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**NATO's MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE: AN ASSESSMENT**

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## NATO's MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE: AN ASSESSMENT

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After the Cold War ended, NATO experienced an unprecedented transformation from a military alliance focused on collective self-defense to a multi-dimensional alliance that is capable of handling the emerging security environment mainly through out of area operations. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, NATO was forced to search elsewhere for a purpose of existence and a strategic framework to carry it into the twenty-first century. NATO's members turned close to home to Eastern and

Southeastern Europe, as well as the Mediterranean and realized that the organization needed to have the ability to handle different types of threats such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction proliferation, and even social or economic problems. As a result, NATO began to focus on these regions as the starting point for security and stability building initiatives. NATO's post-Cold War transformation accelerated after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, and resulted in the strengthening of NATO's approach to the Southeastern European and Mediterranean security environment.

The Mediterranean region is important to the security and stability of many NATO members. Around twenty countries share a coastline on the Mediterranean shores and even more rely on its strategic and economic importance. The stability of the region has been a focus of NATO for quite some time. During the Cold War, NATO's primary objective was to control the activities of the Soviet Mediterranean Fleet and minimize Soviet political influence over the countries of Northern Africa and the Middle East. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has focused on the Mediterranean because of the various types of security threats (political, societal, economic and environmental) emanating from the southern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, as well as the proximity of the region to the Middle East. During the 1999 Washington Summit, NATO proclaimed, "security in the whole of Europe is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean" (NATO, 2000). Security and stability in the Mediterranean is closely tied to two forms of security: hard and soft. Hard security is related to issues that stem from terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and sources of conflict, while soft security is related to political, economic, and social issues. According to RAND's analysis, "problems that have occurred in the Mediterranean sprung from similarly trends, unresolved questions of political legitimacy, relentless urbanization and slow growth, resurgent nationalism, and religious radicalism" (Larrabee *et al.* 1998, p. 2). By concentrating on the Mediterranean, NATO hoped it could help stabilize the transforming security environment by providing the necessary institutional mechanisms in the region for its allies and partners. Since many of NATO's members are located in the Mediterranean basin, it was strategically important for NATO to be involved in the area. Because of the emergence of new type of threats, as well as existing conflicts, the prospect for instability was too great for NATO not to be involved, so, as a result, NATO

established the Mediterranean Dialogue as a key component of its post-Cold War strategy.

### **The Mediterranean Dialogue**

In 1994, NATO embarked on its Mediterranean initiative aimed at increasing stability in the region by establishing the Mediterranean Dialogue, a regional partnership between NATO and Mediterranean states. The establishment of the Dialogue represents one of NATO's official steps in adapting to the post-Cold War security environment, and according to Alberto Bin, has become a "key instrument in support of the Alliance's overall strategy of partnership, dialogue, and cooperation" (Bin 2002, p. 2). The Mediterranean Dialogue originated with five participating countries, which included Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, and within a few years, Algeria and Jordan followed. The logic for the cooperation among the participants rests on the fact that "a strong and confident relationship between NATO and the countries of the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf regions will build trust and encourage mutual understanding" (Rizzo 2007, p. 10). This style of relationship builds upon the concept that working together, sharing expertise, and cooperation will make NATO, its member countries, and the participants of the Mediterranean Dialogue more capable of handling the new security environment after the Cold War.

### **Strategic Principles of the Mediterranean Dialogue**

The successful launch of the Mediterranean Dialogue and its subsequent development has been based upon five principles:

1. The Dialogue is progressive in terms of participation and substance. Such flexibility has allowed the number of Dialogue partners to grow and the content of the Dialogue to evolve over time.

2. The Dialogue is primarily bilateral in structure (NATO+1). Despite the predominantly bilateral character, the Dialogue nevertheless allows for multilateral meetings on a regular basis (NATO+7).
3. All Mediterranean partners are offered the same basis for cooperation activities and discussion with NATO. This non-discrimination is an essential feature of the Dialogue and has been the key to its successful establishment and subsequent development.
4. Within this non-discriminatory framework, Dialogue countries are free to choose the extent and intensity of their participation (self-differentiation), including through the establishment of Individual Cooperation Programmes (ICP).
5. The Dialogue is meant to mutually reinforce and complement other international efforts such as the EU's Barcelona Process (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership) and the OSCE's Mediterranean Initiative.

In principle, activities within the Dialogue take place on a self-funding basis. However, Allies agreed to consider requests for financial assistance in support of Mediterranean partners' participation in the Dialogue. A number of measures have recently been taken to facilitate cooperation, notably the revision of the Dialogue's funding policy thus allowing to fund up to 100% of the participation costs in Dialogue's activities and the extension of the NATO/PfP Trust Fund mechanisms to Mediterranean Dialogue countries.

At first, it was believed that the Dialogue, through these principles, would be able to provide the necessary, post-Cold War initiatives to create a stable environment for Mediterranean countries to thrive in because NATO and its partners were equipped to handle the changing region. Armedeo de Franchis, former Italian Ambassador to NATO, found that "The Mediterranean Dialogue is a forum particularly well suited to dealing with subjects in which NATO possess unique experience and competence" (cited in Paciello, 2002). However, as we see later, the Mediterranean Dialogue has not been successful enough in achieving its major objectives.



## **The Objectives of the Mediterranean Dialogue**

The objectives of the Dialogue are broad and diverse. The Dialogue purports to contribute to regional security and stability, achieve better mutual understanding, and dispel any misconceptions about NATO among Dialogue countries (NATO Mediterranean Dialogue 2007). It does this by providing the channels for partner countries to communicate and cooperate in a forum that would otherwise not exist. Additionally, the Dialogue was created with the objective to help “correct any misconception that may have arisen with regard to NATO activities and to dismantle the myth that an Alliance in search of new, artificial enemies to the South” (Bin 2002, p. 2). This objective stemmed from the fact that after the Cold War many countries believe that NATO was sure to fall apart unless it found an enemy. Moreover, many viewed NATO as a vehicle through which the U.S. would seek to exercise its global hegemony. As a result, NATO established the Dialogue to help dispel these myths by fostering a cooperative partnership between itself and Mediterranean countries. Along with the publicity campaign, NATO wanted to “establish an effective, long term relationship based on mutual security interests” (Managing Change 2003, p. 29). Prior to the creation of the Mediterranean Dialogue, Mediterranean security interests were only in the hands of individual countries and a few NATO members. By incorporating the strategic principles, the objectives could be met through cooperation and partnership. Thus, the Mediterranean Dialogue established a means for which Mediterranean countries could invest and cooperate on security measures together.

## **The Political Dimension of the Mediterranean Dialogue**

The Mediterranean Cooperation Group (MCG), established at the Madrid Summit in July 1997 under the supervision of the North Atlantic Council (NAC), has the overall responsibility for the Mediterranean Dialogue. It meets at the level of Political Counsellors on a regular basis to discuss all matters related to the Dialogue including its further development.

Political consultations in the NATO+1 format are held on a regular basis both at Ambassadorial and working level. These discussions provide an opportunity for sharing views on a range of issues relevant to the security situation in the Mediterranean, as well as on the further development of the political and practical cooperation dimensions of the Dialogue.

Meetings in the NATO+7 format, including NAC+7 meetings, are also held on a regular basis, in particular following the NATO Ministerial meetings, Summits of Heads of State and Government, and other major NATO events. These meetings represent an opportunity for NATO's Secretary General to brief Mediterranean Dialogue Ambassadors on the Alliance's current agenda. Also, for the first time, an MD meeting of Foreign Ministers was organized in December 2004 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Mediterranean Dialogue. The first ever meeting of Defense Ministers was held in February 2006.

The political dimension also includes visits by NATO Senior Officials, including the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General, to Mediterranean Dialogue countries. The main purpose of these visits is to meet with the relevant host authorities and exchange views on NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, as well as to get a better appreciation of each partner's specific objectives and priorities.

### **The Practical Dimension of the Mediterranean Dialogue**

Measures of practical cooperation between NATO and Mediterranean Dialogue countries are laid down in an annual Work Programme which aims at building confidence through cooperation in security-related issues. The annual Work Programme includes seminars, workshops and other practical activities in the fields of public diplomacy (information and press activities, scientific and environmental cooperation), civil emergency planning, crisis management, border security, small arms & light weapons, defense reform and defense economics, as well as consultations on terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

There is also a military dimension to the annual Work Programme which includes invitations to Dialogue countries to observe - and in some cases participate - in

NATO/PfP military exercises, attend courses and other academic activities at the NATO School (SHAPE) in Oberammergau (Germany) and the NATO Defense College in Rome (Italy), and visit NATO military bodies. The military programme also includes port visits by NATO's Standing Naval Forces, on-site train-the-trainers sessions by Mobile Training Teams, and visits by NATO experts to assess the possibilities for further cooperation in the military field.

Furthermore, NATO+7 consultation meetings on the military program involving military representatives from NATO and the seven Mediterranean Dialogue countries are held twice a year. Also, for the first time, a CHOD-level meeting was organized in November 2004. Since then, CHOD-level meetings are a regular feature of the MD. It is also worth noting that three Mediterranean Dialogue countries - Egypt, Jordan and Morocco - have cooperated militarily with the Alliance in the NATO-led operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina (IFOR/SFOR) and Kosovo (KFOR).

### **NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue Prior to September 11, 2001**

Prior to the terrorist attacks of September 11, the Mediterranean Dialogue was mildly successful, in terms of creating a dialogue among Mediterranean countries. In 1997 the Mediterranean Cooperation Group (MCG) was established to oversee the program and future development. As it was stated above, the operational principles of the Mediterranean Dialogue rely on two dimensions, political and practical. The political dimension of the pre-9/11 Dialogue consisted of political consultations that were held in the NATO+1 format and visits by senior officials. The practical dimension of the Dialogue before 9/11 was wide and varied. According to NATO, "measures of practical cooperation between NATO and Mediterranean Dialogue countries are laid down in an annual work program which aims at building confidence through cooperation in security-related issues" (NATO Mediterranean Dialogue, 2007). Cooperation programs include seminars, fellowships, political consultation, civilian training, and military activities. The programs were self funded which can be attributed to the limited success of the Mediterranean Dialogue. Emphasis was put on civil emergency planning and civil-military cooperation, along with medical evacuation workshops and civil protection

seminars (Larrabee et al. 1998, p. 49). As one can see, prior to 9/11, much of the focus of the Dialogue was put towards organizing and preparing Dialogue countries for civil-military emergencies, and within four years, the Mediterranean Dialogue began to respond to the security environment of the Mediterranean tried to become an important player in security relations. For example, the NATO Washington Summit, which established the current strategic concept in 1999, proclaimed the Mediterranean Dialogue as the integral part of NATO's cooperative approach to security (Benantar 2006, p. 170). Since then the Dialogue has been a major focus of NATO and partner countries as a way to establish security and stability.

### **NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue after September 11, 2001**

The events of 9/11 triggered a fundamental shift in the Mediterranean Dialogue's direction by putting it at the forefront of NATO's strategic doctrine. Additionally, the attack "highlighted the need for Mediterranean parties to move closer together" (Managing Change 2003, p. 29). During NATO's Prague Summit in November of 2002, NATO decided to substantially upgrade the political and practical dimensions of the Mediterranean Dialogue. The Dialogue needed to change as a result of the strong threat that terrorism poised towards NATO members and its partners. According to Roberto Aliboni, "because of its [Mediterranean] cultural and political relevance of the Muslim world and Europe's proximity, the Mediterranean area is becoming particularly important for global terrorism" (Aliboni 2002, p. 3). The Mediterranean Dialogue became more important than ever because "the necessity to establish a conflict prevention mechanism is even more urgent after the terrorist attacks of 9/11" (A More Ambitious and Expanded Framework for the Mediterranean Dialogue 2007). Consequently, in the years that followed, NATO focused on the Mediterranean Dialogue as the conflict prevention mechanism necessary for the Mediterranean and greater Middle East region, which meant that the dialogue had to develop and adapt with the transforming security environment.

NATO and its members realized that there needed to be changes made to the Mediterranean Dialogue as a result of 9/11. In 2002 NATO decided to overhaul and

improve the existing Dialogue into a more structured partnership in the future. The Prague Summit Declaration proclaimed,

“We reaffirm that security in Europe is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean. We therefore decide to upgrade substantially the political and practical dimensions of our Mediterranean Dialogue as an integral part of the Alliance’s cooperative approach to security. In this respect, we encourage intensified practical cooperation and effective interaction on security matters of common concern, including terrorism-related issues, as appropriate, where NATO can provide added value” (North Atlantic Council - Heads of State and Government 2002).

The restructuring of the Dialogue was a necessary step for NATO to take in order to make sure that region would be fully capable to handle the challenges that existed after 9/11. The need for strengthening the Mediterranean dialogue further became even more pivotal after the US invasion of Iraq. The US military involvement in the Middle East enhanced the negative perceptions that the people in the region had had about the role and goals of the American foreign policy. Since there was always a link between NATO and the US in the minds of the people in the region, it became imperative for the Mediterranean Dialogue to address these negative perceptions. Consequently, the most significant changes to the Mediterranean Dialogue occurred in 2004 during the Istanbul Summit. NATO Foreign Ministers looked for addition progress beyond that achieved since the Prague Summit in upgrading the Mediterranean Dialogue. The new framework for the Mediterranean Dialogue incorporated more military cooperation than ever before. For example, the enhanced Dialogue’s objective was “enhancing the exiting political dialogue; achieving interoperability; developing defense reform; and contributing to the fight against terrorism” (A More Ambitious and Expanded Framework for the Mediterranean Dialogue 2007). In addition to the reforming the Mediterranean Dialogue, NATO established the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, which promotes cooperation among countries of the Middle East region, at the Istanbul Summit as well. This initiative

includes the same aims for the expanded Mediterranean Dialogue such as the fight against terrorism and preventing the proliferation of mass destruction, but it is targeted towards a Middle Eastern cooperative framework.

As the Dialogue expanded over the years, so have the types and amount of programs facilitated and funded by NATO. Pierre Razoux argues that “The number of joint activities has risen from sixty in 1997 to over 600 in 2007, ranging from over 27 distinct areas from ordinary military contact to the exchange of information on maritime security, counter-terrorism and crisis management” (Razoux 2008, p. 2). The increase in activities can be attributed to the change in attitude of participating countries in the importance of cooperation and partnership. The new Dialogue brought about changes that targeted the potential threats to instability in the region. Invitations to Dialogue countries to either observe or participate with troops in NATO/ PfP sea and land exercises were made (Shaping a New Security Agenda for Future Regional Co-operation in the Mediterranean Region, p. 210). The cooperative military exercises among Dialogue countries are supposed to increase military readiness for conflicts or situations in the Mediterranean region. In addition to the military cooperation activities, the Dialogue has kept with increasing the amount of discussions and meetings between countries. For instance, “cooperation is well engaged as attested by the breadth of discussions, noticeably with Israel and Algeria and their participation in Active Endeavour program, a navigation monitoring operation in the Mediterranean to prevent possible terrorist attacks” (Benantar 2006, p. 170). NATO has even utilized the Dialogue partners in peacekeeping operations. Egypt, Jordan and Morocco have contributed to the international peace force deployed under NATO and EU command in Kosovo (Benantar 2006, p. 170).

However, NATO did not manage to strengthen the Mediterranean Dialogue in non-military areas. Since the problems that the organization had sought to address were of political, economic and social nature, it is difficult for one to understand how they could be addressed exclusively through military cooperation. With limited funding and support, the Mediterranean Dialogue produced some success, but it never fully reached its potential and objectives.

## **Assessing NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue**

To provide an assessment of the Mediterranean Dialogue's operations, one should focus on its objectives, namely to "contribute to regional security and stability; achieve better mutual understanding; and dispel any misconceptions about NATO among Dialogue countries" (NATO Mediterranean Dialogue, 2007).

With reference to the first objective, the Mediterranean Dialogue "... has played no significant role in stabilizing the region and promoting the evolution of participating countries" (Donnelly, 2004). One could even argue that the region has continually been on course towards destabilization. Since the creation of the Mediterranean Dialogue, there have been quite a few conflicts and terrorist attacks since 1995, which is not to say the Mediterranean Dialogue is responsible, but that the region is so large, diverse, and uncontrollable. Some major events in the Mediterranean include the terrorist attacks in Spain, increase in confrontation between Israel and Palestine, and the Iraq War. It is evident that the security task is too large for NATO to handle because regional security and stability rely too heavily on factors that NATO does not and will not have the capabilities to handle. It is important to note that NATO is first and foremost a transatlantic military alliance. Thus, with the emergence of economic, environmental, geographical, and internal political factors affecting regional security and stability, NATO is well beyond its call of duty. As a result, other institutions and organizations have become involved in Mediterranean affairs, which add to the confusion in the region and undermines the possibility of success for NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue.

The transformation of the international security environment since 9/11 has caused NATO to expand its focus on the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Unfortunately these initiatives overlap with other operations of various international institutions such as the European Union, OSCE, and France's new initiative the Mediterranean Union. The overabundance of operations, dialogues, programs, and forums have inhibited positive development in European, Mediterranean, and Middle East relations. More importantly, it negatively affects the countries that are involved in these initiatives because there are too many programs to deal with and too many channels to go through, so, as a result, the

objectives of each of these initiatives are never met. Even more worrying, “there is widespread skepticism in Brussels, Washington and most European capitals about prospects of amicable cooperation between NATO and the EU, especially in the area as sensitive as the Mediterranean” (Razoux 2008, p. 21). Not only is there skepticism from participating countries, but there is skepticism from the member countries that are running these programs and initiatives. However, it is possible to fix this problem by more thorough cooperation, communication and transparency, but NATO has not completely integrated these institutions in a contextual framework in its Dialogue. As noted above, NATO has had to expand its framework to focus on other factors that affect security, such as the soft security issues, which NATO is not fully capable to handle. One way to fix this would be to increase cooperation with the EU so that they may handle the soft security issues. However, the current assessment of the Mediterranean Dialogue clearly shows that the over saturation of international institutions is reducing NATO’s ability to perform to the best of its ability in the Mediterranean, and until this is fixed, the Mediterranean Dialogue will not succeed.

The inefficiency of NATO and other organizations in the Mediterranean is worrisome, especially for the future of stability and security in the region. The second part of NATO’s objectives for the Mediterranean Dialogue is to “achieve better mutual understanding; dispel any misconceptions about NATO among Dialogue countries.” Since the creation of the Dialogue, NATO has failed to reach these goals. Aliboni notes that “While the dialogue did not really succeed in dispelling negative perceptions and improving NATO’s image in the Mediterranean Arab countries, nor in establishing a substantial political dialogue, it did manage to set up a much appreciated bilateral military cooperation with the governments in question” (Aliboni 2006, p. 7). But it is important to note that much of the Dialogue objectives and principles surround the concept of “better mutual understanding” and dispelling “any misconceptions about NATO among Dialogue countries.” The failure to integrate the Dialogue countries in a manner in which to achieve these objectives is why the current assessment of the Dialogue depicts it as failing to meet its objectives set out in 1994.

Since NATO has been reworking its public image in the Mediterranean and the greater Middle East through the Dialogue, the Iraq War and the Israel-Palestinian crisis



has prevented NATO from fully reaching its objective. These crises have reduced NATO's legitimacy in the region, at least in the eye of the much of the Mediterranean. In Helle Malmvig's words, "NATO is largely viewed with suspicion and distrust in the region" and "the general skepticism toward NATO is also due to the fact that NATO primarily is seen as a military alliance dominated by the US" (Malmvig 2005, p. 13). This skepticism has fed into the possible fear that NATO's outreach to the region is just the hand of the U.S. pushing deeper into the pockets of much of the Middle East. The perception of NATO from the Mediterranean and the Middle East is essential to the successes of the Mediterranean Dialogue, which means that NATO and its dialogue is failing to dispel any misunderstandings. Aliboni claims that the "average Arab citizen ordinarily has a negative image of it [NATO]" and, more importantly, "these perceptions curb Arab government's freedom in dealing with NATO no less than the performance of NATO cooperation" (Aliboni 2006, p. 8). It is in this capacity that the Mediterranean Dialogue is not succeeding in reaching its objectives. In order for any initiative to succeed, especially the Mediterranean Dialogue, there must be full participation and commitment from its participants. However, as Aliboni has pointed out, member countries are not able to freely cooperate with NATO. Additionally, "NATO's initiatives are so far isolated from the active political powers in the Arab world particular the opposition" (Al-Khazendar 2005, p. 650).

NATO's cooperative initiatives are so far away from the constituents that legitimize the participating members that the Dialogue will never fully involve the political powers in charge. Evidently, military exercises, the cornerstone of the practical dimension, between Dialogue countries and NATO are not persuading the average citizen to support NATO and its initiatives. There are too many issues of economic, social or environmental importance that affect the general public in which NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue fails to provide any assistance or direction for. If public opinion in participating countries does not become positive towards the Dialogue and begin to distrust the Alliance even further, then there will be no progress in developing a cooperative framework for the future.

NATO's new found mission for cooperation and partnership with other countries is accomplished through dialogue and communication that did not exist prior to the end of the Cold War as it does now. The Mediterranean Dialogue is founded on the belief that

cooperation and partnership is vital to the new security environment, but the foundation on which the Dialogue lies is causing it to struggle. According to Razoux, “For many observers, the partnership is losing momentum and is struggling to address the other political initiatives that are proliferating in the Mediterranean area” (Razoux 2008, p. 1). With the changing security landscape in the Mediterranean, political and military factors are affecting the ways in which the Dialogue is operated. When the Dialogue was established, it relied on the basis for bilateral cooperation between NATO and the member states; however, as the Dialogue failed to produce substantial results, NATO began to change the framework. A more “ambitious” framework was proposed which instituted multilateral cooperation and participation, but, as we have seen over the years, NATO is not capable of successfully providing these forms of partnership. As a result, Razoux has posed the following question: “should we give precedence to the political dialogue or to the practical cooperation” (Razoux 2008, p. 5)? The over saturation of international institutions in the Mediterranean and the political problems that member countries face have prevented the political dialogue and practical cooperation of the Dialogue to reach its full potential.

Even still, NATO and its allies are desperately seeking to fix the Mediterranean Dialogue and its failed framework. Since its establishment in 1994, the Mediterranean Dialogue has undergone major changes, yet the Dialogue has still not completely succeeded in reaching its objectives. The political and practical dimensions rely on cooperation and dialogue, and with each change to the Mediterranean Dialogue, the two dimensions expand and become more complicated. When will NATO stop adding or removing support to the “bridge” between the transatlantic alliance and the member Mediterranean countries before the “bridge” collapses? Some scholars and policy makers keep offering solutions. For example, Chris Donnelly argues that in order “to build security partnerships in the wider Mediterranean region and greater Middle East, NATO needs to develop greater expertise in this part of the world and to increase institutional mechanisms for engagement” (Donnelly 2004). Other scholars and policy makers call for more political dialogue and transparency, but to what end? These types of changes have been occurring for years, yet they come to limited success. And since there are so many other institutions involved in the Mediterranean area, is the Mediterranean Dialogue cut

out to survive? The answer is no, unless it adapts and changes, but, then again, this is all that the Mediterranean Dialogue has done within the last fifteen years.

## **Conclusion**

NATO cannot continue to embark on this public affairs and marketing initiative that it has attempted to do since 1994. It must consolidate and focus on its strengths as a military alliance that is well suited to tackling the new security environment of the twenty-first century. NATO cannot change the political mindsets of Mediterranean countries and its people because it does not have the mechanisms and the means to do so. As a result, the Mediterranean Dialogue has not accomplished its goals and will never fully dispel any misconceptions among Dialogue Countries. NATO must focus on its skills and knowledge of defense and security, while still instituting a regional framework of cooperation and partnership. The lessons of the PfP are far reaching in that success can occur through partnership between NATO and other countries, but the Mediterranean provides a difficult medium for NATO to complete its objectives. By cooperating with other institutions, such as the European Union, OSCE, and the Arab League, supporting their policies and utilizing their skills and knowledge in the areas that NATO is unfamiliar with, the complex security environment of the region can be better handled.

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