

Editorial

A NEW REGIONAL SECURITY AND COOPERATION STRUCTURE IN THE MIDDLE EAST: DREAM OR REALITY?

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More than ten years after the failure of the Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) process, and in the absence of any new initiative of the kind, questions about the feasibility of a regional security system in the Middle East might seem pointless. However, from a long-term perspective, building a security and cooperation framework in this turbulent region might be one of the few solutions available to manage geostrategic and political tensions and prevent future conflicts.

Once the necessity of such a project is acknowledged, many questions arise. Among other things, they relate to the prerequisites to cooperation, the kind of system that should be implemented, and the actors that should be involved at the regional and international levels. The aim of this issue of Conflict in Focus is to foster the debate around these questions.

Contemporary regional security systems were built as responses to perceived common threats. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was initially conceived as a strategic measure to counter the communist threat; the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), as an attempt to unite the Gulf countries against the influence of Iraq and Iran. One may legitimately wonder what common threats could bring together the Middle Eastern countries. The latter indeed tend to view each others' regional strategic stands with much suspicion; most notably when it comes to the Arab Israeli conflict, arms control, and alliances with external powers. Therefore, encouraging the debate over these positions, and the perceptions on which they rest, is crucial to finding minimal common ground on which to build a security system.

This debate relates directly to another fundamental one: that of the choice of regional and international partners. Choosing regional partners is a sensitive political issue, which has crucial implications for the viability of the system. The ACRS process clearly demonstrated this last point: much of its failure was blamed on the exclusion of key countries such as Iran, Iraq, Syria and Libya. However, integrating all the regional actors implies facing many hardships that can easily undermine the success of

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any cooperation initiative. Thinking the building of a regional security system thus implies finding a way out of this tension between inclusion and exclusion.

The choice of international partners also affects the evolution of a regional project. In the Middle East, international partners can play a fundamental leadership role by facilitating controversial discussions. The United States and the European Union both have political, economic and strategic interests in the region. They have historically competed over leadership in this region and have tried to foster their influence and strategic positions in different ways. While the United States has intended to build its hegemony through strategic bilateral alliances with countries such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan or Egypt, the European Union has attempted to foster its influence through the building of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. This partnership was meant to encompass a large array of areas of cooperation; security cooperation has however proven to be its main focus. Facilitating the building of a regional security system and framing the security debate during negotiations would give the United States or the European Union a unique opportunity to enhance its influence in the region.

The characteristics and potentialities of a security system in the Middle East are thus multiple and diverse. Given the complexity of the Middle Eastern scene, the only certainty is that the building of regional security and cooperation will be a long-term process requiring great political will. This political will can only bloom with the awareness that cooperation is a positive sum game that can provide the entire region with the security and stability required for its political and economic development.

In the various articles of this forum, many of the issues raised above are addressed. Adopting a comparative perspective, Peter Jones underlines the different definitions of threat and security, and describes the corresponding regional cooperation regimes, in order to determine what system would best fit the Middle East. Emily Landau and Fouad Ammor interestingly present two different models of regional security and cooperation. Landau stresses the leadership role of the United States and proposes the creation of a group of regional states that would unite against the Iranian threat. As for Ammor, his analysis is embedded in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean process, and therefore gives a key role to the European Union. He discusses the conflicting definitions of threats by Northern and Southern countries participating to the Barcelona Process. Finally, Diane Zovighian confronts conflicting Arab and Israeli threat perceptions in the context of the Arab Israeli conflict, in order to understand how to bridge the gaps between the different countries so as to be able to build a functional regional security system. ■

IS A COMMON THREAT PERCEPTION A NECESSARY PRECONDITION FOR THE CREATION OF A REGIONAL SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION SYSTEM?

Peter Jones*

Introduction

One question which frequently arises in any consideration of creating a regional approach to security and co-operation is; 'Security against what?' Though a seemingly simple question, this raises a host of issues which cut to the very heart of what one is trying to accomplish and how one does it. There are different kinds of security and different kinds of regional co-operation regimes. The kind of security one seeks to achieve or enhance will have a decisive impact on how one designs the system.

This brief article will explore these issues, drawing on other regional examples, but focusing particularly on the Middle East. It will argue that security, both as a concept and a reality, exists on different levels, often simultaneously. Therefore, the countries of any region that are embarking on a search for a new approach to enhanced co-operation and security must sort out what they are seeking and match ends with means.

Different Kinds of Security; Different Kinds of Security Systems

The term 'security' though seemingly straightforward, contains a host of different meanings in international affairs. One often hears such terms as 'collective security;' 'co-operative security;' 'human security' and others. Each of these has a specific meaning, but they are also often confused with each other.⁽¹⁾

While 'human security' has been the recipient of much attention of late, it is mostly related to the role and place of the individual. Therefore, this paper will concentrate on 'Collective' and 'Co-operative' security, in their state-centric meanings. This is not to deny the importance of other types of security, such as human security. However, any regional system which might be created in the Middle East is likely, for the foreseeable future, to be primarily state-centric. Of the various 'types' of security, those which are most relevant are 'Collective' and 'Co-operative'.

Collective security is often used to describe a system whereby a group of states perceive a common threat or enemy and have banded together to collectively stand against it. One of the more famous examples of this is the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), an alliance best known for Article 5 of its Treaty which advances the proposition that an attack against any one of its members is an attack against all of them.

Co-operative security, in modern usage,⁽²⁾ is a concept which holds that a group of states have identified a common set of issues or concerns and are establishing

a set of rules of conduct, or a mechanism whereby they can come together to discuss their concerns and try to develop more predictable relations. One example of this is the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the OSCE. Another is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN.

A key difference between the two is that one (NATO - collective security) is an alliance whereas the other (OSCE, ASEAN - co-operative security) is essentially a regional organisation meant to create and then promote adherence to a code of regional conduct. Each strives to enhance regional security, but in different ways.

In terms of the threat perceptions which motivate the two types of security, collective is often the product of a specific military threat. The members of an alliance are banding together to deter that threat by means of the promise of collective action against an aggressor. Co-operative security is more predicated on the notion that there may not be a specific threat, but that the general danger of misperception and instability could lead to tension and conflict. The purpose of the OSCE and ASEAN, at least in their security dimensions,⁽³⁾ is thus to help enhance regional security by creating regional norms of conduct and a mechanism whereby regional states can meet continuously to discuss their concerns. The 'threat' against which they are designed to work is thus often expressed as unpredictability.

Interestingly, the two types are not mutually exclusive. In Europe, the OSCE and NATO co-exist, as did the OSCE's predecessor with both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. In Asia, ASEAN co-exists with collective defence arrangements, such as the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA), which involves certain ASEAN countries - Malaysia and Singapore - and the UK, Australia and New Zealand.

One does not thus have to pick and choose; each type

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(1) For an informed and thoughtful discussion of some of the different kinds of security see Dewitt, D., 'Common, Comprehensive and Co-operative Security,' *The Pacific Review*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1994.

(2) For more on Co-operative security see Nolan, J., *Global Engagement; Co-operation and Security in the 21st Century*, (Washington DC; The Brookings Institution, 1994). Some confusion exists over the fact that the term 'Co-operative security' was employed after World War I by President Wilson and, subsequently, the League of Nations in a way which akin to what we now call collective security; a group of states banding together to collectively deter and resist aggression. In this paper, the term is not used in the Wilsonian sense.

(3) It should be noted that the OSCE and ASEAN have important social and economic functions, respectively, which go beyond narrowly defined security.

of arrangement can exist within a given space, provided their objectives are not mutually contradictory. In both the OSCE/NATO and ASEAN/FPDA cases, members of the collective security arrangements (NATO and the FPDA) are also members of the respective co-operative security mechanisms (OSCE and ASEAN) and maintain that their collective security arrangements enable them to better fulfill their co-operative security obligations.

The Middle East

The application of these examples to the question of the eventual creation of a Middle East regional co-operation system is important, as it immediately opens up the questions; what kind of security would such a system address? And how would it do it? This, in turn, takes us to the subject of the paper, is a common threat perception necessary to the creation of a regional security and co-operation system in the Middle East?

If we imagine that the subject under discussion is a collective security arrangement for the Middle East, we are, in reality talking about an alliance of some sort. In that case, the alliance members would, presumably, have a common enemy (or enemies). Historically, there has been one attempt to create a multilateral organisation of this type in the Middle East, the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO), sometimes known as the Baghdad Pact. This existed from 1955 to 1979, but was never particularly robust. The Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) has some elements of a defence alliance and may develop further along those lines. Though the latter case does not identify a specific enemy, both arrangements do contain the idea of collective defence against aggression, though a far less robust expression of it than the NATO Treaty.

In place of multilateral defence treaties, many Middle Eastern states have traditionally relied on bilateral defence arrangements with outside powers. Great Britain played this role for many in the region, until it was replaced by the United States. Often these arrangements are not codified by formal mutual defence treaties, but by a web of basing agreements, mutual exercise arrangements and other expressions of intent. In most of the cases, the 'threat' which these bilateral defence arrangements are meant to deter is not formally mentioned, but is quite clear. For the individual GCC states, for example, it was Iraq and Iran, and is now just Iran.⁽⁴⁾

In terms of co-operative security arrangements, there are none to speak of in the Middle East. There was an attempt made as part of the multilateral track of the Middle East peace process to create an ongoing process for regional security and arms control, known as ACRS - the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group. The issues and problems of ACRS have been well described and analysed.⁽⁵⁾ Amongst others, ACRS was not fully representative of the region as important countries were either excluded (Libya, Iran, Iraq) or chose to stay out of the process (Syria, Lebanon). Moreover, ACRS was intimately tied to the Arab-Israeli peace process and its

conception of regional security was a function of the idea that the Arab-Israeli dispute is the critical regional security issue. While it would be foolish to deny that the Arab-Israeli dispute is an extremely important Middle East regional issue, it is far from the only one.

With the demise of ACRS in 1995, some thinking began to be turned to the idea of creating a more inclusive and far-reaching regional co-operation and security framework for the Middle East.⁽⁶⁾ A number of debates have sprung up in this work. These include:

- should the Middle East strive for a region-wide approach, or opt for sub-regional systems, probably focusing on the Persian Gulf in the first instance⁽⁷⁾;

(4) Though, interestingly, for some GCC states, there have historically been concerns about each other.

(5) For more on the Arms Control and Regional Security working group see Feldman, S., *Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control in the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1997) esp. pp.7-16; Griffiths, D., *Maritime Aspects of Arms Control and Security Improvement in the Middle East*, IGCC Policy Paper # 56 (San Diego, CA: Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation 2000); Jentleson, B., *The Middle East Arms Control and Security Talks: Progress, Problems and Prospects*, IGCC Policy Paper #2 (Los Angeles, CA: University of California 1996); Dassa Kaye, D., *Beyond the Handshake: Multilateral Cooperation in the Arab-Israel Peace Process*, (New York; Columbia University Press, 2001); Jones, P., 'Arms Control in the Middle East; Is It Time to Renew ACRS?' *Disarmament Forum*, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Issue 2, 2005, available at www.unidir.org/bdd/fiche-article.php?ref_article=2278; Jones, P., 'Negotiating Regional Security in the Middle East: The ACRS Experience and Beyond', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 26, no. 3, September, 2003; Jones, P., 'Arms Control in the Middle East: Some Reflections on ACRS', *Security Dialogue* 28/1 (1997); Jones, P., 'Maritime Confidence-Building Measures in the Middle East', in Jill Junnola (ed.) *Maritime Confidence-building in Regions of Tension* (Washington, DC: Stimson Center 1996); Landau, E., *Arms Control in the Middle East: Cooperative Security Dialogue and Regional Constraints*, (Brighton; Sussex Academic Press, 2006); Landau, E., *Egypt and Israel in ACRS: Bilateral Concerns in a Regional Arms Control Process*, Memorandum No. 59 (Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies 2001); Peters, J., *Pathways to Peace: The Arab-Israeli Multilateral Talks* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs 1996); and Yaffe, M., 'An Overview of the Middle East Peace Process Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security', in Fred Tanner (ed.) *Confidence-building and Security Co-operation in the Mediterranean, North Africa and the Middle East* (Malta: University of Malta 1994).

(6) Amongst the principal texts are Jones, P., *Towards a Regional Security Regime for the Middle East: Issues and Options*, (Stockholm; SIPRI, 1998), available at <http://projects.sipri.se/mideast/MEreport.pdf> (hereafter cited as the SIPRI Report); Feldman, S., and Toukan, A., *Bridging the Gap: A Future Security Architecture for the Middle East*, (Lanham, MD; Rowman and Littlefield, 1997); and the collection of essays in the special issue on 'Building Regional Security in the Middle East: International, Regional and Domestic Influences', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 26, no.3, September 2003.

(7) The Persian Gulf first argument received a large boost in the wake of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, with several American authors arguing that a new framework could or should result from that experience. There is a somewhat greater appreciation today that this course may not yield early or dramatic results. For examples see, Leverett, F., 'The Middle East: Thinking Big', *The American Prospect Online*, Feb. 21, 2005; Jones, P., 'A WMD Free Zone within a Broader Gulf and Middle East Security Architecture', *Gulf Research Center, Policy Analysis Papers* (Dubai; Gulf Research Center, March, 2005); Yaffe, M., 'The Gulf and a New Middle East Security System', *Middle East Policy Journal*, vol. XI, no. 3, Fall 2004, http://www.mepc.org/public_asp/journal_vol11/0409_yaffe.asp; Mokhtari, F., 'Security

- what role should be played by the outside powers (and primarily the U.S.) in such a system; and
- can a regional co-operation system be started in the Middle East before the Arab-Israeli dispute is resolved?

While the answers to none of these questions are clear, one issue which has yet to be fully considered is this matter of what kind of security the various proposals are advancing. Some of those who were most keen on a Persian Gulf system in the wake of the American invasion of Iraq were largely advancing the idea of a collective security arrangement between the U.S. and certain Gulf countries.⁽⁸⁾ Others, whether talking about the idea of a Persian Gulf first approach, or a wider pan-regional structure, have been advancing the idea of a primarily co-operative regional security system.⁽⁹⁾

The relevance of this distinction for this paper has to do with the question of the underlying threat perceptions which will guide the creation of any future regional co-operation system. In the case of a regional, or sub-regional collective security system, it is likely that the participating states would be only a certain number of regional countries and they would be banding together, probably with the U.S., in an alliance (even if it is not called that) to resist a perceived aggressor. This would require a high degree of congruence with respect to the basic consideration of who is the 'threat,' even if regional politics and cultural norms mean that the threat may not be formally identified.

In the case of a co-operative system, one might expect that a much greater number of regional countries would participate (and that the system would be open to all of them, if they decided to join) and that it would not be aimed at countering a specific country, so much as developing a Code of Conduct and associated dialogue mechanisms to give that Code effect. In other words, there would be no common 'threat' perceived by all, in the form of a specific other country, but rather a general agreement that uncertainty and lack of common standards of behaviour were the danger. To the extent that a 'threat' could be perceived, it would be more associated with concerns over the possible impact on regional stability of such issues as demographic pressures, environmental issues and other problems faced by all of the region's states.⁽¹⁰⁾ It is often not so much a question of 'who' is the threat, but 'what.'

Conclusion

In the short space provided, this paper has addressed the question of whether a common threat perception is a necessary precondition to the creation of a regional co-operation and security system.

The paper has taken the view that the answer to this question very much depends on what type of security those in the region are seeking to advance. In this

paper, a collective security arrangement is a commonly perceived enemy or threat, often in the form of another state or group of states. Such a threat is often the foundation of the collective security arrangement. In the case of what is called in this paper a co-operative security arrangement, commonly perceived concerns over stability and predictability are often at the heart of this distinct system.

It is critical to note, however, that these types of arrangements are not mutually exclusive in practice. Some states in a given region can belong to a collective security arrangement, even as they are part of a broader regional co-operative security arrangement. In Europe and Asia, it is the combination of the two approaches which has played the greatest role in fostering stability over time. But it is necessary that the participants in each type of security arrangement have a clear understanding of what type of arrangement they are joining, what its fundamental purposes are and what its relationship is to any other arrangements which may exist in the region.

In the Middle East today there are clearly collective security arrangements in place, though they are rarely formally declared. What the region is lacking is a co-operative arrangement. This is a critical shortfall, given the great variety of regional challenges and disputes which exist and their potential to foster tension. The region desperately needs a framework which clearly lays out the expected standards of conduct on the part of its states and an inclusive set of dialogue mechanisms to permit its states to co-operate in the development and implementation of this framework over time.

Thus, the creation of such a regional co-operative system is the next great challenge for the Middle East. It will take considerable time, as it has in all other regions, but the process of developing such a system is often as important as its full maturation. ■

in the Persian Gulf; Is a Security Framework Possible?; American Foreign Policy Interests, February 2004; Russell, J.A., 'Searching for a Post-Saddam Regional Security Architecture,' MERIA Journal, March 2003; Pollack, K.M., 'Securing the Gulf,' Foreign Affairs, July/August, 2003; McMillan, J., Sokolsky, R., and Winner, A., 'Toward a New Regional Security Architecture,' The Washington Quarterly, Summer, 2003; Rathmell, A., Karasik, T., and Gompert, D., 'A New Persian Gulf Security System,' RAND Issue Paper, 2003.

(8) See, for example, Yaffe and Russell.

(9) See, for example, Jones (SIPRI Report and GRC paper) and Leverett.

(10) See Jones, SIPRI paper, op cit.

REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST: GLIMMER OF HOPE ON THE HORIZON?

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Introduction

The past six months have given cause for somewhat more optimistic assessments on the prospects for initiating a Middle Eastern regional security cooperation program, at least among moderate states and Israel. The underlying reason is the common threat posed by the prospect and implications of a nuclear Iran. Primarily, the fear of Iran's attempt to impose its agenda on strategic realities in the Middle East. Since the Second Lebanon War there have been a few instances where initial cooperation has been carried out.⁽¹⁾ However these have not led to a broad security program.

For a substantial official regional security dialogue to be initiated in the Middle East two essential preconditions are necessary: relatively strong or at least a minimum of interest by a group of regional states willing to engage each other, preferably due to a common perceived threat; and a very strong extra-regional power with enough clout to set-up a framework. This extra-regional power can then prod the states in the direction of dialogue through provision of concrete incentives. These would help transform their basic interest in cooperation into more tangible willingness to participate in regional dialogue.

The perceived threat from Iran has provided an impetus for fulfilling both conditions. It has increased interest among the regional states themselves to pursue such regional cooperation, and has pushed the United States, the essential extra-regional power, to make a determined effort to create a framework to begin a dialogue and to throw its weight behind it to convince regional states to come on board. The threat posed by Iran has also created enough of a shift in regional sentiments for moderate Arab states to begin to consider working together with the US, after the considerable degree of damage done to the United States' image in the Middle East due to the war in Iraq.

The Interest to Cooperate on Regional Initiatives

1. Regional states

The interest of the moderate regional states in pursuing some form of cooperative dialogue with Israel is congealing, and is probably reflected most significantly in renewed efforts to advance the Arab Peace Initiative. Following the re-adoption of the initiative at the Arab League summit in March 2007, League members agreed the following month that a concentrated effort led by Egypt and Jordan would be made to promote the

agenda⁽²⁾. As a result in late July, the foreign ministers of Egypt and Jordan came to Israel - on what was described by Israel as a historic visit - and conducted talks with Israeli officials.⁽³⁾

Other positive indications include Saudi hints over the summer that they would agree to sit with Israel in the context of a meeting convened by the US (although they have backtracked on this somewhat in recent weeks)⁽⁴⁾, and in early August, on a tour of the Middle East, US Defense Secretary Robert Gates explored ideas for military cooperation with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, as a response to Iran's nuclear program, and found some interest among these states.⁽⁵⁾

An interesting article published in Al-Ahram Weekly in early August opened with a reaction to statements made by Hassan Nasrallah and Amr Moussa. Nasrallah and Moussa had suggested that Western plans to reshape dynamics in the Middle East could not be imposed on the people of the region. The authors of the article argue that "developments on the ground defy their [Nasrallah and Moussa's] wishful statements."⁽⁶⁾ They go on to claim that the region seems to be entering a new phase of "moderates against extremists", and that while there are still reservations about fully embracing

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(1) Of note are two meetings: one in Aqaba in September 2006, included representatives from Israel, PA, Jordan, Egypt and the Gulf, it was geared to advancing the peace process and fighting terrorism; the second meeting in Kuwait City in January 2007 with the participation of foreign ministers from GCC states, Jordan, Egypt, and the US, together with the Secretary-General of the GCC, discussed ways of strengthening their commitment to cooperation to enhance regional security.

For a broader look at attitudes toward regional security cooperation, both past and present, see Emily Landau and Fouad Ammor, *Regional Security Dialogue and Cooperation in the South: Exploring the Neglected Dimension of Barcelona*, EuroMeSCo Research paper, October 2006, 25 pp.: <http://www.euromesco.net/images/regional%20security%20dialogue%20eng.pdf>

(2) "Egypt, Jordan to Push Saudi Peace Plan" Jerusalem Post, 18 April 2007.

(3) Israel viewed the visit as historic because it was the first time the Arab League agreed to discuss issues with Israel. However, there was some difference of opinion as to whether the foreign ministers were representatives of the League or not. Egypt preferred to present them as representatives of their respective states.

(4) On fluctuations in Saudi attitudes toward the US see Joshua Teitelbaum, "Saudi Arabia and the United States: Reluctant Bedfellows in a Strategic Embrace" Tel Aviv Notes, 25.9.2007.

(5) See Jim Mannion, "Gates Ends Mideast Tour with Call for Pressure on Iran", AFP, 2.8.2007.

(6) Dina Ezzat and Doaa El-Bey, "Fast-track 'Moderation'", Al-Ahram Weekly, 2-8.8.2007.

the US approach, "the vast majority of Arab regimes...are not prepared to let the region be ruled by any Islamist political faction", nor are they willing "to entertain a tug of war with Washington." Their depiction of this "New Middle East", underscores that the major fault line in the Middle East is no longer the Arab-Israeli conflict, but rather the split between radical forces and forces of moderation in the region. This shift sets the stage for new opportunities for cooperation among the moderates against extremist elements (including Iran), highlighting also the tendency to now accept the role that the US can play in this regard.

For Israel's part, as opposed to its cool reception of the Arab peace initiative in 2002 when it was first presented, in 2007 Ehud Olmert's reaction was much more positive. He was quoted as saying that 22 Arab states wanting to make peace with Israel was new music to his ears, music he wanted to hear. Following the visit to Israel of the Egyptian and Jordanian foreign ministers, Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman, Mark Regev, said that Israel was willing to engage on the basis of the Arab initiative and hoped that they would find common ground.⁽⁷⁾ As such, a basic willingness to discuss the initiative was forthcoming.⁽⁸⁾

During the month of September we have seen efforts on the part of Israel to strengthen diplomatic ties with moderate Arab states in the Persian Gulf. On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly some progress was made in this regard; both the US and Israel would like to influence moderate states to openly support a Palestinian-Israeli agreement, thereby backing President Abbas rather than Hamas.

2. The US interest to serve as convener

The US interest in pushing regional dialogue among the moderate states forward is directly linked not only to its desire to confront Iran and neutralize the nuclear threat, but also to its interest in continuing a strong presence in the Persian Gulf, and generally reassert its influence in the Middle East. Normally, regional influence in the Middle East can be achieved either by impressive displays of force, or successful peace mediation efforts. Right now, neither track is looking good. The display of force in the Iraq war backfired in this respect, and tarnished America's image and diminished its perceived ability to project power successfully. As for Iran, the US is clearly frustrated with the pace and limited success of diplomatic efforts to deal with Iran over the past 4 years, yet at the same time it is not eager to employ military force, especially in light of the Iraq experience. But the potent Iranian threat has created a new basis for pursuit of the dialogue option. Initiating multilateral regional dialogue among moderate states in the Middle East could help the US advance its goals: to confront the threat Iran poses; to enhance its influence in the region, and to perhaps broker

peace. The United States has some hands-on experience in this regard: it pursued a regional initiative in the early 1990s through the multilateral track of the Madrid peace process, enabling it to influence regional dynamics and politics on a wider scale.

In mid-July 2007 the US announced its intention to convene a Middle East peace gathering in the autumn of 2007, and began significant efforts to secure the participation of the moderate Gulf States, along with Egypt and Jordan. While the expressed intention is to focus on the Israeli-Palestinian track within the regional framework, clearly the insistence on the wider Arab participation indicates that the logic of the talks goes beyond this bilateral issue. Initial statements by Saudi Arabia that it would consider taking part in such an initiative alongside Israel were most encouraging. The US was aware that there is a price for securing the agreement of these states to cooperate: thus the reports in late July of some very attractive offers of aid and arms deals and packages for the Gulf states and Egypt.⁽⁹⁾

What exactly is on the table?

The upshot of the analysis so far is that there are two proposed initiatives for regional dialogue on peace: the US proposal for a regional meeting or conference to take place in November, and the Arab Peace Initiative that was readopted last March. Neither is regional security dialogue per se, or focused on the threat emanating from Iran, but both are significantly informed by the urgency of this threat, and both provide a potential framework for dialogue.

Conceptually, these two ideas - the Arab Peace Initiative, and the US initiative for a regional conference - should be seen as part of the same dynamic, moving in the direction of regional security dialogue. They incorporate the peace element which is an important factor for getting the various states to the dialogue table and more importantly, they provide a framework, the content of which can evolve in tune with developments.

Practically speaking, however, it is not clear how the two initiatives relate to one another. One would assume that the Arab Peace Initiative would be the subject of the conference, but this is not clear. At this point, the Israeli-Palestinian issue has been brought to the fore

(7) BBC News, Middle East, "Israel Hears Arab Peace Proposal", 25 July 2007.

(8) See Haaretz, 24 August 2007 for an interesting article in this vein: "Wisdom on the Way to the Summit".

(9) Upon signing the recent aid package to Israel, US Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns noted that in addition to the aid provided to Israel, the US will continue to strengthen the Egyptian military as well as states in the Persian Gulf: "All of these moves are a signal from the US that we are strong in the region, and will stand by our allies in the face of whoever supports violence and terror." Haaretz, 17 August 2007.

and singled out for treatment, but as of late September, the scheduled meeting had no clear agenda or list of participating states.⁽¹⁰⁾

What are the chances of carrying through?

The confusion over the precise direction, content, and participation of the November meeting has bred conflicting responses from the prospective participants. This has cast a degree of uneasiness over the entire effort. What started out as an idea to create a framework for discussing the Arab Peace Initiative has over the past few months been transformed into a framework with an almost exclusive focus on the Israeli-Palestinian issue, with the Arab states poised to provide a background chorus for accepting a deal between the two.

The benchmark has been placed very high, and the prospects of an agreement on an agenda ahead of the meeting are unfortunately quite slim. The heart of the disagreement today between Israel and the Palestinians as far as the agenda is concerned is whether the talks will focus on a broad "agreement of principles", or a more detailed "framework of agreement". Disagreement on this point could conceivably torpedo the entire initiative. Because of the high expectations, we find reactions, such as from Egyptian President Mubarak, that if there is no agreement on an agenda, the ensuing consequences will be dangerous for all.

The reality is that Israel and moderate Arab states in the Middle East have a lot to talk about, foremost their common concern over Iran's nuclear activities and other extremist elements in the region. They have good reason to initiate dialogue on regional security issues. The Arab peace initiative could provide such a framework. Losing the chance to convene a peace meeting in November because of disagreement on "principles" or "framework" would mean losing a chance for creating an important framework for conducting very necessary regional security dialogue. It is therefore in the interest of all sides to support the conference on the understanding that it is an essential framework, and then leave the contours of the agenda broad enough so that it does not fail before it has a chance to begin.



(10) A US official reported in late September that in addition to Israelis and Palestinians, present at the meeting would be representatives from Russia, the US, the EU and the UN. The Arab League would be represented by Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen. The participation of Syria is an issue of concern. Initially the US was against Syria's participation, but as of late September seems to have removed its opposition. Still, there are some awkward questions with regard to its participation, the most recent being the nature of cooperation it has with North Korea and whether it was indeed involved in activity in the nuclear realm.

SECURITY CULTURE AND REGIONAL COOPERATION: CONFRONTING CONFLICTING PERCEPTIONS OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

Diane Zovighian

Regionalization of security regimes has been a fundamental trend in world politics since the end of World War II, which has led to the launching of organization such as NATO, ASEAN, OSCE, OAU in the Northern and Southern hemispheres. Since the beginning of the 1990's, in a post-Cold War context and in the midst of the Madrid Peace Process, Middle Eastern officials⁽¹⁾ and Middle East scholars⁽²⁾ have been discussing the possibility of creating a security regime in the Middle East.

Frequently, the setbacks of security cooperation in the region have been attributed to geopolitical and strategic constraints (i.e. the persistence of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the question of nuclear weapons and arms control, the competition over regional leadership between regional powers, etc.). This article aims at widening the debate by shedding light on the role of conflicting threat perceptions and "security cultures"⁽³⁾ as obstacles to the launching of a regional security regime in the Middle East. This paper will focus on confronting Arab and Israeli threat perceptions and "security cultures". Although national divides and conflicting perceptions exist within Arab political and military establishments, they will not be addressed in this article.

Common perceptions of threats as well as adequate regional security strategies are a prerequisite to security cooperation. Identifying these threats and strategies implies analyzing national perceptions of the regional and international security environments. These perceptions rest on a set of values and norms that are part of the states' "political identity"⁽⁴⁾ and "security culture". In that sense, assessing the feasibility of a regional security regime in the Middle East requires confronting Arab and Israeli perceptions of the regional and international environments.

Confronting conflicting perceptions of the Arab-Israeli conflict

This article focuses on perceptions of the Arab Israeli conflict by regional actors. It argues that diverging, and even conflicting perceptions of threats and national security in the current political and military context are some of the main obstacles to the establishment of a security regime in the Middle East. Perceptions of threats play a fundamental role in shaping security doctrines, as they contribute to the naming and defining of the "enemies" and, subsequently, create or accentuate specific "weaknesses" of the State. Perceptions, therefore, mold the framework in which national security is discussed

and managed by politicians and militaries. In this sense, conflicting perceptions of threats in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict have given birth to antagonistic security approaches.

Evolving within an environment perceived as hostile, Israel has developed a specific national security doctrine. The perception of Arab countries' "hostility" toward Israel is rooted in a century-long confrontation with the Arab population in the Middle East following the first waves of Jewish emigration to Palestine at the end of the 19th century. It has been reinforced by the memory of the wars between Israel and its neighbors since 1948, as well as by subsequent Arab leaders' declarations denouncing Israel⁽⁵⁾. Though the signing of bilateral peace treaties; with Egypt in 1979; and with Jordan in 1994, lightly attenuated the Israeli fear for its existence, the surge of Islamist movements since the 1980's, (i.e. Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine) and the lack of control

- (1) The Arms Control and Regional Security process that took place parallel to the Madrid Peace process discussed regional security issues and cooperation in the Middle East. For an analysis of setbacks and future options for an ACRS process, see Peter Jones, *Arms Control in the Middle East: is it time to renew ACRS?* 2005. Sub-regional attempts to build security regimes in the Middle East have been made. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is one of the few examples of successful examples. For more information on the GCC See www.gcc-sg.org.
- (2) Peter Jones, *Towards a Regional Security Regime for the Middle East: Issues and Options*, 1998; Shai Feldman, Abdullah Toukan, *Bridging the Gap: A Future Security Architecture for the Middle East*, 1997; collection of articles in Emily Landau, Tamar Malz, *Building Regional Security in the Middle East, Domestic, Regional and International Influences*, 2003; Zeev Maoz, *Regional Security in the Middle East: Past, Present and Future*, 1997.
- (3) As defined by Fulvio Attina, *The Building of Regional Security Partnership and the Security Divide in the Mediterranean Region*, Institute of European Studies, 2004, pp. 17-18: "the concept of security culture is used to explain the security policies and decisions of states as intrinsically influenced by their recent past experience in dealing with security problems. More precisely, this analysis assumes that recent past experience and beliefs, traditions, attitudes and symbols are intimately related and add to one another in shaping the country's security culture." At the end should be outside the quotes????
- (4) As defined by Peter J. Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identities in World Politics*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996, p. 6. Identity is: "a shorthand label for varying constructions of nation- and statehood. The process of construction typically is explicitly political and pits conflicting actors against each other. In invoking the concept of identity the authors depict varying national ideologies of collective distinctiveness and purpose."
- (5) Solidarity with the Palestinian people has been a fundamental part of Arab discourse from 1948 onwards. For e.g. In the September 1964 Declaration, the Arab League officially stated the necessity of "joint Arab action" and support to Palestinians against "Zionist colonialism". See www.mideastweb.org/arabsummit1964.htm.

exerted over them by weak Arab regimes have revived Israeli feelings of insecurity⁽⁶⁾.

Fear of "annihilation", resulting from the persistent memory of Arab hostility as well as the memory of the Holocaust, has fostered an offensive and over militarized Israeli security culture. This culture also results from strategic elements of the Arab-Israeli conflict, perceived as an Arab threat or an Israeli weakness⁽⁷⁾. These include:

- The Arab "demographic threat": The size of the Arab population contrasts with Israel's smaller population (7 million people), leading to perceived greater mobilization capacity.
- Scarcity of Israel's water supply: Israel's restricted territorial extension. Amongst other things, this restriction correlates with the absence of "strategic depth": many cities, industrial centers, etc., are located near frontiers and potential battle fronts.
- The accumulation of conventional equipments by Arab countries (coupled with the memory of Iraqi Scuds attacks during the first Gulf War) and the development of biological and chemical weapons⁽⁸⁾.

These strategic elements lend themselves to a presumed "quantitative edge" for Arab countries, and have shaped Israeli military and strategic doctrines. Shai Feldman outlines the main aspects of Israel's "grand strategy"⁽⁹⁾:

- Deterrence. Israel's nuclear policy⁽¹⁰⁾ (i.e. the development of nuclear capabilities and the enforcement of an ambiguous position towards this matter) is an essential part of its deterrence strategy.
- Enforcement of "escalation dominance". According to Feldman, "escalation dominance" is "the ability to cause far greater damage to the terrorists and their sponsors than the damage that the terrorists could cause".
- Division of Arab countries. Israel encourages "disunity" by signing peace treaties and trying to wage war separately with each of these countries.
- External alliances (most notably in the last decades with the United States, but also with regional actors such as Turkey or Christians in Lebanon).
- Efforts to develop a qualitative edge, balancing the quantitative Arab edge. This ultimate objective has led Israel to invest in research and education⁽¹¹⁾, and to deepen its relationship with the US, which provides the country with advanced-technology weapons and financial resources.

These components of the Israeli security doctrine leave little space, if any, for security cooperation with other actors in the Middle East. They underscore the state of fear and mistrust that dominates Arab-Israeli relations. Examining Arab perceptions and national security strategies leads to the same conclusion.

Israel's image in the discourse of Arab leaders and population is that of a state pursuing an "expansionist strategy", enjoying superior military capacities and benefiting from international support. The memory of the Arab-Israeli wars (especially the 1956 and the 1967 wars) as well as Israel's subsequent occupation of the Sinai (whose control was transferred back to Egypt in 1979), the Golan Heights, Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem have increased mistrust among the Arab population and its leaders. Israel's ambiguous position towards the Palestinian Territories has played a significant role in reinforcing this feeling: while Israeli politicians have emphasized the necessity of 'peace' and 'Israeli security' to stop occupation, they have also passively accepted the establishment of settlements in the West Bank. Israel's non-compliance with UN resolutions such as resolution 242 of the UN Security Council; its disregard for the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on the "Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory"; and its denial of many fundamental rights of the Palestinians, have contributed to the view of Israel as an "aggressive" and "untrustworthy" state.

(6) In Al-Arabiya, July 10, 2007, Ehud Olmert states, speaking of Hamas: "Hamas does not want to recognize us and certainly [does] not [want] to make peace with us. Hamas wants to destroy us like Ahmadinejad in Iran wants." He also emphasizes the threat represented, from his point of view, by Islamic extremism for Middle Eastern security: "I think there is a problem that the Arab world needs to cope with, and that problem is that you have too many extremists, fundamentalists who deal in terror. They pose a danger, and not only to Israel. They endanger the entire Arab world".

(7) Shai Feldman includes, three of the followings, and argues that they shape Israel's "grand strategy".

(8) Efraim Inbar, "Israel Strategy", MERIA, 1998

(9) Shai Feldman, Abdullah Toukan, Bridging the Gap: a Future Security Architecture For The Middle East, Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1997. See chapter 2, "Israel's National Security Perceptions and Policy".

(10) Other scholars have discussed Israel's security strategy. Some conclusions diverge from Feldman's. For example, Efraim Inbar, in "Israel Strategy", stresses the setbacks of Israeli escalation dominance strategy, emphasizes the weaknesses of its military artillery, and puts into perspective US support.

(11) Although it is internationally acknowledged that Israel is a nuclear weapon state (NWS) since the 1970's, Israeli officials have repeatedly pledged that "Israel will not be the first nation to introduce nuclear weapons to the Middle East", as Prime Minister Levi Eshkol first said in the mid-1960s. However, according to the Nuclear Threat Initiative (www.nti.org): "Israel is now an advanced NWS, in both quality and quantity of its arsenal. ... It is believed that Israel's current nuclear arsenal ... is comparable in quantity and quality to that of the United Kingdom and France".

Israel's qualitative military edge and offensive military doctrine have reinforced Arab countries' feelings of threat. Apart from its possession of nuclear weapons, Israel enjoys superior military capacities, especially in the air force domain. It has also developed missile and satellite programs with the support of the USA. These two countries have signed a range of military agreements that have enabled Israel to benefit from important scientific and military resources. The enforcement of Israel's qualitative military edge is often associated with its close relationship to the United States, further strengthened by the action of pro-Israel lobbies in the USA, such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)⁽¹²⁾. During the year 2006, Israel received around \$2.4 billion of military aid from the US. In order to secure access to oil in the region and to promote political stability, the US has also signed agreements with Arab countries, such as Egypt, Jordan, and Gulf countries, to supply them with military equipment. However, the United States prioritizes Israel's security. In July 2007, a sale of weapons (including air-air missiles and joint direct attack munitions) worth \$20 billion was contracted between the US and several Gulf countries. Soon after, in reaction to Israeli criticism, the United States promised Israel "an increase of over 25 percent in military and defensive aid". Moreover, according to Ehud Olmert, George W. Bush gave him assurances "to keep the qualitative edge between us [Israel] and the other states [in the region]"⁽¹³⁾.

Arab perception of Israel as a threat might also be considered, as a consequence of Arab weakness and incapacity to act in a regional, cooperative way that would defend collective interests and ensure security for both Palestinians and other Arab people. Arab countries have not been willing to set a common security organization (the Arab League cannot be considered as such since it has no military capacities). As Barry R. Schneider points out⁽¹⁴⁾: "analysis of the strategic perceptions in the Arab World reveals that the option of general war against Israel is not seen as feasible". This is partly linked to the fact that "Arab countries are not equally worried about their own strategic interactions with Israel"⁽¹⁵⁾.

Conclusion

Arab and Israeli conflicting perceptions of the political and military regional context and related threats are obstacles to regional security cooperation. Thus the question arises: what can be done to change not only perceptions of threats but also security cultures?

An important part of the literature relating to this issue emphasizes the role of Track 2 methods⁽¹⁶⁾. Track 2 methods bring together regional officials, diplomats, academics, researchers, and others to discuss conflicting issues. This is considered to be the first step toward fostering debate between countries, enhancing understanding and subsequently, lessening divergences. The Arms Control

and Regional Security (ACRS) process, which cannot be considered a successful initiative, was based on this approach. The most common example used to argue for the efficiency of the Track 2 method is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) process. Still this top-bottom method suffers from many limitations. Among other things, it restricts the debate to a small part of the countries' elite, and does not help with popular perceptions. By not broadening the debate beyond the elite, it risks confronting potential domestic pressures that could contradict diplomats' and researchers' efforts to reach agreements on sensitive issues, such as peace and the denuclearization of the region.

Track 2 methods should be complemented by efforts to change threat perceptions and how people understand national security at different levels of society. Reforming educational systems and training journalists could help promote new analyses of the regional security context. This would contribute to changing both 'official' and popular perceptions and discourses on regional security.

Fostering mutual understanding of perceived threats and of national security objectives would create an appropriate environment for discussions over the creation of a regional security regime, and allow the creation of a comprehensive peace process. Reforming national security cultures in the Middle East must therefore be seen as the only solution for the building of regional security cooperation. ■

(12) Other scholars have stressed this point such as Yehezkel Dror who emphasizes the fact that "mini think tanks dealing with national security issues have been set up and produce some impressive surveys and analyses; ... and writings by individual scholars, professionals and intellectuals on grand strategic issues have proliferated, including some on formerly "taboo" subjects".

(13) The AIPAC lobby works at "strengthening US-Israel homeland security cooperation". See the controversial paper of Walt Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, *The London Review of Books*, March 2006. This paper discusses US-Israeli financial, political and military relationships and emphasizes the role of pro-Israeli lobbies and organizations in the USA

(14) In *Le Monde*, *Les Etats-Unis vont augmenter de 25% leur aide militaire à Israël*, July 29th of August 2007

(15) Barry R. Schneider, *Middle East Security Issues, In the Shadow of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation*, Air University Press, Alabama, 1999

(16) *Ibid.*

(17) Emily Landau, *Arms Control in the Middle East, Cooperative Security Dialogue and Regional Constraints*, Sussex Academic Press, 2006; Peter Jones, *Peter Jones, Towards a Regional Security Regime for the Middle East: Issues and Options*, SIPRI, 1998

THE MEDITERRANEAN SECURITY: A CASE OF CONFLICTING PERCEPTIONS

*Fouad M. Ammor**

The Mediterranean region is facing a multiplication of menaces including a deficit of democratic practices, a population facing an identity crisis due to modernization, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and drug trafficking. This has led to joint efforts by institutional actors and others who aspire to peace, prosperity, democracy, justice, human dignity, and international solidarity.

The entire Euro Mediterranean zone has become more visible after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The late 1980s brought the displacement of the East-West gravity center. That East-West gravity center was characterized by the potential for a disastrous military confrontation between the two super powers and their allies. The implosion of the Soviet Union inaugurated a new environment where the principal fracture is between the North, highly developed and armed, and the South, underdeveloped and prone to economic, political, and identity problems. Among many reasons that make the region significant is the fact that it includes countries in the North and the South.

This paper will discuss threats and menaces, what they are and why they currently exist, as well as how institutional actors such as the European Union in partnership with other nations are addressing these dangers. The first question to be asked is, do those menaces pose a danger to the region? Secondly is the Mediterranean area characterised by particular risks in relation to the rest of the world? Lastly are the countries and peoples of the region affected in the same manner by these risks? Or should social and regional differences be taken into account?

Risks are defined as the most or least foreseeable of dangers. Risks are intangible and difficult to identify. Menaces are acts or promises that aim to intimidate. If the common denominator of risks and menaces lies in their dangerous character; the difference is that menaces are characterised by anticipation grounded in past experience while risks are potential dangers.

The reason for the current situation of the Mediterranean region is related to the end of the bipolar system. Since the emergence of one dominant world power, what were formerly menaces between States have been substituted by external menaces. These external menaces have a strong propensity toward the privatisation of political violence.

Regional Implications for the New International Security Deal

Current and future risks are to be examined against the backdrop of a constantly changing world. These changes exist at different levels, and determine the nature of future risks and eventually the modality of their resolution.

One of the most significant changes is the forced¹ or intentional² opening of economies in the Mediterranean region into a regional and international economy. Thus, countries' borders have become more porous than before. The European Union has addressed this porous border phenomenon by creating a battery of measures; judicial political and economic to address accompanying problems. While, in certain Mediterranean partner countries some initiatives to limit immigration have been attempted, in most countries the EU example is far from being followed.

Since overtime menaces and risks have become more transnational. It follows that to combat those threats we need cooperative trans-national structures. This cooperation must be commensurate with the level of challenge and begins with coordination between partner countries themselves. It should be noted that the lightening of borders is paradoxically concomitant with the strong return of identity sentiment and a quest for belonging.

Related to questions of identity, one anticipated risk is that a large number of southern populations do not feel the advantages of democracy. This is closely connected to concerns about modernity. A shortcoming of modernisation is that its outward appearance might increase aspirations for a return to a mythical past. In order to counter this backwards-looking desire it is necessary that people experience real improvements in their daily life. This can happen through the enhancement of good governance in partner countries. It also requires the updating of domestic culture and rejecting what does not correspond with modernity, progress, and social justice. It is important to carry out this double effort including adapting the socio-cultural traditions and adapt it by using it in the present world.³

One major effect of modernization is that we have witnessed an acceleration of time thanks to the revolution of communication technology such as the Internet and mobile phones. Our lifestyle has rapidly changed as information rapidly circulates it replaces human interaction. Those that threaten the Mediterranean region

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can use these new modes of communication to facilitate criminal acts. Consequently, it is necessary for the forces who seek peace, stability and progress to coordinate their actions and act rapidly.

Knowledge is another feature, which is deepening the gap between North and South. Future society will be knowledge based. This knowledge-based society currently consumes tremendous petroleum resources and will continue to probably for the next 30 years. The international market supply of petroleum could face serious problems and become an object of terrorist attacks. Regardless of the threats the market must ensure regular supply at acceptable prices.

Another change related to the previous point is linked to the principal lever of development. The problem is the availability of highly trained individuals to be used for their countries advantage. Nowadays, the 60s and 70s concern for technological transfer is obsolete and old-fashioned because technology has become democratized. The bet today is on transfer of competencies. These competencies need to be appropriate and governed by ethics. They must also highlight common values, citizenship, and patriotism. These ideals might be at the centre of political preoccupations in the future.

The Barcelona Process and Regional Stability

In November 1995, 15 Ministers of Foreign Affairs from the EU and 12 from Southern Mediterranean countries met in Barcelona to sign a document known as the Barcelona Process.⁴ This presented a turning in Euro-Mediterranean relations.

This declaration initiated a significant new stage in North/South relations because it replaced the mosaic of bilateral treaties between the EU and its Southern partners. The Barcelona Process provided a framework for a coherent approach to address economic issues through political, social, and cultural components.

The Barcelona Process meant, that for the first time, the different instances that structured the relationship between the North and South were approached via mutual interaction. The Barcelona Process goal of sustainable development highlighted how economic and financial development cannot succeed without progress in human and cultural relations and good governance. Setting up a shared zone of peace and stability is, strongly, linked to respect for human rights. It is this multi-faceted definition of development that was adopted in the Barcelona Declaration.

The questions that need to be answered about this partnership are mainly the following: has it succeeded in realizing the anticipated results? Is the context that created this relationship between the two shores of the Mediterranean unique? How can we respond to the changes that have and will affect this context? What are

the new modalities to respond to current challenges in the region (European Neighbourhood Policy, Mediterranean Dialogue and NATO's Istanbul Initiative?) And what are the perspectives of a partnership taking into account the new challenges in this zone, following events, which marked the beginning of the third millennium?

The factors, which led to the Barcelona Process include the following. Firstly the end of a bipolar system in international relations and the emergence of one super power represented by the United States of America to manage the most important affairs of the world. This has meant the redistribution of 'cards' and new roles for different countries in the international scene. Therefore, the US changed its traditional isolationism to use its power to influence different parts of the world including the Mediterranean region. Prior to this interventionist mode, the Monroe Doctrine significantly influenced US foreign policy.

The Monroe Doctrine,⁵ was named for former American president, James Monroe. For Monroe the world was divided between different powers, this limited the intervention of the United States to the American continent. Thus the Mediterranean should have been left to European management. This classical geo-strategic distribution of tasks showed its limitations in the last twenty years; especially after the events of September 11, 2001.

The second crucial circumstance that paved the way to the historic Barcelona meeting was the peace initiative between Palestinians and Israelis: the 1991 Madrid meetings and those of Oslo in 1993 had inspired hope to end that longstanding conflict through historical meetings of political leaders of the Middle East with the international community's support but this hope did not last for long.

The third circumstance that affected the Euro-Mediterranean atmosphere that led to the Barcelona Process was the Gulf War⁶. This war stirred up the debate about geo-strategic interests after the cold war. In fact, Europe has had a particular interest in Southern Mediterranean countries since the 1970s petrol crisis and the embargo. The Gulf War intensified this interest.

The last significant circumstance, which influenced the stability of the Mediterranean region, was the ideological debate after the fall of the Soviet Empire. As far as the war of ideas is concerned, two approaches are subject to debate in the ideological sphere in the North. The first idea is that of Samuel Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations". Huntington believes that a war of civilizations (as a new mode of confrontation in the world) is going to take place at the end of the bipolar system. The principal cleavage, according to this thesis, lies in the confrontation between the Arab-Muslim civilization and Western civilization. This will lead to

continued instability. The second thesis is that of Francis Fukuyama, who in contrast to Huntington thinks that: the fall of Iron Curtain is the victory of the free world. For Fukuyama we are witnessing the end of ideologies and the omnipresence of a unique model, liberal and democratic capitalism.

While the above thesis dominate discussions, it would be false to think that in southern countries, intellectual debates have remained inactive. In the South two intellectual mainstreams exist. Their basis is the gap between North and South is becoming deeper than ever and the tested models of development in the South have not achieved their expected results. Accordingly, this stubborn fact has led to two interpretations: a) a call for the modernisation of partner countries via carrying out reforms by enhancing democracy in the management of public affairs, and by effectively calling upon the full human and material energies of nations; b), a call for the revision of Islamic cultural and identity patrimony.

It should be pointed out that previously taboo topics have started to be discussed relatively freely in Mediterranean partner countries. These include issues of identity related to the desire to return to a mythologized Arab world, the legitimacy of political regimes and the credibility of some political leaders, and within certain countries debate about minorities' rights.

It was in this atmosphere, influenced by ideological debates, the hope for a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the end of a bipolar system that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) came to be and that new threats emerged. Those new threats are primarily from non-state actors.

Emergence of New Threats

Non-institutional actors of indeterminate localization, rather than institutional actors have created the new risks the region faces today. Non-institutional actors are characterized by the extent of the destruction and the disruption they cause through their actions, their organization which is based on a large scaled networking, and their non hierarchical structures, the targeting of innocent people, and their method, human bombs.

The Partnership has responded to these threats by prioritizing the security of the region. If the EMP seeks to go beyond security concerns to create a zone of peace and shared prosperity it must address democracy. Democracy is indivisible from development; thus, these two pillars (democracy and development) are indispensable for stability and security in the Mediterranean area. A challenge for allies in the partnership is two contrasting visions of the role of security. The EU fundamentally perceives security as an end in itself, while Partner Mediterranean countries see it as a means of development. This difference of perception increases disagreements and misunderstandings between the actors of the Euro-

Mediterranean Partnership. Ideally, there should be a convergence of the two different visions between the two shores of the Mediterranean

Threats such as terrorism, organized crime, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, emigration⁷, can lead to instability. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and those that took place in other countries of the Mediterranean area (London, Madrid, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco...) have catapulted the problems of security and fight against terrorism to the forefront at the expense of democracy and human rights. The horrible events of 9/11 were exploited by some political regimes in the South (and in some cases even those of North) to mitigate the adopted¹⁰ democratic openings.

Since these events, the Mediterranean has become a geo-strategic region of tremendous importance to the United States and the European Union. Within the framework of the wider Middle East, Americans are no longer interested in the Mediterranean way as a simple maritime corridor but as a part of a geopolitical entity, which starts in Mauritania and extends into Afghanistan. There is great concern that social and economic backwardness in this great space generates frustrations leading to terrorism and instability. Consequently peace is threatened in Northern countries¹¹.

How to Confront Risks and Threats

The rise of radicalism, international terrorism, the marginalization of a significant part of the population, crisis in the labour market and, environmental pollution are universal risks that need joint international action.

The events of September 11, 2001 in New York, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania in the United States, those of May 16, 2003 in Casablanca, Morocco, March 11, 2004 in Madrid, Spain and July 7, 2005 in London, England, affect directly or indirectly the Euro-Mediterranean area. For partner Mediterranean countries, these new menaces, are added to ancient ones, such as conflicts of inter state control and leadership, and they are not substituted like in the countries of the North. If Northern countries could solve their problems with ancient threats by putting an end to the risks related to the Cold War and learn to work cooperatively, then theoretically it is possible to achieve the same in the South of the Mediterranean. Accordingly, the new menaces (soft) are simply added to the inherited ones, from the cold war (hard) and the colonial period (Sahara).

As far as the means used to face these menaces, differences are observable from the two shores of the Mediterranean. To confront these risks, the North targets the short-term horizon, i.e. a security approach with the expectation of a positive political result. Southern nations consider these risks to be solvable with time and see the solution as a joint effort between all parties that can be fruitful over the long run.

The European Union in order to advance its position, regardless of the Euro-Mediterranean framework related to the Barcelona Process, continues to have individual relations with Southern countries in a neo-bilateral framework. In addition, as far as dissension continues to mark political, economic and social lives of these Southern countries, any cooperation will not be but a punctual colmatage of real problems. The implication of the EU in partner countries conflicts - most of which are the heritage of ancient periods - is needed for the success of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.

Better than that, in this part of the world, a clear foreign policy that mobilizes ambitions for development is the key to all enterprises of cooperation and also to the reduction of risks.

The major factors for instability in the Mediterranean are the result of internal management of public affairs by political powers in partner countries, and at the same time the outcome of ambiguity of behaviour by external powers such as the EU and the USA. In addition to the deficit of good governance in the South there is the EU pusillanimity.

The conjunction of frustrations, marginalisation and exclusion of a large amount of the population is reflected by difference in incomes, weak freedoms of expression, lack of mobility, and the problem of belonging and an identity crisis. All these factors can lead to violence and danger.

To address the risks and menaces, a series of initiatives were set up to face these dangers including the Mediterranean Dialogue, 5+5 Dialogue and the EMP. The results of these initiatives are overall encouraging. Their major weakness lies in a communication deficiency concerning their aim on the part of Southern. It should be pointed out that the pacific solution of inter state problems of partner countries is a crucial condition for any success of these attempts to face these threats.

Also, the EU as well as for USA should approve the result of some southern democratic practices (mainly electoral ones) that catapult some so-called radical political parties to power. This would show a respect for democratic principals and rules. For the United States and the European Union to disregards elected governments because they do not approve of them would increase frustrations and accordingly threats. The will of people deserves respect. History teaches us that peoples' errors remain a school for learning real democratic practices. It must also be taken into account that the reality of power leads those regimes to take into account governing constraints. It follows that the denial of popular will cannot teach real democratic practices.

How can we fight menaces together and in a systematic

manner, if there are: a) obstacles to people, b) some awkward discourses confusing Islam (principal religion of a lot of Mediterranean Partner countries) and terrorism; c) an unconditional support of certain regimes without paying attention to the creed of good governance; d) a timorous support of social and intellectual actors of the academic world and the press in MP countries; e) persistence of inter state conflicts of MP; f) a feeble comprehension of MP expectations.

Security and stability in the region can be attributed to, the solution of inter state conflicts that undermine development efforts and also to the acceleration of rhythms and repartition of economic growth. This cannot be achieved without the participation of all actors including civil and institutional ones. At the regional level, there is a need to strengthen south-south cooperation in order to mitigate national egoism and develop the mechanisms of regulation at the international level to enhance justice and respect of international equality.■

NOTES

1. La mondialisation est pour beaucoup dans cette ouverture forcée. Les institutions internationales renforcent la tendance, c'est le cas, notamment de l'Organisation Mondiale du Commerce.
2. Les accords de coopération régionaux, pour la partie méditerranéenne, la manifestation la plus importante est le Partenariat Euro Méditerranéen.
3. Mohammed Abdel Jabri « Connaître le Coran » 2006, Edition
4. La Déclaration de Barcelone : <http://enropa.en.int/scadplus/leg/ar/trb/n1500.htm>.
5. « Monroe » du nom du président des USA, James Monroe (1758-1831) qui définissait les principes de la politique étrangère des Etats Unies en proposant un partage du monde : « L'Amérique au Américains » sous-entendu, le reste du monde n'intéressait pas les USA et relèverait d'autres puissances.
6. Hani Habib « Le partenariat euro méditerranéen, Publisud, Paris 2003.
7. Ouverture du séminaire « La PESD et la Méditerranée » de l'Institut d'Etudes de Sécurité de l'Union Européenne », Allocution du Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, M. Michel Barnier 2004.
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