



**STRATEGY
RESEARCH
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**TOWARD A TUNISIAN SECURITY STRATEGY
FOR THE NEW CENTURY**

BY

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ABSTRACT

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This strategic research project starts by identifying the geo-strategic environment that Tunisia has to deal with as an Arab, Muslim, African, and Mediterranean country, and also as part of the United Arab Maghreb, that includes Algeria, Morocco, Libya, and Mauritania. It underlines the economic, diplomatic and social challenges that Tunisia has to face, especially to be integrated into the world economy, and to maintain and keep good relations with all the countries in its area of interests. The second part of this paper is an attempt to identify the factors that may threaten the Tunisian stability and interests, at present and in the future. These threats may be economic, ideological, environmental, technological, and informational. The paper also presents the current Tunisian security strategy, the "Global Defense", based on the use of all the elements of national power in order to preserve the national integrity and sovereignty. These elements include the military, the economy, foreign policy, the national will and the "esprit" of defense. Finally, this paper looks at what must be changed in the present Tunisian security strategy in order to meet the future challenges and threats.

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TOWARD A TUNISIAN SECURITY STRATEGY FOR THE NEW CENTURY

The recent major changes in the world order after the cold war have brought about regional instability, and in certain regions of the world serious crises. This is especially true in the case of nations that had to adapt their fragile economic and social structures to the new uncertain and complex order. In fact, the national security issues have become major components of national strategy, especially because of the incapacity of "emerging nations" to insure their security. Regardless of the size and sophistication of their military forces and weapon systems, they cannot be sure of victory in today's environment. More important, however these nations must seek a strong economy, and a coherent social structure on which the military forces can depend in order to guarantee the national integrity.

The above observations lead us to conclude that the armed forces and the national economy are inseparable factors when planning or developing "national security strategy". Moreover, these are not the only elements to be considered when planning "national security strategy", other factors should be involved in this process in order to be effective including diplomacy, international relations, environment, social status, and national will.

This said, a relatively small country as Tunisia cannot depend for its security on its military forces alone, but must also rely on the other elements of national power. For this reason, and since the end of the cold war, Tunisia adopted for its security the doctrine of "Global Defense"¹ considered as the most suitable policy for a country whose major concerns are:

- Economic, and social development
- Education of the population
- Health care
- Technological and scientific "Know How"

So, what is the geo-strategic and world environment that Tunisia has to deal with? What kinds of threats should be considered now and in the future? What are the elements of the "Global Defense"? And is the Global Defense strategy sufficient to respond to the actual and the possible future threats to the Tunisian security? These are the questions that this paper will attempt to answer.

THE GEO-STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Tunisia is a relatively small Arab North African country. It is located on the Mediterranean sea bordered by Algeria to the West and Libya to the South East. Tunisia has a three thousand years of history that shaped its society and culture, and which gave the country a unique geo-strategic status. These facts were recognized by the Declaration of November 7, 1987 when President Ben-Ali said: "We shall give Islamic, Arab, African, and Mediterranean solidarity its due importance. We shall strive ourselves to achieve the unity, based on our common interests, of the "Great Maghreb"²

Tunisia has therefore to deal with five levels of strategic interests being part of the "Islamic Nation", an Arab country, an African nation, a Mediterranean society, and most important, a member of

the "Great Arab Maghreb". These associations affect Tunisian foreign policy formation as it has to consider a host of complex issues and to steer itself a balanced course because of the interdependence of these five strategic levels and their sensitive, and often, contradictory aspects. In addition, Tunisian policy makers must account for the relative differences in the perception of "common interests" among the nations involved in the five areas of the world of which Tunisia is a member.

For these reasons, and in order to overcome this complex and unique situation, Tunisia has consistently pursued a balanced policy of openness and moderation in its international relations, which, I believe, will maintain peace, provide economic growth, promote social prosperity, and give the country more credibility in the international community. How do the Tunisian policy makers deal with these challenging issues?

-TUNISIA AND THE "UNITED ARAB MAGHREB" (U.A.M):

Tunisia and the other members (Algeria, Morocco, Libya, and Mauritania) of the U.A.M believe that their geographic proximity and common heritage prepare them for joint action to meet the imperatives of the present and the challenges of the future. The primary challenge is the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, which Tunisia is in the process of participating in on the basis of cooperation, solidarity, and stability between the two shores of the Mediterranean, of which the U.A.M. countries are a principal component. "Tunisia which has made the United Arab Maghreb project a strategic choice, consider that the delay in the process of building the U.A.M. cannot justify any questioning of this great gain, which is an aspiration of all the Maghreb people"³ President Ben-Ali will also add that: "the obstacles now preventing the U.A.M. from best accomplishing its role must not lessen our determination to go forward to achieve this ambitious project of civilization, whose completion requires perseverance and patience like other groupings which have come into being near our region" Tunisia is also convinced that exploiting judiciously and together, the potentialities of the Maghreb countries enable the Union of the Maghreb to act as an interlocutor with the rest of the world fully able to support its role in opening a dialogue which preserves its interests, and specificities, and responds to the expectations of its people.

At this strategic Arab Maghreb level, Tunisia considers that any political or social crises in one of the Maghreb countries will have direct impact on the others. Therefore, a common strategy should be developed to promote stability, order and peace, leading to common economic and social development as prerequisites for establishing democracy on solid basis. The numerous internal problems confronted by the constituent countries, are the major obstacles preventing the Maghreb Union from becoming a reality. But beside these internal difficulties, other international obstacles are also to be considered such as the Western Sahara conflict, and the sanctions against Libya.

-TUNISIA AND MEDITERRANEAN RELATIONS:

Tunisia places particular importance on economic integration and cooperation with the countries of the Maghreb and between the two flanks of the Mediterranean. President Ben Ali has advocated a relationship of co-development and interdependence between the European Community and the southern

flank of the Mediterranean. On July 17, 1995, Tunisia was the first country, south of the Mediterranean to sign an agreement of association with the European Union. This agreement extends cooperation to cover all fields--culture, education, economy, scientific research, and political, and social dialogue. On July 19, 1995, eleven countries took part in a regional meeting held in the Tunisian city of Tabarka with the aim of laying the ground for the Euro-Mediterranean conference of Barcelona (Nov. 95). The ancient Tunisian city of Carthage hosted on April 21-22, 1995, a symposium on the teaching of tolerance in the Mediterranean. Participants adopted a major document, known as the "Carthage Charter" on tolerance in the Mediterranean.⁴

These facts, and events explain the Tunisian interests in this particular region, and also its belief that national security depends largely on how efficient, and good its relations are with this community. This also can be explained by the traditional link that ties Tunisia to the Mediterranean countries, and the influence that they have on its economy, stability, and security.

-TUNISIA AS AN ARAB AND MIDDLE-EAST COUNTRY:

"Arab solidarity at the center of our priorities" ⁵. It is this that Tunisia is striving to make clear in its external policy and its relations with its sisters in the Arab world. Tunisia, also consider that intensifying joint Arab actions is a duty and a necessity so as to safeguard the strategic interests of the Arab community, to attain their common objectives, and to consolidate their abilities to meet the challenges confronting them.

This shows how Tunisian foreign policy and strategy are traditionally linked to the Arab world and the Middle-East area. That is why any Arab or Middle-East political or economic crisis will have immediate impact on the Tunisian foreign, and domestic policy

In this context the Tunisian economy and foreign policy have always been influenced by the events that shook the Arab world such as the Arab-Israeli wars, the Gulf war, and even the Arab-Israeli peace process in which Tunisia played a significant role. Therefore, Tunisian policy makers and politician will always consider that the Tunisian security strategy has to consider this traditional relationship and set the means and the ways for an Arab regional stability, peace, and cooperation.

-TUNISIA AS AN AFRICAN COUNTRY:

Because of its location and membership in the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U) Tunisia has interests in issues that influence the African continent. For this reason Tunisia is a very active member in O.A.U, and believes that the African interests are also Tunisian. Foreign Affairs Minister Said Ben Mustapha participating at 70th session of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Council of Ministers held in the Algerian capital delivered an address in which he underlined that the international conditions on the eve of a new century should exhort all the African countries to act in mutual support and concord, by resorting to dialogue and relying on wisdom, which are the foundations of the African culture. He called on African countries to adhere to the principles stated in the OAU Charter to find lasting solutions to the conflicts and the critical situations that prevail in some regions of the continent. He also stressed the need

for Africans to conceive a global approach that takes into account the African priorities and the requirements of the international environment. Concerning the economic situation in Africa, he pointed out that the regional integration and the horizontal cooperation between the African countries and sub-regions, as part of the implementation of the Abuja Treaty (Economic integration of the African continent), remain the best means to consolidate the continent's capacities and to apprehend globalization under the best circumstances⁶. The foreign affair minister noted that "The consolidation of peace, and the reinforcement of the continent's economic capacities are two parallel paths which require from us a clear strategy and a priority order that we should conceive in solidarity, in concord and in the certainty that our continent is capable to rely on itself,"⁷.

-TUNISIA AS AN ISLAMIC COUNTRY:

While assuming its identity as an Arab-Muslim country Tunisia is also firmly oriented toward progress, and openness. Tunisia is therefore convinced that Islam is not incompatible with modernity and as a member of the "Organization of Islamic Conference", Tunisia has strived to consolidate the real, and essential Islamic values such as fraternity tolerance, modernization, and moderation.

Tunisian position toward "political Islam", or Islamic radicalism is clearly expressed by policy makers and supported by the people who reject radical extremism considering it contradictory to the basic values of Islam. This attitude gives Tunisia a unique position among the conservative groups in the Muslim society and is sometimes a source of ideological conflicts that it has to deal with. Nevertheless, Tunisian beliefs are respected by the moderate Muslim countries, regarding it an example of modernity, and social integration. Why is Tunisia so different? What impact has that difference had on the country? And what lessons does it provide for the future? According to Esther Coopersmith:

The answers to the first question involve history, religious philosophy and pragmatism. The fact that Tunisia has been a crossroads of many cultures and creeds for more than two millennia helped to create an outward-looking mentality. When Islam became dominant, the rights of other religions were protected and through the centuries Tunisian Imams were among the most enlightened in the region. The Arab world was still beset by colonial rule and social stagnation 70 years ago when a Tunisian scholar, Tahar el-Haddad, published "Our Women, Islamic Law and Society." His book boldly challenged the concept that the Koran prescribed an inferior status for women. The real breakthrough occurred in 1956, when Tunisia gained independence from France. The first president, Habib Bourguiba, understood that a small nation with limited natural resources could not prosper with half its population relegated to ignorance and subservience. The new republic's first major social reform, the Code of Personal Status, banned polygamy and established basic equality. The 1956 code started a process of rapid liberalization that continues under Bourguiba's successor, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Today, women represent roughly half the student body at all levels of Tunisia's education system, including universities. A public health network provides comprehensive family planning services. As a result, Tunisia has a birthrate similar to that in Western industrial societies. The fact that women are truly integrated in public life has contributed greatly to Tunisia's remarkable progress in other spheres. In just four decades of independence, it has become a stable, middle-class society with an enviable economic growth rate - better than 5 percent - and a profile that increasingly resembles a developed country rather than an emerging one. Yet it remains an overwhelmingly Muslim society as well, demonstrating that Islam and modernity can coexist comfortably. Tunisia's example

provides some hope for other nations groping for a better future in what remains a troubled region⁸

THE THREATS

Given its geo-strategic position, Tunisia has a unique status with different kinds of threats. While some threats are easy to identify as they are considered classic, others are hidden and may appear suddenly and destabilize the country. More important is that changes in the world order have brought uncertainty, complexity, and new types of threats. Similarly, the rapid evolution of modern society, the increasing sophistication of the technology, and the globalization trend, will be certainly accompanied by unusual types of threats that require new types of policies, and new measures other than those that the policy makers were used to dealing with. Even though Tunisia does not face a credible military threat due to its moderate foreign policy and the success of its diplomacy, this does not exclude an eventual serious conflict that may suddenly or gradually occur causing a change in the existing regional equilibrium. Following is a discussion of the main threats facing Tunisia.

THE PRESENT THREATS:

-Economic Threats:

The world is in the process of undergoing significant changes in the economic sphere. In particular, there is an emergence of major regional trading blocs, and a growing tendency among countries to liberalize their economies and to adopt market system as the basis of economic organization, management and policy making. "In light of these developments, Tunisia decided to join the World Trade Organization (WTO), and to sign a partnership agreement with the European Union (E.U.). Setting-up a free-trade area is among the major goals of that agreement since this is considered the most efficient way to reinforce relations between the signatories as it will create greater growth opportunities and attract more foreign direct investments (FDI)"⁹.

However, if economic liberalization allows growth opportunities for the national economy through increased market size and trade, capital mobility, reorganized economic activities, and easier technology transfer, it also creates serious challenges. A major challenge is that of greater competition among countries, which imposes a reexamination of the country's comparative advantages, and requires efforts to increase the competitiveness of the economy.

This said, failure in achieving economic goals, may lead to an internal economic disaster that will create a difficult situation and threaten the country's stability. As an example, the agreement with the European community became effective in 1998 and will lead to a free trade zone for manufactured goods by the year 2008. "This is a risky undertaking because if the Tunisian industrial sector, which currently contributes over 50% of exports, fails to reach European standards by that date, European imports could swamp the country and destroy its industrial base".¹⁰

-Ideological Threats:

Political Islam was for Tunisia the major ideological threat for about two decades between 1970 - 1990. The appeal of political Islam was due to poor economic conditions and a decreasing standard of life. But since the change in the political leadership in the country on November 7, 1987, major economic and social reforms gave the government more credibility among the people who in turn rejected the fundamentalist ideology. The change mitigated any immediate danger by Islamic extremism in the country. In the words of President Ben Ali:

We have been able totally to eliminate this danger; all Tunisian society has rejected extremism, terrorism and fanaticism in all their forms, the more so since they do not correspond with the temperament of Tunisians, who are known throughout the world for their openness of mind, their tolerance and moderation. The regenerated and multi-dimensional breath of reform which has impregnated our action over the last eleven years, and the effort we have made over this period to mobilize all the potentialities of the country in the service of the national community, while being attentive to the preoccupations of all the social categories and striving to stimulate the spirit of solidarity and initiative and guaranteeing political and social rights and human rights. All this has definitely enabled us to turn the page on the fundamentalist danger, which is now no more than an old and trite refrain.¹¹

But, even though Tunisia has eliminated the fundamentalist threat, the danger can be from external sources. Therefore, specific measures have to be taken to protect the borders and the population from this major threat either by diplomatic means, economic and social means, or even by military means if necessary. An adequate strategy is so needed to face this threat.

- Environmental Threats:

The Tunisian environment faces today the problems of toxic and hazardous waste disposal which poses a threat to public health; water pollution from raw sewage; limited natural fresh water resources; deforestation; overgrazing; soil erosion; and, desertification. These issues constitute a real threat to the population, to the economy and may become sources of instability. But if some of these problems are attenuated by local measures, others could be classified as multinational and may cause a real threat when not solved such as limited fresh water resources. Given that Tunisia gets most of its fresh water from the Medjerda river which has its source in Algeria, any change in the Algerian policy toward Tunisia or any major hostilities between the two countries may lead to the use of the "water weapon" which will impact regional stability. Therefore:

Tunisia's policy of environmental protection aims at preserving the ecological equilibrium, safeguarding natural and human resources, preventing and reducing the various forms of pollution, and reconciling the requirements of development with the imperatives of the environment, so as to protect the natural elements (air, water, soil and bio-diversity), improve the population's living conditions, and attenuate the risks threatening these resources. All these actions are part of the national strategy for sustainable development, and in accordance with the principles of the 1992 Rio Conference. A long term strategy, and an action plan have also been set, starting with creating or reinforcing the existing technical, financial, institutional and legal tools necessary for a rational and sustainable management of the environment. This long term action is also accompanied by many public awareness campaigns and environmental education program for youth.¹²

- FUTURE THREATS:

Forecasting is risky business especially about the future. This is mostly due to the change in the global conditions that make the future uncertain and hard to predict. It is, however, possible to assume certain future global trends.

- The expanding information warfare threat
- The proliferation of advanced technology
- The increasing global trend toward urbanization
- The growing resources scarcity
- The global warming
- The increasing frequencies of terrorist events
- The rising transnational crime
- The drug trafficking

Tunisia may face the following threats in the future:

Technological threats:

Ideological threats

Informational threat

Environmental threats

THE CURRENT SECURITY STRATEGY OR THE "GLOBAL DEFENSE CONCEPT"

The concept of defense is no longer limited to military considerations, but has been expanded to reach the other components of the national security strategy including all the national elements of power.

Moreover, the end of the cold war, and the New World order changed the meaning of the "national sovereignty" concept and increased the role of the United Nations in peace keeping operations in several regional crises since 1991.

This new order, will certainly pressure a small country with limited resources, as Tunisia to diversify its defense options, and to use all its elements of power in order to increase its chances of surviving. For this reason the "Global Defense" concept has been adopted as a national security strategy, that depends on all the national capabilities including all the following components:

-ELEMENTS OF THE "GLOBAL DEFENSE":

- The military defense:

Considered as a major element of any defense strategy, it includes all the military services, paramilitary forces and national- guard. These forces are of two types:

- The active units
- The reserve components.

-The economic defense:

Economic strength is considered as the essential factor to have a powerful and structured military forces, to create national power, and to guarantee the state's sovereignty.

For these reasons the concept of defense exceeds its classical meaning of strictly referring to military forces. Today it includes the national economy, especially as the world moves toward globalization whereby the economy becomes a major component of international relations, and a critical concept for national security in the modern age.

Consequently Tunisia has sought to insure its national security through economic development, and a strategy was set up to guarantee and reach this objective. The ultimate goal is the total integration of the national economy in the international environment and the preparation of the country for an entry into the new century with the best chances for success. To quote from a recent development plan:

To reach this ambitious goal, the guidelines and priorities of the development process have been defined in light of lessons based on results from previous experience, as well as of the requirements and expectations of the future. Efforts were undertaken to give greater efficiency to the means of production and to make the economy more diversified and competitive. Consequently, efforts were concentrated on insuring that the various measures and reforms already taken give their full effects and are extended to various areas. More specifically, work continues towards opening of the economy to the outside world, increasing exports, reforming the price subsidizing policy and domestic trade, continuing fiscal reform and implementation of the various fiscal systems, as well as pursuing the privatization program and reforms in the financial area.¹³

-The Diplomatic Defense:

"We shall continue to keep up our good relations and positive cooperation with other countries, particularly friendly and sister countries, we shall respect our agreements"¹⁴.

In order to guarantee its integrity, Tunisia consider that diplomatic efforts and peaceful solutions are, means for national security and powerful ways in achieving regional and world stability. Therefore diplomacy is considered as one of the Defense Policy components

Diplomacy:

President Ben Ali's foreign policy includes among its priorities working for regional integration in the Maghreb, inter-Arab consensus-building and co-operation, and Euro-Mediterranean co-development. Under Ben Ali's leadership, Tunisia has actively contributed to the search for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, offering an unwavering and concrete support to the Middle East peace process. Ben Ali's chairmanship of the Organization of African Unity demonstrated a strong commitment to seeking negotiated solutions to the conflicts shaking the continent and to preventing and armed confrontations in Africa.

During his visits abroad, his meetings with the Heads of state and Kings and his discussions with world leaders, President Ben Ali invariably pleads the cause of a more just, more united, more stable and more prosperous world. In his view, globalization should be a source of universal progress and mutual development, not a factor of imbalance or domination.

Foreign Policy

Peacemaking

Tunisia has consistently pursued a balanced policy of openness and moderation in its international relations. It has always endeavored to promote a comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which ensures a just and lasting peace in the region. Within this framework, Tunisia took part in the Madrid Conference and has fully supported the Middle East Peace Process by actively participating in its multilateral track and contributing to the realization of the Palestinian-Israeli agreements. It has advocated peaceful settlement of conflicts around the world, especially in Africa.

Peacekeeping

Tunisia has participated in various humanitarian relief and peacekeeping operations around the world since the 1960's. More recently it has dispatched hundreds of peacekeepers to Cambodia, Namibia, Rwanda and Burundi.

The Mediterranean

Tunisia places particular importance on economic integration and cooperation with the countries of the Maghreb and between the two flanks of the Mediterranean. President Ben Ali has advocated a relationship of co-development and interdependence between the European Community and the southern flank of the Mediterranean.

Relations with the US

Relations between Tunisia and the United States date back to the eighteenth century when Tunisia signed a treaty of friendship with the young American republic. Strong ties of cooperation were developed between both countries since Tunisia's independence in 1956. The two nations maintain today close relations of friendship and cooperation. Tunisia actively supports the US initiative for the promotion of a business and trade partnership between countries of the Maghreb and the United States.

International Organizations

Tunisia is a member of various international and regional organizations including the United Nations, the League of Arab States, the Arab Maghreb Union, the Organization of African Unity and the Islamic Conference Organization. In all such fora, Tunisia has advocated peaceful settlement of conflicts, tolerance and dialogue.

- Psychological Defense:

This element of the national defense policy aims to keep high moral among the population and guarantee the national cohesion in case of crises, by avoiding the impact of enemy psychological

operations and propaganda, by controlling the information broadcasting and the proliferation of disinformation.

This action can't only be a matter of crisis circumstances it is in fact more complicated than it seems to be. Thus in peacetime the population must acquire confidence in its political institutions and representatives and support the national effort. Nevertheless the only way to achieve this objective is by insuring social development, and the respect of human rights and by promoting the wellbeing of the public which are the basic elements of democracy. As the president indicated:

We have given protection to human rights, to the development of mechanisms for their enforcement and to the raising of awareness concerning them. This is a major part of our political program, since we are firmly convinced that human dignity has no meaning without these rights. We have made no distinction between political and civil rights on the one hand, and economic and cultural rights on the other, but have worked to promote them both in the texts and in practice. We are working to inculcate democratic principles, human rights and the noble precepts of Islam into our young generations¹⁵

- The Civilian Defense:

This type of defense is conducted by civilian units, trained during peace time, and assigned to geographic sectors called military regions. The regional military command and the regional civilian authorities are responsible for updating the mobilization plans, coordinating their action with the military units, and for providing the necessary equipment to conduct these operations.

Using civilian equipment for their transportation, these units conduct a guerilla type of operations in order to protect supply routes, critical economical infrastructure, and if necessary, conduct sabotage actions on enemy positions, and participate in information operations.

-WHAT MUST BE CHANGED TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE:

-In the technological field;

Today's technology is developing with a very high speed, the nations that will not be able to keep with this rate and speed will, unfortunately, be left far behind, and will not get the chance to recover. On the one hand, depending on foreign technology, by just importing it, is not only very expensive, but will not allow the consumer to develop his own capabilities. On the other hand, as in the case of Tunisia technology import especially in the military field can't be done without interrupting the economic, and social development. Therefore, Tunisia needs to emphasize the integration of technology by investing in scientific research, and by setting a high technology oriented educational system that will provide highly skilled experts.

-In the informational domain:

Some say that the future war will be the war of information. Those who do not possess the information and do not have the technology to use it will certainly be the looses. In fact, in the future the information will not only influence the use of the military power but also the economy and the society. Those who have access to the information will control the world economy. Thus, Tunisia should also

include in its military, economic, and social objectives the possession of the informational technology as well. The war of information must be won before it starts and a lot must be done in order to win and survive.

-In the environmental field

Although the Tunisian government includes in its priorities the environment protection issues, it will be very difficult to overcome all of its threats as far as the actual strategy does not involve all the national elements of power in this regard. As an example the military forces still have more means to do it than any other organization. But the role actually given to this element of power is insignificant in comparison with its capabilities especially if he can be given the adequate financial support. Another way to promote the environment protection is to involve the private sector especially in the profitable sectors as recycling, water purification, agriculture, fishery ... etc. A lot is still to be done in this field in order to guarantee the self sufficiency in agricultural products and food needs which may be the consequence of the environment degradation.

CONCLUSION:

It is important to reconfirm that the national security issues have become a major components of national strategies, especially in the case of the "emerging nations". More important, however, these nations must seek a strong economy and a coherent social structure on which the military forces can depend in order to guarantee the national integrity and sovereignty.

The armed forces and the national economy are, for this reason inseparable factors when planning or developing the national security strategy. In fact the interaction between these two interdependent elements is so strong that both will influence each other.

Moreover, these are not the only elements to be considered when planning a national security strategy, other factors should be involved in this process in order to be effective including diplomacy, environment, social status, and national will.

Therefore, the actual Tunisian security strategy, regardless to the national means, the threats and challenges that the country may face, seems to be the most effective strategy to be adopted. But as far as the future is concerned more emphasis must be applied to overcome other challenges including:

The control of information

The possession of technology

The environment protection

In order to accomplish these objectives and shape the future, further measures should be taken in order to:

Develop agricultural production and foster the continued growth of this sector decreasing the effects of natural factors, thus ensuring food security and the reduction of the trade deficit;

Develop and improve infrastructure since services such as transport, communications, etc. play an important role in supporting productive activities and competitiveness, in improving living conditions for citizens, and in ensuring integration in the world economy.

Improve human resources and prepare them to meet the challenges of the future, particularly the challenge of acquiring technological know-how. To that purpose, programs relating to education, vocational training, higher education, and scientific research should be strengthened so as to improve skills and competencies and adapt them to the profound changes that are taking place globally. In addition, other social sectors such as health, social security, and special programs, should be the objects of increased attention.

Grant a greater role to the private sector in implementing sectorial policies and programs by giving it access to new activities such as infrastructure public services and environment.

Word Count = 5297

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Law 61/70 Feb.21.1970 creating the National Defense Council and law 27/86 May 2nd 1986
- ² Declaration of November, 7th 1987 (<http://www.tunisianonline.com/html/declarationhtml>)
- ³ President Ben Ali gives interview to "Monday Morning" (published in issue no 1373, April 19,1999 <http://www.tunisiaonline.com/pressbook/mmorning/interview.html>)
- ⁴ Tunisia foreign policy <http://www.tunisiaonline.com/html//government2.html>
- ⁵ President Ben Ali gives interview to "Monday Morning" (published in issue no 1373, April 10, 1999 <http://www.tunisiaonline.com/pressbook/mmorning/interview.html>)
- ⁶ Tunisian Foreign Affair Minister attending OAU council of Foreign minister's meeting July 9, 1999(<http://www.Tunisiaonline.com/news.html>)
- ⁷ Tunisian Foreign Affair Minister attending OAU council of Foreign minister's meeting July 9, 1999(<http://www.Tunisiaonline.com/news.html>)
- ⁸ "Tunisia land of both Muslim and modern" by Esther Coopersmith (Nando Media)
- ⁹ Republic of Tunisia Ministry of Economic Development 9th Development Plan 1997- 2001 part I "Main orientations " Social and economic policies-overall framework (<http://www.tunisiaonline.com/developmemt/>)
- ¹⁰ Republic of Tunisia Ministry of Economic Development 9th Development Plan 1997- 2001 part I "Main orientations " Social and economic policies-overall framework (<http://www.tunisiaonline.com/developmemt/>)
- ¹¹ President Ben Ali gives interview to "Monday Morning" (published in issue no 1373, April 10, 1999 <http://www.tunisiaonline.com/pressbook/mmorning/interview.html>)
- ¹² <http://www.tunisiaonline.com/html/environmenthtml>
- ¹³ Republic of Tunisia Ministry of Economic Development 9th Development Plan 1997- 2001 part I "Main orientations " Social and economic policies-overall framework (<http://www.tunisiaonline.com/developmemt/>)
- ¹⁴ Declaration of November, 7th 1987 (<http://www.tunisianonline.com/html/declarationhtml>)
- ¹⁵ President Ben Ali gives interview to "Monday Morning" (published in issue no 1373, April 10, 1999 <http://www.tunisiaonline.com/pressbook/mmorning/interview.html>)

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