



RESEARCH PAPER

Academic Research Branch - NATO Defense College, Rome - No. 6 – May 2004

Contents

Editorial	1
<i>Peter Faber</i>	
NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue: Options for the Future	2
Nato Defense College publications	8

Editorial

It has become widely accepted that in a "globalized" world there are no irrelevant nations or regions anymore. And given this perceived "truth," there are those in NATO who believe that if you are not proactively addressing security problems at their source, the problems will inevitably come to you. These problems certainly existed (and continue to exist) in NATO's immediate rim lands, and therefore led to its highly successful Partnership for Peace program and to its only modestly successful Mediterranean Dialogue Program (MDP).

For reasons that the following Research Paper makes clear, the latter program remains a work in progress. Its original goals were too limited, or so its critics argued. They were mere "fingers in the dyke"; the MDP needed, despite undeniable real world constraints, to ascend to the "next level." The Prague Summit subsequently sought to strengthen, expand, and deepen the program, but for every follow-on success there were also a series of "coulds," "shoulds" and "to be considereds" that followed in its wake. That is why the MDP, yet again, will feature prominently in discussions at the upcoming Istanbul Summit.

These discussions may well revolve around enhanced political dialogue, greater military interoperability, needed defense reform, and improved counter-terrorism capabilities. A myriad number of tactical-level programs and options will be provided as well. NATO planners have been busy developing options that reflect specific partner needs, preserve the Self-Differentiation Principle, focus on practical and "tailored" areas of concern, and potentially complement the efforts of other organizations.

All these details are necessary, of course, but what is truly important is to determine the basic architecture of an improved MDP. Should it be part of a new transatlantic Mediterranean policy or should it remain separate? Should it come in two tracks; one track for those nations who want to participate proactively within the program and another for those who prefer a less binding, more politically flexible approach? To what extent should the MDP and PfP programs now merge together, if at all? Would establishing a joint NATO-EU Mediterranean Agency provide needed economies of scale and effort in this complex region? These questions are open-ended too, but they are also macroscopic. In order to enhance this debate on fundamentals, the following Research Paper not only identifies the preconditions for future MDP success, it also explores four basic options the Alliance might want to pursue in the program, now or in the future.

Peter FABER, Associate Researcher, Academic Research Branch

Research Paper

NATO Defense College
Collège de Défense de l'OTAN
Academic Research Branch
Via Giorgio Pelosi, 1
00143 Rome – Italie

Directeur de publication:
Jean Dufourcq

Assistante de publication:
Laurence Ammour

web site: www.ndc.nato.int
e-mail: research@ndc.nato.int

Imprimerie CSC Grafica
Via Arrivabene, 40
00159 Rome – Italie

© NDC 2004 all right reserved



NDC Research Branch Elaboration on Senior Course 103 Analyses NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue: Options for the Future

1. Context and Thesis

● The Mediterranean Dialogue Program (MDP) has historically been a confidence-building exercise rather than a true partnership. As a result, it has experienced only modest success in realizing the following core objectives.

- To contribute to enhanced security and stability in the broader Mediterranean area.
- To improve/achieve mutual understanding between NATO and its seven MDP partners.
- To correct lingering misperceptions of the Alliance's goals and purposes.

● By any objective measure, NATO has not fulfilled the first objective and has only partially fulfilled the other two. The reasons for this limited success include the following.

- The MDP partners are not a homogeneous block – economically, politically, or militarily. The unresolved “hard” (rather than “soft”) security challenges they face today are therefore kaleidoscopic and multi-dimensional by nature. (The past/current MDP – because it is by definition a self-limiting program – cannot hope to encompass such diversity adequately.)
- Participation in the Mediterranean Dialogue is geographically fragmented. Since potential members must first secure Alliance-wide consensus/approval, NATO has yet to invite specific nations – Libya, Lebanon, Syria, etc. – to join the MDP.
- The Mediterranean Dialogue remains a NATO program that promotes a NATO agenda, despite measured attempts by the Alliance to transfer “ownership” to its partners.
- The implementation of this agenda also remains bilateral – i.e., comprehensive and holistic regional-level security cooperation does not exist yet in the Dialogue, or in the Maghreb/Mashrek in general.
- The MDP is too often “a dialogue without money.”
- There are principled differences of opinion among Allies over how to implement the current MDP and how to deepen AND widen it in the future.
- Mediterranean Dialogue partners remain ambivalent about what they ultimately want/expect from the program. They seek NATO's support and yet also appear to be suspicious of its motives. Their

commitment to the MDP has therefore not waxed and waned.

❖ One possible source of this ambivalence is the stubborn, hard-to-repudiate belief that NATO, because it is supposedly “a Cold War relic,” is THE instrument of choice for transatlantic military interventions in the region. Seen from this anxious perspective, the Mediterranean Dialogue could be a tool used to subvert (rather than support) the local security efforts of Maghreb and Mashrek nations.

❖ Partners have also wondered in the past whether the MDP enjoys true NATO-wide support or whether it depends on the energetic support of only certain members.

● NATO leaders were not tone deaf to the above problems and therefore decided to review the MDP at the Prague Summit. At the Summit, they identified 14 possible areas for improved political cooperation, 17 possible areas for expanded cooperation within existing areas, and 8 possible areas for future cooperation. Some have argued, however, that these possibilities subsequently proved to be no more than a roster of “coulds,” “shoulds” and “to be considereds.” NATO leaders left their approval and implementation to the relevant Alliance committees, but only after wringing their hands over potential resource costs. The arguable message – at least to some Summit participants – was therefore as follows: “Have a look at the inventory of possibilities and do as you see fit, but only as long as it looks good and doesn't require actual/additional funding or manpower.”

● Not surprisingly then, the real issue for NATO today is not whether it should have an MDP, but what the nature and content of it should be and how can the Alliance most effectively implement it. The argument of this short Research Paper is that the “common wisdom” is correct – i.e., the current MDP must take the “next step” if it hopes to remain relevant. This next step, however, might include four increasingly complex options.

- *Option #1:* Mediterranean Dialogue Program Plus (MDP Plus).
- *Option #2:* MDP Plus with Partnership for Peace (PfP) Sponsors.
- *Option #3:* An Integrated PfP-MDP Approach (at least in part).



- *Option #4: A Trans-Mediterranean Partnership (TMP).*

2. Preconditions for Success

● Regardless of which of the above option(s) NATO might pursue and adopt, either singly or in combination, it will have to meet the following preconditions first.

- *First:* It must hone a clearer understanding/definition of the greater Mediterranean region and its states. (NATO's security planning depends on this improved understanding.)
- *Second:* It must deepen AND widen its security policy, while also ensuring it reinforces and complements existing bilateral security arrangements and interests.
- *Third:* In terms of political-military cooperation, the Alliance must address the security interests/requirements of its Maghreb and Mashrek counterparts more effectively.
- *Fourth:* NATO must become more systems-of-systems (or "organization-of-organizations") oriented if it is going to build a future MDP "with teeth in it."

3. Four MDP Options for the Future

● After fulfilling the above preconditions, NATO might then consider adopting the following MDP options, either singly or in combination. (Note: The purpose of this short paper is to highlight the options in broad/generic terms; a detailed discussion of their implementation will occur in a future Research Paper.)

● *Option #1: MDP Plus* – This option would "deepen" the current MDP and thereby compensate for its shortfalls. The basic aims of the program would not change, nor would it require additional funds. Instead, MDP Plus would partner/cooperate more aggressively on existing initiatives (including the Mediterranean Dialogue Upgrade Program and its related practical activities).

● *Option #2: MDP Plus with Partnership for Peace (PfP) Sponsors* – This option would pursue MDP Plus, but it would also pair-up a Mediterranean partner with a PfP "sponsor" nation that has directly experienced military transformation, civil-military relations, and security sector reform. In addition to linking the Mediterranean Dialogue and Partnership for Peace Programs together in a circumscribed/manageable way, this half-step option might provide several additional benefits.

- The sponsor could act as a technical advisor on documentation requirements, assorted action plans, PARPs, etc.
- The sponsor might function as an intermediary or "translator" between his assigned partner and a seemingly monolithic, not always comprehensible NATO.

□ Finally, the sponsor could function as a "survivor" and/or "fellow traveler" who has undergone his own reform/transformation processes and has "lived to tell about them." His calm example might help lower local suspicions about costs, NATO motives and requirements, etc.

● *Option #3: An Integrated PfP-MDP Approach* – Despite the recent departure of once-active NATO candidate nations, the PfP Program remains a viable forum for regional and international cooperation. It is a highly effective "soft power" tool and force multiplier for the Alliance. It is also an ideal way to expand Alliance cooperation and dialogue into the former Yugoslavia and – as part of a combined/integrated PfP-Mediterranean Dialogue Program – the Maghreb and Mashrek. The latter option would not only provide economies of scale, it would also provide an opportunity for states like Syria and Lebanon to join the greater European security space.

□ A combined program would also stimulate mutually beneficial cooperation in the following common areas: counterterrorism, asymmetric threats, energy security, defense reform, improved transparency and interoperability, organized crime prevention, migration, arms export control, and procurement practices.

● *Option#4: Trans-Mediterranean Partnership (TMP).*

□ The assumption here is simple: NATO cannot move forward with its own security and stability agenda without taking into account the ongoing efforts of the other international and local actors in the greater Mediterranean region. (The efforts include regional integration, political consultation, free trade, common stability/security, social cooperation, cultural dialogue, and information sharing, while the actors include – to varying degrees – the UN, EU, OSCE, Arab Maghreb Union, and the "5 + 5" Arab and Southern European nations.)

□ By pursuing the Trans-Mediterranean Partnership option, NATO could take a leadership role in bringing together all the relevant security actors/programs in the region under a comprehensive security umbrella. This umbrella would be a working institutional network; it would NOT be ad hoc, as is true today.

□ More specifically, the foundation stone for TMP would be a single/unified Mediterranean security concept that goes beyond bilateral partnering. It would provide a comprehensive blueprint that combines an overarching, cooperative, and cross-regional security template with focused regional and sub-regional security management at the same time.

□ The advantages of pursuing a Trans-Mediterranean Partnership option are obvious.

✳ As already stated, TMP would provide a unified Mediterranean security concept that widened AND deepened regional security



throughout the region, and in cooperation with all relevant actors.

✳ It could potentially broaden the Mediterranean partnership to sub-Saharan Africa and Southwest Asia, and it could better account for/reflect the cultural diversity of these large areas.

✳ It would better complement the “hard” and “soft” power resources available for security/stabilization in the region.

✳ It would provide a “user friendly” vehicle for further cooperation among the various security actors in the area, while also reducing duplication of effort.

✳ TMP would facilitate NATO’s public diplomacy efforts, which must improve significantly in the region.

4. Conclusion

If the MDP is to fulfill its promise in the future, it must take the “next step.” In other words, it must widen and deepen; it must be more coherent and encompassing; and it must serve the needs of Alliance members and their partners alike. The four potential options highlighted here – MDP Plus, MDP Plus with PfP Sponsors, an Integrated PfP-MDP Approach, and a Trans-Mediterranean Partnership – provide increasingly elaborate ways to create lasting and comprehensive regional security/stability in the greater Mediterranean area. The most fundamental question is whether it is appropriate to privilege Option #4 at this time (and “regionalize” the MDP fully), or is it more “doable” for NATO to adopt one of the interim options first?

NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE RESEARCH PAPERS

Full electronic version of NDC Publications is available at the following addresses:

web site: www.ndc.nato.int
e-mail: research@ndc.nato.int

No. 1, March 2004:

- Lionel PONSARD, *Editorial*
- Igor SHARAVOV, *Influencing Russian Public Opinion in order to improve Russian Military Reform.*
- Vladimir LEVANOV, *La Réglementation juridique de la solde du personnel militaire sous contrat en Russie: particularités, problèmes et perspectives.*
- Leonid Y. KOSALS, *Criminal Influence/Control over the Russian Military-Industrial Complex in the Context of Global Security.*

No. 2, April 2004:

- Cees COOPS, *Editorial*
- Jean DUFOURCQ, *L’intelligence de la Méditerranée*
- Lionel PONSARD, *The Russian Orthodox Church: An Interlocutor in the NATO-Russia Relationship?*

No. 3, April 2004

- Jean DUFOURCQ, *Editorial*
- Lionel PONSARD, *La Géorgie à la croisée des intérêts russes et américains*

No. 4, May 2004

- Lionel PONSARD, *Editorial*
- Carlo MASALA, *German Foreign Policy in Crisis?*

Next Issues:

No. 7, May 2004 on the Wider Middle East

No. 8, May 2004 on Proliferation

No. 9, June 2004 on ESDP

Soon:

Occasional Paper no. 1 on Russia