The security environment around the Mediterranean basin and beyond will be strongly affected by, and will also affect, the process of NATO adaptation. In this context, the adaptation process is understood to include changes in the membership, strategy, missions, and command structure of the Alliance. It also embraces the broader process of change in political influence and roles within NATO. To the extent that the Alliance moves further in the direction of the defense of common interests, with less narrowly defined notions of its security space, Europe's southern periphery should, and will, figure more prominently in NATO strategy. Similarly, as even traditional Alliance missions acquire a greater power-projection flavor, and to the extent that the capacity for power projection becomes more widely shared among allies, the contribution of Southern Region states to NATO objectives is likely to grow.

**NATO’s Southern Periphery: Alternative Models**

As noted earlier, the role of the Mediterranean and adjacent areas in transatlantic security is changing. From Cold War marginalization, the southern periphery has clearly moved to the center of Alliance concerns, even if this significance is rarely defined in “Mediterranean” terms. It is simply that the United States and its European allies are more occupied with southern problems—from the Balkans to the Caspian and from North Africa to the Gulf—and doing more in political and military terms around the region. A number of possible future models for the role of the southern periphery in NATO strategy can be offered, ranging from a simple extension of the current approach to more ambitious concepts that would require a fundamental change in the role of the Alliance.
NATO’s Near Abroad

A first and least ambitious model treats the southern periphery—broadly, the Mediterranean and perhaps the Black Sea—as essentially an extension of the traditional European security environment; in short, NATO’s near abroad. In this model, the emphasis is on a limited expansion of the geographic scope of the Alliance. It takes into account the need for common approaches to new risks, emanating from the south and capable of affecting core European security interests. The key areas of regional concern have been the Balkans and North Africa, and it can be argued that Alliance views have evolved to the point that these places are no longer really “out-of-area.” In functional terms, the focus has been on proliferation, terrorism, and refugee movements. This is a balanced model from a transatlantic perspective; crises in this framework are not far from western Europe and may be shaped by European diplomacy and addressed largely (although, as Bosnia and Kosovo demonstrate, not solely) by European military power. The internal problem of Turkish-Greek relations also falls within this frame. Turkey plays an eccentric role in this model of the southern periphery because it is relevant to many potential contingencies and “soft” security problems around the Mediterranean, but many of its own security concerns go well beyond the reach (and in some cases, willingness) of European power. In fundamental respects, this “near-abroad” model of the south is the prevailing model within the Alliance today. Treatment of Mediterranean and southeast European security in NATO’s new Strategic Concept falls within this limited rubric.

North-South Security Relations

A second model, and one that has developed in parallel, treats the southern periphery as a theater for north-south relations in security terms. The focus in this approach is on dialogue and forestalling frictions along “civilizational” or “have and have not” lines. Central to this approach is NATO’s ongoing Mediterranean Initiative, aimed at dialogue and information-sharing with selected partner states across the Mediterranean, and championed by Southern Region states (especially Portugal, Spain, and Italy). France, although heavily engaged in
Mediterranean and north-south relations, is reluctant to see these relations focused within NATO. The Initiative has evolved from and bears a close relationship to various other Mediterranean initiatives, past and current.¹

This model is particularly attractive to those within the Alliance, such as Spain, concerned about the consequences of a defense-oriented approach to the south that might be seen across the Mediterranean as a new cold war along north-south, or worse, Muslim-Western lines. As NATO begins to treat defense-related problems in the south more seriously, this “dialogue” model can play a useful confidence-building role. It might eventually become a vehicle for more concrete security cooperation along north-south lines if the Middle East peace process continues to evolve positively.² In historical terms, the coexistence of this approach with the first model, described above, is similar to the “Harmel” strategy adopted in relations with the Soviet Union—defense and dialogue in parallel. This is a useful approach to reconciling the looming tension between dialogue and defense in NATO southern strategy. As part of an agreed NATO initiative, the dialogue model enjoys a basic level of political support within the Alliance, although some major and potentially controversial choices will need to be made about how to operationalize the Initiative in the future.

**Power Projection**

A third, “power-projection” model views the southern periphery as a logistical anteroom to critical regions beyond the Mediterranean basin—above all, the Gulf and the Caspian. This is a more ambitious conception of the strategic role of the south, going considerably beyond the consensus view within the Alliance. In transatlantic terms, it is heavily weighted toward an American world view and the requirements of U.S. national security strategy. With the limited exceptions of France and Britain, it is also a model that is relevant only in the context of

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¹ Including the proposed Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM); the Five plus Five dialogue between the Arab Maghreb Union and southern European states; the Mediterranean Forum; and the EU’s Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Barcelona) program.

American power-projection capabilities. It draws heavily on the Gulf War experience in which the Mediterranean served as a critical rear area and in which Southern Region members played an integral part in access and overflight. This is also a model in which proliferation trends in the south and the potential for asymmetric strategies, including terrorism, play a complicating role. The power-projection model highlights the strategic importance of Turkey as a facilitator but also as an increasingly assertive regional actor in its own right. It is also worth noting that some traditional missions for the Alliance, including countering a resurgent Russia in relation to Turkey, are by virtue of their distance part of this power-projection model. In addition to Turkey, this model could argue for more active NATO cooperation with Israel and Jordan as part of a “northern” approach to defense of the Gulf.

Toward a Global NATO?

A final model would treat strategy toward NATO’s south as a step toward a more global NATO, with a firm focus on defense of common interests without reference to geographic boundaries. This approach is clearly far beyond the current limits of NATO consensus, but it is not inconceivable over the longer term. It can be regarded as power projection “plus,” in the political as well as the operational sense. A more limited conception might see this “global” model as the goal, but with the Mediterranean—Europe’s doorstep—as the logical place to start on an expanded transatlantic security agenda.

In the wake of the 1999 Washington summit and the elaboration of a new Strategic Concept, the notion of Europe’s southern periphery as NATO’s “near abroad,” together with the established “dialogue” model, will likely guide Alliance strategy toward the south. But from the perspective of U.S. security interests, and with the likelihood that Alliance members will (perhaps simply as coalitions of the willing) be called upon to act beyond the Mediterranean basin in the future, more ambitious models are also useful. A transforming development, such as the return of France to NATO’s integrated military structure, could make more expansive visions of the south’s role in NATO strategy viable.
Southern Region Perspectives on A Changing NATO

Perspectives on NATO adaptation vary considerably from Lisbon to Ankara, and it would be misleading to attempt a synthesis. This analysis is aimed at characterizing the key lines of interest and concern, particularly in relation to future NATO missions. Although not a traditional “Southern Region” state, France’s views are reflected here as a key actor in Mediterranean security and a strong influence over strategic thinking in southern Europe.

Future of NATO’s Mediterranean Initiative

There is an unresolved tension in Southern Region attitudes toward the south. Policymakers and observers applaud the new attention to Mediterranean security problems, and some states, particularly in the western Mediterranean, believe that dialogue and confidence-building, rather than new defense initiatives, should be the centerpiece of NATO strategy toward the region. By contrast, Turkey is more comfortable with a defense-oriented approach. NATO’s Mediterranean Initiative is seen as worthwhile, but it has suffered from a lack of resources and an inability to bring the dialogue states, including Israel, together in a true multilateral fashion.3 At the moment, the Initiative is almost exclusively bilateral in character, so opportunities for risk-reduction in a south-south context are lost.4 There is little support for the idea of a formal “partnership for peace” program in the Mediterranean (an idea first raised by the former Italian Chief of Defense Staff). But the Initiative might be given a boost through new PfP-like activities around the Mediterranean, perhaps giving some existing bilateral exercises a NATO “hat.” With its active program of bilateral military activities in the Mediterranean (e.g., with Egypt), the United States could play a key role in this regard. There is a consensus that renewed progress in the Middle East peace process—a more tangible prospect in the wake of

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3 As an example, places have been reserved for dialogue partners at the NATO Defense College in Rome and at the NATO School in Oberammergau, but these places are self-funding. The same is true of invitations to observe NATO exercises.

the 1999 Israeli elections and the revival of Syrian-Israeli negotiations—would transform the climate for the Initiative.

**Functional Versus Geographic Missions in the South**

French and Spanish analysts see greater attention to Mediterranean challenges as a key step toward ensuring the continued relevance of the Alliance in a changing security environment. But these states do not wish to see the Mediterranean region “singularized” as an area of threat requiring special treatment. The concern is two-fold. Neither country wishes to complicate delicate political relationships across the Mediterranean through a more assertive declaratory strategy toward the south. For France, under current conditions at least, there is also little interest in seeing NATO become the centerpiece for Western strategy toward the Mediterranean.

The new Strategic Concept notes, but does not stress, the role of the “Mediterranean” in Alliance strategy. However, the region’s future importance to the Alliance is strongly defined in functional rather than geographic terms, that is, in terms of new missions (peacekeeping, crisis management, counterproliferation, etc.). These missions will be inherently “southern” in character and far more likely to be carried out around the Mediterranean than on the Polish border. Power-projection missions are similarly seen as most likely and most demanding in relation to crises on the southern periphery.

Southern Region observers as well as AFSOUTH officials point to the looming gap between planning and operational demands in the south, including ongoing requirements in the Balkans, and the NATO resources traditionally devoted to Southern Region military activities and infrastructure. Southern Region contingencies dominate post–Cold War NATO military planning, but the region has perhaps 20–25 percent of total NATO assets and activity. Southern Region infrastructure, whether funded nationally or through NATO infrastructure funds, is widely seen as undercapitalized. As noted earlier, this under-

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5 The delicate issue for France is Algeria; for Spain it is the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla.


7 This is an AFSOUTH estimate. Admittedly, it is a difficult measurement to make, but the rough percentage is illustrative of a perceived imbalance.
capitalization weighs heavily on NATO’s ability to address proliferation risks in the south.

**Traditional (Article V) Versus Nontraditional Missions**

There is a notable divide within the Southern Region on the question of traditional Article V missions oriented toward the defense of territory versus nontraditional missions aimed at the defense of common interests. In reality, of course, there is no fundamental conflict between these missions because there is no suggestion that the Alliance abandon Article V commitments. However, Southern Region states are especially sensitive to the longer-term implications of shifts in emphasis, perhaps because their security concerns have long been at the margins of NATO strategy.

Portugal, Spain, and Italy have been at the forefront in attempting to reorient Alliance strategy toward security risks beyond territorial defense. There is also a strong Spanish and Italian interest in engaging the Alliance on what might otherwise be viewed as “nonshared” risks. Madrid would certainly favor any evolution of the Alliance concept that strengthened the outlook for a multilateral approach to the security of the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on the Moroccan coast. Italy has a similarly strong interest in NATO support in dealing with refugee flows from across the Adriatic or from North Africa. Southern Europe generally is interested in additional reassurance on energy security issues.

Without dismissing the significance of nontraditional challenges and missions, Greece and Turkey share a more conservative view of Alliance missions. Both Athens and Ankara continue to regard threats to borders as a serious concern. The Kosovo experience reinforces this view. Turkey faces a host of potential threats to its territorial integrity, as well as proximate risks from ballistic missiles and insurgents—both definable as Article V-type problems. Both are especially concerned about reaffirming Article V commitments in light of the enlargement process, which is widely seen—rightly or wrongly—as introducing a new spirit of conditionality in Alliance security commitments.

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8 The term is Spanish, and is usually applied in relation to the defense of Ceuta and Melilla—within the WEU area but outside of NATO.
There are also some notable differences in perspective on possible new missions envisioned in the Strategic Concept— in particular, crime, drugs, and terrorism. These so-called “third pillar” issues (to use EU terminology), traditionally regarded as national responsibilities within the Alliance, inspire varying responses across the Southern Region. In the western Mediterranean, inclusion of these issues is generally non-controversial, except in France where there is a strong preference for EU-based approaches. Greece too is reluctant to see NATO undertake initiatives on terrorism or international crime, apart from drug trafficking. Given the struggle against the PKK, Turkey has a strong interest in seeing counterterrorism emerge as a new NATO mission, but is wary of initiatives on crime and drug trafficking, where the Turkish experience is controversial.

Outlook and Preferences on Enlargement

There has been an evolution in Southern Region views on NATO enlargement. Early in the enlargement debate, southern European and Turkish perceptions could fairly be characterized as neutral at best, and often negative. Concerns centered on the likely dilution of attention and resources, and the migration of Alliance influence eastward—concerns shared elsewhere, but with particular relevance for smaller allies in the south. Turkey, with multiple—and controversial—security problems on its borders, also feared that a larger NATO would be a NATO with more conditional, less automatic security guarantees. Overall, Southern Region opinion is now more positively disposed toward the enlargement process, although there is still some sensitivity in the eastern Mediterranean about the longer-term effect on security guarantees. Greece and Turkey, in particular, have come to accept arguments about the stabilizing contribution of NATO membership in regional security. Analysts in both countries also urge that NATO extend this argument to the insecure Balkans, where their own interests are di-

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9 Persistent left-wing terrorism and Greek policy toward international terrorist activity in Greece has been a consistent issue in bilateral relations between Washington and Athens. Greece and Cyprus have also been criticized for lax policy toward money laundering. These are now signs of improvement in all of these areas.

rectly engaged (both Athens and Ankara are also keen to play a more active role in PfP activities in the region).

Across the region there is an expectation of, and support for, the idea that subsequent enlargement moves include southeastern Europe. The most promising candidates in this regard are Slovenia and Romania. A southward enlargement would help “secure the Balkan hinterland” and would encourage a geographically (read politically) balanced NATO. This last consideration reflects the widespread concern in NATO’s south that the accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic strengthens German influence in European and transatlantic affairs, and reinforces an eastward-looking bias in NATO strategy.11 Romania might also be a useful partner for an Alliance that becomes more interested in power projection toward the Black Sea and the Caspian.12

**Nuclear Policy**

Overall Southern Region opinion is relatively relaxed about nuclear weapons and strategy, although, with the notable exception of Turkey, there is continuing interest in the political benefits of a less nuclear NATO. This argument extends, especially in Spain, to the benefits for bilateral security cooperation with the United States of further reductions in nuclear weapons based in Europe. The new Italian government, with its leftist background, faces different dilemmas on nuclear issues. Rome is keen to demonstrate its reliability as a NATO ally, but has some sympathy for antinuclear sentiments emanating from Germany. Privately, some southern European strategists are interested in retaining a robust declaratory strategy and appropriate nuclear systems based in Europe to deter looming proliferation risks. This interest may well become more overt over the next decade. Turkish views are more straightforward, with multiple proliferation risks on Turkey’s borders and the persistent problem of Russian nuclear forces (and doctrine) arguing for a strong NATO commitment in this area. Ankara

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11 However, NATO will acquire an additional Southern Region member in the process; Hungary will be assigned to ASFSOUTH. If Austria were to become a member, it too would likely become part of NATO’s south for command purposes.

12 Romanian defense officials stress their country’s role in facilitating Western power projection to these regions, perhaps in cooperation with Turkey and Israel. See Robert D. Kaplan, “The Fulcrum of Europe,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 1998.
is also exposed to the consequences of loose nuclear weapons, material, and expertise resulting from chaos in Russia.13

Command Reform

Command reforms already in place (including the shift to two regional commands) should bolster the weight of the Southern Region in NATO planning and focus additional attention on risks emanating from the south. The activation of new Joint Sub-Regional Commands (JSRCs) also implies a more active role for Southern Region members in NATO command arrangements. New commands in Verona and Madrid are noncontroversial. New JSRCs at Izmir and Larissa are more controversial, and could easily become embroiled in broader Greek-Turkish tensions, although good progress has been made on this front in Athens and Ankara, and new JSRC arrangements are going forward in the eastern Mediterranean. Outside the AFSOUTH area, but nevertheless part of the security equation along the southern periphery, the restructuring of command responsibilities in the eastern Atlantic to accommodate a more active Spanish role in the Alliance and the prospective establishment of SOUTHLANT will improve NATO’s ability to act in West African and North African contingencies. SOUTHLANT along with AFSOUTH can also play a role in exercises, exchanges, and information activities associated with the Mediterranean Initiative.14

Turkey, Italy, and Greece have volunteered to serve as “framework nations,” providing headquarters and command and control infrastructure for an additional NATO rapid-reaction corps in the south. Under current plans, Hungary will be the only Southern Region country without a NATO command. This could provide a future opportunity to establish a JSRC for the Balkans or the Black Sea, and could facilitate an operational air presence in southeastern Europe.

13 Turkey has been the scene of some prominent attempts to sell or ship nuclear material from the former Soviet Union.

Transatlantic Roles, Capabilities, and Mandates

Among the Southern Region states, Portugal, Italy, and Turkey have historically been most concerned about maintaining an active U.S. presence in European security affairs. This pattern can be expected to continue or perhaps be strongly reinforced in the case of Turkey. Turks are wary of any change in NATO that points to more European influence at the expense of U.S. engagement, or promotes the role of European institutions from which Ankara is excluded, or in which its influence is restricted.\(^5\)

Elsewhere, movement toward a common European foreign and security policy, a stronger European defense identity, and generally a more balanced approach to transatlantic security roles is favored. The Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) concept, in particular, is applauded as a means of giving Europe a greater capacity for crisis management, especially on the southern periphery where many potential European-led, U.S.-supported operations can be envisioned. The critical component in many cases will be U.S. tactical air power as well as airlift. The maintenance of a standing U.S. air presence in or readily accessible to the Southern Region is thus intimately connected with southern European perceptions of the utility of the CJTF model. The confluence of likely movement toward a more power-projection-oriented alliance and European exposure to proliferation risks in the south will probably reinforce this linkage among presence, capability, and reassurance against retaliation.

The Defense Capabilities Initiative outlined at the Washington summit, together with European defense initiatives presented at the EU’s Cologne summit and more fully articulated in Helsinki, suggest that Europe may be “getting serious” about acquiring more mobile and capable military forces. Kosovo has given further impetus to this trend. If so, the impact of these new European, including southern European, capabilities will be felt, first, in the potential for intervention in adjacent Mediterranean areas.

Southern Region observers generally favor and anticipate the eventual return of France to the integrated NATO command, and would

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\(^5\) Turkey adopted a tough negotiating position at the Washington summit, withholding agreement on a new Strategic Concept in order to secure guarantees regarding its role in WEU decisionmaking and European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI).
view this development as a critical contribution to the future effectiveness of the Alliance in the south. For some, the attractiveness of this prospect is enhanced by the belief that it would balance a more active German role in peacekeeping and crisis management in the Balkans and the Mediterranean.

One feature of the post-Cold War European security environment troubling to NATO’s southern allies—France excluded—has been the rise of contact group formulas in addressing regional crises. There is a widespread belief that this approach tends to marginalize smaller allies, even in those cases where their security interests are directly concerned. Italy’s experience of exclusion from Balkan diplomacy in pre-Dayton Accord Bosnia, despite its proximity and critical operational contribution, provides a clear example. A degree of conservatism about out-of-area operations encourages most southern allies to favor reliance on a clear-cut UN mandate, wherever possible, for operations outside the treaty area.

In sum, the process of NATO adaptation promises increased attention to the Mediterranean and its hinterlands, above all, as part of new functional missions for the Alliance that are most likely to be performed on the European periphery. Adaptation will also encourage increased activism and assertiveness on the part of southern allies.