



UNISCI Discussion Papers

SECURITY CONCEPTS, INSTITUTIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR CO-OPERATION PARTNERSHIP AND CONFLICT PREVENTION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

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FECHA:	Mayo de 2003

1. Introduction

Mediterranean politics have been undergoing profound change since the end of the Cold War and the subsequent unleashing of the processes of globalization. These changes have affected all countries and extended to include domestic, regional, trans-regional politics and the interactions between the region and the global system. Eastern and Southern Mediterranean countries are experiencing the forces of political and economic change, and political-ideological extremism, and the European Union is coping with the rise in strengths of political secessionism in several European countries. Traditional conflicts are still plaguing the Mediterranean in addition to new ones, which have emerged since the end of the Cold War. The Mediterranean is also going through processes of integration and fragmentation at the same time. Because of the different levels of development and state-building, northern countries have been able to achieve integrative breakthroughs unmatched by the southern states. Furthermore, for the first time, the region is experiencing the introduction of neo-regional arrangements, the most important of which is the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership project. It is also going through a process of slow integration into a global economy through the arrangements of free trade and association agreements and financial liberalization.

Mediterranean security has been no exception. The concepts of Mediterranean security and the Mediterranean countries conceptualizations of security have been re-examined to cope with the global transformations and new realities in the region. Various security models, proposals, and arrangements have been submitted. Virtually all of them were put forward by northern Mediterranean countries in order to cope with the perceived risks coming from the South. These proposals were based on assumptions, which the Arab countries of the Mediterranean claimed to be unrelated to their security concerns. For that reason, the Mediterranean lacks a single unifying security concept around which security arrangements could be developed. The Barcelona process is trying to cope with this problem. There are several common documents which have been agreed on but the Charter for Peace and Stability has not yet been signed.

¹ Las opiniones expresadas en estos artículos son propias de sus autores. Estos artículos no reflejan necesariamente la opinión de UNISCI. The views expressed in these articles are those of the authors. These articles do not necessarily reflect the views of UNISCI



1.1. The Impact of Globalization on Mediterranean Security

Globalization has influenced the conceptualizations of security in the Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries, albeit in different ways. In the North, the change has been in the direction of moving from the concept of national security, where the reference object is the territorial state, to the concept of international security, emphasising interdependence, to the concepts of world security, fundamental security and global security, emphasising global risks and challenges affecting human beings in general.

This new conceptualisation emphasises that the international system is becoming increasingly differentiated from the traditional state system. As a result, the new process of global interconnection implies a redefinition of time, space and state power. It also implies the deterritorialisation of the socio-economic, cultural, political and military space. In fact, some Western academics and politicians are emphasizing the diminishing importance of states as international actors.

In the South, there has been an increasing emphasis on the expansion of the concept of security to incorporate developmental dimensions and linkages with regional and global processes. However, because of the newness and sometimes fragility of the structures of the nation-state in the South, there is also an emphasis on considering the nation-state, as the basic political unit of analysis around which Mediterranean security should be structured. In general we can say that in the new international environment, security is still a public good that only states can provide. Security is not a question of markets nor of transnational enterprises.

Globalization has also influenced Mediterranean security in some other ways, the most important of which have been the introduction of neo-regional arrangements such as the establishment of the Mediterranean Forum in 1994 and the launching of the Barcelona process in 1995 leading to the projected Euro-Mediterranean partnership. These projects would have been almost unthinkable in the pre-globalization era, and are based on a neo-regional philosophy. The challenge is to establish genuine Euro-Mediterranean linkages, which benefit all the actors involved in a balanced way and to address their economic and security concerns. To do this it is fundamental to construct the region as a viable political, economic, cultural, security and ecological region and acknowledge its transnational linkages at the same time. But the process needs first the prior recognition of the political will for increasing co-operation.

Globalisation also has its dark sides, which have taken the form of the spread of drug-trafficking, illegal trans-Mediterranean immigration, and the spread of neo-epidemics that individual countries are unable to address on their own. This is further complicated by the persistence and escalation of traditional conflicts, which makes the task of dealing with the new security challenges a formidable task. This calls for finishing the classical agenda in order to clear the road for establishing a pan-Mediterranean regime for coping with the new security challenges.

1.2. Contrasting trends in the Mediterranean

It is also important to note the growing contrasting trends between the North and South affecting regional security. The population of the Northern Mediterranean countries is currently growing at very low rates, not higher than 1% a year since 1950, whereas that of the



Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries are still rising at a robust pace. This trend, plus the reduction in mortality and the young age structure, has produced a demographic divide between North and South in the Mediterranean.

One of the consequences of this demographic imbalance has been the South-North migratory flows. The countries of the EU have been subjected to increasing migratory flows, becoming a major foreign and security issue. The influence of the extreme right and the increasing trend in xenophobia has produced a securitisation tendency. The closure of borders has also generated a criminalisation of migration, seeing increasingly the migration flows under the lenses of human trafficking, prostitution, smuggling, drug trafficking and as a fundamental challenge to internal security, national cohesion and national sovereignty. This trend has been intensified especially after the September 11 events, by adding an ideological dimension to the question in the form of linking migration with the perceived “Islamic” threat. The image of the migrants is linked in some European quarters to the fear of invasion. This threat perception is not sufficiently understood with the real causes of migration: Population growth, differences in income, demographic and labour force shortages in the EU, and the attraction of the EU as publicised by the media, the wish to have access to welfare, consumption and employment. This kind of perception is not similar to the perceptions regarding other flows, in particular the flows coming from the Eastern and Central European countries. The Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries do not accept the securitisation of migration and this so called Shengen mentality. In fact migration has become a major security issue for the EU (Seville European Council.)

This is also linked to terrorism considered nowadays as the main security issue for the Western countries.

In this regard, the first problem is the definition of terrorism. That has been a very controversial exercise.

This was, and still is, a very thorny issue during the negotiations of the declaration for the Barcelona Conference. Later in the meetings of the *ad hoc* group on terrorism there was no possibility of consensus. And even after the September 11 attacks the agreement on the definition was not possible. However in the fifth Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Valencia on 22-23 April 2002 several important documents for fighting against terrorism were adopted: In the “Valencia Action Plan” several axes of dialogue and co-operation on terrorism were retained as well as the “Regional co-operation programme in the field of Justice, in combating drugs, organised crime and terrorism, as well as co-operation in the treatment of issues relating to the social integration of migrants, migration and movement of people” In these documents there is a clear compromise to support international legality on this and on the implementation of UN resolutions and conventions on terrorism, in particular Resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1390 (2002) for the suppression of the financing of terrorism, the impulse of regional initiatives coming from the Arab League or EU considered compatible, and a renovated mandate of the *ad hoc* group on terrorism to put into practice measures such as the organisation of meetings of experts on the financing of international terrorism, the strengthening of co-operation on the harmonisation of laws against terrorism, police co-operation, in particular in the movement of people, the co-operation on justice and co-operation on asylum and extradition. The Euro-Med Forum for its part finally approved a document on the code of conduct on terrorism at the meeting in Nikonos on the 21st of May 2002. However



there still exists a wide disagreement on the definition of terrorism. It would be very difficult, to say the least, to adopt at the present time this code of conduct document in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean process where the Syrians, Lebanese, Israelis and Palestinians are present. The Arab countries tend to present terrorism in the Middle East more from a structural perspective, such as fighting occupation, than from a Western perspective of fighting inadmissible violence against innocent people.

In fact, there is a good number of terrorist movements in the Mediterranean region, a majority of US-designated terrorism supporting states and, in apparent contradiction, a low number of casualties compared to the potential targets in the whole region. The same can be said on the fighting against international crime and, at a different level, drug trafficking, given the fact that in the Mediterranean there are several drug producing countries. This activity cannot be developed without, at least, the passive support of the states.

Turning now to food security, it is a question where an insufficient consensus still exists, especially in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. The levels of awareness of future difficulties on food supplies, given environmental prospects, increasing population trends and external debt problems are different in the North and in the South. This question is not relevant in the Euro-Mediterranean documents. On agriculture the only really important aspect for most of the governments in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean is the access of southern agricultural products to the EU markets. Strategies to deal with this challenge are insufficient or non-existing.

In conclusion it can be said that the perception of risks and threats are not very similar.

1.3.Northern and Southern Perceptions and Conceptualisations

Furthermore, the actors in the Mediterranean security issues are not in agreement about their overall security approaches. In this respect, one can distinguish between three major approaches:

1. - A Hobbesian approach, dominant in the strategic analysis of the US. This perspective emphasises the existence of potential threats coming from the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean such as terrorism, drug trafficking, migration flows at some extent, and in particular the proliferation of missiles and weapons of mass destruction.
2. - A Kantian approach that emphasises the importance of democracy and human rights, cooperation and the rule of law and justice as the main tools for conflict prevention and conflict resolution. This approach is quite dominant in European thinking on Mediterranean security issues and is best demonstrated in Arab approaches as they emphasize the legal norms governing security issues.
3. -A Grotian perspective that focuses on political, social, economic and environmental challenges that can affect security in the Mediterranean. This is also an important European approach.

The cold war implied several political alignments in the Mediterranean. The countries of the northern shore of the Mediterranean entered, in a direct or indirect (the Spanish case) form, the Western defence system centred on NATO. However the countries of the southern shore did not constitute a homogeneous block. The decolonisation process led to the adoption



of differentiated security and defence policies. During the cold war the Western countries could count on the support of Israel and a more nuanced support by other countries like Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan and, after the changes made by Sadat, also Egypt.

The cold war environment obliged southern countries to a certain political clientelism. The political regimes were given support as promoters or clients of superpower interests in the Mediterranean. The question of the promotion of democracy and human rights was a secondary question in the Western agenda as this agenda was dominated by super-power rivalry considerations. The end of the cold war heralded the end of superpower rivalry and the end of military threats to Western powers in the Mediterranean. The main priorities in the Western agenda shifted towards emphasis on the peaceful management of political, economic, social and military transition in the former Warsaw Pact countries.

In the beginning, the Mediterranean countries received little attention in the Western agenda. But gradually Western security institutions realised the significance of the Mediterranean in the new regional and trans-regional security architecture. The European Union (EU), NATO, and the West European Union (WEU) and to a less extent the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) initiated proposal for trans-Mediterranean cooperation. These proposals were constrained by two major factors, namely, (i) the asymmetry of perceptions and the different conceptualisations of security; and (ii) the deficiencies in the proposals submitted. A brief review of these factors may be in order

1.3.1. Contending North and South Conceptualizations of Security

In the EU and NATO countries the end of the Cold War opened a window of opportunity for a re-conceptualisation of security in the Mediterranean. Southern European countries, mainly France, Spain, and Italy, tried to create a new security architecture in the Mediterranean given their strong interests in the region. In co-operation with North African countries, they created the 5+5 formula for co-operation, and later on Italy and Spain submitted a proposal to establish a Conference on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean. These proposals were based on some co-operative security premises. But the problem was that such premises were lacking in the Mediterranean: The 5 + 5 Formula was frozen because of the internal situation in Algeria and the Lockerbie terrorist attack. Furthermore, the Arab countries were reluctant to accept the format of a Conference on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean that would necessarily include Israel, which was still occupying the Palestinian territories. Finally the US did not accept the proposal considering that it would affect the freedom of movement of the Sixth Fleet. Later on, Southern European countries lobbied within the EU for a more active role in the Mediterranean given the pressures exercised by non-Mediterranean members to shift attention to Eastern and Central Europe. The end result was the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership proposal and the Barcelona Declaration in 1995. The Declaration referred to three baskets of cooperation, the first of which was the political basket, which contained elements of a cooperative security arrangement. Later on during the French Presidency of the EU in the second semester of 2000, the Charter for Peace and Stability in the Mediterranean was drafted after a process of North-South consultation. If we examine the Barcelona Declaration and the Draft Charter, one concludes that the EU was attempting to apply to the Mediterranean the broader concepts of security, including the political, economic, social, environmental and defence aspects of security. This was in line with the broadening and expansion of the concept of security that took place in particular after the end of the Cold War in the Western countries.



It developed from state centred concepts and national security to the concept of societal security, where the referent object is nations and societal groups, and human security where the referent object are individuals and mankind in general. The major problem was that the EU and the Southern Mediterranean partners were trying to apply to the Mediterranean concepts derived from the experience in Central and Eastern Europe rather than from the security environment of the Mediterranean.

NATO, in its strategic concept of November 1991, established a clear differentiation of risks between Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. Allied security was considered to be challenged by instabilities that might arise from the serious economic, social and political difficulties, including ethnic rivalries and territorial disputes which had to be faced by many countries in Central and Eastern Europe; in the particular case of the Soviet Union by the risks and uncertainties of its process of change and by its significantly large conventional forces and nuclear arsenal. In the case of the Southern Mediterranean countries and the Middle East, the NATO approach was clearly unrealistic and biased. It was considered that the build-up of military power and the proliferation of weapon technologies in the area, including weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missiles capable of reaching the territory of some member states of the Alliance were the principal problems (The Alliance Strategic Concept 1991 , points 10,11,12).

Later, in the new Alliance Strategic Concept of 1999, the approach was more general. The appearance of complex new risks to Euro-Atlantic peace and stability, including oppression, ethnic conflict, economic distress, the collapse of political order, and the proliferation of WMD were mentioned (The Alliance Strategic Concept 1999: point 3). And, under the heading “Security challenges and Risks”, risks such as uncertainty and instability in and around the Euro-Atlantic area and the possibility of regional crises at the periphery of the Alliance were mentioned. It is important to underline that there was no distinction made between the countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the Southern Mediterranean regarding social, economic and political difficulties, ethnic and religious rivalries, territorial disputes, inadequate or failed efforts at reform, the abuse of human rights and the dissolution of states that could lead to local or even regional instability, crisis, human suffering and armed conflicts. In addition, the proliferation of WMD in NATO’s periphery and other regions, the global spread of technology that can be of use in the production of weapons and the disruption of information systems were added. Also global challenges were included such as acts of terrorism, sabotage and organised crime, the disruption of the flow of vital resources and the uncontrolled movement of large numbers of people (The Alliance Strategic Concept, 1999, points 20 to 24).

All these security risks and challenges were very relevant in the Mediterranean region.

For its part, the WEU approved in November 1995 a common concept of European security. The following risks were mentioned: potential armed conflicts, proliferation of WMD and their delivery means, international terrorism, organised crime, drug trafficking, uncontrolled and illegal immigration, and environmental risks.

In the evaluation of all these risks nothing specific appeared regarding the Mediterranean. The paragraphs dealing with environmental risks did not mention the



environmental challenges affecting the Mediterranean region. (European Security: Common Concept, 1995)

This document in fact was a complement to the Barcelona Declaration where all these risks appear with a Mediterranean dimension. Some of them, such as environmental challenges, were included under the heading of economic co-operation

It is important to underline here that NATO has maintained as a priority the fight against proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. That is focused particularly on the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. In this way the approach that implies dialogue, co-operation and confidence building is overshadowed by the policies for fighting potential WMD threats. It appears that NATO and in particular the US centre on the potential military capabilities of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. In general it can be said that it is a question of abstract and exaggerated assessments and they do not take into account the profound economic and military disparities existing in the Mediterranean. This discourse can be qualified as Hobbessian. The consequences are obvious: these countries can also present NATO or EU rapid deployment forces and real military capabilities as a threat as well as in the not too distant future, the military preparations and astronomical spending on systems such as the NMD. The focus of attention of this military system are the so-called rogue states. A good number of them are located in the Mediterranean or its vicinity. The excessive emphasis on potential vulnerabilities thinking only of the Northern Mediterranean countries induces a profound asymmetry with the Southern Mediterranean countries whose vulnerability is beyond comparison.

In this way, regarding WMD, there exists a clear differentiation first between the EU states and the US where in many analysis and assessments alarmist views prevail, while in the European analysis there is no immediate threat perception to national security. Even countries such as Italy and Spain support the US initiative on NMD but with the more or less declared objective of participating in its technological development. In the case of Spain it is also linked to the fight against terrorism, a national priority. However both countries consider the BM threats from the Southern Mediterranean as not very relevant and have maintained ambiguous policies in order to avoid public opinion perception of threats coming from the Maghreb or the Middle East. That is also the case of France given the importance of the Maghrebian population or French population of Maghrebian origin.

On the other hand, the Mediterranean Arab states consider that a fixation on non-very realistic threats exists. They consider themselves as artificially marked as risk states. Thus, the Western countries could justify billions of spending on weapons systems, proposing hardware solutions to artificially inflated problems. This perception has been reinforced since the September 11 events when the terrorist threat, formerly included in the NATO Strategic Concept of 1999, became the main security priority.

However on these and other security issues there are important different security perceptions and conceptualisations on the southern shore of the Mediterranean

In the Mediterranean Arab countries one can detect an enlargement of the concept of security to include developmental and societal dimensions. However, given the newness of state structures, and their involvement in territorial conflicts, security issues and concepts are



still dominated by hard security issues and are state-centred issues. The Arab countries have presented some proposals on Mediterranean security. The most important of these proposals is the Egyptian proposal to establish the Mediterranean Forum; it was presented in 1991 and established in 1994. The Forum comprises 11 Mediterranean countries, and from the beginning focused on political, economic, social and cultural issues². The Egyptian initiative reflects the Arab conceptualizations of Mediterranean security. According to these conceptualizations, the starting point is to settle the hard security agenda in the Mediterranean before embarking upon co-operative security projects in which Israel would be involved. It is hardly possible, according to them, to engage in such projects as long as Israel continues its occupation of Arab territories. Once this issue is resolved, co-operative security projects could be developed. On the other hand, economic co-operation with European Mediterranean and non-Mediterranean countries should be developed in the hope that such co-operation would be enlarged at a later stage to include Israel once the hard security issues have been resolved. Arab countries do not reject European co-operative security proposals in principle. They contend that there are certain prerequisites for the effective application of these proposals, the most important of which is the resolution of the hard security issues, and building arms control regimes in the Middle East that can achieve a strategic equilibrium and security for everybody in the region. It is argued that Europe had introduced such proposals in the mid- 1970s after the territorial issues were settled and the East-West arms control regimes were established. In this context, one can understand why Arab countries are skeptical about security concepts such as human security and humanitarian intervention. The fragility of state structures, and the dominance of hard security issues tend to perpetuate the role of the state in devising security strategies. Furthermore, the schism between civil society groups and the state on the conceptualization of security issues tends also to increase the role of the state in deciding the security agenda. Civil society groups in Arab countries tend to subscribe to a hard security agenda more than the governments are willing to do.

Israel's concept of national security has been focused on hard security issues since the creation of the state. Israel was born at war. The Arab –Israeli conflicts and the instability in the Gulf area were two major circles of conflict and concern during the cold war. The end of the cold war did not mean a significant change in the region. Israel's fears are a little bit overshadowed by recent developments such as the so-called Iranian threat, the residual Iraqi threat and, in particular, the so called terrorist threat. The wave of violence after the second Intifada has produced a new emphasis on Israeli Hobbesian approaches regarding the security problems in the Middle East.

For Turkey, the end of the cold war implied also a more complex security and defence situation. Turkey feels that new security threats affect its national security. The countries surrounding Turkey are very unstable and there are dangers of its involvement in regional conflicts. The Caucasus, the Balkans and the Middle East are in a volatile situation. Within Turkish society there exist emerging public pressures for a more interventionist policy on behalf of ethnic minorities within Turkey's vicinity. However the military approach has been insufficient. The Kurdish question and terrorism are also major security problems and military tools and hardware are not the most appropriate means for dealing with these challenges. But the official security conceptualisation is still dominated by hard security issues.

² The Euro-Med Forum initially created working groups. Later the participants met at the level of senior officials. They can create working groups ad hoc. In the first semester of 2002 two working groups met : the first one on Conflict Prevention in Rome, the second on Economics in Casablanca.



1.3.2 The Deficiencies of NATO and EU's Initiatives

Plans and programs to confront and manage risks and challenges in a co-operative way substantially differ in the countries and organisations in the northern part of the Mediterranean.

Inside NATO there is a mixed position. NATO launched the Mediterranean dialogue with the aim of promoting better understanding and creating confidence, and to correct misperceptions on NATO policies in the Mediterranean partners. But the NATO Mediterranean dialogue in the beginning had obvious shortcomings, and dialogue for the sake of dialogue was not attractive to the Mediterranean partners. NATO, in 1999, converted the dialogue into co-operation but little progress was achieved. Lack of enthusiasm and lack of funding have precluded an advance in military co-operation and common activities. There are some projects in progress for moving from co-operation to partnership with a bottom up philosophy. Thus the perspective behind this initiative is pragmatic. It intends to enhance security through short-term forms of co-operation and long-term investment in training, expertise and common exercises. However this dialogue does not confront from the beginning the security dilemmas that the Mediterranean partners have to manage nor the different security agendas existing between the North and South in the Mediterranean. The dialogue is still bilateral with each of the seven Mediterranean partners, thus limiting, the possibilities of North-South and South-South co-operation. It is qualified as selective by including pro-Western countries and ignoring others like Syria and Libya. It also divides the Arab space into countries that are considered more co-operative in the implementation of the Western agenda, even in the case of the final collapse of the Middle East Peace Process. This kind of misperception impedes progress in this limited co-operative initiative.

The EU initiative launched in 1995, the Barcelona Process has also had to manage different misperceptions and shortcomings. This initiative tried to deal with the new political, economic and social issues on both sides of the Mediterranean which constitute common challenges calling for a co-ordinated overall response. The general objective was to turn the Mediterranean basin into an area of dialogue, exchange and co-operation guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity calling for a strengthening of democracy and respect for human rights, sustainable and balanced economic and social development, measures to combat poverty and the promotion of a greater understanding between cultures.

The process has been strongly affected by the ups and downs of the Middle East conflict; thus, the co-operation envisaged has had a limited success. And the main objective, establishing an area of common prosperity, has not been achieved. The association agreements signed with the different Southern and Eastern Mediterranean partners imply a profound challenge to the economies of these countries, given the fact that the economic project is almost only based on strengthening trade exchanges, and focuses on establishing a free trade area only in the field of manufactured goods, the area in which the Europeans enjoy a relative advantage. Agricultural commodities, the area in which the Arab countries enjoy a relative advantage over the Europeans, are almost excluded from the free trade area. Furthermore, the free trade bilateral agreements cannot generate a dynamic of regional integration due to the lack of major investment and of appropriate public policies. Some studies have forecast a strong contraction of local supply, a lack of a dynamic and competitive production system and a tendency to the worsening the divisions and distortions of income in the Mediterranean. (Sid



Ahmed 2001). The economic space has not excluded some agricultural exchanges, nor does it permit a free space for the movement of persons. The primary goal of the EU to open up the closed space in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean and create a hierarchical structure of trade and production as was developed in the Pacific by Japan, would possibly have unwanted implications between the Mediterranean partners, leaving the economic decision centres out of reach of the decision-making process of the Arab states. It will probably imply a major change in the traditional concept of the Arab state and as increasing perception of a new economic dependence on EU interests.

At the same time the implementation of liberal economic policies and the construction of an area of common prosperity raises the question of good governance and political development. On this point the assessment of the EU policies regarding the first chapter of the Barcelona declaration is not very positive. The tendency to consider the political area as separate and in a different compartment from economics has produced a negative result affecting the attraction of foreign investments.

In the social, cultural and human dimension and the creation of a common space for peace and stability, the main challenges have to do with cultural co-operation. The Mediterranean partners cannot accept the destruction of their cultural fabric or being culturally colonised through Western and European media, intellectual production and the control of global cultural infrastructures.

Thus the co-operation process becomes more complex due to factors such as the increasing perception by the Mediterranean partners of new challenges to be confronted. The pragmatic and normative approach of the EU has its shortcomings.

1.4. Conflict Resolution vs. Conflict Prevention

There are two main schools of thought in the Mediterranean on how to deal with conflicts. The first school is advocated by the EU and focuses almost exclusively on the task of conflict prevention. The second school argues that conflict resolution must precede conflict prevention. This school is mainly articulated by Arab actors in the Mediterranean.

The EU has progressively developed its own doctrine on conflict prevention since 1993, adapting its external action to a changing international environment. It has developed mechanisms for civilian and military crisis management that could be extended to Mediterranean security issues. The EU has been engaged in the Mediterranean using a full range of capabilities: association and free trade area agreements, co-operation, development assistance, social and environmental policies, humanitarian assistance, civilian and military crisis management, political dialogue and co-operation in the area of Justice and Home Affairs. In the EU Council held in Seville in June 2002, intercultural dialogue was recognised as a significant mean for conflict prevention (Prevention of Violent Conflicts, 2002). The Barcelona process *per se* is a conflict prevention exercise and in the “Valencia Action Plan” it was stated that political dialogue must focus among others on conflict prevention and crisis management (Valencia Action Plan, 2002).

The Arab countries contend that the EU has to play a more significant role in Mediterranean conflicts, especially the Arab-Israeli conflicts. They consider its role will not be



restricted to the function of conflict prevention rather than conflict resolution. The latter function must not be left to the USA, even if it is the main actor capable of influencing the dynamics of that conflict.

According to the European Commission communication on Conflict Prevention, the EU will attempt to achieve four important objectives:

1. - A more systematic and co-ordinated use of Community instruments
2. - Improve the efficiency of its actions.
3. - Improve the capacity to react quickly to nascent conflicts.
4. -Promote targeted international co-operation on conflict prevention with all the EU's principal partners.

The EU has adopted a considerable number of concrete actions with a clear prevention objective. It establishes a clear link between short-term and long-term prevention recognising the importance of addressing, from the outset, root-causes of conflict such as poverty, lack of good governance and respect for human rights, and competition for scarce natural resources (EU Programme on Conflict Prevention, 2001; Report on the implementation of the EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts, 2002). All this is particularly relevant to the Mediterranean and come into contradiction with some EU policies implemented until the present such as:

1. - Lack of firmness in dealing with authoritarian regimes in the Mediterranean with the object of opening the way to a more favourable democratic environment. In this field it is important to underline the narrow national interest of the EU countries that still prevails in the approach to the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. The consequences are a lack of co-ordination and open competition. There is only a rhetorical approach regarding the creation of a favourable political environment in countries showing an internal conflict potential
2. -Lack of substantial contributions to macro-economic stabilisation and economic support for economic reforms. It is important to underline the implications for the partners of the association agreements in the distortions of income in the North-South relationship and inside the countries, increasing poverty potential in significant segments of the population in the Mediterranean countries.
3. -Lack of effective policies to deal with natural resource problems such as access to water, shared water resources or natural resources depletion.
4. -Lack of credible steps for the promotion of conversion, disarmament and non-proliferation both with regard to weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons.
5. -Lack of political will for improving the EU leverage in the solution of the Middle East conflict.
6. - Lack of credible steps for a real solution in the Western Sahara conflict and, as a consequence, the promotion of AMU integration.
7. -Lack of effective ways to address cross-cutting issues which contribute in the Mediterranean to increasing tensions and conflicts, such as the recognised trafficking by several Mediterranean states, migration flows and human trafficking, environmental degradation, transnational crime and the spread of major communicable diseases.



The Arab countries argue that the conflict preventive approach of the EU is highly questionable at different levels. First, the exclusive emphasis on conflict prevention bypasses the present security agenda in the Mediterranean and focuses on a future agenda. Consequently, the EU will lose its relevance for those actors that are at present in conflict. States usually pay more attention to their present conflicts rather than to the ones which could emerge in the future, and tend to focus on the frameworks which could provide a mechanism for conflict resolution rather than to those which provide the promise of a new world. This is because engagement in a conflict entails a pattern of resource mobilization, which could only be changed after the conflict is resolved. If the Euro-Mediterranean partnership (EMP) disengages itself from the more urgent conflicts thereby focusing on creating a preferred future world, states that feel the burden of current conflicts are likely to lose interest in the EMP. A focus on soft security issues does not constitute a sufficient response to the concerns of the countries engaged in conflicts. Secondly, international relations cannot be compartmentalized. The continuation of current conflicts is likely to have a negative influence on the possibilities of establishing a future-oriented cooperative model of Trans-Mediterranean relations, as current conflicts will necessarily affect future relations. Countries in conflict are not likely to agree on the parameters of the future world unless those of the present are agreed upon. Thirdly, there is no promise that other frameworks will resolve current conflicts. This will result in a conflict-ridden Mediterranean world and a utopian EMP focusing on creating a new model of Euro-Mediterranean relations whilst leaving the fire burning at its back door. There is no promise either that other frameworks will resolve current conflicts according to the principles laid down in the Barcelona Declaration, thereby weakening the relevance of the Declaration. Fourthly, the fact that current conflicts are being handled in other frameworks does not necessarily exclude an active role on the part of the EMP in conflicts among its member states, at least at the level of articulating a policy including the major principles for the resolution of these conflicts, especially where there are international legal bases for the resolution of these conflicts. Fifthly, it seems that emphasis on conflict prevention to the detriment of conflict resolution runs contrary to the letter and spirit of the Barcelona Declaration. Perusal to the Declaration reveals that the Euro-Mediterranean partners were laying down the principles of the resolution of current conflicts. The Declaration referred to major principles, which are highly relevant to the process of the settlement of current conflicts such as establishing areas free of weapons of mass destruction and respecting the rights of the peoples to self-determination, and the territorial integrity of states. These items address some of the core issues in the current conflicts in the Euro-Mediterranean world. Finally, the Arabs argue that the emphasis on conflict prevention rather than conflict resolution reflects the dominance of a status-quo oriented paradigm. The notion of stability can only be accepted if there is an agreement among the actors on the basic parameters of the situation. Such was the case in Europe in the mid-seventies. In some areas of the Euro-Mediterranean world there is no agreement on these parameters. Under these conditions, an emphasis on the notion of stability will serve the interests of some actors to the detriment of others. For example, an emphasis on stability and conflict prevention in the Eastern Mediterranean necessarily means providing Israel with ample time to absorb the Arab occupied territories during which it will not be disturbed by Arab resistance to occupation. Under these conditions, it is difficult to speak meaningfully of a security partnership.

At all events the “Valencia Action Plan” stresses the importance of focusing on conflict prevention and crisis management in the framework of a reinforced political dialogue. The Euro-Med Forum for its part is also working on a common project for conflict prevention.



1.5. The Future of Mediterranean Security

The structural and conceptual North-South gaps in the question of Mediterranean security cannot be over-emphasized. These gaps account for the failure of creating a credible regime for pan-Mediterranean security. It is our argument that the North has a special responsibility in trying to bridge these gaps. The North has great experience in building security regimes and it could draw upon this experience to build a Mediterranean regime. The European experience within the framework of the Helsinki process from 1975, up to the present, points out two main lessons: the first is the sequential building of a security regime and the second is the clear definition of the geo-strategic space.

The Helsinki process shows that building a regional security regime, such as the OSCE model, cannot be achieved while hard security issues are still dominant. The dominance of hard security issues in the South is creating suspicions in the sense that the introduction of soft security regimes will result in the perpetuation of hard security issues. The emphasis of the EU and NATO initiatives on soft security issues has not helped to improve the image of these institutions in the South. Such an image could undergo a major transformation if the initiatives of these institutions genuinely addressed southern hard security issues thus opening new horizons for the introduction of cooperative security regimes and giving more credibility to soft security regimes. This is not the case after the NATO Prague summit with regard to NATO Mediterranean dialogue where the upgrading dialogue “a la carte” will probably mean more lines of division taking into account the question of the definition of terrorism and the different levels of participation in NATO activities that this fundamental question will imply. At the same time the upgrading format of 26 + 7 at Ambassadorial level does not mean a healthier budget for reinvigorating and upgrading this dialogue. In fact the NATO budget for this dialogue has decreased. The NATO focus on fighting terrorism has clearly unwanted consequences... Even more so if finally there is a military campaign in Iraq not fully supported by the UN Security Council. The consequences will be extremely negative for any North-South dialogue in the Mediterranean.

The proper sequential pursuit of the Mediterranean security agenda should also be coupled with the expansion of the Mediterranean space. From the beginning, the space of the Helsinki process comprised all the relevant and concerned actors in the East and the West. This was not the case in virtually all-Northern security initiatives in the Mediterranean (Marquina, Brauch 2001) These initiatives focused on the selection of certain actors without a clear criteria except the political approval of the North. The EU-Mediterranean Dialogue was kept separate from the EU-Gulf Dialogue. This has created fears of political divisions in the South. The EU also insisted on negotiating with the southern Mediterranean actors separately, an approach which was not pursued with any other regional grouping. The League of Arab States, that was from the beginning in the Barcelona process, has provided the cover for the absence of some Arab states in the process. However, this symbolic presence is insufficient. An enlargement of the Mediterranean space to include other Arab actors, who are willing to join the process, could be a significant step in the direction of allaying the security concerns of southern actors. This openness can not avoid some skepticism on the possibilities of unity among the different Arab countries, but the door has to be kept open.



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Abbreviations

EU	European Union
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NMD	National Missile Defense
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
US	United States of America
WEU	Western European Union
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction