semantic artifice: we now speak of the “broader”, not the “greater” Middle East, a term perceived as too imperialistic; we have removed from the title of the initiative all references to geography (apart from its birthplace, Istanbul) and content (it is no longer about dialogue, security, peace or partnership – and to cap it all, it is not even about NATO). Depending on whether it is being discussed in Washington, London or Paris, the ICI means a variable area that may or not contain the borders of Maghreb and those of Central Asia, including Afghanistan, and Iran and Iraq. In this way, consensus among allies is maintained, but at the price of creating a climate of uncertainty that could raise all kinds of strategic specters in the countries of the region. Is this wise? How can a vague and insubstantial semantic device become a credible instrument of strategic cooperation?

3. Potential relationships between the MD and the ICI: variations on three options

For NATO’s success in the region, it is important to define the geographical boundaries of the ICI and to adopt a clear stance on its relationship with the MD. Of the various possible options, three will be examined:¹²

- a) There should be a clear separation of the geographical area now covered by the MD from that of the ICI.
- b) There should be a clear separation between the MD -expanded to include Libya, Syria and Lebanon and reorganized into the Maghreb and Mashrek sub-areas- and the ICI.
- c) There should be a single area from Mauritania to

Iran, but divided into regional sub-areas: Maghreb, Mashrek, and the Arabian-Iranian Gulf.

What are the potential strong points of each of the above options?

In option a), the approach is mainly conservative: an old instrument is retained and a new one developed alongside it. This would allow both instruments to develop and interact. In this system, two frameworks would co-exist for a limited period, based on fairly similar approaches but with distinct components that have matured in different ways. In other words, we have combined cloning and evolution.

In option b) the MD’s internal demarcation lines are eliminated and multilateral components are used to stimulate cooperation in regional sub-areas. The bilateral system is reserved for managing self-differentiation, while promoting a sufficient degree of transparency to build confidence. In the case of the ICI, bilateral relations are conducted with a view to developing the desired degree of sub-regional relations. On this basis, it is advisable for the ICI process to begin with the GCC countries. However, Saudi Arabia must be included as soon as possible, and there must be a place for Iran.

Option c) could be considered the outcome of the first two options. Once it has reached maturity the ICI would become a combination of bilateral and multilateral components, aiming to stimulate sub-regional cooperation and at the same time support a range of specific cooperation projects. A flexible and very general strategic forum would need to be created where Alliance and ICI countries could discuss their security concerns. Practical cooperation would take place within smaller multilateral sub-regional frameworks, and bilateral action programmes would be planned for some issues. In this complex framework, pivotal States would receive special attention. Algeria in the Maghreb, Egypt in the Mashrek, and Iraq and Saudi Arabia in the Gulf could have a considerable impact on their neighbours. This is where the international strategic community’s action must be focused, to back the necessary political reforms and boost confidence, but without applying double standards. However, this would be a long-term development based on the Allies’ common vision of the region’s future and the funding needed. To achieve this, frank discussions need to be initiated with the Alliance, followed by international cooperation efforts that are compatible with one another. Otherwise the ICI will experience the same successes and restrictions as the Partnership for Peace: success

¹¹ On the ambiguities of the ICI, see Laure Borgomano-Loup, *Jeux de rôle au Moyen-Orient*, NDC Occasional Paper No.2, NATO Defense College, Rome, September 2004.

¹² There are of course intermediate scenarios: an MD that is expanded but not split into regional sub-areas; an ICI that excludes certain countries such as Iran; an ICI that includes a Mashrek incorporating other countries (Syria, Lebanon) which so far have not been involved in cooperation with NATO, etc.

where conditions are already favourable and supported by policies implemented within the European framework (Maghreb, perhaps); failures where its action is needed the most (the Arabian-Iranian Gulf).

Conclusion

In both the MD and the ICI, it is NATO's objectives that must define the geographical area of cooperation and the nature of its instruments, not vice versa. Moreover, the borders of the regional sub-areas must continue to

be flexible and adaptable to change: while strategic issues could separate the Maghreb from the Mashrek, political or economic factors could bring them together into a single cooperation framework. Depending on circumstances, it might be advisable to focus on self-differentiation and launch enhanced cooperation with partners wishing to accelerate or develop their relationship with NATO. Transparency remains the key issue, as it generates confidence. Flexibility, creativity –and funding– will, therefore, be more crucial than ever for participation in the construction of continually expanding area of peace.

The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative - Possible Next Steps Ahead

Carlo MASALA and Peter FABER¹

Quelles sont les limites et les possibilités de développement de l'ICI? L'article suivant analyse la situation stratégique des partenaires de ce programme, en particulier ceux du Golfe. Il envisage ensuite trois options pour sa mise en œuvre et termine par une série de recommandations pratiques. Il conclut que l'ICI doit être considéré comme le point de départ à partir duquel l'OTAN peut aider les pays du Golfe en constituant un cadre régional de coopération de sécurité.

1. The Current Security Environment of ICI Partners

Today's ICI partner nations face serious security problems, some of which may undermine their potential ability to fulfil partnership goals. These problems include but are not limited to the following.

- The triangular balance of power once maintained between Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia no longer exists in the Persian Gulf area. As an unintended consequence of the overthrow of the Baathist Regime in Iraq, Iran is now in a regionally stronger position than its two historical rivals, which has serious implications for NATO members (Turkey), NATO partners (Russia), and Mediterranean Dialogue partners (Egypt, Israel, Jordan) that have interests in the area.
- The future stability of Saudi Arabia and Iran remains in doubt, as does the stability of politically fragile and socio-economically uncertain candidate ICI partner states.

- The currently volatile relationship between Lebanon and Syria may contribute to a further deterioration of the general balance of power in the Middle East.
- The growing demand for oil and gas by non-OECD countries may lead to their increased presence in the Persian Gulf region, and thereby prove politically troublesome for members of the transatlantic community.
- The ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to cast a long shadow over the Persian Gulf region.

Given the above problems, the security environment remains uncertain for current and future ICI partners from the Persian Gulf region, as does the hope that it will improve any time soon. Nevertheless, NATO should consider pursuing three possible strategies in the region – either singly, in sequence, or in combination – in order to fulfil its evolving ICI goals.

2. Three Possible NATO Strategy Options for an Evolving ICI

Strategy No.1 - A Low Demand, Gentle Collaboration Strategy. This strategy primarily emphasizes “soft” security, information networking, and the creation of a “dense web of cooperative efforts.” It stresses, in other words, the importance of confidence building measures and imposes few, if any, political preconditions, requirements, or desired end-states on ICI members. Because this approach is both flexible and open-ended,

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Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member countries have the opportunity to cluster their activities together as frequently as possible (in groups of two and above).

The potential benefits of this strategy are fourfold – 1) it is flexible; 2) it accounts both for the diversity and specific requirements of individual ICI members; 3) it focuses on shaping attitudes rather than on forcing or demanding changes in behaviour, and 4) it can enhance multilateral cooperation between GCC members.

The *Low Demand, Gentle Collaboration Strategy* does have three weaknesses however – 1) it lacks enforcement provisions and/or behavioural preconditions, which means it may not attract the resources, manpower, and long-term commitment it actually needs; 2) it may not actually diminish local ignorance about NATO and its objectives, and 3) it may not help address the problems arising from a changing strategic environment.

Strategy No. 2 – A Measured Collaboration Strategy.

This strategy stresses a partial intertwining and interpenetration of NATO and the GCC at the organization-to-organization level. In particular, it encourages GCC members to cooperate with the Alliance in targeted areas while NOT extending perceived or actual security guarantees to them at the same time.

The potential benefits of this particular strategy are threefold – 1) it would permit NATO to move away from bilateral or clustered forms of engagement with GCC members and move towards involving them fully in increasingly “hard” security activities; 2) it would encourage GCC states to take greater responsibility for the security and stability of their region, and 3) it would help address some of the security problems that Persian Gulf countries currently face.

The *Measured Collaboration Strategy* does have two weaknesses, however – 1) some NATO members may actively oppose a more formal commitment to Alliance-GCC programs, and 2) the commitment could actually deepen existing political fault lines in the region rather than ameliorate them.

Strategy No. 3 – A States Further A-Field Strategy.

This strategy encourages non-GCC countries in the Persian Gulf region to participate in specific NATO-GCC initiatives. Basically, it is an “added partner” strategy that seeks to promote a sense of political ownership for non-GCC members in the region, and thereby help erase suspected dividing lines between them and NATO-GCC. The longer-term aim of this strategy would be to create a Regional Security Forum that includes both regional and extra-regional players (much like the ASEAN Regional Security Forum, for example).

Like the *Low Demand, Gentle Collaboration Strategy*, the benefits of this third strategy are also fourfold – 1) it would establish a forum for sustainable security in the Persian Gulf region; 2) it would avoid isolating regional powers unnecessarily; 3) it would encourage burden-sharing between NATO and other organizations and countries (in order to further the security and stability of the region), and 4) it would help address most of the security challenges in the area. Despite these advantages, however, the *Further A-Field Strategy* is not likely to get strong support from particular NATO members and GCC countries at this time.

Given the comparative strengths and weaknesses of the above three strategies, which one(s) get adopted will depend on the collective political will of NATO and its current or prospective partners. The *Low Demand, Gentle Collaboration Strategy* requires the least amount of political will, but it also runs the risk of repeating the problems already experienced in the Mediterranean Dialogue program. We therefore think that NATO should be more ambitious with its ICI program – i.e., it should adopt a *Measured Collaboration Strategy* at the outset and then work towards a *States Further A-Field Strategy* as its ultimate contribution to security and stability in the Persian Gulf region.

However, regardless of which ICI strategy(ies) NATO finally decides to pursue, the Alliance must guard against three potential problems.

- *First:* GCC members may attempt to instrumentalize NATO’s role in the Persian Gulf area for their own geopolitical ends. For example, they may want the Alliance to help restore and maintain a new regional balance of power, and/or to provide informal security guarantees for specific states or even family dynasties. NATO must obviously protect itself from these possibilities.
- *Second:* There is currently no transatlantic agreement on what are the preferred common strategy(ies) and objectives for the Persian Gulf region. Since ICI will not succeed without such an agreement, it must exist and it must complement rather than duplicate other initiatives in the region.
- *Third:* ICI also needs adequate funding if it is going to succeed. However, if the Alliance is going to reprioritize and reallocate existing resources to fund ICI activities adequately, it must avoid financially marginalizing the Mediterranean Dialogue Program as a result.

3. How Should NATO and its Partners Implement ICI?

Regardless of the specific strategy or strategies chosen to implement ICI, they should all concentrate on 1)

fulfilling practical measures, 2) creating a multilateral political vision, and 3) implementing a substantive public diplomacy strategy. The means of achieving these objectives could be through bilateral cooperation with individual countries, multilateral cooperation with the GCC, or a combination of both.

Fulfilling practical (and primarily bilateral) measures – In this particular area, NATO could accomplish the following.

- Achieve and enhance interoperability with ICI countries, primarily through military exercises, educational and training activities, and by building a GCC partner peacekeeping unit that is capable of working with Alliance members.
- Enhance mutual cooperation in the fight against terrorism. Possible activities in this area could include intelligence-sharing, maritime cooperation, developing standardized law enforcement policies, improved border security and protection, etc.
- Actively promote civilian control of the armed forces, a respect for human rights and the rule of law by these same forces, and improved transparency in defense planning and budgeting.

Creating a multilateral political vision – This visioning process should occur in parallel to the above bilateral measures. Its success, however, might require at least some of the following.

- A series of ad-hoc NATO ministerial meetings that not only emphasize the close interdependence of regional security and ICI, but also that the latter initiative is part of a much broader framework for security and cooperation.² (This framework includes non-ICI regional powers and some Mediterranean Dialogue countries.)
- Establishing liaison offices at NATO Headquarters and GCC Headquarters.
- Creating a NATO-EU ICI Agency to enhance mutual support in the region.
- Establishing a regional defense college sponsored by both NATO and the EU.
- And creating a working network of regional defense institutions and/or think tanks.

Implementing a substantive public diplomacy strategy – NATO's public diplomacy strategy for the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative should not duplicate the one used for the Mediterranean Dialogue program. Since academic institutions and media are largely under the

government's control in potential ICI partner countries, they cannot always act as effective "gatekeepers" for NATO's message. The Alliance should therefore pursue a two-part public diplomacy strategy in the Persian Gulf, both at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

- First, it should continue to invest in gatekeepers, despite the fetters that bind them. In the case of academics and journalists, for example, the Alliance should 1) organize visits to NATO Headquarters, its strategic commands (ACO and ACT), and its agencies; 2) organize senior-level conferences for pundits from NATO, ICI and Mediterranean Dialogue partner countries; 3) establish a year-long ICI Research Fellowship at the NATO Defense College; 4) schedule the participation of ICI-related staff officers and diplomats in NATO Defense College courses; 5) formalize lecturer or teacher exchanges among relevant institutions; and 6) sponsor academic conferences involving the NATO Defense College, partner institutions from ICI countries, and/or GCC institutions.
- However, in addition to adapting these familiar options to new circumstances, NATO should translate its webpage into Arabic (including MP3 files, ICI-related documents, and general NATO policy documents), along with articles and books that clarify NATO's development since the end of the Cold War. These materials should then be distributed to Arabic-speaking gatekeepers and students alike, either in hard copy or PDF file formats.

4. Conclusion

This short article has identified three potential next-step strategies for the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. They include 1) bilateral cooperation between the Alliance and interested countries in the Persian Gulf region on the basis of self-differentiation and joint ownership; 2) yet-to-be-determined multilateral cooperation at the NATO-Gulf Cooperation Council level, and 3) the pursuit of a broader "added partner" security cooperation framework for the region and beyond. One year after the initiation of ICI, NATO is still grappling over which strategy or combination of strategies it should pursue in the future. It is our recommendation that it should pursue the last two listed here – i.e., it should adopt a *Measured Collaboration Strategy* at the outset and then work towards a *States Further A-Field Strategy* as its ultimate contribution to security and stability in the Persian Gulf Region.

² These points could appear in joint NATO-GCC political declarations, for example.

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