9 Prospects for Mediterranean Security: a Yugoslav View

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Introduction

In any analysis of existing relations in the Mediterranean, the question of security figures prominently. This is because in that part of the world both Mediterranean and non-Mediterranean actors are important; and because global and narrow local objectives and influences come into play. A corollary, however, is that attempts are being made to reduce tensions in the region.

The extensive physical presence of the superpowers in the Mediterranean Sea and on its shores; the possibility of the superpowers exerting an influence on a number of countries which are either close to them in virtue of their socio-political development or simply in need of their friendship; the virtually permanent crisis in the Middle East; the existence of crisis points in the Mediterranean area; and the generally unstable situation – all these factors characterise developments in the Mediterranean and cause increased anxiety among Mediterranean countries and peoples. In a situation of this kind it is understandable that the Mediterranean countries should not be spared an intense arms race, that they should pile up arms and that, fearing greater complications, they should seek increased security within these parameters.

Looking at the Mediterranean against this background, which is unfortunately permanent, one can very well ask what possibilities there are of changing relationships in the Mediterranean.
region and of implementing measures which would at least whittle down the stockpiles of arms and lead up to a gradual improvement in the present general situation. It should be stressed at once that such an approach has to be based on assessments of long-term trends, it implies rational conduct and is based wholly on optimistic realism. Proponents of this outlook reject claims that this situation is insoluble and unalterable and that it does not depend on the actions of Mediterranean countries but only on external forces which have become deeply entrenched. Such claims are based on reality but a reality which is linked to the present moment and which can and must change as different conditions mature and as progressive, above all Mediterranean, forces embark upon organised activity.

The present writer believes that progress in the field of disarmament and in the quest for improved security in the Mediterranean should be sought in a number of directions:

1. the introduction of confidence-building measures into the Mediterranean region;
2. freezing and gradual scaling down of non-Mediterranean fleets;
3. freezing of military budgets in all Mediterranean countries;
4. halting the spread of military alliances and banning the establishment of new military bases;
5. turning the Mediterranean into a zone of peace.

These measures would not resolve the existing conflict situation nor would they dismantle the present military arsenals. But each can be seen as a contribution to a more stable climate, greater confidence and gradual disarmament.

Confidence-Building Measures

Confidence-building measures have been introduced into the practice of European politics through the Helsinki final document, and the development of European relations so far has demonstrated their full justification. In substance they boil down to a reduction in forces involved in military exercises, giving advance notice of military manoeuvres of specific scales, and exchanges of observers. The development of relations in Europe