Chaillot Papers
- 25 -
September 1996

SECURITY IN NORTHERN AFRICA: AMBIGUITY AND REALITY

Fernanda Faria & Alvaro Vasconcelos

INSTITUT D'ETUDES DE SECURITE
UNION DE L'EUROPE OCCIDENTALE

INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY STUDIES
WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

Chaillot Paper 25

SECURITY IN NORTHERN AFRICA: AMBIGUITY AND REALITY

Fernanda Faria & Alvaro Vasconcelos

September 1996

ISSN 1017-7566
Published by the Institute for Security Studies of Western European Union and printed in Alençon, France, by the Imprimerie Alençonnaise.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

In December 1994, the WEUPermanent Council gave the Institute for Security Studies the task of analysing the security and defence policies of the Maghreb countries and Egypt, in liaison with security institutes in those countries. This was to become an addition to the Institute's continuing work on Mediterranean security. A year later, the Barcelona Conference established that networking among foreign policy institutes was to become a component of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

An earlier version of this *chaillot Paper* was written as a background paper by the Instituto de Estudos Estratégicos e Internacionais (IEEI), Lisbon, for a seminar on 'Security and defence policies of the Maghreb countries and Egypt' held at the Institute on 9-10 March 1995.

The basic argument of this paper commissioned by the Institute is that differences in language and perceptions of security between the two shores of the Mediterranean remain. In this area, the very notion of security, while not identical in all countries, embraces a wider concept than elsewhere. Policies and strategies are suggested that take account of the special conditions in the region. The second part of the paper includes individual studies of non-WEUMediterranean states that are engaged in a security dialogue with WEU, with the addition of Libya.

Persuaded as we are that the exchange of information and views on security and defence issues will contribute to a better mutual understanding of perceptions, the publication of this paper will, we hope, provide new inputs to the continuing debate on Mediterranean security, with a more active contribution by all parties concerned.

Guido Lenzi
Paris, September 1996

GENERAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTS

Alvaro Vasconcelos[1]

The countries of Western Europe are faced with the problem of defining a common, comprehensive approach to Mediterranean issues. Until recently they tended to focus their attention on economic aspects of links with the region, but the importance of political aspects has now been realised. The Euro-Mediterranean partnership launched at Barcelona in November 1995,[2] which seeks to achieve a balance between political, econ-omic and human relationships across the Mediterranean, is in a way a response to all those who maintained that these had to be based on a 'necessary solidarity', and that in the field of security there exists an institutional vacuum that has to be filled if the Mediterranean is to become a region of stability and peace.

To begin with, an observation: relations between Europe and northern Africa[3] in the field of security, which are full of misunderstandings, are characterised by distorted perceptions and images of Islam and political Islamism, which are often confused, and by the threat or reality of terrorism, which extremist nationalist movements on both sides use to further their demagogic ends. These misunderstandings stem in the first place from mutual ignorance. A certain confusion is, however, partly intended, especially since in the South political debate on the military dimension of security is still almost taboo. As Hamadi Essid has remarked, 'there is still a need to define and redefine terms which, rather than contributing to the dialogue we desire, reduce it to a series of parallel monologues and, at several levels, reinforce misunderstandings.'[4]

At Barcelona, it was agreed that security aspects of the political dialogue in the Mediterranean should be developed. For that to be possible, Europe will have to have an objective awareness of the real security questions that arise, as well as northern African policies and priorities, and realise what is actually at stake.

Security: a concept that covers a number of different concerns

Analysing the problem of security in the Mediterranean region and the security policies of northern African countries raises a certain number of semantic difficulties, which is an added complication. The concept of security itself varies not only between the two shores of the Mediterranean but also from one northern African country to another. We shall first try to distinguish the different meanings and then to understand the many concerns covered by the term security.

In northern Africa today, security has a very wide sense, including numerous aspects - economic, political, social and cultural - in addition to the purely military aspect, although not all necessarily see security in the same way. We shall attempt here to bring out the main elements, which in reality are often superimposed, of this concept of wider security: economic security, national security and security of identity.

The notion of *economic security* is based on the idea of dependence on the outside world, the existence of a centre (the West, which exploits) and a periphery (the Third World, which is exploited); this was the viewpoint of the non-aligned countries, which have included two particularly active countries in northern Africa, Algeria and

Egypt, the first of which put forward the concept at a summit meeting of non-aligned countries in its capital in 1973. At present, if the economic aspect is still an integral part of this notion, the West is no longer seen simply as the generator of dependence but rather as an unavoidable partner if countries in the region are to overcome the economic weaknesses that are the cause of serious social and political problems. Economic security is becoming less rhetorical and less of a unifying factor, and more a real concern and more national. Today, carrying through reforms, increasing productivity, entering the international system and ensuring free access to the markets of the industrialised North are priorities in all countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

Concerns are felt over financial dependence (debt) and supplies of certain essential foodstuffs. It is sometimes a matter of 'the need to guarantee sovereignty in the question of food supplies'.(5) Incidentally, the concern over guaranteed sources of energy and water has led some authors to take the view that security should be seen more in geo-economic than in geo-political terms.(6) In this context the problem of sources of water assumes special importance in the Middle East and Egypt, which cannot afford, for this reason among others, not to be concerned over the stability of countries through which the Nile flows. Egypt and Morocco depend on the situation in countries in the Gulf region, which partly explains their military participation in the US-led coalition during the war against Iraq. Currency earned by Egyptians working in the Gulf countries accounts for Egypt's current transactions surplus, whereas its trade balance shows a considerable deficit.(7) In the case of Morocco, oil is one of its main imports. Whereas Libya and Algeria are net exporters of energy, Mauritania and, to a lesser extent, Tunisia, are dependent on imports of oil or gas. Concerns that dependence on energy supplies have created in a number of Arab countries are nearly as acute as in European countries and the United States, for which the uninterrupted supply of oil and gas is vital.

As regards the concept of *national security*, which is dominant in northern Africa, governments' worries about what they see as 'internal threats' come well before their need to deal with external threats. In other words, there is often confusion between the state's interests and those of a particular government. When internal issues dominate, all of the activities of society tend to be perceived as having a direct influence on the security of the state. In many countries this has been the case during the phase of nation-building that follows independence. After Algeria's independence in 1962, the army found itself running the state to which it had given birth.(8) The distinction between its role *vis-à-vis* an external threat and that of defender of the regime has been allowed to diminish and disappear.(9) As opposition parties have become more powerful, in particular with the rise of Islamic extremism and the emergence of armed groups, the notion of national security has become flexible and taken to extremes in certain countries. The more that political regimes feel threatened from within, the more political pluralism and civil society are made fragile and the more the concept of national security becomes equated with security of the regime; the role of the army becomes less clear and its use to enforce law and order is legitimated. The regional and international contexts are then perceived essentially in terms of their impact on the development of domestic policy.

The priority given by the governments of northern African countries to the internal threat does not, however, eclipse concerns for foreign policy and defence in the true

sense. Defence policies equally depend on the external threat that is perceived to be posed by neighbouring countries in a South-South context.

Also, the concept of national security as it relates to the external threat is not totally free from concerns about what is happening internally, as political Islamism can have an external basis. In spite of its almost exclusively rhetorical nature, Iran's support for the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) led to Algiers breaking off diplomatic relations with Tehran; on several occasions, Egypt has accused Sudan of giving training, including military training, to Egyptian Islamist groups, in particular at the time of the attempted assassination of President Mubarak at the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)summit in Addis Ababa in June 1995.

The role of the army and the influence it has on the definition of security policy vary from one country to another. The situation in Algeria, for example, where the army and the government are in practice merged, is the opposite of that in Morocco, where the army, which has until now been isolated from questions of internal politics and has concentrated on the conflict in the Sahara, has been strictly controlled by the government. Politico-military relations assume great importance during a period of transition, as was the case in the countries of southern Europe that became democratic in the 1970s; it is what can also be observed in the processes of political reform that have begun in northern Africa.

The most worrying aspect of the wider security concept, or rather its most perverse outbursts (which are also seen in the North), is that it involves firstly *security of identity*, which is in the first instance concerned with the defence of an identity that is threatened. That, basically, is the point of view of the political Islamist movements, where the expressions 'political Islamism' and 'radical Islamism' are both used to designate a variety of popularly based political movements whose goal is the creation of a theocracy and the overthrow of governments in place, through peaceful or violent means or a combination of the two. In fact, their idea of security is linked with moral, cultural and 'civilisational' questions posed in the name of the 'purity' of Islam, as if it is only now, after its two first phases, political and economic, that decolonisation may have reached the last phase, which is cultural.[(10)] This point of view was expressed very clearly by the FIS leader Ali Ben Hadj, who said before the Algerian elections of 1991, 'And if my father and his brothers [in religion] physically threw out the oppressive French from Algeria, I, together with my brothers, with weapons and with faith, dedicate myself to banishing them intellectually and ideologically, and having done with their supporters ...'[(11)] Was not the prime target of the Iranian revolution Western, American culture? The Algerian Islamists, in their turn, attack governments accused of importing from the West 'morals contrary to those of Islam',[(12)] which would lead to social inequality and economic dependence, French-speaking intellectuals and secularism (which is equated with atheism), 'paradiabolicals' and the emancipation of women, all of which, in their eyes, represent an intolerable intrusion by the West. The Islamists are thus tending to replace pan-Arab nationalism by pan-Islamist nationalism.

This vision, which is based on xenophobia and identity, is also present in the North in another, equally primary form, among the extremist nationalist movements that campaign for the expulsion of immigrants of other cultures and religions, who are considered to represent a threat to the national identity and therefore to security. The

idea is presented in a more sophisticated way in the thinking of authors like Samuel P. Huntington,[13] for whom 'civil-izational' identity will be the determining factor in the future international system: 'The great division among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be culture'. This idea belongs to a current of thought that, in both the North and the South, would put the clash of civilizations at the heart of present and future intra-state and inter-state conflicts and try to explain, on the basis of ethnic and religious conflicts alone, the present process of disintegration of certain states. This amounts to maintaining that religious and cultural differences are not a source of permanent enrichment of society but on the contrary a source of tensions that tend to be resolved through violence.

Economic security, national security and occasionly security of identity in some cases come together in a single concept that is at once too flexible because it tries to include everything and too restrictive because it gives priority to areas that are not exclusively to do with security. Abdallah Saaf questions whether such overlapping, which is facilitated by the 'flexible' and trivial use of the term security, is not the exclusive domain of non-democratic regimes.[14]

The too close links established between economic and national security must not be confused with the concept accepted in the West since the end of the Cold War in which economic, political or even social and environmental aspects are not overlooked. As has often been remarked, in the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue things that are fundamentally different are dealt with although the terminology used is similar. In Europe, when one talks of wider security it means in particular that one is not overlooking the importance of the social and political factors, nor the national and regional circumstances that could contribute to crisis situations and then degenerate into armed conflict. From this viewpoint, it appears clearly that the real or potential sources of instability in northern Africa are neither strategic nor military, but rather political, economic and social. To prevent such crises, it is therefore essential to formulate an integrated response that addresses the underlying economic and political causes as a first priority. This, moreover, remains the position of the European Union as a whole (it does not necessarily reflect the view of all of its member countries) best suited to its characteristics as a civil power that, being unable to meet the challenges of security in the strict sense ('hard' security), still prefers to make use of economic instruments, despite the progress made possible by Maastricht in the area of Common Foreign and Security Policy.

To have done with confusion over semantics and avoid the negative consequences for democratic development of too wide a security culture and concept, some authors make the distinction between security and 'high politics', a notion that includes economic, political and social issues that have a decisive effect on society and foreign affairs.[15] Moreover, to designate the obvious connection, especially in the Mediterranean, between the question of security and the political, economic and social context, the term *contextual security* is used by authors to indicate that it is impossible to analyse security issues correctly out of context.[16]

Against this confused backdrop, questions of defence in the strict sense are rarely encountered. Defence policy, which is considered to be the preserve of each state, is often absent from studies devoted to security in the Mediterranean, except for those concerning the Middle East, in particular Egypt,[17] Addressing this issue is, however,

a matter of priority for transparency and mutual confidence, on which Mediterranean stability must be built, especially since the absence of a strategic language common to Europe and northern Africa, which is complicated by the ambiguity of the concepts used, constitutes one of the misunderstandings, and not the least of them.

It is true that in Europe the strategic language, until now considerably marked by bipolarity, is extremely codified and unsuited to conveying a security concept, in which there is no overall, perfectly defined threat, that is developing in the direction of cooperative security. In the South, on the other hand, definitions are much vaguer, and a language with Third World overtones is still used in many cases. This situation of relative incomprehension has improved slightly recently, in particular thanks to the development of strategic studies in northern Africa and efforts to cooperate made in this field by specialists on both sides of the Mediterranean.[18]

An entirely new context

In speaking of security in northern Africa, from Egypt to Mauritania, a range of widely differing realities have to be taken into account: the Arab-Israeli problem in the case of Egypt, nationalist policy in Libya, specific problems in the central Maghreb and the fragile nature of society and the state in Mauritania. Both a source of division and a 'federating' element, political Islamism cannot be omitted from the analysis, given its internal and regional impact.

The following types of question arise. How have changes in the inter-national context and the Middle East in recent years affected the security of these countries? How did they react to the Gulf war? How do the countries of northern Africa see their role in the changed international order? In what ways is the rise of Islamism reflected in relations between these states? What are the chances of cooperation between the North and the South on security issues?

Perceptions in the post-Cold War period

If the impact of the end of the Cold War on the two shores of the Mediterranean is hardly comparable, several writers have stressed the increased vulnerability or marginalisation that it could imply for northern Africa. The world is no longer bipolar, and non-alignment has lost its *raison d'être*. No state can count on contradictions between the superpowers. The northern African countries are all seeking new forms of integration in the international system without neglecting the economic aspect, which is crucial for each of them, and are as a result redefining their Mediterranean relationships. Only Libya is still doomed to ostracism, seemingly wishing to manage its largely intentional isolation through alternating signs of enmity (for instance by expelling immigrants, in particular Palestinian) and offers to use its good offices (to assist the Sudan regime).

The Gulf war may have both precipitated changes in the international order and revealed their repercussions, while increasing the gap that already existed between governments' priorities and popular perceptions.

Divisions within the Arab League are becoming greater, and the improvement of relations with Israel is nullifying part of the concept of Arab national security, which

during the Gulf war had the result of putting the countries of northern Africa in opposing camps. Only Morocco and Egypt took part in the coalition, the former supporting the resolution of the latter condemning Iraq's action at the Arab League summit held in Cairo in August 1990. Tunisia, which sought an Arab solution to the conflict, did not participate in the Cairo meeting. Libya, in an attempt to emerge from its isolation, maintained an ambiguous attitude throughout the duration of the crisis, although it expressed some support for the Egyptian position. Mauritania was from the beginning critical of Cairo's position and that of the multinational coalition, and Algeria tried without success to act as a mediator.

In all of these countries, the public, who felt their view had been neglected and considered the new international order to be unjust, supported Saddam Hussein and opposed Operation DESERT STORM, which was seen as an attempt to destroy a powerful Arab country; this position was openly shared only by the Mauritanian leadership.(19) In Algeria, the development of the crisis in the Gulf led to a build-up of nationalist sentiment, a clear reflection of the public mood, while the various political parties, who were in the middle of electoral campaigning, tried to outdo each other in anti-Western, pro-Iraqi rhetoric. Initially the FIS, which was supported financially by Saudi Arabia, hesitated, then, afraid of becoming less popular than the FLN, unreservedly supported the regime of Saddam Hussein. In Morocco, which took part in the coalition, the general feeling among the population, clearly seen in the size of the demonstrations (in particular the general strike of January 1991) against the American intervention, found an echo in the palace. On several occasions the King emphasised that Moroccan troops were not in the Gulf in order to liberate Kuwait but to assure the defence of Saudi Arabia, especially the holy places. In Algeria, Tunisia and Mauritania, demonstrations in support of Iraq and inflammatory anti-Western speeches, directed at France and the United States in particular, followed one after another.

Whereas in the final years of the Cold War period governments in the region had become more realistic, the public and a part of the intelligentsia have not abandoned the former Third World, anti-Western leaning of Arab nationalism. Contrary to what is widely believed, public opinion is of major import-ance in the Arab countries. The public know how to make their discontent heard, and governments are now obliged to take account of their voice, since it is precisely on popular discontent that political Islamism feeds.

Today, governments everywhere in northern Africa are confronted with popular demands that they take a position on causes considered of importance to the Islamic world, such as the war in Bosnia. During the four years preceding the Dayton accords, these governments had great difficulty in explaining that in Bosnia it was not a question of a war between civilisations or a war of religion, which could have incited the mobilisation of the Islamic countries against the West, but of Serb aggression, against a multicultural, multi-religious state, that had been condemned by the West despite the weakness of the intervention by its security organisations and resultant loss of credibility.

For the most part, the public in the region see this incompetence on the part of Europe as proof of its anti-Muslim complicity. Religious leaders consider that deliberate negligence by the EUand its member states can only be attributed to religious

discrimination.[20] The support that the Bosnian cause has undoubtedly gained among the European public and opinion-formers has not been acknowledged south of the Mediterranean, even among Arab intellectuals who closely follow the debate in Europe.

Confronted by the flagrant difference in the speed and scope of the Western reaction to aggressors of the Muslim faith and those of the Orthodox religion - Iraq and the Serbs - the people of northern Africa accuse the West of applying double standards in an unjust international order that marginalises them or, worse still, is ranging itself against the South, which it apparently perceives as the new threat. It is in this light that the redefinition of NATO's roles in the Mediterranean is interpreted. Imprecision concerning the role of EUROFOR and EUROMARFOR, which include naval units and troops from Portugal, Spain, France and Italy, are seen by specialists from northern Africa as an indication of their true mission: nothing other than intervention on the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

The EUhas until now been the only European institution that the public and governing élite have viewed, not with mistrust but, on the contrary, with a degree of hope. However, the EUis increasingly seen by them as a club that is only concerned with its present or future members, while Europe closes its doors to northern African products and immigrants.

Islamism at the heart of the debate

With the end of the Cold War and the improvement of Arab-Israeli relations, a convergence between Egypt and the countries of the Maghreb is beginning to appear, as economic aspects and the Islamist factor assume greater importance.

The governments of Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt, which are attempting to counter the Islamic fundamentalism that threatens their survival, are giving priority to development. In Algeria, the deterioration of the situation has made the military factor crucial in anti-Islamist policy. In Libya, the Gaddafi regime continues to combat the Islamists and any other opposition through its monopoly of power. For the governments of all these countries, Islamism now represents *the threat* that overrides all other regional, South-South tensions, even though these have not disappeared. Border disputes have for the most part been resolved or are in the process of being resolved. The only remaining serious territorial dispute is that of the Western Sahara, which Algeria does not wish to see become an integral part of Morocco.

The scenario that is most feared in a South-South context is that an Islamist government comes to power in Algeria, in particular because of its impact on Tunisia, where towards the end of the 1980s political Islamism became the main opposition force. The Tunisian *En Nahda* (Party of the Renaissance) found support among the Algerian FIS and used areas on the border with Algeria to launch propaganda, particularly radio broadcasts. As for the impact that the advent of an Islamist government in Algeria would have on the Western Sahara, that is difficult to predict. The declarations of some FISleaders to the effect that the question of the Western Sahara would be easier to resolve by an Islamist government prepared to recognise its 'Moroccan-ness' (which would partly explain Morocco's accommodating attitude towards this movement) cannot be taken literally: the nationalist character of the FIS

belies them straight away. Moreover, Moroccan complaisance, which includes not explicitly condemning the FIS, is explained by the difficult relationship between the two major countries of the central Maghreb. Thus, certain Moroccan Islamist leaders, who were very critical of the position taken by the Alaoui monarchy at the time of the 'Green March' - considered by them to be 'erroneous in three ways, historically, religiously and politically'[(21)] - now publicly acknowledge 'the unquestionable Moroccan-ness' of the Western Sahara. Once the question of the Sahara is settled, if the claims of the Polisario Front are not met, which will probably be the case, the problem of its marginalised armed men, who will be exposed to Islamist or other plans for destabilisation, will have potentially serious implications for Algeria and Mauritania.[(22)] Because of its fragile nature, indeed its internal rifts, Mauritania, which is essential to the equilibrium of the region, is very sensitive to regional tensions.

Three groups or models of attitudes of governments or élites towards political Islamism can be distinguished. There is the attitude of the 'eradicators', who are in favour of the total exclusion of radical Islamists from the political arena; that is the attitude taken at present by Algeria and, with subtle differences, Egypt and Tunisia. Next is 'assimilation', in other words controlled and limited assimilation of Islamists in political life, yet without going as far as to allow participation in elections; that is what is happening in Morocco. Lastly, there is 'integration', which is today advocated by the sectors of the Algerian opposition who were signatories to the Rome platform, and was formerly used to varying degrees and then abandoned, by Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria. In spite of obvious divergences, all seek the support of the EU, although it is itself torn in various directions by disagreements between member states, which hesitate over the policy to follow on Islamism and its radical variant, and are divided into those who tend towards the 'integrationists', who are more influential in the Nordic countries, and the 'eradicators'. Arab opposition leaders, in particular those who wish to settle the Algerian crisis politically and took part in the Rome meetings, consider EUintervention to be essential as support for the process of reform and dialogue. However, they are afraid that the EUmay accept a solution that only the most radical forces (in the case of Algeria, those who dispose of military means) would be in a position to support. The signatories of the Rome platform having called for a boycott of elections, the partial success of the Algerian presidential referendum of 16 November 1995 has weakened them, but a political solution has not as a result become any less necessary, as the continuing violence has shown.

Foreign relations (outside the region) are now determined by a search for partners that can contribute to solving the economic and social crisis and neutralising radical political Islamism. This tendency, which has become more pronounced since the end of the Cold War, was already evident in the Maghreb, particularly in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, from the second half of the 1980s. The desire to bind itself to Europe explains Morocco's request for membership of the EU; the creation of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) in 1989 is explained, aside from regional motives, by the need to unite better to organise relations with Europe; Maghreb countries' interest in strengthening their relations with Europe, especially southern Europe, also led to their participation in the initiative for cooperation in the western Mediterranean launched in 1990, in Rome, subsequently called the 'Five plus Five'.

For the time being the North is not perceived as a threat - in any case not a military threat - either by governments in the Maghreb (except Tripoli) or by the sectors of the

élite who have nothing against Islam but fear an Islamic state; rather, the North is seen as an essential partner whose intrusive presence is not feared but rather its lack of interest. Governments and intellectuals who advocate secularism fear: (a) that the North will renounce its programme of economic aid or make it conditional on political reform; (b) that the question of the Maghreb, which is now a European political issue because of the presence of large immigrant communities in Europe, could be used in a demagogic and often xenophobic way for domestic political motives; (c) that radical Islamist movements could obtain material support in Europe and the United States.

The Maghreb is not greatly preoccupied with the military aspects that concern Europe. Possible scenarios include selective intervention in the event of the deterioration of an internal conflict, especially in Algeria, in particular to evacuate European nationals, and in particularly serious cases in support of an ally in a conflict between Maghreb states. Such a possibility is, however, considered very unlikely by many specialists on northern Africa. Yet that is not the view of the public, to judge by public reaction to the Gulf war. Among territorial disputes from the past inherited from the presence of colonial powers in northern Africa, there remains only the question of Ceuta and Melilla, on which both Spain and Morocco, given their cooperation in several areas, prefer to let time do its work in producing a satisfactory solution. Only a very serious crisis in Morocco would put this policy of prudence in danger. Incidentally, resolution of the question of Gibraltar would be bound to affect the future of these enclaves.

Meanwhile, it has been Egypt that has changed the direction of its foreign and security policies most. Indeed, since the beginning of the 1990s, this country, which has taken a greater interest in the situation in the Mediterranean and drawn closer to both Europe and the Maghreb,[23] has asked for membership of the AMU and in 1994 launched the Mediterranean Forum. The Middle East problem and relations with Israel and the United States as well as the Gulf countries are not considered any less central to internal and regional stability. It is, however, clear that Europe occupies a more important position in Egyptian foreign policy.Apart from its economic concerns, two factors account for this. *Vis-à-vis* Islamism, the position of European governments, those in the south in particular, is nearer than the United States's to that of Cairo. The United States tends to favour the integration of Islamists into the political arena;[24] Egypt is seeking in other ways to balance its relationship with the Americans, now that the collapse of the Soviet Union has deprived it of any alternative.

Egypt thus tends to differentiate decreasingly between the eastern and western parts of the Mediterranean basin. The possible consequences of its interest in the Maghreb depend on several factors: the possible relaunching of economic cooperation within the AMU, the way Israel's policy towards the peace process develops and consequently the process of cooperation and integration in the Middle East. What Egypt is attempting to do is to reconcile the assertion of its new Mediterranean policy and its wish to work for a type of pan-Arabism that is likely to increase its influence, and thus to be the kingpin in relations with Israel.[25]

Cairo's concerns over Israel's nuclear capability should also be noted.[26] The issue has been debated bilaterally at a high level. According to the daily *Haaretz*, Israel would

be prepared to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) two years after the conditions for peace in the region have been achieved.(27) Considering itself the mainspring of regional security, at the beginning of 1995 Egypt insisted that it would not sign if Israel did not and, on the eve of the New York conference, was still resisting pressure from the Americans and Europeans for an indefinite extension.(28) Having failed to convince other Arab countries of the advantages of a partial extension before Israel became a signatory of the NPT,(29) in the end Cairo followed the others in seeking an indefinite extension.

Egypt's concerns over Israel, which has since the peace treaty of 1979 ceased to be a direct military threat, have however not disappeared, and its defence policy is still influenced by the possibility of a reversal of Israel's position.(30) Present difficulties in the Israel-Palestine peace process reinforce these concerns.

Prospects of cooperation with Europe

Since the end of the Cold War, and particularly with the peace process between the Palestinians and Israel, the security situation in the Mediterranean today is characterised by the fact that, both in the South and in the North, there is a state of *security without a threat*. The North has suddenly found itself without the adversary that, over a period of forty years, was the *raison d'être* for its collective security organisations, and countries on the southern shore are also tending to lose their 'enemy number one' (which had a doubly 'federating' effect through support for the Palestinian cause and Arab-Islamic solidarity). This development is very important for Egypt: it is here that is to be found one of the deep-seated reasons for Egypt's pan-Arabist ambitions, at a time when the split between pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism is tending to grow wider. With the sudden absence of the traditional threat, the North and the South may be tempted to make a substitute enemy out of political Islamism. The conditions are, however, present, at least between the two sides of the Mediterranean, in which cooperation on security issues can be envisaged, with priorities established that are no longer for action *against* (a 'federating' opponent) but *for* (the prevention of conflicts).

The United Nations, questions of collective security and peacekeeping operations all offer possible ways for northern African countries to play an operational part in the new world order. Since 1994 Egypt, a potential candidate for a new permanent seat in the Security Council, has taken part in many peacekeeping operations. Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia have until now been less active in this respect, but the presence of Moroccan troops alongside those from Europe and the United States in the IFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina should be underlined. Algeria's participation in UNoperations must be mentioned, in that it is breaking with its tradition of not deploying troops abroad. The question is whether, in the coming years, there will be greater participation by Maghreb countries in UNpeacekeeping operations. Perhaps it will be necessary to resolve the incompatibility between the desire to play a more active role internationally and the tendency, particularly among the public, to consider that the great powers are in a sense imposing a right to interfere through humanitarian operations. Northern African countries, notably Egypt and Tunisia, are working on the creation, within the OAU, of forces that can take part in UNoperations. Acting in their capacity as president of the OAU, in 1994 and 1995, they were particularly active in the setting up of an African mechanism for conflict prevention, management and

resolution. This is an area of possible cooperation; since the crisis in Rwanda, the Europeans have been anxious to contribute to the development of an African capability to prevent crises but also to intervene militarily, in the framework of peacekeeping operations in sub-Saharan Africa.(31)

What policy should Europe adopt?

For Europe, the November 1995 Barcelona Conference marked the end of a long process of awareness of the need to integrate the Mediterranean region into its economic sphere. During the 1980s, it was already clear to the Europeans that the countries of northern Africa were experiencing an economic and social crisis that was made worse by population growth and, for various reasons and to varying degrees, current regimes' lack of political legitimacy. According to some, Europe had to develop a preventive strategy, along economic and social lines, with the aim of stabilising the region and limiting population growth so as to reduce the Islamists' political room for manoeuvre and slow down migratory flows. This was the reasoning underlying initiatives such as the arrangement known as 'Five plus Five', the EC's Redirected Mediterranean Policy and the idea of co-development.(32) Today, as a result of both the paucity of past efforts and the difficulties encountered by attempts at political reform in the Maghreb, the prospects are quite different. The crisis they were intended to prevent is already a reality, and is very serious in the case of Algeria. Political aspects now take precedence over economic factors, and security issues are beginning to be taken into account in relations between Europe and northern Africa.

Regarding the defence policies of countries in the region and the military means at their disposal, European governments are obliged to recognise that there is no threat to them from this area. Four types of security challenge can nevertheless be identified: the emergence of a radical Islamist government, whose exact form is difficult to predict but which would undoubtedly be ideologically hostile towards Europe; the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; a conflict between neighbours or the demise of a state; a rise in terrorism and the reappearance of state terrorism, with all its possible consequences for European citizens living in these countries and for the European continent itself. To include emigration in a list of security challenges, as often happens, is a dangerous mistake, since it leads to confusion between economic and social issues and security (including internal security), and helps the cause of extreme right-wing demagogy in Europe.

Taken individually, none of these problems, not even the advent of an Islamist government in northern Africa, would really pose a danger to European security, but if they all had to be dealt with simultaneously things would be much more complicated. A conflict between neighbouring states or the collapse of a state would inevitably have repercussions, given the close relations that countries in the south of Europe, France in particular, have with states in northern Africa, and because it would probably involve at least a large-scale humanitarian operation (which is impossible to dissociate completely from the use of military forces). Another important element is the supply of gas to Europe from Algeria, which passes through Morocco and Tunisia and could therefore be threatened by a situation of prolonged war or the break-up of a state.

In order to meet the existing challenges, an attempt must first be made to resolve the political, economic and social problems that contribute to the rise of extremism. That is why European support for political initiatives is crucial; for it to be effective, member countries of the EUwill have to agree on their priorities and on the coherent management of issues of common interest - not only radical Islamism but also political conditionality, cooperation and immigration. The necessary dialogue on the development of democracy and human rights in northern Africa must be pursued taking into account all the differences in culture and civilisation. It is in this way that the problem of migration can also usefully be tackled. This is a fundamental aspect of Euro-Maghreb relations on the social and economic levels, and an essential element in the political dialogue concerning basic rights, in particular the rights of minorities, and the right to religious and cultural diversity in Europe and elsewhere.

Dealing with this subject with northern African countries is more complex than with, for example, the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The first reason for this difficulty is not the more or less authoritarian nature of these regimes or their receptiveness to Third World doctrines, but rather the fact that, independently of apparent or real concessions to political Islamism, they see in overtures from Europe a form of interference, an attempt to deny them the right to cultural difference. This respect for differences in civilisation should not, however, be confused with theories that maintain that countries in the South suffer from an endemic inability to share universal values with Europe. The success of European support for the process of democratisation and the protection of human rights in this part of the world thus presupposes that the difference between civilisations is respected, including the guarantee of the cultural and religious rights of Maghreb communities in Europe. In this area, it is also important not to limit political transition and multi-party participation in elections without taking account of constitutional aspects, electoral laws and, in certain cases, political compromise between factions among the élites. Algeria and, further south, Angola, are two examples that should not be repeated. South Africa, on the other hand, is a case of 'coming to terms with transition' that should be closely studied.

Although the distinction between the eastern and western parts of the Mediterranean is becoming blurred, the concept still has a certain usefulness when discussing European security. The situation in the Maghreb has direct consequences for Europe, because of its proximity and certain potential South-South conflicts.(33) As for the Middle East, the implications are not of the same order and are above all seen in terms of oil supplies. Europe's responsibilities and influence are increasing but are not always decisive. The United States, on the other hand, continues to play a decisive role in the Middle East where, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, it has had no competition to face. Unlike Europe, the United States offers security guarantees to several states. For the United States, it is a question of a region to be dealt with quite independently of European security.

Unlike Europe, where there is a panoply of institutions, in northern Africa there is no regional collective security framework. The area is at present characterised by strategic fragmentation, indeed by a retreat from cooperative ventures in the Maghreb. It is thus difficult for the EU to form an integrated, coherent policy towards it. The strategic 'vacuum' between the two shores of the Mediterranean is another challenge that has to be taken up. Attempts to fill this vacuum are multiplying, but partner

institutions in the South are still fragile. It is true that the profusion of initiatives, their lack of consistency and the fact that they are in most cases competitive rather than complementary, does not help matters.(34)

The AMU, which was conceived as an attempt at political and economic cooperation between the Maghreb countries that includes the setting up of structures for cooperation in defence matters, is almost paralysed.(35) The Arab League is not and has never been a framework for collective security. The crisis prevention and management mechanism created by the OAU, which is concerned essentially with sub-Saharan Africa, is far from being a true security instrument. On a wider scale, including both shores, the OSCE (formerly the CSCE) which in its meetings has always formulated conclusions on 'questions related to security and cooperation in the Mediterranean', has never really examined this problem. Its recommendations on the Mediterranean only concern culture and ecology, and the north African countries have moreover never been admitted as *ex officio* members.(36)

The idea suggested by Italy and Spain in 1990 that a CSCM along the lines of the then CSCE should be set up got no farther than being a project that was at once too ambitious because of the number of participants and impossible to implement as long as the Middle East conflict was not resolved. The French initiative for cooperation in the western Mediterranean taken by President Mitterrand in 1983, which since 1990 has included the countries of southern Europe and the AMU, was not really successful. Security issues were excluded from this cooperation, and it was precisely the security repercussions of the Libyan question and the crisis in Algeria that nearly killed the 'Five plus Five'.

While emphasising economic, scientific and technological cooperation, an Egyptian initiative, the Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation in the Mediterranean launched in Alexandria in July 1994,(37) instituted a political dialogue along inter-cultural lines. This enterprise, which is fairly informal, does not include the EU, the only organisation capable of contributing in a decisive way to the urgent economic problems of countries to the south of the Mediterranean. It responds in particular to Egypt's wish to play the European card, which explains the lack of enthusiasm shown by the countries of the Maghreb.

Other multilateral initiatives have been taken, mostly in connection with the Middle East peace process, for instance the working groups set up following the donor conference,(38) such as the Working Group for Regional Economic Development, in which the EU plays an important role along with the United States. Mention should also be made of the economic summits in Casablanca (1994) and Amman (1995), covering the Middle East and the Maghreb, that the Americans have taken in hand.

On the specific issue of security, recent efforts have aimed at countering, through dialogue, existing negative perceptions. An example of this is the dialogue between WEU, Egypt, the Maghreb countries less Libya, and Israel. WEU's aim is not so much to stress the creation of a multilateral Mediterranean security framework but rather the establishment of exchanges with each of the countries concerned, while at the same time making military activities in the Mediterranean more transparent.(39) Military cooperation itself occurs strictly at the bilateral level. Are the Maghreb countries ready, following the marked drop in enthusiasm for sub-regional integration, to

consider a multilateral debate on security issues? It is difficult to reply with certainty. What, on the other hand, is in no doubt, is that this area is still an extremely sensitive one, full of dangerous ambiguities.

In February 1995 NATO envisaged an exploratory dialogue with Mediterranean countries: Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel and, more recently, Jordan.(40) The institutionalisation by this organisation of a sort of 'partnership for peace' with the countries of this region is not yet being contemplated. Reactions were not slow in coming. In Algeria, circles close to the government found in this idea encouragement for their anti-Islamist policy and understood very well the reasons why they had not been invited to participate. Others saw the initiative as an alliance against their country, which was following a path to 'Islamisation'. The Algiers daily *La Tribune* considered that NATO was treating Algeria like Iran, and was preparing a regional defence arrangement to ward off the dangers that Algeria might pose.(41) Several articles in the Maghreb press stressed, in particular following the declarations of Willy Claes, the NATO Secretary-General at the time, that Europe had at last found an enemy, a 'global threat' capable of replacing the defunct Soviet threat. These misunderstandings show, on the other hand, just how important it is to take into account the differences in perception between governments and the public in any initiative connected with Mediterranean security.

Increasingly, the tendency seems to be towards an integrated European approach, as shown by the Euro-Mediterranean conference in Barcelona, whose aim is to associate the political dimension with economic aspects. Nevertheless, security issues are still treated with much hesitation. It was not by chance that WEUwas not present at Barcelona.

The aim of that conference was to create an overall framework for Mediterranean cooperation. In addition to economic, social and environmental questions, the subjects discussed included certain preconditions related to security in the Mediterranean region, such as the establishment of the political relationships necessary for the creation of a climate of mutual confidence. It linked the idea of setting up, around the year 2010, a Euro-Mediterranean area of free exchange with the promotion of democracy and the defence of human rights, one of its most interesting aspects. However, the EUdoes not yet have a common position on either the crisis in Algeria or the attitude to adopt *vis-à-vis* radical Islamism. This deficiency hinders the deepening of the political and security dimension of the conference and explains why it is difficult to converse with the United States on this subject, even though that is a necessity at both the security and political levels.

The tone used in the final document shows the wish to give a political content to Euro-Mediterranean relations, *inter alia* in the field of security. A process was begun that could lead to the creation of an institutional framework for multilateral cooperation in this sphere. Although the United States was not present at Barcelona, because of European opposition, it cannot be excluded from the security initiatives that will follow. This multilateral mechanism should in addition result in common action within the CFSP In any event, it will necessarily mean taking into account regional diversity and the need for complementarity, which have been missing from the various initiatives undertaken previously. In other words, inter-Mediterranean relations will have to extend wider and take into account the usefulness of pursuing

and developing subregional initiatives, giving priority as necessary to those concerning the peace process in the Middle East and those, like the AMU, which it is hoped will emerge from their state of lethargy. The proposal for a Mediterranean Pact, broadly similar to that proposed by France for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, is of interest provided it is integrated into the Euro-Mediterranean initiative.

To be effective, the dialogue begun by WEUwith countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean will have to be integrated in any initiative by the European Union that could carry forward the Barcelona process. This dialogue will have to be centred on cooperation in defence matters and be based on what already exists at the bilateral level between the countries of the region.

If it is not to end in failure, any Mediterranean cooperative initiative must be based on an integrated approach to economic, political and security issues, including 'hard' security. The EU, which is seen by governments and Arab public opinion alike as an economic power that is essential to the solution of the region's problems, will necessarily be involved. Security issues will have to be dealt with in a very explicit way in this wider context, and this will have to include transparency in military activities and arms control. Without mutual confidence, any project, whether political or economic, will fail.

SECURITY POLICIES AND DEFENCE PRIORITIES

Fernanda Faria[42]

When analysing the security and defence policies of northern African countries, one must distinguish between Egypt and the countries of the Maghreb, and treat the latter individually. The first distinction is necessary because one is dealing with separate sub-regions, and the second because there exist between these states conflictive relationships that results in them forming distinct strategies and security and defence options. In this domain, policies, in particular alliances, have conveyed the wish of each country to distinguish itself from the others.

Whereas Egypt's strategic options and defence priorities will continue to be linked to the presence of Israel and affected by the Arab-Israeli conflict, neither Israel nor the West, which is seen as Israel's main source of support, will be central to the threat perception in the Maghreb, despite the public's mistrust. Libya can be considered something of an exception, but in general concerns in the Maghreb tend to be linked to the situation within the region. Border issues rather than the public's perception have had the greater impact on the definition of governments' priorities and defence policies.

One of the major difficulties encountered when analysing the security and defence policies of countries in the region is that it is often difficult to tell where one ends and the other begins, because of the nature of the regimes and because they again feel particularly threatened from within by the rise in Muslim extremism.

Another difficulty, which has been mentioned earlier, is that apart from Egypt, these countries do not have any tradition of conducting strategic and defence studies; in other words there is a lack of documentation, information and debate in general.

Given these limitations, their security and defence policies will be examined using a number of criteria so as to bring out the different viewpoints. The sequence of criteria chosen, which is the same for all countries, does not imply any order of priority, and the space devoted to each point depends only on its importance for the country in question. The criteria are:

- the perception of threats and the evolution of those threats;

- civil-military relations and their impact on security policy;

- the main lines of security and defence policy;

- possible defence policy in the near future.

Egypt

The direct, external threat has been particularly significant in Egypt. Even after independence in 1922, the country was subjected to British presence and influence in internal affairs of state. Even before the end of this process (in 1956, with the nationalisation of the Suez Canal), that is, as from 1948, Israel was perceived as a real threat, and that was to affect its defence policy in a determining, lasting way.(43)

Libya was also considered to be a potential threat on account of the growth in its military potential (a minor confrontation between the two armies was to occur in 1977), its territorial ambitions (the conflict with chad is an example of this) and its support for actions to destabilise the region, particularly since the 1970s. Currently, the threat from Libya is at once less credible and less probable, and this has led to a political *rapprochement* between the two countries. Relations with Khartoum are developing in a less positive way, indeed they continue to deteriorate. In addition to their territorial dispute over the Halaib 'triangle' that has continued since Sudan became independent,(44) President Hosni Mubarak accuses the Sudan Government, a strong defender of Islamist ideology, of supporting extremists in Egypt, while Khartoum maintains a relationship with Iran that is perceived by Cairo as an alliance that is dangerous for national, or even regional stability.

However, despite the strategy of all-round defence that the Egyptian authorities have seemed to favour since the end of the Cold War, other external threats seem to them less serious than that once posed by Israel and over which uncertainty still hangs. Despite such questioning and a certain residual mistrust, a war between the two countries appears improbable at present. Questions of 'economic security' and internal security are what now predominates. The challenges are decreasingly military in nature, but can have an effect in this area: control of the waters of the Nile, which is considered vitally important; threats to stability in the Gulf region and consequences for the Egyptian economy; the danger of the spread of radical Islamism (with the support of Iran and Sudan(45)), which has become a more significant potential threat because of the economic and social problems it could create.

In the field of civil-military relations, the wars with Israel and the perception of this permanent threat, not only to Egypt's territorial integrity but to the Arab world in general, have helped to strengthen the political role of the armed forces. Following the *putsch* of 1952,(46) the army became the backbone of the new regime and strengthening Egypt's military capability became a priority. In 1967, after its defeat at the hands of Israel in the Six Day War, the army relinquished its part in active political life but has retained a non-negligible, indeed decisive influence over matters concerning national security and defence, such as the definition of defence priorities and investments in the defence sector. The army is also an important economic actor, which allows it to maintain a political role. On the one hand, it is a source of public contracts related to the infrastructure and the modernisation of the country; many former military personnel have moreover become businessmen and are managers or help to manage companies. On the other hand, the Egyptian defence industry, which is the largest in the Arab world, represents a big proportion of Egyptian industry, even if its growth is irregular; during the 1980s it employed 70,000 people and had an annual turnover of $340 million.(47) Today, major investment is in hand that could lead to the development and modernisation of other sectors of Egyptian industry.

Despite the changes that have taken place in the regional environment, maintaining a powerful army that is even capable of facing up to Israel's military potential is for Egypt still an essential objective. The declared mission of the armed forces is still to defend the country against any attack from Israel. With a more powerful army than those of its Maghreb neighbours, in terms of both numbers and equipment,[48] Egypt would be easily capable of countering any military threat posed by Libya or Sudan, but is still in a position of weakness *vis-à-vis* Israel. Programmes to re-equip and train its military forces are designed particularly to modernise them and make them mobile and professional, in other words capable of responding to a variety of situations. These programmes, which were begun in 1983 and cover successive five-year periods (the third started in 1993), benefit from financial aid from the United States.[49] They have enabled the Egyptian army to renew and replace its equipment, for the most part of Soviet origin, with Western equipment; the process has been completed in the army and is continuing in the navy and air force.

Having benefited from substantial financial aid, in particular American, and the cancellation of a part of its debt in return for its participation in the Gulf war, Egypt has increased its defence effort. Its defence budget has risen continually: according to some estimates, it rose from $1.6 billion in 1993 to $2.96 billion in 1995, and defence expenditure could represent over 5% of GDP.[50]

Egypt's decision to have modern armed forces capable of rapid reaction merely reflects a more general tendency in its foreign policy since the beginning of the 1970s: a gradual distancing from the Soviet Union and *rapprochement* with the United States which, following the signing of the Camp David accords in 1979, became its principal support and guarantor against Israel.[51] In this context of closer political, economic and military ties with the West, Egypt resumed military cooperation, including in the areas of defence industry and training, which included combined exercises, in particular with Britain, France and the United States.

Furthermore, relations with the countries of the Gulf have always been a priority for Egypt, which sees security in that region as an element of its own security.[52] In particular, Egypt is attempting to re-launch cooperation with them in the field of defence.

Military participation in peace operations is another justification for the modernisation of Egypt's armed forces, and it is worth noting the number of Egyptian troops participating in UNpeacekeeping operations (2,192 in 1994); they are by far the largest contingent among northern African countries and surpassed in the Middle East only by Jordan.[53] This participation is seen as helping in the development of relations with other states, the Egyptian armed forces' military and technical training, and as a factor that enhances Egypt's international credibility.

It is unlikely that Egypt will reduce its defence spending during the next decade; it is even tending to raise it, but it will have to take account of the worsening of its economic and financial problems. The crisis also concerns Western countries, who at present represent the most important source of financial aid to Egypt, and the countries of the Gulf, which Egypt would like to involve in its plans for both national and Arab military modernisation. These factors could moreover help regional

cooperation in security and defence among Arab countries, something that Cairo wishes and encourages (as illustrated by the recent Damas declaration). However, divisions, distrust and conflicts between Arab countries, and their 'every man for himself' attitude that persists in almost all spheres, prevents progress towards a system of collective defence in the region, an idea that has existed since the creation of the Arab League.

A reduction in defence spending is all the more difficult to envisage since Egypt has not yet completed the restructuring and re-equipping of its armed forces. In particular, it is trying to improve its ballistic missile capability,(54) but does not consider nuclear, biological or chemical (NBC) weapons of mass destruction to be an option. Although it has the means to defend itself against chemical weapons (its present equipment is Soviet and Western in origin), and possesses the means to produce them, there is no indication that Egypt is pursuing research into biological and chemical weapons. Egypt's refusal to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention in January 1993 was intended more as an instrument of negotiation and a means of applying pressure than a declaration of intent, and should be analysed in the framework of the nuclear debate in the Middle East. Its principal concerns are the threat that Israel's arsenal poses to the country and the region, and the risk of proliferation in the Middle East where Iraq, and more recently Iran, are accused of trying to develop a military nuclear capability. Egypt has no military nuclear ambitions, but is concerned at the lack of coordination of nuclear and chemical arms control measures in the region, as this encourages greater militarisation.(55)

Tunisia

Tunisia's defence policy has often been marked by the country's turbulent relations with its Algerian and Libyan neighbours,(56) which are militarily stronger and have hegemonic ambitions, whereas Tunisia is smaller and has limited resources. Even though the reasons are different in the two cases, the difficult relationship with its neighbours is seen today as the main source of threat.(57)

If the risks of military confrontation seems at present remote, they are sometimes more plausible in the case of Libya. This perception is heightened by the more or less permanent tensions in the two countries' political relations, often due to incidents such as the expulsion in 1985 of Tunisians resident in Libya, the closing of borders or mutual accusations of attempts at internal destabilisation. Libya's potential in terms of military equipment - even if the standard of training of the military casts doubt on its effectiveness in practice - the nature of the Gaddafi regime, border disputes and certain differences that the question of economic zones continues to create, are important factors in the evaluation of the threat from Libya. They are, moreover, accentuated by the rise in radical Islamism in the region and the fear that it will contribute to internal destabilisation. Libya is in particular accused of training and supporting Tunisian and Algerian Islamists, not in order to promote the Islamist ideology (something with which Tunis reproaches Sudan, Iran and Saudi Arabia) but with a view to undermining internal stability.

Algeria is also seen as a potential threat, but of a different kind. Whereas the military regime and nationalist ideology of this country were once perceived as threats, today the concern is of a civil war between Islamists and the army, and the implications of

this for stability within Tunisia.[58] Even if it is the Algerian military regime that emerges strengthened from this crisis, it will not be seen as a danger as long as it continues to give priority to the fight against the armed Islamist groups; in Tunis, its role will on the contrary appear to be in a sense a *guarantee* of security and regional stability. There are, moreover, common economic interests, in particular in the field of energy, that would benefit from the improvement of political relations between the two countries.[59] However, as long as the situation in Algeria is not stable, as long as violence there continues and the future strength and political role of the Islamists is not clear,[60] Tunisia will continue to regard Algeria with concern and mistrust, and will cooperate with its neighbour's Interior Ministry on the control of frontiers and the activities of armed groups. In this way, Tunisia is seeking to gain greater influence over its own extremists and contain the Algerian conflict.[61]

Yet if Tunisia considers Algeria, which is at once the cradle and the victim of the Islamists, to be a potential threat, it is equally due to certain weaknesses of the Ben Ali regime. At the very moment when he had neutralised and controlled the phenomenon, the Algerian crisis and external support for the FIS reawakened his fears. Tunisia has several concerns: the infiltration of armed Algerian groups, the extension of violence to its territory, or support from Algeria to Tunisian Islamic fundamentalists. Equally, however, Tunisia fears the social impact that a wave of immigrants and refugees from Algeria could have on a society whose fabric is still fragile despite good economic growth.[62]

Neither the hostile environment nor permanent concern over the military strength of its neighbours, Libya in particular, has had any significant impact on the relationship between the military and civilians in Tunisia. In this country, power has never been in the hands of the armed forces, which are completely subordinated to the government and controlled by it. Habib Bourguiba, the first president of Tunisia following independence, considered that an army that was too powerful and too much in evidence in political life represented a risk. This explains why the army has never had significant means at its disposal and has never played a political role nor constituted threat or legitimized the regime.[63] That did not prevent it from helping maintain law and order during the riots of 1978 and 1984; it could well intervene again in the event of an intensification of Islamist activities or, if there were an internal conflict in Algeria, be called upon to assist the gendarmerie to carry out checks on the border between the two countries. The Tunisian Army will, however, not be the main instrument in the fight against Islamism: that would not be in the government's interests, especially as, being composed mainly of conscripts, it would be easily influenced by those it was meant to be fighting. The responsibility for combating Islamism would fall to the internal security forces; these have been considerably strengthened in recent years.[64] The Tunisian Army's mission is, and has always been, subject to the real, effective control of the President of the Republic.

The participation of Tunisian armed forces in UNoperations should also be noted, in particular in Africa, which demonstrates growing governmental interest and diplomatic involvement in black Africa. This contribution is admittedly modest, but it may help increase the armed forces' standing without indicating any change in the government's attitude to them.

However, Tunisia's limited military capability adds to its vulnerability. Efforts made in this area have been intensified since 1980, following the Gafsa affair, regarding the size of the armed forces (which rose from 28,600 in 1980 to 35,500 in 1993), and equipment, which may be of Western origin but is obsolete. The Tunisian Government is investing in the modernisation of its armed forces but also the internal security forces. It is attempting in particular to improve their mobility and the Navy's equipment. Tunisia's defence expenditure in 1992 was $596 million, around 3.8% of GDP, of which 50% went to the internal security forces.(65) In any event, Tunisia's defence spending is much lower than that of its neighbours in both relative and absolute terms.

Having invested very little in his defence capability, Bourguiba put the priority on relationships that might offer security guarantees in the event of attack from neighbouring countries.(66) A bilateral accord with France that covers extensive military cooperation, in particular regarding the training of Tunisian officers, and close collaboration with the United States - for financial support, procurement of military equipment and training - are the pillars of the defence policy of Tunisia which, since it gained independence and during the Cold War, clearly opted for the West. Although these relations continue to be considered crucial, they seem insufficient, or perhaps less credible, in a strategic and security context in which countries feel much less threatened by military aggression than by low-intensity conflicts, and in which the countries to the south of the Mediterranean have the impression that they have been marginalised, especially compared with Central and Eastern Europe.

The proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction has never been and is still not a Tunisian defence policy option. On the other hand, the development of collective defence systems in the region would probably be welcomed by Tunisia, to judge by its interest in developing regional cooperation in general, including in the field of security, and in particular within the AMU, but also in the Arab world and the rest of Africa.

Morocco

Like its Maghreb neighbours, Morocco has since independence in 1956 essentially been preoccupied by relations with its neighbours as a result of border disputes inherited from the colonial period and its pretensions to regional leadership, to which Algeria also aspires. Relations within the Maghreb have always been fairly difficult, but those between Morocco and Algeria have been the most conflictive. A first dispute, the 'war of the sands', arose between them in 1963, shortly after Algerian independence, as Morocco laid claim to an area of desert on its southern border that had been included in colonial Algerian territory.(67) There was also the quarrel over the Western Sahara. Although Algeria does not participate in this directly,(68) it plays a fundamental role by supplying military support and logistics to the Polisario Front and by giving diplomatic backing to the SADR (Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic) created in 1976, in particular within the OAU (which immediately recognised the SADR) and the UN. This conflict, which began in 1975, lay at the heart of Algerian-Moroccan relations and affected all of Morocco's defence policy, including its policy on alliances, throughout the period of the Cold War. Directly or indirectly, Algeria has therefore until now been the main threat to Morocco.

The future of relations between the two countries will be determined to a large extent by the way in which the question of the Sahara is settled. A referendum on self-determination among the Sahrawi people has been put off several times because of differences between Morocco and the Polisario Front on issues such as the nationality of international observers, the constitution of electoral lists and the census of Sahrawi voters. Rabat wants to be sure that the result of the referendum will be in its favour, but it seems equally keen to obtain a political agreement with Algiers before it is resolved. Although not directly involved in the conflict, Algeria has none the less an important part to play in settling it. There remains the question of the demobilisation of the 3,000 to 5,000 soldiers of the Polisario Front. These forces could continue to have a destabilising effect, and for Morocco it is important that they do not have Algerian support for attacks from Algerian territory or guerilla operations within Morocco.

Apart from the dispute over the Western Sahara, there are other issues, both internal and regional, political and social rather than military, that affect security and defence policy.

Morocco is not spared the threat to internal and regional stability posed by the rise in radical Islamism in northern Africa, particularly because of the implications of the crisis in Algeria. The political and religious legitimacy of the monarch - who is the 'commander of the believers' - gives the Moroccan regime benefits that others in the region do not have: until now, no national Islamist movement has challenged the religious legitimacy of the monarch or the monarchy itself, and this would allow the government to deal with the Islamist question within the existing framework. The economic, social and political context in Morocco could however favour the rise and radicalisation of Islamist movements. For the time being, the most immediate effects of the Algerian crisis seem to be limited, in Morocco, to networks supporting Algerian armed Islamist groups and a greater flow of arms. Yet that makes the Moroccan authorities fear that armed Islamist groups will be formed and violent demonstrations held on its territory. The possibility of an Islamist government in Algeria would make these even more likely, as Algeria could prop up Islamist movements in the region.

Civil-military relations are less marked by concerns with the external context than with the perception of the armed forces as an internal threat. Attempted *coups d'état* in 1971 and 1972 (a third may have planned for 1983) showed up the army as a danger to the government. It has to a large extent been the conflict in the Western Sahara that has enabled the army to re-establish its image in the eyes of the public and its credibility, as seen by the Moroccan political class, as the guarantor of national sovereignty and independence.

That war, however, above all served the cause of the government. On the one hand it allowed the government to send the officers far away and keep them occupied in the war while King Hassan II strengthened measures designed to control the army that dealt a serious blow to the hierarchy and removed its autonomy.[(69)] On the other hand, thanks to the conflict in the Sahara and the internal threat that the army represented, the monarch was able to increase his authority and narrow the political field by presenting himself as the guarantor of political pluralism.

The army still has a lot on its plate, whether in the conflict itself or in preparing defences in the Sahara and surveillance of the border, a task that the situation in Algeria makes even more necessary. If the Islamist groups were to destabilise the situation, the army could also be called upon to help. Its role is nevertheless clearly defined and its functions within the state controlled, especially as it has no powers of decision, questions of security and defence now being the exclusive province of the monarch, the Parliament having only a consultative, even symbolic role.

The army has even become a diplomatic instrument used by the government in support of its cause on the basis of bilateral accords. That is how most of its interventions or military presence outside Morocco since 1975 should be viewed: in the United Arab Emirates in 1986 and in Equatorial Guinea; the threat to help chad militarily in 1983 was in addition a clear message aimed at Gaddafi, one of the Polisario Front's main supporters, and the sending of 1,500 troops to Saudi Arabia during the Gulf war in 1990-91 also has to be seen in a bilateral framework rather than in that of the international coalition against Iraq.(70) Previous interventions in Africa (in particular in Zaire in 1960 and again in 1977) and in the Middle East (in Sinai and the Golan Heights during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war) were carried out in the name of, respectively, African solidarity and Arab solidarity. It is only recently that overseas expeditions seem less linked to the question of the Sahara and are once more part of UNoperations involving international forces. In 1993, 1,000 troops (and 60 civilians) were sent to Somalia, and military observers participated in UNAVEM in Angola and more recently in Bosnia.

The question of the Western Sahara and tensions with Algeria also determine Morocco's policy towards the great powers. The Moroccan Government attempted to take advantage of the ideological proximity of Algeria and the USSR to establish a link between the conflict in the Western Sahara and the East-West confrontation. Rabat thus drew closer to the West, strengthening military cooperation with the United States and France, its principal suppliers of arms and equipment.(71) But this policy has not played the same role as in Tunisia: it has never been a security or defence guarantee. Given the dispute with Algeria, it was designed in particular to obtain diplomatic backing for its cause in international bodies and financial assistance to improve and modernise its military potential. It is the army's symbolic responsibility to uphold national sovereignty and independence, and this has justified the army's increase in strength and the purchase of military equipment. Defence expenditure rose from 3.3% of GDPin 1975 to 8.9% in 1982, and manpower from 65,000 in 1973 to 141,000 in 1982. At present, the Moroccan armed forces are the largest in the Maghreb and among the most professional and efficient,(72) thanks in particular to their considerable combat experience and the technical superiority of their equipment (mostly Western in origin) compared with Algeria's. Its defence spending has dropped considerably since the 1980s, but remains at a level of around 4% of GDP: in 1993 it was $1.09 billion and the 1994 defence budget was estimated at $1.23 billion, 4.3% of the estimated GDP for that year.(73)

The mobility and defensive assets of the army, which are far greater than those of the air force or navy, even though Morocco has a long coastline, well illustrate Morocco's defence priorities. For the most part in the Western Sahara,(74) and to a lesser extent

on the border with Algeria (in the south and north-east), efforts to modernise will continue to be made despite the financial constraints.

Morocco has never been tempted to acquire nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, or ballistic missiles. It has nothing - neither hardware nor research projects - that might suggest it has an interest or intentions in this area.

Rabat is trying in particular to offset its loss of strategic weight in the post-Cold War period by increasing its diplomatic influence, especially as a mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict and by developing its relations with the EU, although it appears to be giving priority to bilateral cooperation (notably with the United States and France).

Morocco is paying particular attention to *rapprochement* with the EUand bilateral links. Having initially taken considerable interest in the AMU, Morocco is now giving the organisation a lower priority. Those that would like to see the organisation developing, in particular in the field of common security and defence, think that Morocco will for the present probably not be a partner.

Algeria

The decade following Algeria's independence was marked by conflicts and tensions on its borders, notably with Tunisia, Libya (on the Ghat strip),[(75)] Mauritania[(76)] and Morocco. There is also the question of the Tuareg people; this concerns rather Mali and Niger, but also the Algerian Government, not so much because of the military threat it poses but because it could affect the stability of these regions in the south.[(77)]

Algeria does not feel that there is any military threat to it in the region. Strong tensions with Morocco, the ambition to gain regional or even international hegemony, but also domination of the political powers by the military, initially and up till the 1980s determined strategic options and security and defence policy. From the end of the 1970s, but especially since the oil crisis of 1986, the economic situation has deteriorated continuously, and social and political instability have increased questioning of the regime and the popularity of the Islamist opposition; concerns over stability and internal security have become priorities for both the government and the army, which has resulted in improved relations between Algeria and Morocco and made the prospect of a settlement of the conflict in the Sahara more promising. Islamism (above all support for the movement from Sudan and Iran) is therefore seen as a much more serious danger than Morocco.

Islamism is seen as a threat not only to the élites, but also as a threat to national unity, since it has helped heighten divisions within the country and strengthen regional or even secessionist tendencies in Algeria: that is the case for the Kabylia region, whose claims to autonomy have never been recognised. When the confrontation between radical Islamists and the military began, there were even fears for the unity of the army because of desertions, infiltration by Islamists and divisions over the strategy to adopt.

It is therefore internal order and the maintenance of national unity and stability, rather than Algeria's international or regional role, that concern the Algerian Army in the short term, and this strengthens the army's position in political life and its control of

centres of decision. The army has always legitimized the government. It has itself been the ruling body, both for the defence and security of the country and for the economic and social development of the nation. It was only in 1989 that the new Constitution institutionalised multipartyism and recognized the separation between the army and the political leadership of the state. But the events of 1991 and the interruption of the electoral process following the victory of the FIS in the first round of elections handed back the reins of power to the military.

Islamism is not, however, the army's sole preoccupation. The beginnings of an easing of political restrictions at the end of the 1980s and, more recently, economic liberalisation, have incited the army to maintain a dominant position, if only to manage the process of transition better. It has to be understood that in the 1980s the Algerian political leadership changed the strategic direction adopted following independence. There was not, however, time for the new options to consolidate; they were in a sense interrupted by the pressing question of the Islamist threat, which determined choices not necessarily corresponding to the long-term perspective.

Until the beginning of this period, the logistic and other military support given by the Algerian Army to the Polisario Front, and the threat arising from the rearmament of Morocco, had incited Algeria, like Morocco, to increase its military effort, in order to ensure its defence. Algeria was the country in the region that most strongly resisted any policy of alliances, which it saw as a form of dependence and incompatible with its nationalist policy and non-alignment. Even though it developed close relations with the former Soviet Union, its main arms supplier, these never resulted in accords on defence or military assistance other than the training of Algerian officers in the Soviet Union and the presence of military advisers in Algeria.

For a decade, Algeria has reduced its dependence on Moscow for arms, and has modernised its equipment, which had become obsolete compared with those of Morocco, which were of Western origin. This policy of modernisation has for Algeria, like Morocco, meant a *rapprochement* with Western countries, particularly France and the United States.(78) Despite the economic crisis, these plans remain matters of priority because of the Islamist threat, but with the accent on anti-guerilla warfare, with improved land and air mobility and logistics,(79) areas in which the Algerian Army is weak. Other important aspects are the education and training of military personnel, in which the United States and France have a dominant role. Algeria's effort to improve its forces has also included a rise in the number of men involved in the fight against the fundamentalists: since the beginning of 1995, reservists have apparently been recalled to strengthen the numbers in the army and other security forces.(80) Compared with 1994, the defence budget for 1995 ($1.33 billion) has risen by 48% - 12% in real terms.

Despite their weaknesses, the Algerian armed forces are some of the largest in the region;(81) in terms of numbers, its air and land assets are larger than those of Morocco, although the effectiveness of a large part of this equipment is questionable. Plans to modernise, which include restructuring the army and the creation of a national defence industry, are designed to improve Algeria's military effectiveness. The country also has a ballistic missile capability and may have the basic capability to carry out research on and produce chemical weapons, but there is nothing to indicate that it has the intention of bringing missiles with chemical warheads into service.(82)

As regards nuclear proliferation, the fact that Algeria has two nuclear power stations initially caused concern over its intentions,[83] but this subsided considerably following Algeria's signature of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in January 1995 and verification agreements with the IAEA.

Algeria is at present one of the most inward-looking countries in the region because of the radical nature of the Islamist opposition. Its plans for modernisation of the armed forces are important but the Government is convinced that the fundamental issue in the fight against the Islamists is econo-mic development. It is in particular from that viewpoint that the Government is endeavouring to develop relations with the EU in order to obtain financial support but also international political backing, which is equally vital.

That situation also explains why Algiers is trying to re-establish political and security cooperation within the AMU. The development of that organisation is very much in Algeria's interests: on the economic level, with intensified regional cooperation, and from the political point of view, as it sees the AMU both as a source of support at the local level and as a means to grow closer to Europe. As far as defence is concerned, however, Algeria, like its Maghreb partners, does not seem to want to cooperate either within the AMU or in any other regional or international organisation. Even its participation in UNpeacekeeping operations has to date been very modest.

Mauritania

Mauritania, the weakest of the Maghreb countries, has very little political and strategic influence in the region. Its geographical situation, between the Maghreb and, to the south, Senegal and Mali, and the perception of internal threats, determine its security and defence priorities.

Because of the question of the Western Sahara, Mauritania's relations with not only Rabat but also Algiers were until recently very tense. Although in August 1979 it renounced any claim to that territory, and given the distance separating it from that conflict, Mauritania still fears Morocco's ambitions for a number of reasons: the historical arguments put forward by Morocco to justify its claims; its attitude to the holding of a referendum and the status of the port of La Gouera; and the security of the rail link from Zouerate to the sea,[84] the last two being economic issues of importance to Nouakchott. Regarding Algeria, its involvement in the conflict and its support of the Polisario front Front have hindered *rapprochement* between the two countries.

Tensions between Mauritania and both Mali and Senegal are quite different in nature: they are connected with the question of refugees and disturbances between the populations living in the area of their borders. There are in Mauritania some 40,000 Tuaregs and Moors from Mali who are frightened of returning to Mali despite the signature, in April 1992, of the Bamako accord. Moreover, there are 15,000 black Africans from Mauritania in Mali, where they frequently clash with the army, whereas in Senegal thousands more, having been expelled in 1989 by the military regime in Nouakchott, fill the refugee camps on the Senegalese side of the river separating the two countries.[85]

Although still fairly marginal, the radical Islamist tendency nevertheless has its followers, both among the opposition (Ould Daddah's Union of Democratic Forces in particular) and in government (the Democratic and Social Republican Party). This ideology (which has been subject to Afghan, Pakistan and Sudanese influence) is, however, also spread through numerous associations, has many sources of finance (Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Kuwait, for example) and recruits among the social outcasts that inhabit the capital's shanty towns, who have already given an indication of their potential - during the riots of 1994 and 1995, when the army had to be called in.

Dealing with these domestic problems is a matter of priority for Mauritania's security policy and forces, and will probably continue to be since the social and political situation (not to mention the economic situation) seem to be getting worse. The possibility of armed confrontation cannot be excluded.(86) Armed conflicts could yet have a negative effect on Mauritania's foreign relations, but that should not lead to significant new military operations.

The army plays an important role in Mauritania's internal affairs. It was the army that overthrew the Ould Daddah regime in 1978 and was a pillar of the regime set up by Sid' Ahmed Taya. In 1992, a civil government was reinstalled following elections, but the army is still a leading actor, in particular in the maintenance of internal stability, and indeed of the regime and national unity.

Yet Mauritania would not be able to defend its territory against military aggression or territorial claims using military force alone. Its army is the weakest in the region in terms of both equipment and manpower: it numbers only 14,670 (including 4,870 internal security forces) and the country is sparsely populated (2.2 million inhabitants), and twice the size of Morocco. Even by increasing its defence effort, Mauritania will remain very vulnerable compared with its neighbours and still heavily dependent on a policy of alliances and security guarantees, from France in particular. But it is not trying to develop its military potential to any notable extent (in 1994 its defence budget was $36 million, 2.7% of GDP; in 1995 it was slightly higher, at $37 million);(87) nor does Mauritania intend to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

Deeply concerned by the conflict in the Western Sahara, the country also has an interest in the AMU's continued existence, but is not sufficiently powerful politically to determine the future of regional cooperation and even less able to form a view on security and defence.

Libya

Since the military coup of September 1969, Libya's foreign policy has had twin aims: to fight against the influence of the West and to work towards Arab unity, which Gaddafi has on several occasions tried to promote by signing short-lived treaties of union with nearby countries. Yet in spite of these pan-Arab leanings, the country's foreign policy is based above all on nationalism. In the area of defence that has meant the pursuance of military power, confrontation with neighbouring countries,(88) and opposition to Israel and Western countries, notably by supporting terrorist movements in Europe but especially in the Arab world that have attacked the West or its interests in the region.

This nationalist, pan-Arabist attitude is proclaimed with virulent anti-Western rhetoric, aimed in particular at the United States,[89] but also Westernised Arab élites, who are accused of pursuing a policy that is detrimental to the cohesion of the region. Arab unity and Libyan interests thus often merge, since Gaddafi sees himself as the champion of pan-Arabism after Nasser and presents his foreign policy as an instrument of that unity.

As for countries bordering on Libya, these are not regarded as threats, even if armed conflicts and quarrels have for the most part been initiated by Tripoli. It seems unlikely today that these disputes, any Libyan support for Islamists or even the construction of a large artificial river to use underground reserves of water could cause relations with these countries to degenerate. Moreover, Libya no longer really frightens its neighbours, even if Colonel Gaddafi attacks them verbally from time to time.

Despite some weaknesses, the military power of Libya is a factor of instability for some states in the region, Tunisia in particular. Even if Tripoli still reproaches some of its AMU partners for not having supported it at the time of the United Nations embargo, relations are none the less a little more relaxed, the Libyan leader's priorities being in the first place concerned with domestic issues and general policy. He seems now to be more preoccupied with internal stability, which has worsened in recent years. This is generally seen as implying a loss of authority resulting from the nature of his regime, in which membership of a particular tribe and tribal alliances play an important role.

Islamic extremism is not seen as the main threat to the regime. Part of this movement, the weakest part, still has ties with the former regime of King Idris; more recent, revolutionary (and therefore more attractive to young activists) movements still only have marginal influence, despite several attempts to infiltrate the military and confront the security forces. Further, the fact that Islam is presented as a pillar of the revolution (that has adopted Islamic religious law), Tripoli's anti-Western ardour, the fight against 'Western morals', the absence of unemployment, the wealth of the country (even if there is not an abundance of consumer goods) and the still tribal structure of Libyan society are all advantages that can help control and limit the spread of Islamism in Libya.[90] Nevertheless, the confrontations in 1995 between the security forces and armed groups calling themselves Islamist suggests that the regime is not so impervious to that movement as it would seem or would wish it to be believed.

Other demonstrations of discontent with the regime have originated in the army, even among the elements nearest to Gaddafi, who has subjected the army to thorough, frequent purges and restructuring in order to maintain his control of it. On several occasions he has had to deal with dissidence among the military in his entourage that participated in the 1969 *coup* and some of whom come from other tribes. The army may thus equally be seen as an instrument of power over which Gaddafi has absolute control or as a threat to the government.

How will the Libyan head of state be able to pursue his internal and foreign policies in this new context? Basically, neither his policy nor his revolutionary tendency have

changed very much, but his attitude towards the outside world has been modified. The country's isolation and internal dissidence are leading him to seek allies among his near neighbours, like Egypt. Relations with Cairo have improved considerably, especially since the end of the Gulf war and the imposition of sanctions on Tripoli. Egypt has, then, become Libya's principal source of diplomatic support on the international scene and an economic and political link with the rest of the world. The question of support to Egyptian fundamentalists, which has sometimes cast a shadow over relations between the two countries, no longer seems to arise, the two countries following fairly similar policies in this respect. It is therefore in the Libyan regime's interest not to look for quarrels in the West; these could harm its relations with its neighbours, which wish to remain on good terms with Europe and the United States. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Gaddafi has tried to make gestures of reconciliation towards the West, not by renouncing his ideology but because international isolation damages his position, in particular in economic terms (even if an embargo on Libyan oil is unlikely, despite the efforts of the United States). During the Gulf war, he criticised Iraq's attitude and did not take advantage of the situation to launch fresh invective against the West even though Arab public opinion was strongly anti-Western.(91) Also, he seems to have reduced or even ended his support for Islamist and nationalist movements in Europe and in the Arab world.

Gaddafi's Libya, with its pretensions to leadership of the post-Nasser Arab world, counted above all on military strength to affirm its regional and international role. Thanks to oil revenues, it has been able to build up powerful armed forces.(92) Its defence expenditure has often been among the highest in the Arab world, but the reductions begun in 1985 probably increased after 1991 because of the embargo. According to estimates given in *The Military Balance*, its defence budget for 1995 is $960 million, and therefore much lower than that of Egypt or even Algeria or Morocco. The effects of the embargo on defence expenditure do not therefore seem negligible, but that is not the only consequence: it has an adverse effect on the Libyan army's effectiveness, in particular because of the lack of technical training of personnel by foreigners,(93) the bad state of numerous equipments of Soviet origin and the difficulty in obtaining spare parts for equipment.

The Libyan armed forces have, despite everything, considerable offensive capability. They are certainly not the largest in the region,(94) but have more equipments (tanks, other armoured vehicles, combat helicopters and aircraft) than most countries in the Maghreb. They also possess ballistic missiles(95) and can produce chemical weapons,(96) which chad accuses Libya of using during the war between the two countries. As for biological weapons, Libya merely has a few research installations but does not seem able to manufacture weapons. On the nuclear side, Libya has a 10 MW reactor used for research (and supplied by the former Soviet Union) and may be building a 40 MW reactor; however, despite several attempts it seems unlikely that Libya will succeed in acquiring or developing a nuclear capability.(97)

However, given the low profile recently assumed by Gaddafi, it is hardly to be expected that he will promote a policy of increased arms acquisitions, especially since, as has been suggested, that would arouse the mistrust of neighbouring countries (especially in the Maghreb) and create further tensions with the West. The Colonel seems at present to prefer the political approach and the fostering of bilateral

relations, especially with Egypt, rather than cooperation with regional organisations, the AMU in particular.

Prospects

In summary, the attention of the countries of northern Africa is focused more on *security* than on *defence*. Their threat perception is dominated by fears of internal instability; stability is threatened by the questioning of regimes and national unity, even the existence of the state itself.

What policies might countries in the region adopt to meet the challenge? Governments in the region have up till now responded with the repression or control of Islamists, and no great change should be expected in that respect. There has been an increase in the size and equipment of the forces of law and order, especially in countries where Islamist groups are most powerful or an increase in this trend is feared.(98) In these countries, an effort will be made in the fields of conventional weapons, communications and land mobility.

The intraregional threat, that is to say the possibility of a conflict between neighbouring countries, is small. Most disputes over borders have been resolved, with the exception of the Western Sahara and the quarrel between Egypt and Sudan over the Halaib triangle, the only one that may yet cause a new armed confrontation in the region. However, so long as these questions have not been resolved in accordance with principles and rules set by the United Nations and the parties involved, they will remain an obstacle to political harmony in the Maghreb and a hindrance to cooperation in the region.

Today, the threat is more political than military. It is linked to the fear of seeing radical Islamism serve as an instrument of destabilisation, and the implications and effect within individual countries of the rise of fundamentalism in neighbouring countries. The way in which this threat is seen has no direct implications for possible military conflicts in the region, although it could act as a detonator. It does nevertheless have effects on political relations between states: it makes them more distrustful of each other while driving them towards solidarity in the face of a common danger. Cooperation between interior ministries in the fight against radical Islamists has not however implied either an improvement in the situation or political *rapprochement*. It has not revitalised the AMU, despite Egypt's request for membership which, moreover, produced varying reactions among the Maghreb countries: some seem to see in it the opportunity to give regional cooperation new impetus, while others view it as an attempt by Cairo to widen its influence in the Maghreb, with the attendant risk of importing the problems of the Middle East into the region.

If this need for security cooperation has not made any real impact on political *rapprochement* between the countries of the region, it will have even less on relations where defence issues are concerned. Provision is made in Articles 14 and 15 of the Treaty of Marrakesh,(99) the AMU's founding document, for a sort of assistance and mutual solidarity pact; a Defence Council was moreover created in January 1990, but these initiatives amount only to declarations of intent and have not yet had any practical application. Although the regional context has evolved and defence issues

have become less important than security, it will take time for these countries to modify radically their mutual attitudes and their cooperation in this sphere. That will not happen without substantial and lasting political *rapprochement*, of which there is for the moment no sign.

As regards the position of these countries on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, a distinction has to be made between nuclear, and biological and chemical weapons. If, previously, nuclear weapons were seen as a way of making up for the loss of strategic importance of these countries at the end of the Cold War, these countries today seem rather to be investing in political and economic instruments in their quest for regional and international influence. Yet they are still preoccupied by biological and chemical weapons and the ballistic missiles that could be used to deliver them. It remains to be seen whether such a situation will encourage these countries to participate in arms control initiatives at the regional level and with Europe.

1. Alvaro Vasconcelos is Director of the Instituto de Estudos Estratégicos e Internacionais, Lisbon.

2. See the Work Programme annexed to the Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference, 28 November 1995.

3. In this paper the term 'northern Africa' is taken to mean the Arab Maghreb Union (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) and Egypt.

4. Hamadi Essid, 'Les termes de l'équivoque', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Dossier no. 5, *La France et les Arabes*.

5. For a discussion of security of food supplies in the Maghreb, see the works of Assia Bensalah Alaoui, in particular the chapter 'Partenariat et accord de libre-échange' in Alvaro Vasconcelos (ed.), *Européens et Maghrébins - une solidarité obligée* (Paris: Karthala, 1993), p. 170.

6. Abdel Monem Said Aly, 'From Geo-Politics to Geo-Economics - Egyptian National Security Perceptions', paper presented at a meeting of experts organised by UNIDIRin Malta, 16-17 April 1994.

7. To give a more precise indication of the vital importance of earnings by Egyptian expatriate workers, for 1991, for example, these were some $1.5 billion greater than Egypt's exports for the same year.

8. Lahouari Addi, *L'Algérie et la démocratie - Pouvoir et crise du politique dans l'Algérie contemporaine* (Paris: Editions la Découverte, 1994).

9. This absolute coincidence between a security state and state security was for a long time prevalent in Latin America, where authoritarian, indeed military regimes used the term national security to designate both internal security - in reality their maintenance of power - and economic development aims. For an analysis of politico-military relations in Brazil during the period of transition from authoritarian to democratic government, see Hélio Jaguaribe, 'Defesa do Estado, da Sociedade Civil e das Instituiç› es Democr‡ticas - Uma Nova Concepç‹ o de Segurança Nacional para o Brasil', *Estratégia - Revista de Estudos Internacionais*, pp. 8-9 and 129-146.

10. François Burgat, L'Islamisme en Face (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1995), p. 77.

11. Interviewed by Slimane Zéghidour in *Politique Internationale*, 49, Autumn 1990, p. 156.

12. See Séverine Labat, *Les Islamistes algériens. Entre les urnes et le maquis* (Paris: Seuil, 1995), p. 57.

13. Samuel P. Huntington,'The Clash of Civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3, pp. 22-49.

14. For a discussion of the confusion created by generalised use of the term security, see Abdallah Saaf, 'Le discours stratégique arabe - Constantes et variations', *Cahiers du Lumiar* no. 2 (Lisbon: IEEI, September 1994), pp. 9-10.

15. Abdallah Saaf, op. cit

16. That is in particular the conception of Italian and Spanish promoters of the CSCM, such as Roberto Toscano and Miguel Angel Moratinos.

17. Abdallah Saaf, op. cit.

18. The importance of pursuing this cooperation has, moreover, been emphasised in the conclusions of the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Conference. Annexe to the Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference, 28 November 1995.

19. According to a communiqué from the Ministry of Information issued on the same day that security forces intervened to break up demonstrations in Nouakchott, the 'serious aggression' by the coalition demonstrated a 'firm desire to destroy Iraq and its economic and military capacity'.

20. Ali Hallil Dessouki, 'The impact on relations between the Islamic world and Western Europe', in Mathias Jopp (ed.), 'The implications of the Yugoslav crisis for Western Europe's foreign relations', *chaillot Paper* 17 (Paris: WEUInstitute for Security Studies, October 1994), pp. 82-91.

21. Albelkrim Moutii, quoted in François Burgat, *L'Islamisme au Maghreb* (Paris: Karthala, 1988), p. 191.

22. Djillali Liabès, Director of the Institut national d'Etudes deStratégie globale, told the author of these concerns in 1994 shortly before his assassination in Algiers.

23. Mohammed El-Sayed Selim,'Mediterraneanism: A New Dimension in Egypt's Foreign Policy', op. cit.

24. For an American point of view on political Islamism, see Graham E.Fuller and Ian O.Lesser, *A Sense of Siege: The Geopolitics of Islam and the West* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press/RAND, 1995).

25. For a commentary on Egypt's recent hints at pan-Arabism, which the author describes as a mirage, see Fouad Ajami, 'The Sorrows of Egypt', *Foreign Affair*s, vol.74, no. 5, 1995.

26. According to several sources, Israel has some 200 nuclear warheads, while the estimate given in *The Military Balance 1994-95* (London: Brassey's for the IISS, 1994) is a hundred.

27. Quoted in, for example, *Le Monde*, 25 February 1995.

28. It will be recalled that the concerted diplomatic efforts of EUmember countries prior to the NPTextension conference led to a common position within the CFSP.

29. To the great relief of Washington and Paris, the Arab League, meeting in March 1995, refused to support the Egyptian position,which was backed by Syria.

30. Abdel Monem Said, 'La politique des sécurité égyptienne', in Bassma Kodmani-Darwish and May chartouni-Dubarry (eds.), *Perceptions de sécurité et stratégies nationales au Moyen-orient* (Paris: Masson for the IFRI, 1994).

31. See Winrich KŸhne, Guido Lenzi and Alvaro Vasconcelos, 'WEU's role in crisis management and conflict resolution in sub-Saharan Africa', *chaillot Paper* 22 (Paris: WEU Institute for Security Studies, December 1995).

32. Habib Slim, 'Le codéveloppement, nouveau modèle de coopération', in Alvaro Vasconcelos (ed.), *Européens et Maghrébins - Une solidarité obligée* (Paris: Editions Karthala, 1993), pp. 113-137.

33. See, for example, regarding the position of the Mediterranean in European security priorities, Karl Kaiser, 'challenges and contingencies for European defence policy', in Laurence Martin and John Roper (eds.), *Towards a common defence policy*, a study by the European Strategy Group and the Institute for Security Studies of Western European Union (Paris: WEUInstitute for Security Studies, 1995), pp. 29-36.

34. See, in this regard, Roberto Aliboni, 'Institutionalising Mediterranean Relations: Complementarity and Competition', paper presented at the second session of the Mediterranean Study Commission (MeSCo), Alexandria, 30-31 March 1995.

35. Mustapha Sehimi, 'La sécurité en Méditerranée occidentale', in Alvaro Vasconcelos, op.cit., pp.27-46.

36. The OSCEdid, however, decide, during its Budapest conference, to intensify the informal dialogue, at the level of experts, with non-participating Mediterranean countries, that is to say Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Israel. Confidence-building measures were to be addressed with a view to studying the OSCE's experience in this matter. See Victor-Yves Ghebali, 'After the Budapest Conference: The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe', *NATOReview*, no.2, March 1995, pp. 24-7.

37. Consisting of Greece, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt and Turkey. As at May 1996, Israel had not yet been admitted

38. At the donor conference held in Washington on 1 October 1993, five multilateral working groups were created, dealing with water, the environment, refugees, arms control and regional economic development.

39. Military observers from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt attended the Italian-French-Spanish Exercise TRAMONTANA 94, in which the scenario was of an evacuation of European nationals.

40. The current initiative is due to Spain and Italy. The United States was in favour, whereas certain European countries were somewhat reticent, fearing that this initiative would be seen as the adoption of a NATO position on internal conflicts. It was therefore agreed that the dialogue would be strictly exploratory in nature.

41. M.A.Boumendif, 'Assistance to the young democracy or mistrust of the future Islamist state - NATO's recent initiative shows a dangerous ambivalence *vis-à-vis* Algeria', *La Tribune*, 12 February 1995.

42. Fernanda Faria is an associate researcher of the IEEI, Lisbon.

43. For a discussion of Egypt's security policy and threat perception, see the paper 'Egypt's Security Policy' presented by Wadouda Badran at a seminar organised by the WEUInstitute for Security Studies on 'Security and Defence Policies of the Maghreb Countries and Egypt', Paris, 9-10 March 1995.

44. The dispute over this area of desert adjoining the Red Sea has worsened since 1992, after Sudan granted a Canadian company an oil concession. Tensions have increased, with mutual accusations following the attempt to assassinate President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June 1995, which gave rise to fears of armed confrontation.

45. See Abdel Monem Said, 'La politique de sécurité égyptienne', in Bassma Kodmani-Darwish and May chartouny-Dubarry (eds.), *Perceptions de sécurité et stratégies nationales au Moyen-Orient* (Paris: Masson for the IFRI, 1994).

46. The monarchy was abolished during a *coup d'état* led by a group of officers that included Gamal Abdel-Nasser, in 1952. In 1953 Egypt was declared a republic.

47. It was during the Nasser regime in particular that Egyptian defence industry expanded rapidly, but many projects aimed at diversification and giving Egypt maximal autonomy were seriously hampered by the embargo and the withdrawal of many European technicians, then, following the Camp David accords and *rapprochement* with the United States, because of the deterioration in relations with the Gulf countries, the main source of financing of the Arab Organisation for Industrialisation (AOI), established in 1975 to promote inter-Arab cooperation in armaments production. During the 1980s, the Iran-Iraq war permitted Egypt to become a major arms exporter, but the following decade was affected by the crisis: Egypt lost its principal market, Iraq, and is having difficulty in finding others; moreover, its defence industry is fairly dependent on imported technology and international financial assistance. See Andrew Rathmell, 'Egypt's Military-Industrial Complex', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, October 1994.

48. In spite of reductions in the size of its armed forces made as part of a programme of modernisation, Egypt's armed forces are still the largest in northern Africa and among the largest in the Middle East, with a strength of 436,000, according to figures given in *The Military Balance 1995-1996* (London: Brassey's for the IISS, 1995).

49. Egypt is the second recipient of USaid in the Maghreb and Middle East after Israel. 60% of US financial aid goes towards military modernisation programmes.

$1.3 billion out of a total of $2.1 billion provided each year by the United States as Foreign Military Assistance (FMA) are used to acquire USdefence equipment, usually in the form of military assistance.

50. See *The Military Balance 1994-1995* and *1995-1996*.

51. Links with the former Soviet Union, which were particularly important in the field of defence (equipment, and the training and doctrine of the Egyptian armed forces) developed especially after nationalisation of the Suez Canal and during the 1960s, and lasted until 1972, when Sadat expelled about 17,000 Soviet advisers. The ending of the treaty of friendship between the two countries occurred later (March 1976).

52. See Wadouda Badran, 'Egypt's Security Policy', op.cit.

53. In April 1994, more than 3,200 Jordanian troops were participating in UN peacekeeping operations, almost all of them in former Yugoslavia in UNPROFOR. See *Peacekeeping Information Notes 1993: Update no. 1*, United Nations Department of Public Information, New York, April 1994.

54. In addition to *Frog*-5 (range 50 km), *Frog*-7 (70 km) and *Sakr*-80 (80 km), Egypt possesses 9 *Scud*-B launchers and over 100 missiles that have a range of 280 km, and is in the process of increasing the range of the *Scud* ('project T') to 450 km and developing the *Badr*, which should have a range of 850 - 1,000 km.

55. See Wadouda Badran, op. cit.

56. The disagreement with Algiers concerns 'boundary marker 223' in the south and the border at Bir Romane on the Mediterranean; the demarcation of the border with Algeria was finally undertaken in 1993. The dispute with Tripoli over the continental platform of the Gulf of Gabes, which was resolved by the International Court of Justice, The Hague, and other problems connected with Libyan military incursions into Tunisian territory and attempts at internal destabilisation such as the attack on Gafsa in 1980 by a group of opponents trained in Libya, have contributed to a relationship of permanent conflict.

57. See for example the paper 'Politique de sécurité et de défense de la Tunisie' presented by Habib Slim at the seminar mentioned in note 43.

58. See Habib Slim, op. cit.

59. The trans-Mediterranean gas pipeline from Hassi R'Mel in Algeria to Italy via Tunisia, and the oil pipeline from Hassi Messaoud, Algeria's main oilfield, to the Tunisian port of La Shkirra.

60. Whatever the future place of the Islamists in the Algerian political system may be - whether they assume power, merely participate in government or are recognised as a legitimate political party - they will always be seen in a negative way by the government in Tunis.

61. The members of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) moreover accuse the Tunisian Government of sending experts in anti-terrorist warfare to Algeria, and this was the argument used to justify the attack on a Tunisian frontier post and the murder of six guards in February 1995.

62. Entry into Europe becoming increasingly difficult and a visa being necessary to enter Morocco, Tunisia has become an easier and more attractive destination for Algerians attempting to flee the civil war. But it too is beginning to take steps to limit the number of immigrants entering the country, in particular by restricting the number of work permits granted to Algerian workers.

63. Tunisian soldiers still do not have the right to vote.

64. See Fernanda Faria, 'Politiques de sécurité au Maghreb. Les impératifs de la stabilité intérieure', *Cahiers du Lumiar* 1 (Lisbon: IEEI, September 1994), p. 43.

65. *The Military Balance 1994-1995*.

66. There is a tacit understanding between France and Tunisia according to which France would come to the aid of Tunisia in the event of an attack by Libya. France demonstrated this at the time of the Gafsa affair, when Tunisian dissidents trained and armed by Libya attacked police and army barracks, by deploying its fleet just beyond the limits of Libyan territorial waters.

67. This dispute was settled by a convention on the position of borders, signed in 1972, but was not ratified by Morocco until 1989. The marking of the border has still to be done.

68. Morocco nevertheless accuses Algeria of having taken part, until 1978, in armed attacks on Morocco, its soldiers having joined forces with the Polisario Front.

69. In 1973 the Ministry of Defence was replaced by a defence cabinet having purely administrative and bureaucratic functions.

70. See Mustapha Sehimi, 'The defence and security policy of Morocco', paper presented at the seminar quoted in note 43.

71. This cooperation, which Morocco has also enjoyed with Spain since the end of the 1980s, extends to the training of military officers, technical assistance and combined exercises. In addition, in 1982 Morocco came to an agreement with the United States, which was renewed in 1988, granting USforces transit facilities on its territory.

72. Figures given vary: according to *The Military Balance 1994-1995*, the Moroccan Army numbers 195,500, and according to French sources 223,000.

73. See *The Military Balance 1995-1996*.

74. Again, figures vary, but the number of troops in the Western Sahara is reportedly between 110,000 and 140,000.

75. Libya was the last country to sign an agreement with Algeria on the marking of borders, on 26 January 1995.

76. An agreement on their common border was signed in February 1984 and the marking has been completed.

77. See Abdelwahab Biad, 'Algeria's security and defence policy', a paper presented at the seminar mentioned in note 43.

78. The United States and France in particular have become suppliers of defence equipment; cooperation agreements with Algeria also include the training of officers.

79. In 1995, several articles in the press mentioned orders placed by the Algerian Government, in particular 700 *Scorpion* armoured vehicles valued at $200 million and nine *Ecureuil* civilian helicopters, which Aerospatiale allegedly refused to equip for military use as Algeria had requested. Algeria also reportedly tried to buy individual protection equipment, infrared detection and night vision equipment. *Le Monde*, 21 May 1995.

80. Around 16,000 people may have been enlisted to strengthen the civic guard. *Le Monde*, 15 April 1995.

81. According to *The Military Balance 1995-1996*, the strength of the Algerian Army is 121,700, and according to French sources 162,000.

82. Algeria has 12 *Frog*-7 launchers, which have a range of 65 km, and may be intending to acquire *Scud*-C (range of less than 600 km) and North Korean *Nodong*-1 missiles (about 1,000 km). See Ian O. Lesser, *Security in North Africa. Internal and External challenges* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1993), p. 52.

83. Algeria possesses two nuclear reactors: one, of 1 MW, which is used for research, and that at Ain Oussera, dating from 1993, which generates 15 MW of electricity.

84. The Zouerate region used to be of great economic importance because of its iron mines. Iron was formerly Mauritania's main export and source of income, but for several years its importance as an export has diminished considerably; it now represents around 17% of GDP.

85. Between 7,000 and 8,000 refugees returned in 1994 but there are still over 50,000 in Senegal. The expulsion of black Africans by Mauritania has also affected officials and the military.

86. The FLAM (Mauritanian African Liberation Forces) launch their operations from Senegalese territory.

87. Figures taken from *The Military Balance 1995-1996*.

88. This has included conflicts with chad and Egypt; frontier disputes with Niger, Algeria and Tunisia, which have taken the form of occasion confrontation in border

areas or incursions into their territory; and tensions between Libya and Morocco, Sudan and Malta.

89. On several occasions during the 1980s, the United States and Libya came into direct confrontation: the bombing by American aircraft of a missile battery in Sirte in 1986, the American raid on Tripoli and Benghazi the same year (followed, by way of reprisal, by a missile attack on the Italian island of Lampedusa), and the shooting down of two Libyan MiG-23 in 1989 by American carrier-based aircraft in the Mediterranean.

90. For a discussion of Islamists in Libya and the Libyan leader's position on the question of fundamentalism, see Dennis Sammut, 'Libya and the Islamic challenge', *The World Today*, 50, October 1994, pp. 198-200.

91. Libya has supplied information to the British Government on support given to the IRA. Another example is support to the Abu Nidal Palestinian organisation, which broke away from the PLOin 1974 and has been responsible for several terrorist attacks: it no longer has its headquarters in Libya and is no longer supported by that country.

92. On the structure, organisation and capability of Libya's armed forces, and those of other Maghreb countries, see José Antonio Saiz de la Pe–a, 'Las Fuerzas armadas del Maghreb' in Antonio Marquina Barrio (ed.), 'Seguridad en el Mediterraneo', *Anales* 7 (Madrid: Fundaci–n Universitaria San Pablo - CEU, 1992).

93. Libya's dependence on foreign military 'advisers' and the scale of cooperation agreements (particularly with the former Soviet Union, France, Italy, the former East Germany and other countries in Eastern Europe) enable it to update its equipment and send military personnel abroad for training. There are still in Libya possibly 300 to 500 military advisers (a very small figure considering that they once numbered over 2,000), mostly from the former Soviet Union, and considered essential for the training of soldiers and technical assist-ance for the repair and maintenance of equipment. Some of these advisers probably left after the wave of expulsions of foreign workers in 1995; however, rather than threaten them with expulsion the regime may have attempted to retain them by enticing them with additional advantages.

94. According to *The Military Balance 1994-1995*, they number no more than 80,000.

95. More than 40 *Frog*-7 launchers and 144 missiles with a range of 70 km, and over 80 *Scud*-B launchers and 240 missiles with a range of 280 km are supposedly in service, as well as an undefined number of *Scud*-C (600 km). Libya may also be in the process of increasing the range of the *Al-Fatah* missiles it has developed from 500 to 950 km, with Iran's cooperation. See *The Non-proliferation Review*, vol. 1, no. 2, Winter 1994, and *TTUEurope*, 149, 18 July 1996, p. 4.

96. In addition to the large complex at Rabta, which it is estimated is capable of producing 1.2 tonnes of chemical agents per day, Libya is reportedly building a second facility at Tarhun‹h, 80 km south-east of Tripoli, with the help of foreign technicians. See Alessandro Politi, 'Schede sugli assetti militari dei paesi del Maghreb e del Medio Oriente', Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome, internal paper. According

to official American sources quoted in the *International Herald Tribune* of 26 February 1996, this second facility for the production of chemical agents could be the largest in the world, and, once finished, which could be in 1997 or 1998, capable of producing several tonnes of chemical agent per day. The control of products used in the making of chemical and biological weapons is extremely difficult, because of their dual-use (civil and military) nature. This fact could serve as an argument for requesting the extension of the embargo already imposed on Libya or at least to counter certain European allies that are more in favour of an easing or even the end of the embargo. See also the reply by French Defence Minister charles Millon to a written question from the Socialist senator Bertrand Delano‘ , quoted in *TTUEurope*, 148, 11 July 1996, p. 3.

97. Alessandro Politi, ibid.

98. For a discussion of security policies in the Maghreb, see in particular Fernanda Faria, 'Politiques de sécurité au Maghreb. Les impératifs de la stabilité intérieure', *Cahiers du Lumiar* (Lisbon: IEEI, September 1994).

99. Article 14 states that 'Any aggression to which a Member State is subjected will be considered as an aggression against the other Member States.' This was included in the Treaty at the request of Libya

Article 15, paragraph 1 states that 'Member States undertake not to permit any activity or organization which could harm the security, territorial integrity or political system of any other Member State.' This was included at the request of Tunisia.