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To Have and Have Not

A Study on the North African Regional Capability

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Sammanfattning

Nordafrika har historiskt sett haft svårt att samarbeta, ekonomiskt, politiskt och militärt. Upprättandet av North African Regional Capability (NARC) som regionens bidrag till African Standby Forces (ASF) är därför en milstolpe för samarbete i Maghreb-regionen. Men för att NARC ska bli effektivt krävs det mer än en formell organisation, NARC måste väsentligt öka sina ansträngningar för att bli operativt. NARC skulle därför kunna bli en organisation som börjar överbygga politiska olikheter i regionen i stort. De nordafrikanska länderna har redan gemensamma säkerhetspolitiska mål att arbeta mot så som terrorism, smuggling, trafficking och väpnade konflikter i sin geografiska närhet. En effektiv utveckling av NARC skulle därtill innebära en viktig kapacitetsökning för ASF då Nordafrika är kontinentens militärt starkaste. Konflikten mellan Marocko och Västsahara fortsätter dock att förhindra regionens potential till politiskt samarbete. Ett starkare samarbete mellan Maghreb-regionen och organisationer som EU och Nato kring försvars- och säkerhetsfrågor skulle därför kunna visa sig viktigt för en fortsatt utveckling av Nordafrikas samarbetsförmåga.

Nyckelord: Nordafrika, African Standby Force, Afrikansk freds- och säkerhetsarkitektur, Regional Economic Community

Summary

The North African region has a poor history of cooperation, be it economic, political or military. The establishment of the North African Regional Capability (NARC) as the region's contribution to the African Standby Forces (ASF) signifies a milestone in the history of military cooperation in the Maghreb. However, in order to make the NARC effective it will take more than to build a formal organisation. The NARC will need to strengthen its efforts in order to ascertain a tangible operational level. NARC could prove to be an organisation which closes the gap between its members and the North African states as a whole. The North African countries already have common goals in their respective security policies; terrorism, smuggling, trafficking and armed conflicts in bordering states. An effective development of the NARC would also mean a significant capacity boost for the ASF as the North African region is the militarily strongest on the African continent. The Moroccan-West-Saharan issue continues however to constrain the region's potential to political cooperation. An increased cooperation between the Maghreb and organisations such as the EU and the NATO pertaining to defence and security related issues might prove valuable for developing North Africa's ability to effectively cooperate.

Keywords: North Africa, African Standby Force, African Peace and Security Architecture, Regional Economic Community

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Acronyms

ACSRT	African Centre for Study and Research on Terrorism
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AMIS	AU's mission in Sudan
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
CADSP	Common African Defence and Security Policy
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
COIN	Counter-Insurgency
CT	Counter-Terrorism
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EW	Electronic Warfare
FIS	Islamique du Salut
LAS	League of Arab States
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
NARC	North African Regional Capability
NASBRIG	North African Standby Brigade
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
PoW	Panel of the Wise
PSC	Peace and Security Council
REC	Regional Economic Communities
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SADR	Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
SAR	Search and Rescue

1 Introduction/Background

As in many other regions, the need for a broad and comprehensive response to potential threats is a desirable goal for the African states. After its formation in 2000/2001 the African Union (AU) made a clear commitment to the advancement of security issues on the continent. Thus, it established the Peace and Security Council (PSC) in 2003. The PSC Protocol, together with the 2004 signing of the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP) provides the foundation of what is now known as the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).¹ The North African Regional Capability or NARC plays an important part of AU's efforts to establish regional brigades capable of enforcing AU's security policies.

The establishment of the NARC creates important opportunities both for the AU and for the Maghreb region itself. For the AU and the African Standby Forces the NARC means an important capacity enhancement as the North African region is the military strongest on the continent. But the NARC can also be viewed as a potential for wider security cooperation in North Africa. Joint security efforts require a more coherent military policy in the region as a whole and the North African countries already have common goals in their respective security policies; terrorism, smuggling, trafficking and armed conflicts in bordering states. Hence, the NARC could prove to be an organisation which closes the gap between its members and North African states as a whole

The NARC is different compared to its regional siblings; it is formed within the militarily strongest region and it is structured differently. In addition to this, the rift between Morocco and Algeria over Western-Sahara continues to complicate the region's possibility of political cooperation. As a direct consequence of the conflict with Western-Sahara, Morocco continues to stand outside the AU and accordingly does not participate in the building of the NARC.

As regards the broader political context of NARC, the most significant steps were taken in 2005 when the Executive Council emphasised the need to make the APSA operational. This entailed the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the Panel of the Wise (PoW), the African Standby Force (ASF) and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).²

The role of the ASF, which is one of the focal points of this project, was cemented early on in history of the AU and it constitutes Article 13 of the PSC

¹ African Union, *Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Police*, Sirte, Libya, 2004

² African Union, *Report on the Status of the Establishment of the Continental Peace and Security Architecture*, 2008, p.2

protocol of 2002.³ This role was furthered in 2004 when the AU adopted a policy framework for the establishment of the ASF in two phases. The first phase (until 30th of June 2006)⁴ required the AU to establish a strategic level management capacity for scenario 1-3 missions and the RECs to complement the AU by establishing regional standby forces up to a brigade size. By the end of phase two (from 30th of June 2006 to 30th of June 2010) the AU predicts that:

The AU would have developed the capacity to manage complex peace keeping operations, while the RECs/ Regions will continue to develop the capacity to deploy a mission Headquarters (HQs) for Scenario 4⁵, involving AU/Regional peacekeeping forces.⁶

1.1 Purpose of Study

This report proposes to identify and evaluate the military capabilities and capacities of the North African states as contributors to the ASF and APSA. The lack or absence of aforementioned capabilities will result in an ensuing analysis of the reasons for this. A pertinent example is that the North African states, with the exception of Morocco, have set up a subordinate organisation which will be responsible for the operationalisation of the North African endeavour, this organisation; the North African Regional Capability (NARC) will hence be the focal point of this study. Therefore it should be noted that the report does not propose nor will it attempt to focus on the ASF, the RECs or their standby brigades as a concept.

Furthermore, the report proposes to clarify the role of other regional organisations relevant to the NARC-project, e.g. the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the North African Standby Brigade (NASBRIG) and the League of Arab States (LAS). Other relevant subjects for analysis such as the political currents in the region will also be included. A brief analysis of the contributing states' military capabilities will also be conducted in order to better understand their potential troop pledges to NARC. To summarise the above; the report proposes to study NARC's capabilities as a contributor to the ASF and the APSA. This also involves a relevant part of its political context i.e. the AU, AMU, LAS and their member states.

³ African Union, *Article 13: Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union*, 1st Ordinary Session of the Assembly African Union. Durban 2002

⁴ The original date was 30th of June 2005. However this was postponed for a year since the deadline could not be matched. Kintzel, W. *The African Standby Force of the African Union*. SWP Research Paper, 2008, p.11

⁵ See Chapter 2.2

⁶ Ibid.

1.2 Demarcation and Scope

As mentioned above the study does not involve a “compare and contrast”- type study between NARC, the other regional standby brigades or the ASF as a whole. However, as NARC is a part of a broader military and political context (AU, PSC, CADSP, and ASF) it will be analysed within said context. Thus references will be made to e.g. AMU, relations between contributing states within the NARC, the LAS, the PSC protocol, the ASF, and the other REC brigades if they are viewed as pertinent to the purpose of the study as stated above.

1.3 Method

The report uses a combination of primary and secondary sources. The official agreements, accords and treaties that have been made available by the AU are valuable primary sources. Similar primary sources from other relevant organisation, e.g. the AMU, are of course also included. As the ASF, of which NARC is a component, still is a work in progress, interviews are also an important complimentary source for the report. Unfortunately, there is little academic literature on the subject. However, the secondary sources are still an important source of information as there are several independent think tanks that have delivered high-quality papers on the ASF and its development, South African-based ISS is a good example of the aforementioned. Moreover, the report will also take account of newspaper articles and occasional papers. From the above it should thus be understood that the main scientific method employed in the study is the hermeneutical approach of subjective analysis which is the main method utilized in qualitative research.⁷ This entails that the researchers employ interpretation of sources as the main method of analysis. In order for the hermeneutical method to be applicable a large quantity of sources need to be taken into account thus enabling the researcher to generalise rather than assume.

⁷ Encyclopedia Britannica, *Hermeneutics*, www.britannica.com accessed 2009-07-09

1.4 Definitions

This study aims to keep within the boundaries of accepted linguistic definitions. However, the use of the terms capacity and capability need to be clarified. There are several definitions listed for the aforementioned terms in various lexica and dictionaries. Generally speaking the meaning of the terms capacity and capability contain the power to produce, perform and deploy as well as the potentiality of an achievement.⁸ Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that that in most cases no distinction is made between the terms, a fact which is duly reflected in the name of the North African Regional Capability. It is also the goal of this report to use abbreviations and acronyms in the original language. However, in order to improve the flow of the report, English translations of governmental bodies and institutions are preferred over French or Arabic.

1.5 Limitations

Several limitations become evident when deciding to study NARC; the lack of primary sources from North African States and the lack of cooperation between said states, the relative nascent state of NARC, the historical and political antagonism between some of the states in the region. Although the above examples may impede the study, they also serve as major topics for analysis and discussion in the report.

Although partly relevant to the political dynamics in the North African region, the Community of Sahel-Saharan states (CEN-SAD) REC will not be treated within this report.

⁸ Encyclopedia Britannica Dictionary, *Capacity & Capability*, www.britannica.com accessed 2009-07-09

2 The African Standby Force

The African Union's standby forces, the ASF, are meant to be comprised of five organisations at a regional level. As the standby forces are coordinated with the Regional Economic Communities (REC), the ASF structure will follow suit and be organised geographically; North, West, Central, East and South.⁹ As regards the chain of command the AU has firmly stated that the potential implementation of an ASF component will be decided and headed by the PSC. In the ASF policy framework the following statements reiterate the above points:¹⁰

3.17 Strategic Chain of Command and Functions.

(1) *In accordance with Articles 6 (Functions) and 7 (Powers) of the PSC Protocol, the PSC, as the decision-making institution, should be the sole authority for mandating and terminating AU peace missions and operations.*

(2) *In accordance with Article 10 (The Role of the Chairperson of the Commission), political command and control of missions mandated by the PSC should be vested in the Chairperson, who should then submit periodic reports to the PSC on the progress of implementation of the relevant mandates of such operations and missions....*

2.1 The AU's Military aim and scope

The AU has envisioned a force size which entails each region establishing a standby force up to a brigade level.¹¹ In concrete terms the AU has envisaged that the force size for each brigade shall total 3000-5000 troops.¹² Furthermore, the AU aims to supply a list containing 500 military observers and 240 civilian police officers in order to have the capacity to handle every perceivable conflict

⁹ Kintzel, W. The African Standby Force of the African Union. SWP Research Paper, 2008, p.11.

¹⁰ African Union, *Policy Framework for the Establishment of the African Standby Force and the Military Staff Committee Part I.*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. May 2003.

¹¹ African Union, *Roadmap for the operationalization of the African Standby Force*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, March 2005

¹² African Union, *A Vision for the African Standby Force? A Draft Document for discussion.*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, September 2005

scenario.¹³ In its Roadmap document the AU has stipulated that the composition of a standby brigade should comply with the units presented below:¹⁴

Brigade (Mission Level) HQ and Support Unit of up to 65 personnel and 16 vehicles.

- HQ Company and Support Unit of up to 120 personnel.
- Four Light Infantry Battalions, each composed of up to 750 personnel and 70 vehicles.
- Engineer Unit of up to 505 personnel.
- Light Signals Unit of up to 135 personnel.
- Reconnaissance Company (Wheeled) of up to 150 personnel.
- Helicopter Unit of up to 80 personnel, 10 vehicles and 4 helicopters.
- Military Police Unit of up to 48 personnel and 17 vehicles.
- Light Multi-Role Logistical Unit of up to 190 personnel and 40 vehicles.
- Level 2 Medical Unit of up to 35 personnel and 10 vehicles.
- Military Observer Group of up to 120 Officers.

It must be noted that the AU's aspiration is that each brigade shall include a Headquarters (HQ) which will have the capability to command a full scale peace operation as well as coordinate the potential mission activities between the regions and the AU. Additionally, there is also an aspiration that each region shall establish a planning element (PLANEM) as well as logistics and training centres.¹⁵ A number of states are also to be identified to facilitate brigade level training and also to act as lead nations in the so-called scenario 6 missions, i.e. AU interventions without international military support.¹⁶ The concept of a brigade structure was originally discussed within the North African sphere, i.e. NASBRIG. However the idea was soon abandoned and a more flexible structure was opted for. Thus the birth of NARC was a fact, which entails a number of

¹³ Kintzel, W. *The African Standby Force of the African Union*. SWP Research Paper, 2008, p.11

¹⁴ African Union, *Roadmap for the operationalization of the African Standby Force*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, March 2005

¹⁵ African Union, *Policy Framework for the Establishment of the African Standby Force and the Military Staff Committee Part I*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. May 2003.

¹⁶ Kintzel, W. *The African Standby Force of the African Union*. SWP Research Paper, 2008, pp.11-12

capabilities put together rather than a brigade framework. This brigade-less concept is also being considered by other African regions such as the East African REC.

2.2 Conflict Scenarios

The AU has drawn up six different types of conflict scenarios. As discussed above the AU aspired to have the strategic capacity to manage scenario types 1-3, i.e. lighter form of military commitment, such as military observer missions, by mid 2006. By 2010 the ASF is perceived to have the capacity to deploy missions at a minimum level of a scenario 4.¹⁷ (see next page)

¹⁷ African Union, *Roadmap for the operationalization of the African Standby Force*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, March 2005

The AU has categorised the scenarios as follows:¹⁸

Scenario	Description	Deployment requirement. <i>(from mandate resolution)</i>
1	AU/Regional military advice to a political mission.	30 days
2	AU/Regional observer mission co-deployed with a UN mission.	30 days
3	Stand-alone AU/Regional observer mission.	30 days
4	AU/Regional peacekeeping force for Chapter VI and preventive deployment missions (and peace building).	30 days
5	AU Peacekeeping force for complex multidimensional peacekeeping missions, including those involving low-level spoilers.	90 days with the military component being able to deploy in 30 days.
6	AU intervention, e.g. in genocide situations where the international community does not act promptly.	14 days with robust military force

The AU has set its goals quite high, especially as regards scenario 6 missions. It can be argued that these types of missions will be rather difficult to implement. Especially considering the fact that scenario 6 missions can potentially be executed against the will of the parties involved, they will most probably render the host nation to deny the AU access to any assistance or local caveats.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Kintzel, W. *The African Standby Force of the African Union*. SWP Research Paper, 2008, pp.11-12

3 NARC's Political and Organisational Context

When studying NARC it is apparent that there are several organisations with varying political agendas that might come to influence the set-up and deployment of the units. Each contributing state will most probably have to take a number of political factors into consideration in order to be able to manoeuvre in differing organisational frameworks. NARC might thus come to be influenced by relations not only in an African context but also in more far-reaching organisations.

3.1 The African Union

Considering the North Africa countries within an AU framework, it becomes evident that the region constitutes an anomaly on the African continent. North Africa is comparably rich. This is no less highlighted by the fact that although the population of Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia combined totals roughly 17 % of the population on the African continent, they stand for 34 % of the total African GDP.²⁰ The relative riches also allow Algeria, Egypt and Libya to push active agendas in the AU as they each contribute 15 % of the AU's general budget. Thus, as mentioned above, it is not the financial aspects which present difficulties for North Africa in its relationship to the African Union, rather it is the political obstacles that the region ultimately must overcome. The principal difficulty in this context is the Moroccan-Western-Saharan relation.

In 1984 Morocco resigned from the Organisation for African Unity (OAU), the AU's forerunner, in protest to that the Western-Sahara or the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) was admitted a seat in the OAU meetings.²¹ The political debacle leading up to the Moroccan resignation was long and complex, involving Mauritania and Morocco, as well as Algeria and Libya. The rift also threatened the idea of African unity as many states felt compelled to take position on the status of SADR.²² The inception of the AU in 2002 had not changed the political situation sufficiently enough for Morocco to join the new organisation as SADR is an accepted AU member.

²⁰ Bergstrand, B-G (2009) *Extracts from the FOI database on "economic Developments and Defence Expenditures – Economic and Military Expenditures*, FOI Memo 2803, March 2009, Stockholm, p. 138

²¹ Arnold, G (2005) *Africa – A Modern History*, Groove Atlantic Ltd, UK, p. 616

²² For a longer discussion on the Western-Saharan issue see Political Hegemony

Although officially outside the AU structure, Morocco still has an advanced relationship with the organisation, attends meetings and partakes in some of the AU institutions.

Since the Moroccan rift has left Algeria's principal competitor effectively out of the race, Algeria attempts to cement its role as a major player in AU security organisation. The African Centre for Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) is located in Algiers and the last two AU commissioners for Peace and Security have both been Algerian. This role might have been facilitated by the contrasting views on peace and security represented by Libya and Egypt. Whereas the Libyan leader Mu'ammar Qaddafi is arguing strongly for an African continental army, Egypt has taken a more moderate approach which involves seeking a successive bolstering of the AU institutions.

3.2 The Arab Maghreb Union

With its headquarters in Rabat, Morocco and headed by the Tunisian national Habib ben Yahia, the Arab Maghreb Union or (AMU) was originally formed in 1989 as a trade promoting organisation. Its members currently are Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.²³ The intention was that the organisation was to develop in two phases; one which involved the free movement of people, goods and capital between the members while phase two sought common diplomatic, military and economic policies.²⁴ However, few of the Union's original goals have been reached. The main issue seems to be the political and military rivalries between two of Union's more powerful states, namely Algeria and Morocco. Both sides have vested interests in the conflict in Western Sahara, a conflict which has so far left the two Maghreb states unreceptive to reconciliation attempts. However, the belligerent sentiment between the two states is deeper rooted and go back to the beginning of respective state's independence.²⁵ It is a quintessential struggle for influence in the region which has not only hampered many of the developments in the organisation but occasionally also entangled other states, such as Tunisia and the Gulf monarchies. However, also other issues such as Qaddafi's foreign policy have left most of the AMU members half-heartedly committed.

²³ The Arab Maghreb Union, *UMA*, (translated from French by author) www.maghrebarabe.org accessed 13 July 2009

²⁴ Cammet, M. *Defensive Integration and Late Developers: The Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab Maghreb Union*, Global Governance, Volume 5 July 1999

²⁵ Zunes, S. *Algeria, the Maghreb Union and the Western Sahara Stalemate*, Arab Studies Quarterly, Volume 17 1995

Currently the Arab Maghreb Union is a partly depleted organisation and although the Union is engaged in a few joint projects, they generally tend to be a far cry from its original ambitions to establish a genuine cooperation for joint security policies.²⁶ This fact was further highlighted when AMU was initially asked to set up the North African Standby Brigade. Notwithstanding the tension between Algeria and Morocco, the NASBRIG project was stillborn in the hands of the AMU due to the fact that Morocco is not a member of AU while Egypt is not a member of the AMU. Consequently, the North African Regional Capability (NARC) was created to start the efforts anew.²⁷

3.3 The League of Arab States

Formed after the Second World War, the League of Arab States is a well established organisation which encompasses no less than 25 Arab states.²⁸ During recent years LAS has augmented its role in Arab foreign affairs. The subjects now range between nuclear proliferation to Sino-Arab relations. Currently all of the North African states (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) are members of the Arab League. Hence it is evident that the relations and issues in LAS are indeed significant to the formation and potential deployment of NARC. In an effort to cement the League's good will towards the AU and its member states, LAS has issued statements declaring that the two organisations share common goals and aspirations. Although the League is eager to highlight that the two organisations share common goals, it also prioritises each member state's right to defend itself against external threats and interference in domestic affairs.²⁹ Therefore it can be argued that LAS has yet to prove itself as a vessel for mediation on the African continent. Given the League's view on each member's right to defend their sovereignty, it becomes palpable that LAS might not be overwhelmingly positive to an AU-led operation in Darfur. In fact, it can be argued that LAS is sympathetic to the Sudanese government.³⁰

With its headquarters in Cairo and under the leadership of former Egyptian Secretary of Foreign Affairs, 'Amr Moussa, the League has been and still is very much propelled by Egypt, a country whose foreign policy is strongly influenced

²⁶ Arab Maghreb Union, *Activities of General Secretary*, (translated from Arabic by author) www.maghrebarabe.org accessed 13 July 2009

²⁷ Kintzel, W. *The African Standby Force of the African Union*. SWP Research Paper, 2008, p.20

²⁸ Hammond, A. *'Amr Moussa's Move from Foreign Ministry to Arab League Signifies Cairo's New Emphasis on Arab Unity*, Washington Report on Middle Eastern Affairs, Volume 20 April 2001

²⁹ The League of Arab States, *General Agreement between the League of Arab States and the African Union*, (translated from Arabic by author) www.arableagueonline.org accessed 10 July 2009

³⁰ International Crisis Group, *Crisis in Darfur*, www.crisisgroup.org accessed 27 July 2009

by its interests in epitomising Arab unity and leadership. Egypt is thus well positioned to either advance or hinder the potential development of NARC by utilizing the political clout of LAS as an instrument of influence.³¹

3.4 The North African Regional Capability

As previously mentioned the progress with the North African Standby Brigade or NASBRIG was slow. Thus, NARC was formed to bridge the gap that the lack of a unified Regional Economic Community in North Africa had created. The NARC-members which consist of Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Libya and Tunisia, were to face further obstacles when the coup in Mauritania in the summer of 2008 led the African Union to suspend the Mauritanian membership. Although Mauritania does not have the ability to act as a major military contributor to NARC the effects of the exclusion were still detrimental to NARC's progress.³²

By 2008 the NARC bloc was lagging far behind the rest of the RECs in their effort to meet the deadline for the African Standby Force.³³ However, since then progress has been made. An agreement at a ministerial level has been signed, the headquarters have been established in Libya, the Planning Element (PLANEM) was located to Cairo, and Egypt also nominated the Cairo Peacekeeping Training School as a regional training centre. In late 2008 Algeria followed suit and agreed to act as host nation for NARC's training headquarters³⁴ and in early 2009 the regional headquarters in Libya was officially inaugurated by General Aoubaker Yunis Jaber.³⁵ Additionally, Algeria and Libya have hosted a number of workshops pertaining to the police dimension and evaluation of deployment areas. NARC is thus moving towards becoming more operational. However, the question still remains if they are to set aside their previous differences in order to meet the deadline for the ASF in 2010.³⁶

³¹ The League of Arab States, *History of the League of Arab States*, (translated from Arabic by author) www.arableagueonline.org accessed 13 July 2009

³² Strategic Forecasting, *Mauritania Suspended from AU after Coup*, 06 August 2009

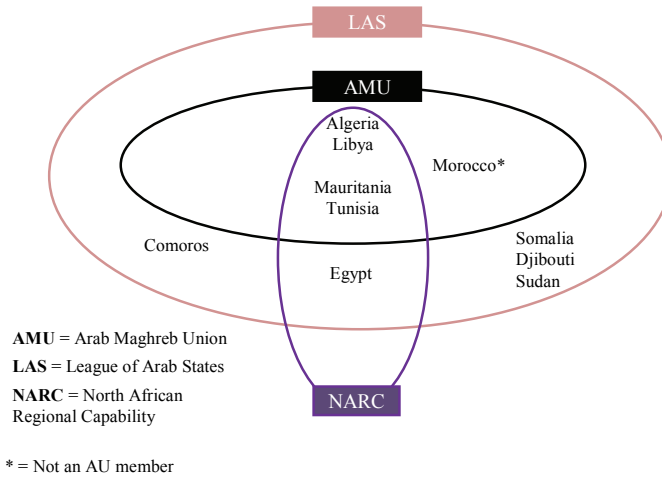
³³ Cilliers, J. *The African Standby Force, an Update Progress*, The Institute for Security Studies, March 2008

³⁴ Algeria Events, *Algeria to Host Training Headquarters of ASF of North Africa*, December 2008

³⁵ Tripoli Post, *North African Regional Command of ASF Opened in Tripoli*, January 2009

³⁶ Interview with ISS, Addis Ababa, 20 October 2009, Addis Ababa Ethiopia

The illustration below demonstrates the current organisational and political involvement of the North African states and their indirect connection to other African states:³⁷



Although there is an abundance of organisations in the region, the North African states have vested individual interests which normally override any organisational structure. Hence, in order to understand the political landscape of the North African region, it is essential to grasp the various political currents in the region, both on a bilateral and on a multilateral level.

³⁷ Kintzel, W. *The African Standby Force of the African Union*. SWP Research Paper, 2008, p.14

4 North African Politics and Economy

NARC is situated within a politically homogenous context with many similar features in the political organisation of the member states. Examining the United Nation's Human Development Index, the vast majority of the NARC contributors rank in the range of medium human development.³⁸ The exception being Libya which is the highest ranking country of the NARC members thus earning a place among the countries deemed as providing a high human development for their citizens.³⁹ Economically the NARC countries have a more discernable variance; the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita ranges between 760 US dollars in Mauritania to 9,010 US dollars in Libya. The North African states have relatively little foreign debt, and in the case of Algeria and Libya it is nonexistent while Mauritania is quite heavily burdened by its foreign debt.⁴⁰ The region is also battling rampant unemployment, especially among the younger generations whom suffer from an unemployment rate which averages around 47 percent.⁴¹

The problems of unemployment are not alleviated by the business climate in North Africa. Foreign investors have had a difficult time successfully working in the firmly regulated national markets of the North African states. Although some states have taken measures to improve the business environment for foreign investors, progress is slow. An example of this is Egypt who was ranked among the top ten reformers in 2007/2008 by World Bank's "Ease of Doing Business" report yet the country's overall rank is 114th, climbing eleven places compared to 2008. The remaining NARC members do not fare better in this regard, with Tunisia being the highest ranked at 73rd, Mauritania clearing a 160th position and Libya failing to make the ranking.⁴²

4.1 Political Culture

Examining the political context of the North African states, it becomes apparent that their colonial legacies have left a deep imprint on their respective history.

³⁸ United Nations, *Human Development Index 2007/2008*, United Nations Development Programme 2007

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ World Bank, *Middle-East and North Africa: an Overview*, 2009 & World Bank, *Country Overview: Mauritania*, 2009

⁴¹ World Bank, *Middle-East and North Africa Annual Report*, 2009

⁴² World Bank, *Ease of Doing Business*, 2009

The European colonial venture in North Africa has been a major contributing factor in North African state-building and the formation of a national identity. Not only did the Arab peoples have to succumb to the idea of a fragmented Muslim Nation or 'Umma, but it also posed difficulties for the independent Arab governments in their efforts to generate loyalties to the new states among their citizens, Arab or non-Arab. However, not all of the North African states faced the same mountainous task as nations such as Iraq or Lebanon. Egypt, for example, had enjoyed periods of governmental autonomy as well as a rich history which undoubtedly worked as an adamantine glue among the Egyptians.⁴³ Other North African states, e.g. Algeria, have had a burdensome time of successfully integrating all of the country's citizens in a post-colonial structure. In the case of Algeria, it has been the Berbers in the north-eastern region of Kabylie that has opposed the central Arab government.⁴⁴ The conflict between Algiers and Kabyl-Berbers is a significant example of failed state-subject integration in North Africa, one of the many factors that have moulded the political culture in the region.

In essence the political culture in North Africa has developed along three lines; Patrimonialism, Militarism and Islamism. However, to only assume that the political culture is confined to aforementioned types of political culture is a generalisation with the weaknesses it entails. Other political ideologies have also set root in North Africa. Democracy, Nationalism and Pan-Arabism are all valid illustrations of the political developments that have emerged in contemporary North Africa.

4.1.1 Patrimonialism

A prevalent characteristic in North African political leadership is the strong presence of patrimonial rule. Patrimonialism often denotes an authoritarian rule, characterised by a number of components. These characteristics are personalism, proximity, informality, balanced conflict, military prowess and religious rationalisation.⁴⁵ Personalism can be explained as the governance through a network of personal relationships. Thus the majority of political decisions reside in the said networks. Personalism was a common trait in the courts of the old Islamic dynasties however its presence is still tangible in modern day Arab

⁴³ James, A.B & Springborg, B, *Politics in the Middle East 5th Edition*, Addison Wesley Longman 2000, pp.27-31

⁴⁴ Chikhi, L. *Al-Qaeda Exploits in Algeria's Kabylie*, Reuters UK, June 2008

⁴⁵ James, A.B & Springborg, B, *Politics in the Middle East 5th Edition*, Addison Wesley Longman 2000, p. 118

bureaucracy and authoritarian rule.⁴⁶ In patrimonial societies physical proximity often entails political influence and power. First and foremost these often are close family members, such as brothers and sons. The concept of proximity is evident in a number of North African countries, e.g. Libya and Egypt where the sons of the current leaders are set to continue their fathers' legacies.⁴⁷ The above mentioned patrimonial characteristics promote informality. Personal relations and proximity to the ruler encourage informal decision-making rather than cementing formal political formal institutions. Furthermore, informality also has the added "benefit" of sowing the seeds of distrust among those involved in the networks.⁴⁸ This in turn creates a fertile ground for balanced conflict. To echo the words of James and Springborg: *In a Middle-Eastern context, the dictum "divide and rule" takes on a special meaning.*⁴⁹ Several North Africa leaders have been especially apt at nourishing existing rivalries and creating new ones. The Qaddafis, the Bourguibas, the Nassers and the Moroccan monarchs have all utilized the tactic of balanced conflict to their advantage. In order to consolidate their political power many of the North African leaders also take on the role of the benevolent knight, a culture that has deep roots in the Middle-East and North Africa (MENA). Military prowess is thus yet another tool used by the patrimonial leader, one which is often permeated by an emphasis on personal courage and skill as a military commander. Abdel-Aziz Bouteflika, the current Algerian president, can be used to highlight this point as he joined the resistance movement against the French during Algeria's struggle for independence.⁵⁰ Although North African rulers tend opt for a secular approach to their power, religious rationalisation is nonetheless capitalised on by some leaders in the region to legitimise their power. The Moroccan monarchy has long claimed a genealogic connection to the Prophet Mohammed. From time to time, Libyan leader Mu'ammarr Qaddafi also adopts an Islamic rhetoric, most notably during his visits to the Sub-Saharan states.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.120

⁴⁷ All Business, *Libya's Political Leadership, the System*, July 2007 & The Trumpet, *Concerns Mount over a Mubarak Dynasty*, September 2006

⁴⁸ James, A.B & Springborg, B, *Politics in the Middle East 5th Edition*, Addison Wesley Longman 2000, p. 122

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.123

⁵⁰ Mortimer, R. *State and Army in Algeria: the Bouteflika Effect*. The Journal of North African Studies, Volume 11 June 2006

⁵¹ Ibid, p.126

4.1.2 Militarism

In the post-colonial era of the North African states the military has been generously endowed with resources and few constitutional reins. Thus, the armed forces have managed to acquire a role as a major player on the political scene. There are several explanations for this; the perceived threat from their former colonial masters; regional rivalries; the seeming threat from Israel and the fact that many of the North African leaders have military backgrounds.⁵² Furthermore, the military is also put to use as a bulwark against political opponents and against, chimerical or actual, fifth-column elements.⁵³ The military is thus not only used to counter and expel foreign threats but also to effectuate and perpetuate the prevailing political rule.

However, the patronage of the military establishment also contains an inherent danger for the ruling elites. In many North African states the threat of a military coup d'état cannot be disregarded by current leaders. A number of techniques have hence been employed in order to pre-empt said threat. Rotation of officers and creating a satisfied military corps are two of the more predominate ones. Of course, this threat varies greatly from state to state and has little to do with the size of respective country's armed forces, as in the case of Mauritania.⁵⁴ Yet another pertinent example of military rule in North Africa is Algeria, a country where there are few discernible boundaries between the government and the military. However, in the case of Algeria the military establishment has manoeuvred itself into position from whence it can rule but not be burdened by the day-to-day administration of governing a country.⁵⁵ Thus creating a sort of symbiosis clearly capitalised on by the politico-military elite in the country. The Algerian example demonstrates that Militarism, like many other types of political rule, is constantly evolving and adapting to different circumstances. Furthermore, there are few signs indicating that the militarism in the Maghreb region is decreasing. Between the years 1988-2006 military expenditure in the region increased by a whopping 109 percent. This makes North Africa the record holder for the largest increase in military expenditure in the world by region.⁵⁶ Regional rivalries, internal tension, bureaucratic momentum and demographic pressure

⁵² Cordesman, A.H & Nerguizian, A. *The North African Military Balance*, CSIS 2009 p.3 & James, A.B & Springborg, B, *Politics in the Middle East 5th Edition*, Addison Wesley Longman 2000, pp. 168-177

⁵³ & James, A.B & Springborg, B, *Politics in the Middle East 5th Edition*, Addison Wesley Longman 2000, p.173

⁵⁴ See chapter 4 of this report for further information.

⁵⁵ Cook, S.A. *Ruling but not Governing: The Mystery and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria and Turkey*, CFR 2007

⁵⁶ Rönnbäck, A.S. *Regional Co-operation in North Africa: Success or Failure?* Umeå University 2007

will most probably be contributing factors to the continuance of a strong military influence in the Maghreb.⁵⁷

4.1.3 Islamism

Considering the large gap between state and society and the scarce political options in the North African states, Islamism has emerged and strengthened its foothold in the entire Maghreb.⁵⁸ Islamism in North Africa has many faces; it can entail a moderate and constitutional orientation such as in the case of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt which officially denounces violence,⁵⁹ while other groupings, e.g. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), opt for a more militant approach to their resistance.⁶⁰ Whichever form Islamism takes on it has been, and still is, perceived as a threat by the echelons of the North African governments.⁶¹ This with due reason, Islamism has from time to time posed a tangible challenge to the North African rulers. In the case of Algeria, the challenge from the Islamists culminated in a decade long civil war. The prelude to the war was marked by the electoral victory of the Islamist party, Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) in the parliamentary elections of 1991. A fact that was hard to accept by the military backed Algerian government which gave the order to interrupt the electoral process in the beginning of 1992. Armed resistance ensued and the country was plunged in a civil war that lasted for almost a decade and cost almost 100.000 lives.⁶²

Although Algeria is trying to reconcile itself with its past, the Islamist presence is still perceptible in Algerian political life and society. In many instances the Islamists have merely changed their tactics. The radicalised Jihadists have transformed their struggle to a more global one, while the constitutional Islamists are putting pressure on the government to make political concessions.⁶³

Not all of the North African states have had the same history of violence in their confrontations with Islamists as Algeria. However, Islamism in North Africa

⁵⁷ Cordesman, A.H & Nerguizian, A. *The North African Military Balance*, CSIS 2009 p.88

⁵⁸ The Middle-East Policy Council, *Transcript from Symposium on North Africa*, Blackwell Publishing, September 2007

⁵⁹ Muslim Brotherhood, *Dr. Morsi: MB Has a Peaceful Agenda*, www.ikhawanweb.com accessed 23 July 2009

⁶⁰ Kirschke, J. *The al-Qaeda we don't know: AQIM the North African Franchise*, World Politics Review October 2008

⁶¹ The Middle-East Policy Council, *Transcript from Symposium on North Africa*, Blackwell Publishing, September 2007

⁶² Martinez, L. *The Algerian Civil War 1990-1998*, Columbia University Press, 2000

⁶³ Kirschke, J. *The al-Qaeda we don't know: AQIM the North African Franchise*, World Politics Review October 2008

cannot be wholly disregarded as a passing trend. Among other factors, the rise of Islamism stands in correlation to the demographic changes in North Africa, i.e. a growing and politically alienated younger generation that is faced with meagre chances of employment and economic development. In order to thwart the Islamists' ambitions some Maghreb states have decided to allow moderate Islamist parties to participate in their respective countries' political system. This serves two purposes. Firstly it strips the Islamist parties of their more radicalised supporters since they perceive an Islamist party working within the existing system as betraying the party's initial programme of resistance. Secondly, it also puts the Islamists to the test, i.e. are they going to stay on the moderate path or will they stray from it? No matter the outcome, Islamism is an ideology that most probably will continue to influence political life in the Maghreb.⁶⁴

4.2 Political Hegemony in the Maghreb

An aggregated security effort often needs a surveying force or motor; a leader, if you will. This hegemonic coordinator allows for the circumvention of obvious complications that will otherwise arise during an endeavour in which all the involved parties are to have an equal input. This rather crisp analysis of the prerequisites for security collaboration can be ascribed to the so-called realist branch of political theory. Accordingly, a region's success or failure in creating an accommodating political climate for military cooperation is dependent on the presence or absence of a hegemonic force in the region. Moreover, if a region has several pretenders to hegemonic throne, as is the case of North Africa, regional cooperation is further hampered.⁶⁵

The Western-Saharan conflict is a serious obstacle and remains an infected issue in North Africa. Furthermore, it has at times involved most of the Maghreb countries. When Spain left Western-Sahara in 1976 the territory was split between Mauritania and Morocco. The independence movement, POLISARIO took up arms against both occupiers and managed with the tacit help of Algeria to defeat Mauritania to the extent that Mauritania withdrew its claim to the territory. The war between Morocco and POLISARIO continued while POLISARIO got additional help from Libya.⁶⁶ The situation deteriorated to the point when Morocco in 1984 withdrew from the OAU. In order to further its ability to counter the constant attacks from POLISARIO, Morocco built a wall

⁶⁴ The Middle-East Policy Council, *Transcript from Symposium on North Africa*, Blackwell Publishing, September 2007

⁶⁵ Hull, C. & Derblom, M. *Abandoning Frontline Trenches? Capabilities for Peace and Security in the SADC region*, FOI-R-2768 2009, p.57

⁶⁶ Arnold, G (2005) *Africa – A Modern History*, Groove Atlantic Ltd, UK, p. 616

which together with several mediation attempts seemed to calm down the situation. POLISARIO also had its bases moved from Algeria to the Mauritania. The feud has over the years caused much resentment, principally between Morocco and Algeria, but also between Morocco and Libya. The relationship between Morocco and Mauritania has also suffered as a consequence of the conflict. Presently, a UN peacekeeping operation: MINURSO monitors the ceasefire that has been in effect as of 1991.⁶⁷

Hence, regional hegemony in North Africa has never been an unambiguous issue. However, Egypt has long been considered as the regional power in North Africa, and this with due cause. Egypt is indeed the region's military strongman, it is also considered to be the Americans' preferred partner in the North as well as being the most populous of the North African countries.⁶⁸ In addition to this, Egypt has a cadre of skilled diplomats and well maintained channels for exercising political leverage. Nonetheless, in order for a state to be perceived as the hegemonic power in a region it necessitates that the state is acknowledged as such by the rest of the states in the region. This is a fact that takes on a greater importance once the states agree on military cooperation. A state that does not possess legitimacy as the hegemonic force by the partner states will not have the political elbow room to act according to its epithet. In this regard Egypt might encounter a few obstacles on its course to being accepted as the NARC region's hegemonic authority.⁶⁹

During the course of history the Maghreb-countries (literal meaning: where the sun sets) have held Egypt as a Mashreq-country (literal meaning: where the sun rises), i.e. filing Egypt in the same cabinet as other Middle-Eastern states, such as Iraq, Syria and Jordan. The paradox in all this is that the dominant states in the Mashreq, such as Saudi-Arabia, prefer to view Egypt as an African country thus safeguarding their own leadership. It would be difficult to deny Egypt its rightful geographical position as a North African state.⁷⁰ However, the fact that Egypt is not a member of the Maghreb-club is further highlighted by its absence in the Arab Maghreb Union. The main reason for this seems to be that the existing AMU members are fearful that Egypt might come to dominate the organisation. Consequently, Egypt's ascension to the hegemonic throne of North Africa has not passed unchallenged. As a result of the recent developments in the region Libya has emerged as the main contender.⁷¹ Libya does not carry the same clout

⁶⁷ MINURSO homepage 30 November 2009 <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minurso/>

⁶⁸ IISS, *the Military Balance 2009*, Volume 107, pp.229-276

⁶⁹ See chapter 3.2 and 4.2 of this report for further information.

⁷⁰ Square, I.K. *Egypt's Evolving Role in Africa: A Sub-Saharan Perspective*, Institute for Security Studies, December 2008

⁷¹ Crumley, B. *Has Libya Really Reformed?* Time Magazine, August 2007

as Egypt does in the Middle-East however Qaddafi does not have his eyes set on the Middle-East but rather on Africa.⁷²

Other North African states have opted for a different approach to asserting their position among the region's aspiring political captains. Seeing the potential contained within the AU's security organisation, Algeria has managed to establish itself as the AU's security czar.⁷³ Considering the incessant rivalries between Algeria and Morocco, it can be argued that the Algerians are anticipating the moment when the AU turns its hands to the conflict in West Sahara, thus leaving Algeria in a rather beneficial position to exert political pressure on its nemesis, Morocco.

The region's little brother, Tunisia, has traditionally taken a more pragmatic and realistic view on the political antagonism in the Maghreb. Aware of the limits of its political influence, Tunisia has spread its political capital, leaving the country with numerous politico-economic ties with various states.⁷⁴ Tunisia's non-threatening political demeanour has also enabled the country's representatives to receive important political appointments, such as Secretary General of AMU.⁷⁵

⁷² All Africa, *Africa Must Unite to Achieve Its Goals*, Daily Observer July 2009 & IOL, *Qaddafi Announces Separation from Arabs*, IOL African News, October 2003

⁷³ See chapter 4.8 of this report for more information.

⁷⁴ Murphy, E.C. *The Foreign Policies of Middle-Eastern States*, ed. Hinnebusch, R.A et al. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002 pp.235-256

⁷⁵ The Arab Maghreb Union, *UMA*, (translated from French by the author) www.maghrebarabe.org accessed 13 July 2009

5 Military Capability in the NARC region

Considering the fact that the majority of the Maghreb countries have enjoyed a period of relative stability and economic growth, the NARC contributors (with the exception of Mauritania) have been able to rapidly rejuvenate their military forces.⁷⁶ Hence, said states have been given a respite to undertake modernisation projects to upgrade their military might. Nonetheless, this has not always resulted in an improvement of their military capacity.⁷⁷ However, it can be argued that the military capability of the Maghreb states can be deemed as relatively proficient in to comparison the majority of their African peers.⁷⁸

Below is a presentation of each contributor state's military capacity. The purpose of this is to give the reader a schematic overview of said states potential involvement in the NARC as well as the current condition of the Maghreb countries' military forces.

5.1 Algeria

The Algerian armed forces were fairly well trained and equipped before the country was thrown into a decade long civil war in 1990. The country currently keeps 147,000 men at arms of which the majority, circa 80,000, are poorly trained conscripts. The armed forces have always played a major role in Algerian political affairs and although the military has lost some of its political influence it is still known commonly among Algerians as "the Power".⁷⁹ However, this has not improved the state of the armed forces as the military elites are more preoccupied with political and internal security rather than military performance. Algeria's military has been modelled after the perceived threat from Libya and the tension with Morocco which has resulted in an overstretched and underfunded military.⁸⁰ Considering the widespread corruption among the officer corps and the ripples of a long civil war, it becomes evident that the Algerian armed forces are in a rather poor state.

Like its neighbours the Algerian army has a vast number of obsolete weapon systems of various types which has resulted in a poor C4I (Command, Control,

⁷⁶ Cordesman, A.H & Nerguizian, A. *The North African Military Balance*, CSIS 2009 p.3

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 88

⁷⁸ IISS, *The Military Balance 2009. Volume 107*, Sub-Saharan Africa

⁷⁹ Ibid, p.41

⁸⁰ Ibid, pp.7 & 46

Communications, Computers and Intelligence) capacity. Algeria has long used Russia as its main supplier of armaments and military doctrine. Hence, the army possesses large quantities of artillery while it is reliant on slow moving and bulky strategic and tactical units. The army has had no real combat experience save border clashes with Moroccan forces in 1963. During the civil war it was almost exclusively Algerian paramilitary forces that were used in combat. These forces gained much of the combat experience that the Algerian army lacks. Furthermore, as Algeria opened up for new alternatives in counterinsurgency during the 1990's, these forces benefitted from the expertise that French and U.S advisors brought with them. This has led to the Republican Guard being one of the best organised and maintained forces in the country; a small paramilitary force which has done much to assist the government in its fight against radical jihadist groups. Although the army has its deficiencies there are signs of a modernization process. Their C4I capacity is set to receive a much needed boost and so are the land systems. There are also indications of a more flexible attitude in the echelons of the Algerian military with the intent of increasing their capacity for counterinsurgency, rapid deployment and joint exercises with NATO.⁸¹

By regional standards the Algerian Navy can be considered as a modern and competent force. However there are still deficiencies to be found in training, operational readiness and equipment quality. In an effort to modernize its Navy Algeria purposes to acquire the French made FREMM multi role frigate. This can be viewed as a response to Morocco's ambition to purchase FREMM frigates by 2013. As concerns logistics and transport vessels, Algeria has the capability to have small to medium sized landing parties operational. The country also has a number of small patrol vessels which can be used for inshore and counterinsurgency operations.⁸²

The Algerian Air force is a rather dated organisation with a Soviet-style structure. It is also dependent on other countries for training and advisors (Pakistan and Egypt). The Algerian attack and fighter airplanes exclusively consist of Russian aircraft of MiG- and Su- types. The price of upgrading said systems to use Western technology might make the Air force's attempts at modernisation a costly affair. On paper, Algeria has a fair capability for strategic and tactical airlifts. However, combat and technical support, electronic warfare (EW) capacity and countermeasures, training and maintenance are areas which need attention and improvement. Currently some air crafts are grounded or in storage due to lack of trained personnel.⁸³

⁸¹ Cordesman, A.H & Nerguizian, A. *The North African Military Balance*, CSIS 2009 pp.46-47

⁸² Ibid. pp.51-53

⁸³ Ibid. p.50

5.2 Egypt

Egypt has during the last 30 odd years cemented its role as a military juggernaut in the region. Egypt's leading position is largely due to the signing of the Camp David accord and the subsequent flow of American Foreign Military Assistance (FMA) to the Arab Republic. The above mentioned assistance totals roughly 1.3 billion US Dollars per annum.⁸⁴ – An amount considerably higher than any other North African or Middle Eastern state receives (with the exception of Israel).⁸⁵ Egypt also has a strong tradition of militarisation of the country's political leadership; a tradition that began in 1952 with General Muhammad Naguib's Free Officers' revolt and which is still perpetuated today with Husni Mubarak, a former Air force pilot and later Commander-in-Chief.⁸⁶ Under the leadership of Mubarak Egypt has actively pursued a security policy of military deterrence which still entails a relatively far-reaching offensive capacity.⁸⁷ Combined with access to fairly modern US armaments and military assistance, it is unlikely that any of the Egypt's Arab neighbours has the capacity to challenge the Republic militarily.

The Egyptian army has between 280,000-340,000 men of which 190,000-220,000 are conscripts.⁸⁸ Conscripts training and general soldier benefits are quite poor, yet still better than in the rest of the North African states. An officer, however, tends to enjoy larger dividends and better perks; a long supported Egyptian policy in the endeavour to pre-empt military coups.⁸⁹ A large proportion of the army's equipment can be considered to be of an advanced and modern type.⁹⁰ As previously mentioned, much of it is supplied by American manufacturers but the army still stores quantities of Russian made land weapons which have proven to be unsuitable for Egyptian terrain and modern warfare.⁹¹ Additionally, the country still possesses various types of obsolete artillery which is difficult to maintain as well as rather aged transport vessels. The army logistics

⁸⁴ Azvara, J. *From Cold Peace to Cold War, the Significance of Egypt's Military Buildup*. The Middle Eastern Review of International Affairs. Volume 11 March 2007

⁸⁵ IISS, *The Military Balance 2009*, Volume 107, pp. 240-269

⁸⁶ James, A.B & Springborg, B *Politics in the Middle East 5th Edition* Addison Wesley Longman 2000 &

al-Awadi, H, *In Pursuit of Legitimacy, the Muslim Brotherhood and Mubarak 1982-2000*. I.B Taurus 2007

⁸⁷ Azvara, J. *From Cold Peace to Cold War, the Significance of Egypt's Military Buildup*. The Middle Eastern Review of International Affairs. Volume 11 March 2007

⁸⁸ IISS, *The Military Balance 2009*. Volume 107, p.242

⁸⁹ Azvara, J. *From Cold Peace to Cold War, the Significance of Egypt's Military Buildup*. The Middle Eastern Review of International Affairs. Volume 11 March 2007

⁹⁰ IISS, *The Military Balance 2009*. Volume 107, p.242

⁹¹ Kemp, G & Harkavy, R.E *Strategic Geography and the Changing Middle East* Carnegie, 1997, p.175

and recognisance capacities can be considered to be moderate to good. During the last 25 or so years Egypt has also enjoyed the benefits of joint military exercises with US troops which makes the army a fairly proficient force in the arena of modern warfare in its region.⁹²

The Egyptian Navy has also benefitted from the military ties between the US and Egypt. The country's maritime forces have modern vessels and armaments yet maintenance and support are still sometimes provided by foreign contractors or advisors. Taking into account the naval capacities of Egypt's North African neighbours it becomes apparent that Egypt possesses a superior naval strength.⁹³ The Egyptian Navy also has a relatively satisfying logistical force on paper.⁹⁴

The Egyptian Air force is rather well equipped and trained. Their pilots are considered to be among the most competent and skilled compared to their Middle-Eastern and North African peers.⁹⁵ The Air force has acquired modern aircraft, satisfying EW-capacity and the ability to sustain strategic and tactical airlifts.⁹⁶

5.3 Libya

In 2003 the Arab Jamahiriyyah (Great People's Republic) came in from the cold. Before that Libya had made a name for itself as the outcast of the North African countries. This is largely due to the eccentricities and political caprice of the country's leader, Mu'ammr Qaddafi. In fact, the Libyan armed forces still suffer from a state of perpetual reorganisation attempts. On paper the Libyan defence looks impressive indeed. With vast quantities of equipment, Libya has a formidable military apparatus for a country of roughly six million inhabitants. It must be noted, however, that a large proportion of this equipment is kept in storage or is poorly maintained. Libya began its military build up in the 1970's and has ever since nurtured an overly militaristic mindset which consequently has resulted in an undermanned and oversized military. This point is highlighted by Cordesman and Nerguizian who refer to Libya as "*the world's largest military parking lot*".⁹⁷

⁹² Azvara, J. *From Cold Peace to Cold War, the Significance of Egypt's Military Buildup*. The Middle Eastern Review of International Affairs. Volume 11 March 2007

⁹³ Cordesman, A.H & Nerguizian, A. *The North African Military Balance*, CSIS 2009 p.83

⁹⁴ IISS, *The Military Balance 2009*, Volume 107, p.243

⁹⁵ Ibid, p.70

⁹⁶ IISS, *The Military Balance 2009*, Volume 107, pp.243-244

⁹⁷ Cordesman, A.H & Nerguizian, A. *The North African Military Balance*, CSIS 2009 p.60

Libya currently has a 50,000 strong army, half of which are poorly trained conscripts. These are organised in units which are best described as oversized in relation to their actual capability. To put things in perspective, Libya currently has 25-33% of the manpower needed to satisfy the number of men required to fill the existing military units. The army's development is also hampered by degrees of nepotism and Qaddafi's own security precautions which involve rotating officers to prevent coup attempts. Qaddafi has also disallowed certain types of training believing that they might come to threaten his personal security. Occasionally there are reports of alternative constellations in the army, e.g. The People's Cavalry or The Revolutionary Guard Corps. However, according to observers these should be viewed as mere representations of Qaddafi's transient military ideology rather than a genuine attempt at military organisation. Moreover, the Jamahiriyyah's capacity for logistics, combat support and services is also poor and there is little evidence indicating that the logistics would hold up in the event of war. Libya's rather whimsical approach to arms and equipment acquisitions makes maintenance a horrendously difficult task. Although there are a few units in the Libyan army that have fared better than the rest, the Libyan armed forces would have a hard time successfully fighting a modern or asymmetrical enemy.⁹⁸

The above can be said to be true for the Libyan Navy as well. Certain crews are regarded to have moderate capacity to operate. However, deficiencies can be found in logistics, support and combat training. Libya's current naval capacity is restricted to patrol and coastal missions. Nonetheless, less erratic modernisation projects are underway as Libya is to receive patrol vessels to improve the Navy's ability to intercept smuggling and trafficking. New vessel acquisitions are also in progress which will update the country's search and rescue capacity. Libya naval vessels have also partaken in NATO-led maritime exercises.⁹⁹

The Libyan Air force retains an impressive fleet of aircraft, some of which can be considered to be of an advanced type. The majority of the Libyan aircrafts are of Russian make and the military arms deals between the two countries seem to continue.¹⁰⁰ Libya's armadas of attack and fighter air craft, transport and fuel crafts as well as its moderate support and intelligence capabilities ought to enable Libyans to keep an Air force to be reckoned with. This, however, is not the case; inadequate pilot training, poor maintenance and lack of personnel plague the air force in the same manner as the rest of military branches. In fact, a large proportion of the Air force's missions are flown by North Korean, Pakistani,

⁹⁸ Cordesman, A.H & Nerguizian, A. *The North African Military Balance*, CSIS 2009 , p.64

⁹⁹ Ibid. p.67

¹⁰⁰ Jane's Information Group, *Russia Prepares to Sell Weapons Worth \$2.5 Billion to Libya*, Jane's Intelligence, April 2008

Syrian and former Soviet instructors. Meanwhile, it is estimated that up to 50% of Libya's aircrafts are grounded or in non-operational shape.¹⁰¹

5.4 Mauritania

Out of all the NARC-contributors the Mauritanian armed forces can be considered to be the smallest in every aspect; smallest military budget and consequently smallest Army, Navy and Air force. Yet the Mauritanian military plays a major role in Mauritanian political life. During the summer of 2008 a bloodless coup was staged by the military Chief of Staff, Muhammad Ould Abdelaziz, after attempts by the former President Abdellahi to dismiss him.¹⁰²

Mauritania's army is the largest of the country's armed branches. It currently has 15,000 men in its ranks, the majority of whom are conscripts serving their two year stints. The equipment carried by the Mauritanian land forces can at best be described as obsolescent. The machinery consists of early Russian cold war models and the same is applicable for the weaponry. However, as the Mauritanian Army does not keep an abundance of military equipment maintenance is not an insurmountable task. As regards the country's land forces there is no real logistical or support capacity to speak of.

The Mauritanian Navy is a compact organisation with an estimated 620 sailors currently in service. Albeit they have the capacity for smaller offshore operations, the Navy's capacity is limited to patrol mission with aging vessels.

The Mauritanian Air force is indeed a minute affair; home to 250 airmen it has the limited capacity to complete little more than limited reconnaissance, patrol or transport missions.¹⁰³

5.5 Tunisia

One of the few states in North Africa with a relatively moderate military expenditure, Tunisia currently has a standing army of 35,800 men, 22,000 of which are conscripts. The Tunisian military main purpose is to act as a defensive force in the event of external military aggressions, a mission that the armed forces carry out well. However, the country has, and has had, few enemies and

¹⁰¹ Cordesman, A.H & Nerguizian, A. *The North African Military Balance*, CSIS 2009 p.72

¹⁰² Qatar News Agency, *Reports of a Military Coup in Mauritania*, August 2008 & Jane's Intelligence Review, *Military Rule Returns to Mauritania*, September 2008

¹⁰³ I Cordesman, A.H & Nerguizian, A. *The North African Military Balance*, CSIS 2009 p.72

until recently Libya was perceived as the chief threat to the Republic's sovereignty. Similar to its Maghreb neighbours Tunisia has seen an increase in jihadist activity which has replaced the traditional threat of an invasion by a foreign force. Accordingly, the country has prioritised in intelligence gathering, joint NATO exercises (mainly maritime) and counterinsurgency.

The Tunisian army is capable of controlling smaller defensive operations. Training standards for officers and career corps are higher than in the rest of the Maghreb countries. However, there is little that suggests that the Tunisian army has the capacity to organise and sustain a prolonged military campaign. Recently the Tunisians has begun upgrading the equipment of the country's land forces, the majority of which are aging American Main Battle Tanks (MBTs), artillery pieces and Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs). The land forces are also burdened by the fact that the army keeps equipment of different types which makes maintenance and compatibility efforts quite difficult. The land forces also need to improve the capacity for logistics operations since the army probably would have a hard time operating far from the depots and storages, the majority of which are located close to city centres.¹⁰⁴

As regards the Navy the Tunisians have succeeded in maintaining a fairly professional maritime force. However, it is a small force in comparison to the country's neighbours and it has poor "blue water" and logistical capacity. Nonetheless, the Tunisian Navy fulfils the requirements of Tunisia's strategic needs as the Navy has the capability to patrol local and inshore waters.

The Tunisian Air force is a small and competent military force. The Air force has been expanding in a slow but comfortable pace and it executes its mission of air defence, counterinsurgency and attack training. The Tunisians have opted for American aircraft and they have utilized these obsolescent models (of F-5 type) to the best of their ability. The country is, however in need of at least a wing of modern combat aircraft to meet its strategic requirements. Moreover Tunisia has problems recruiting competent personnel and it is still dependent on foreign contractors for logistics and maintenance.¹⁰⁵

5.6 Morocco

As previously mentioned, Morocco is not a member of the AU and consequently not a NARC contributor. However, Morocco's military capacity is pertinent to this chapter due to two reasons; primarily Morocco's security policy is part of a larger context, i.e. the military balance of the region. Secondly, it also

¹⁰⁴ Cordesman, A.H & Nerguizian, A. *The North African Military Balance*, CSIS 2009, pp.80-81

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, pp.83-84

contributes to the permeation of current conflicts and political rivalries. Therefore this report opts to include an overview of the previously mentioned capacities.

Morocco's military and security apparatus has been formed after the perceived threat from Algeria and the low-intensity conflict in Western Sahara.¹⁰⁶ Like its North African neighbours Morocco has a large conscript army which continues to grow. The Kingdom is currently spending roughly 11-12 % of its national budget on military expenditures. In comparison to the other North African states Morocco has managed to maintain a higher standard of career forces while its expenditure on enlisted men is still considered to be comparably low. This undoubtedly affects the training and combat competence of the Kingdom's forces, especially its reserve forces. Nonetheless, the Moroccan army's 175.000 conscripts is one of the few forces in North Africa that has seen combat since the 1960's. Although, the aforementioned experience mostly consists of irregular or guerrilla warfare against the POLISARIO in Western Sahara this has tested the Moroccan troops. Furthermore it has also put the Moroccan auxiliary forces to the test, more specifically the logistics branch of the armed forces has proven that it can deliver and sustain logistical support for longer periods of time. Even so the training and sustainability of the ground forces still remains erratic and considering the fact that the Moroccan army has purchased large quantities of land weapons of different types the maintenance and C4I battle-management capabilities has suffered considerably.¹⁰⁷

The Moroccan Navy cannot be considered to be a modern Mediterranean force as it has poor "blue water" capacity. However, its standards have enabled Moroccan vessels to participate in NATO counterinsurgency exercises. The Moroccan Navy's ability to launch Search and Rescue (SAR) operations, maintain and carry out naval transport missions makes it a fairly well equipped naval force by African standards.

The Kingdom's Air force is has a relatively large tactical airlift capacity as it possesses fairly good sized armada of transport aircraft. In addition to this it has air refuelling capacity, SAR ability and good electronic intelligence capability. On the other hand the Air force's combat proficiency needs to be improved; sections of the combat air force is grounded, the pilots lack advanced combat training and parts of the Air force is obsolete. Efforts have been made to address the above issue and the outlook is that the Air force will undergo a modernisation process within the next few years.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Cordesman, A.H & Nerguizian, A. *The North African Military Balance*, CSIS 2009, pp.9-10

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p.10

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, pp.31-35

5.7 Troop Pledges to the NARC

At the time of writing¹⁰⁹ the study has yielded very little official documents pertaining to troop pledges from the NARC contributors. Moreover, documents or communiqués regarding NARC's organisation, build-up and structure have yet to surface. There has been scarce documentation from the different workshops and meetings on a military strategic level and few concrete results have emerged from said meetings. Perhaps this can be viewed as symptomatic of the political problems facing the region, as there is a limited tradition of collaboration on military matters. Echoing the words of an AU observer "*a realistic timeline for an operational NARC is in between 6 to 10 years minimum, given the current level of activity*".¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ 2009-11-23

¹¹⁰ Interview with AU official Addis Abeba, 2009-10-28, Addis Abeba, Ethiopia

6 Previous Performance

6.1 Diplomatic and Political Intervention

Acknowledging the fact that NARC is an organisation solely formed to organise the military contribution of the North African states to the African Standby Force, it has no history of diplomatic or political intervention in ongoing conflicts. Admittedly, this is not the purpose of NARC nor will it be. Therefore the following section will focus on other regional organisations that the North African states are members of.

The AMU is primarily an economic organisation which does not often stray from the politico-economic field.¹¹¹ The AMU's political and diplomatic interventions have mainly focused on issuing statements which have been more or less innocuous. Even so, the AMU does occasionally raise the issue of ongoing conflicts during its annual symposiums as well as in other forums, such as the Arab Summit. During the 2009 hostilities in Gaza, the AMU issued a statement confirming that the Arab Maghreb states had agreed on a vision for ending the internecine strife among their Arab brethren.¹¹² However, AMU has also been confronted by its own fair share of difficulties in forming a coherent strategy for diplomatic and political interventions. Notably during the first Gulf War when the AMU was, to reiterate the words of Richard Connaughton; “*torn apart*” due to the disparate views of the member states concerning operation Desert Storm.¹¹³

An organisation that has an inveterate history of diplomatic and political intervention is the League of Arab States. Initially established to counteract the formation of a “Zionist” state in the former British mandate of Palestine,¹¹⁴ the League's main ambition is to function as a channel for political harmonisation between the Arab states.¹¹⁵ Today, the Arab League is an organisation with clearly defined conduits for exercising its political or diplomatic clout. The League's activities are divided into ten different branches, each branch

¹¹¹ Cammet, M. *Defensive Integration and Late Developers: The Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab Maghreb Union*, Global Governance, Volume 5 July

¹¹² Arab Maghreb Union, *Maghreb Countries Have Vision to Overcome Inter-Arab Rift*, March 2009, www.maghrebarabe.org accessed 2009-07-16

¹¹³ Connaughton, R.M. *Military Intervention in the 1990s, a New Logic of War*, Routledge 1992, p.107

¹¹⁴ Background Information Summaries, *League of Arab States*, Great Neck Publishing

¹¹⁵ The League of Arab States, *the Alexandria Protocol*, January 2009, p. 13 (translated from Arabic by author)

containing a set number of offices.¹¹⁶ Branch two, three and four are the offices for military affairs, Arab-African relations, Palestinian affairs and Arab Peace and Security as well as several other offices.¹¹⁷ As regards the League's intervention in African conflicts, the most notable is the Darfur-conflict. As of 2004 LAS has issued over 90 statements, including a number of emergency meetings, relating to the Darfur crisis.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, the League has undertaken great efforts to support AU's mission in Sudan (AMIS) – at least verbally – in practice however, LAS has done little to shift its political weight in order to put pressure on the Sudanese government.¹¹⁹ In 2006 the League pledged 150 million US dollars to help the AU alleviate the situation in Darfur. However, by 2007 only 15 million had been delivered.¹²⁰ Representatives of LAS member states have also been accused of impeding United Nation's Security Council resolutions and political decisions concerning Darfur.¹²¹

In the ranks of the NARC, the contributors Egypt and Libya have distinguished themselves as diplomatic and political arbitrators. Egypt has an extensive record as an Arab mediator in Africa. Egypt is an important US ally in the region and has on occasion been called upon by the United States to facilitate US diplomatic efforts.¹²² Although the lion's share of Egypt's diplomatic activities have been directed towards various conflicts in the Middle-East, Egypt's gradual advance in African affairs is now a distinguishable feature in the Arab Republic's foreign policy.¹²³ Libya does not bring the same diplomatic experience to the table as Egypt does. However the People's Republic has gone from an outcast to a political actor in the region. Qaddafi has made great efforts to further Libya's political influence in Africa. Echoing the words of the Libyan leader's son, Seif ul-Islam Qaddafi who considers Libya to be "*the main diplomatic actor in North Africa*".¹²⁴ Although Seif ul-Islam's estimation of his country's political

¹¹⁶ The League of Arab States, *Activities*, (translated from Arabic by author)

www.arableagueonline.org accessed 17 July 2009

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ The League of Arab States, *Darfur*, (translated from Arabic by author)

www.arableagueonline.org accessed 17 July 2009

¹¹⁹ Hasbani, N. *About the Arab Stance vis-à-vis Darfur*, International Crisis Group, March 2007

¹²⁰ Background Information Summaries, *League of Arab States*, Great Neck Publishing

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² UPI International Intelligence, *Rice to Seek Arab Support for Strategy*, January 2007

¹²³ Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Egyptian Diplomatic Demarche in Africa*, November 2006

www.mfa.gov.eg accessed 18 July 2009

¹²⁴ Crumley, B. *Has Libya Really Reformed?* Time Magazine, August 2007

influence might be rather generous, Libya's encroachment into African affairs must be recognised as a successful undertaking.¹²⁵

6.2 Military commitments

The establishment of NARC is a milestone in North African military cooperation. However, being a nascent organisation the members of NARC have no real experience in the field of peace and security operations. Due to the tensions in the region and the inefficiency of the AMU, military harmonisation has been virtually impossible to create or plainly undesirable. In comparison to other RECs, such as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), AMU's peace and security organisation and experience is, for all effects and purposes, non-existent.¹²⁶ However, the recent threat from Islamic militants, such as the transnational al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)¹²⁷ has forced the North African leaders to re-evaluate their attitude vis-à-vis military cooperation. This realisation has led Maghreb countries to partake in NATO-led naval and counter-insurgency exercises, such as the Phoenix Express in 2008.¹²⁸ These developments are unprecedented in the post-colonial history of the Maghreb countries and a sign that progress is being made.

Although multilateral military cooperation has been arduous to achieve for the North African states, a number of them have succeeded in deploying troops in other international frameworks. A valid example is Egypt who currently keeps forces in eight countries under the auspices of the United Nations.¹²⁹ The vast majority of Egypt's international force is located in Sudan where roughly 1.300 Egyptian troops are deployed.¹³⁰ The Egyptian involvement in African peacekeeping is deep-rooted and six out of the eight countries that the Arab Republic has forces in, are African states.¹³¹ Simultaneously it can be argued that Egypt has the capacity to increase its peacekeeping efforts in Africa.¹³²

¹²⁵ Ronen, Y. *Libya's Diplomatic Success in Africa: The Reemergence of Qaddafi on the International Stage*, Diplomacy and Statecraft, Volume 13, December 2003

¹²⁶ Arab Maghreb Union www.maghrebarabe.org accessed 14 July 2009 & Hull, C. & Derblom, M. *Abandoning Frontline Trenches? Capabilities for Peace and Security in the SADC region*, FOI-R-2768 2009, pp. 30-52

¹²⁷ Kirschke, J. *The al-Qaeda we don't know: AQIM the North African Franchise*, World Politics Review October 2008

¹²⁸ Associated Press, *Greece: Libya, France to join U.S Naval Exercise*, Defense News, April 2008

¹²⁹ IISS, *The Military Balance 2009*, Volume 107, p.244

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Souare, I.K. *Egypt's Evolving Role in Africa: A Sub-Saharan Perspective*, Institute for Security Studies, December 2008

No other NARC contributor currently matches Egypt's military assistance to the UN. Tunisia has circa 450 men under UN flag in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC),¹³³ a substantial force for a country of that size. As regards Algeria and Libya, they keep less than twenty UN-observers in DRC, Sudan and the Philippines while Mauritania has no international deployments.¹³⁴

During recent years Algeria has furthered its participation in AU's peace and security organisation. Among other things, the Algerian involvement entails setting-up and hosting the AU's Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT).¹³⁵ Algeria has also provided the last two peace and security commissioners to the AU Commission; Mr. Said Djinnit and, the present commissioner, Mr. Ramtane Lamamra.¹³⁶ Moreover, as a part of the Algerian endeavours to display a firm commitment to the AU's peacekeeping efforts, the Algerians also agreed to provide the airlift during the AU mission to Somalia.¹³⁷

¹³³ IISS, *The Military Balance 2009*. Volume 107, p.268

¹³⁴ Ibid, pp. 240 & 257-258

¹³⁵ African Union, *Terrorism*, www.african-union.org accessed 15 July 2009

¹³⁶ Norell, M, Sörenson, K, Damidez, N *Afrikanska Utmaningar*, FOI-R-2487, 2008, p.39 & African Union, *Who's Who*, www.african-union.org accessed 15 July 2009

¹³⁷ African Union, *Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Situation in Somalia*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, July 2007

7 The Future of NARC

The North African region has a poor history of cooperation, be it economic, political or military. Although success stories can be found, they are scarce. The very fact that the region now has managed to establish the NARC cooperation signifies a milestone in the history of military collaboration in the Maghreb. Never has the Maghreb countries, Egypt included, shouldered responsibility for establishing such extensive military partnership. However, to make the NARC an effective organisation it will take more than to build a formal organisation and appease regional rivalries. Considering the June 2010 deadline, NARC needs to strengthen its efforts in order to ascertain a tangible operational level. This might prove to be a difficult task as the NARC member states are currently in a new position.

Nevertheless, it must be recognised that NARC has a couple of assets which, if employed correctly could work in its advantage. The buds of regional cooperation have sprouted during recent joint naval exercises under the auspices of NATO.¹³⁸ Existing channels and points of contact can thus be further widened in order to reach a higher degree of efficiency as regards the actual implementation of the cooperative effort. Additional starting points can also be detected in the Maghreb states recent offensive against terrorist activities in the region. Counter-Terrorism (CT) and Counter-Insurgency (COIN) operations allows the Maghreb states to exploit much of their vast experience and potential in the field to create a more effective base for further collaboration. These initial signs of a broader CT-approach indicate that regional cooperation is not an insurmountable task.¹³⁹ Furthermore, NARC possesses a military capacity unmatched by the other RECs; there is no lack of hardware or equipment; the general level of military training in the NARC states are higher than in many other African states while some of the NARC contributors also have experience in the field of peacekeeping.¹⁴⁰ The prospective positive outcome of a joint North African Standby Brigade is therefore unparalleled. Moreover, a functioning NARC will not be compelled to spend the same amount of resources or manpower to be able to contribute considerably to the African Standby Force as a whole.

Thus, an increased cooperation with organisations such as the EU and the NATO to the Maghreb could prove valuable to fuse the general cooperation in the region. Moreover, the recent COIN- and CT-operations in the south of Algeria

¹³⁸ See chapter 4 of this report for further information.

¹³⁹ Fethi, N & Jameh, S. *Algeria and Bordering Sahel Countries Mount Joint Offensive against Al-Qaeda*, Maghreb, May 2009

¹⁴⁰ IISS, *The Military Balance 2009. Volume 107, Sub-Saharan Africa & Cordesman, A.H & Nerguizian, A. The North African Military Balance*, CSIS 2009 p.

have forced several of the regional states to augment their level of cooperation as the CT-issues are of a cross-border nature.

The inherent necessity of cooperation during the set-up and operation of NARC makes the organisation an opportune stepping stone for a more coherent security policy in the region. In many aspects the Maghreb states have common goals in their security policy; terrorism, smuggling and armed conflict in neighbouring states are all genuine threats to the security of the region. NARC is thus an organisation which might in effect bring about a more united North Africa. Scrutinising the track record of previous attempts at collaboration, it becomes clear that for NARC to become efficient it must also be viewed as a project worth investing in. Hence, a potential spoiler of such a process might be Morocco. As the only state outside the regional, and indeed the continental effort to build security, Morocco must be made aware of the potential benefits of a more stable region. Unfortunately, a prerequisite for Morocco to even consider integration as a vital political option seems to be that the West-Saharan issue in some way is resolved without Morocco losing too much face. How such a solution would look like is outside the scopes of this report, but undoubtedly it would need to involve some sort of autonomous status for Western-Sahara, something Morocco still firmly opposes.

8 Conclusions

The AU initiative to set up a regional and continental standby force is in its essence an immense undertaking. Considering the vastness of the African continent with its different regions and heterogeneous conflicts, the standby force is itself facing several challenges. However, when other regions wrestle with deficiencies as regards military materiel, adequate training and competent manpower and leadership, the North African region faces problems which entail political will and colliding interests. This study has identified a number of factors that currently are hindering, and will continue to delay, the development of a fully operational NARC.

Primarily there are several organisational obstacles which NARC has to overcome in order to fulfil its full potential as a military standby force. These involve addressing the issue of conflicting loyalties between different organisations and the apparent overlapping of organisational interests. A pertinent example of this is the involvement of LAS (of which all the North African states are members) in the Sudan issue. While the AU is pushing for a solution to the crises in Darfur and Southern Sudan, LAS gives priority to its members' right to defend their sovereignty.

Another organisational obstacle is the lack of a functioning regional economical community. The AMU would have been an ideal platform to build a true NARC cooperation upon as it would contain a common market and common interests. However, the AMU was from the beginning flawed, as Egypt, a major regional actor, is not a member of the organisation. In addition to this, the dormant conflict between Algeria and Morocco has resulted in a weak and ineffective AMU. Moreover, Morocco not being a member of the AU is detrimental to a genuine regional cooperation under AU flag.

Furthermore, the NARC members do not always see eye to eye as regards the political direction of NARC. This has been apparent as Libya would prefer a continental army while Egypt on the other hand would like to see a more moderate and progressive development as concerns military cooperation. In the mix is also Algeria, a state which is keen on working within the AU framework and has taken the role as the AU's security Czar, leaving Tunisia taking a more observing role vis-à-vis its bigger neighbours.

In spite of the many political obstacles that the NARC initiative has yet to overcome, it remains a laudable initiative since it is pressuring the North African state to reconsider their sometimes strained relationships to one another. In addition to counter-terrorism and migration issues, NARC might emerge as another collaboration point. However, for NARC to be a productive forum for

security collaboration in the region, it prerequisites Morocco's engagement, at one point or another.

In a future perspective NARC will most probably not deploy as a unified brigade in the sense of military intervention force. Nonetheless, a more probable scenario, which is actually already realised in some respects, is that NARC might contribute to peace support operation in one capacity or another around the continent. Here the expertise of the NARC contributors might come to much use, e.g. police training, logistics, counter-terrorism, intelligence and technical training. Finally, if NARC is viewed as the beginning of a more close-knit North Africa, it might be considered a successful venture as it marks a more militarily and politically balanced North Africa. Undoubtedly, any progress made by NARC will be alleviating for the continent as a whole.

A more politically and militarily harmonised North Africa could also prove to be a valuable stabilising factor in the Mediterranean region as well as for the Sahel countries. Hence, it would be in the interest of Western organisations such as the EU and NATO to invite North African states to partake in joint exercises and joint regional summits regarding security issues. This could very well have a consolidating effect because the distrust between the North African states is one of the regions foremost obstacles to real cooperation.

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