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PERCEPTIONS OF SECURITY IN THE EURO-MED NORTH-SOUTH DIMENSION: THE NORTHERN PERSPECTIVE

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PERCEPTIONS OF SECURITY IN THE EURO-MED NORTH-SOUTH DIMENSION: THE NORTHERN PERSPECTIVE

by Roberto Aliboni[1]

> The Southern Mediterranean World is viewed as an anarchic and underdeveloped world. It is a world ridden with various forms of domestic instability, controlled by authoritarian regimes lacking legitimacy, engulfed with deep economic deformities, and crises, and lacking democracy.
> Mohammed El-Sayed Selim[2]

The area currently encompassed by the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) reflects fairly well the broad Western perception of the new strategic situation established by the end of the Cold War. The North Atlantic Council described this situation very aptly in the strategic concept it approved in Rome in 1991, though it meant to refer primarily to the European East: "Risks to Alliance security are less likely to result from calculated aggression against the territory of the Allies, but rather from the adverse consequences of instabilities that may arise from the serious economic, social and political difficulties, including ethnic rivalries and territorial disputes ... The tensions that may result ... could lead to crises inimical to European stability and even to armed conflicts"[3].

As a matter of fact, no state in the Mediterranean areas included in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is regarded as willing and capable to conduct a full military attack on European Union (EU) countries and, in fact, no such threat is minimally perceived or even taken into consideration in the Northern part of the Euro-Med area. The national security of the EU countries or that of their alliances, from a military point of view, is not in question, nor is any armed conflict expected.

In contrast, the North perceives a set of risks and challenges emanating from Southern political, social and economic conditions of instability, both in the domestic and inter-state arenas. The effects of this instability are regarded in the North as factors that can affect in a negative way the democratic regimes, the social order, and the economic affluence that characterise today's EU nations. In other words, EU security is taken in a broader rather than a military sense.

This paper discusses, first of all, the factors of Southern instability perceived by the Northern members of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. It takes into consideration two arguments: (a) the intra- and inter-state factors that generate instability in Southern Mediterranean areas and, in EU perceptions, constitute sources of risk for EU stability; (b) the spill-over effects from such Southern instability that - once again, in the EU's eyes - affect European stability. In its last section, the paper draws some conclusions.

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[2] "Southern Mediterranean Perceptions of Security Co-operation and the Role of NATO", in H.G. Brauch, A. Marquina, A. Biad (eds.), *Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for the 21st Century*, MacMillan Press & St. Martin Press, London & New York, 2000, pp. 129-146; p. 131.

[3] See Part I, point 10 of "The Alliance's Strategic Concept agreed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Rome on 7-8 November 1991", in *NATO Handbook,* Brussels 1995.

Sources of risk

A number of principal factors are regarded by the West as causes - either structural or proximate - of instability in the Southern Mediterranean area. The shaky foundations and performances of the regional economies, along with their social implications, are among them. This paper, however, refers to three basic political factors: (a) the unsteady legitimacy of political regimes; (b) the relevance of systemic oppositions to the authority of the secular state and international order; and (c) the unresolved and fresh conflict in the area. These factors mostly concern the Arab states, though some of them involve Israel and Turkey as well.

(a) the unsteady legitimacy of political regimes - The Arab states cannot be regarded as weak states, in the sense of states undermined by serious structural flaws or fault-lines, though the states in the Levant may be closer to such weakness because of the peculiar legacy of both colonisationand decolonisation[4]. In fact, while at the end of the Cold War, such weakness was exposed in the former Soviet Union and the Western Balkans, a remarkable stability was witnessed on the part of the Middle Eastern and North African states. In contrast, these states feature a weak legitimacy of their political regimes, which must be attributed to the continued importance of their need for authenticity - be it pan-Arab or Islamic - with respect to other political discourses.

Saad Eddin Ibrahim[5] notes that legitimacy, in the form of an "implicit social contract, forged by the elites in the 1950s, had been predicated on a 'trade-off' between genuine political participation and palpable improvement in the quality of life of the citizens as well as the heady excitement of Arab nationalism. In other words, political freedom was sacrificed on the high altar of Arab nationalism". Having failed to establish a powerful pan-Arab state, the Arab regimes subsequently became discredited. After the end of the Cold War, there were attempts by the same regimes to guide transitions towards democracy to reset the foundations of their legitimacy. However, these attempts proved broadly unsuccessful.

In fact, incumbent regimes face objective domestic situations that do not facilitate a transition to democracy. Their problem is not to compromise with significant liberal oppositions in order to shift the foundations of legitimacy by moving to establish some forms of democracy. The real and relevant opposition does not come from those who ask for the establishment of democracy in view of the non execution of the contract (there are almost no liberals[6]), but from those who insist on the contract being fulfilled. In this context, if the governments dropped authenticity and moved to establish more democratic institutions, they would encounter serious opposition and almost no support and would hardly be able to survive. Thus, the regimes are hostages to their early legitimacy. As they are unable or unwilling to deliver in terms of this legitimacy and have no alternative base of consensus, they remain with tormented and weak power which does not allow for political reform, bold foreign policies or quick economic

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[4] R. Aliboni, P. Miggiano, *Conflict and Its Sources in the Near East and North Africa. A Conflict Prevention Perspective*, Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Strategic Papers No. 81, 1999, Cairo.

[5] Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Crises, Elites and Democratization in the Arab World", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 2, Spring 1993, pp. 292-305; quotation at p. 293.

[6] Paul E. Salem, "Arab Political Currents, Arab-European Relations and Mediterraneanism", in L. Guazzone (ed.), *The Middle East in Global Change*, MacMillan Press & St. Martin's Press, London, New York, 1997, pp. 23-42.

innovation. As seen from the EU point of view, weak incumbent governments are a first important source of instability.

(b) the relevance of systemic oppositions to state authority and international order - Today's significant oppositions to Arab governments - and related concerns - come from religious rather than nationalist quarters. In the 1990s, Western and EU perceptions with respect to Islamism oscillated and so did policies. There was a wide debate about political Islam and what to do with it, from which two main positions emerged.

On one hand, after the 1990-91 Gulf War, Western perceptions of Islamism and its impact became acute as a result of domestic reactions stirred by this war in most Arab countries, in particular in Egypt, occupied Palestine and Algeria. The apparent expansion and strength of political Islam emerged as a major concern for at least two reasons: one, because it was perceived as a threat to Arab governments currently engaged in the Middle East peace process and, two , because it was more easily associated to the Islamic presence in Europe in view of the large Algerian community in France, increasing immigration to Europe and the participation of veterans from the Afghani wars in military operations in the Western Balkans. These developments appeared to confer a more palpable global dimension upon Islamism and make its impact beyond MENA borders more likely.

Perceptions of such international Islamicist projection combined with emerging ideas in Western countries about the enhanced role that cultural and identityfactors were expected to play in post-Cold War international relations and the clashes these factors would bring about. In this framework, NATO, a little hastily, went so far as to pinpoint Islamism and Islam as the new global threat to the West after the end of communism.

On the other hand, the rise of political Islam was regarded as one aspect of the need for the MENA polities to introduce political reform and pluralism. In a sense, this view was in tune with the typical democratic triumphalism that prevailedin the West as a consequence of the end of communism. The argument was that, provided they renounced violence and accepted the rules of the democratic game (most of all, alternation in power), Islamist parties and groupings had to be considered legitimate oppositions and integrated into national political processes within the framework of democratic reforms. The inherently systemic character of Islamicist oppositions to the kind of Westphalian-like and secular states that had gradually grown up in the MENA area after the French Revolution was broadly trivialised by stressing the unacceptability of "culturalist" interpretations[7].

This point of view has been strongly supported by Western non-governmental organisations (e.g. the St. Egidio Community in Italy) as well as academic circles and has strongly influenced official Western policies. Developments in Algeria have been - particularly for Europe - a most important test of such views and policies. Islamist leaders, considered terrorists by - to continue with the same example - the Algerian government, were given political asylum in European countries and the United States. In general, the distrust towards the authoritarian and illegitimate character of the Algerian military regime overweighed concerns about Islamicist violence. The use of violence by the Algerian state was regarded as state terrorism, to the extent it was exercised by a poorly legitimated incumbent power, so that Islamicist violence (though

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[7] Shireen T. Hunter, "The Rise of Islamist Movements and the Western Response: Clash of Civilizations or Clash of Interests?", in L. Guazzone (ed.), *The Islamist Dilemma*, Ithaca Press, Reading, 1995, pp. 317-350.

not terrorism) was regarded as legitimate resistance. This state of affairs continued up to the mid-nineties. The expulsion of a number of Algerian leaders from the United States and Europe coincided with a change in Western governmental policies.

Today, MENA terrorism is being reconsidered by Western governments. The change is partly due to economic interests (definitely in the Algerian case) but also to a more realistic appreciation of the adverse domestic impact of Islamicist violence and religious political opposition on allied regional governments and the propagation of such violence to nearby European countries and as far as the United States. This is not to say that there is complete convergence among the Northern and Southern countries concerned. However, at least at the governmental level, the Western and European perspective has substantially changed. Political Islam is regarded as an important factor of instability in the MENA countries, though not necessarily a factor of terrorism, with negative implications for the West and the EU. In the end, while the apocalyptic and very poorly articulated view of political Islam as a total and global risk has not been accepted, the basic orientation on which that view was predicated is presently shaping Western and European perceptions and policy-making.

In Israel, political stability is assured by long-standing democratic institutions. Still, it is being undermined by causes and in a context that differ from the Arab countries but have similar effects. A recent analysis stated that the post-1967 War dissolution of the "Ben Gurionist" strategic antagonism with the adjoining regional countries has given way to a search for political solutions that have, in turn, stirred the rise of an Israeli ethno-nationalism strenuously opposing such solutions on the basis of forms of ideological exclusivism and religious extremism that were alien to early Zionism. Ethno-nationalist trends have been compounded by changes in the Israeli social fabric stemming from modernisation, growing income inequalities and immigration of Jewish communities socially deprived with respect to the existing Israeli elite. Mark Heller points out that "the most notable consequence of these social changes was the emergence of a coalition between the forces of Land Israel-focused ethno-nationalists, stimulated by a sense of national deprivation, and sub-group identities (especially among North African voters), encouraged by a sense of relative communitarian deprivation"[8]. These trends have given way to political fragmentation, on one hand, and Jewish domestic terrorism and violence, on the other.

These trends are similar to those prevailing in the Arab world. In particular, it must be noted that, besides the use of terrorism and the spreadof violence, the most important political outcome has been the emergence of weak governments, based on fragmented coalitions. Successive Israeli governments, both on the ethno-nationalist and democratic sides, have been strongly conditioned and weakened by the smallest parties in their respective coalitions. Such conditioning comes, more often than not, from religious parties, to which the early Israeli secular state is gradually yielding, in the same way that early Arab secular states are with a view to mollifying religious oppositions. The weakening of the secular character of MENA states, as well as that of governments and regimes is in itself a cause of instability, domestically and internationally. And coincidentally, it is definitely one of the most important reasons for the inconclusive outcome of the Middle East peace process.

(c) unresolved and fresh violent conflict in the area - Public opinion in Europe - and more broadly speaking, in the West - perceives the MENA area as conflict-ridden. This

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[8] *Continuity and Change in Israeli Security Policy*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, Adelphi Papers No. 335, London; p. 42.

perception, though, does not in general account for changes in the character of conflicts that have derived from the end of East-West confrontation. In fact, reference is still made to a region affected by instability stemming prevalently from inter-state conflict waged by conventional warfare. On the contrary, instability, today, comes from intra-state conflict, where lower violence prevails in the form of terrorism, guerrilla actions and insurgency, and threats stems from non-conventional factors in the form of WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) proliferation.

In fact, the end of the Cold War has strongly curtailed the military capabilities of a number of Southern Mediterranean countries and changed their strategic and political perspective. One consequence of such curtailment, coupled by worsening economic conditions, has been a trend towards acquiring WMD, as they are perceived as having the most effective expenditure/impact ratio. Another important consequence of changes in the political/strategic perspective, has been that the most relevant conflicts in the area - in particular, the Western Saharan and Arab-Israeli conflicts - have declined militarily and entered into a negotiating phase. The situation that prevails today in the area is one where major conflicts are not yet resolved or completely resolved , but are terminated in the sense that political and military conditions are likely to prevent them from re-erupting as inter-state armed conflict. The terminated (i.e. politically unresolved) character of major Southern Mediterranean conflicts[9] has, to a considerable extent, shifted violence from the international to the domestic arena. In fact, as we have already seen, the peace processes the governments have been compelled to enter into by changes in the international context have raised strong domestic opposition from nationalist as well as religious quarters and contributed to weakening their legitimacy. As a result, while inter-state conflict is suppressed, domestic violent conflict has increased, in the form of political turmoil, terrorism, guerrilla actions, and insurgency.

It must be noted that the increase in domestic conflict in the MENA area does not compare with the developments that took place in the European East and the Soviet "empire" as a consequence of the end of the Cold War . While domestic conflicts in the European East, particularly in the Caucasus and the Western Balkans, were triggered by the collapse of state structures, in the Southern Mediterranean and the Middle East these structures have not collapsed at all, so that conflict has not assumed the same disruptive character as in the European East. Even in the worst such Southern Mediterranean domestic conflict, i.e. the Islamist attack on the Algerian state, the latter upheld a relatively high degree of what Baker and Weller call "sustainable security"[10] and proved capable of surviving by repressing Islamicist violence. A case of sustainable security has resulted even more clearly from the conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK. One important implication of this solidity of the state is the relatively low relevance of domestic turmoil in terms of international security (contrary to what happened in the European East), i.e. in terms of secessionist or irredentist trends.

In conclusion, the current character of conflict in the MENA area is more intra-state than inter-state and what is contested is more government than territory (to use SIPRI's concepts[11]). Though it is diverse from the more traditional situation ordinarily perceived

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[9] Aliboni, Miggiano, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-5.

[10] I.e. the ability of the state to perform basic functions (e.g. police and justice) effectively enough as to prevent it from collapsing; see P. Baker, A. Weller, *An Analytical Model of Internal Conflict and State Collapse: Manual for Pratictioners*, The Fund For Peace, Washington D.C. ,1998.

[11] See, in the series of annual reports, M. Sollenberg (ed.), *States in Armed Conflict 1995*, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, Report No. 43, Uppsala, 1996.

by public opinion, the current kind of conflict configuration is perceived in the West and in the EU as a source of instability, in addition to those mentioned earlier. First, the instability deriving from domestic conflict compounds the factors that presently contribute to weakening governments and regimes, in particular their ability to proceed with gradual political reform and contribute to international order and stability.

Second, even though major conflicts are terminated and violence has shifted towards domestic arenas, this does not mean that the Mediterranean as a whole is free of international tensions, crises and more or less latent conflicts[12]. It may well be that the existing geopolitical configuration will continue to prevent inter-state conflict from erupting. Still, domestic conflict weakens governments' ability to come to terms with unresolved inter-state conflict and that inability fatally translates into more domestic conflict, low-intensity violence in international relations and hostile relations between regional states. All in all, both terminated and domestic conflict give the area a character of accentuated instability.

The outcome of instability: spill-over effects

What is, in the eyes of the West and Europe, the outcome of these sources of instability (which must be added to socio-economic factors that have not been taken into consideration in this paper)? The two great alliances of the West, NATO and the EU, have provided similar responses to this question.

The updated NATO's "strategic concept" approved at the 1999 North Atlantic Council gathering in Washington D.C.[13] summarises members' perceptions and vision with respect to the character and fundamentals of their security and the vital interests that could be affected by external instability. This vision refers to the broad international environment. However, the southern and south-eastern approaches to Europe are more specifically alluded to by the emphasis of the document on proximity. Paragraph 20 in the updated strategic concept deserves a full quotation[14]:

Notwithstanding positive developments in the strategic environment and the fact that large-scale conventional aggression against the Alliance is highly unlikely, the possibility of such a threat emerging over the long term exists. The security of the Alliance remains subject to a wide variety of military and non-military risks which are multi-directional and often difficult to predict. These risks include uncertainty and instability in and around the Euro-Atlantic area and the possibility of regional crises at the periphery of the Alliance, which could evolve rapidly. Some countries in and around the Euro-Atlantic area face serious economic, social 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 can lead to local and even regional instability. The resulting tensions could lead to crises affecting Euro-Atlantic stability, to human suffering, and to armed conflicts. Such conflicts could affect the security of the Alliance by spilling over into neighbouring countries, including NATO countries, or

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[12] Laura Guazzone, "Who Needs Conflict Prevention in the Mediterranean ?", *The International Spectator*, Vol. 35, No. 1, January-March, pp. 83-102, 2000.

[13] See NATO Press Release NAC-S(99)65, 24 April 1999 (www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999p99-065e.htm)

[14] It must be underscore here that the analysis of the strategic concept encompasses varying areas - like the Balkans and the Caucasus - further to MENA's; for this reason it differs from the analysis given in the first section of this paper: for example, it contemplates the "dissolution of states" which in contrast, as argued in the above, has nothing to do with MENA areas.

in other ways, and could also affect the security of other states.

Further to this general statement, paragraph 24 in the same document lists risks specifically perceived by the Alliance. Beside risks (such as "the existence of powerful nuclear forces outside the Alliance" and "proliferation of NBC weapons and their means of delivery") that may translate into military threats to the Alliance and thus give way to defensive responses on the basis of Art. 5 of the Washington Treaty, the updated strategic concepts points out the existence of emerging risks "of a wider nature" concerning interests that are perceived as vital to the Alliance. These risks include "acts of terrorism, sabotage and organised crime, and ... the disruption of the flow of vital resources. The uncontrolled movement of large numbers of people, particularly as consequence of armed conflicts, can also pose problems for security and stability affecting the Alliance". The emergence of these risks can lead to consultation inside the Alliance and action, if need be, under Art. 4 of the Treaty (something the European allies were not willing to accept during the Cold War).

As far as the EU is concerned, European perceptions were very neatly expressed in the words of a distinguished German official of the EU Commission, who played a prominent role in bringing about the Barcelona Declaration: "Europe wishes to see as its southern rim a group of countries that will not: be at war with each other; be destabilised by socio-political conflicts; export terrorism or drugs to Europe; threaten Europe's social stability by continued or even sharply increased flows of illegal immigration".[15] With respect to its southern approaches, these perceptions - similar to those expressed by NATO - have given way to the EU's EMP initiative, in which they are fully reflected, from WMD proliferation through illegal immigration.

EU concerns are even more clearly illustrated by the various drafts of the Euro-Med Charter for Peace and Stability, the document that Euro-Med parties have been negotiating since 1996 with the purpose of attaining a more focused concept of shared security than the Barcelona Declaration provided . The drafts of the Charter emphasise the so-called "new trans-national risks"[16], i.e. "terrorism", "organised crime and any kind of trafficking, especially regarding women and children, drugs, money laundering, cybercrime and illegal migration".

Differences between NATO and the EU are, however, significant and have to be noted. They concern objectives, institutional frameworks and policy responses.

Two main possible tiers of adverse effects are perceived to come from Southern instabilities: on one hand, effects on Western and European broad "vital" national interests, in a mostly external perspective; on the other, a number of spill-over effects that reach out and affect internal settings and domestic order, particularly in European and EU countries . While challenges to external vital interests are a main concern to NATO, the EU is principally concerned with challenges to internal order and stability.

These two different perspectives determine different policy responses. NATO provides essentially military responses. These military responses entail the use of military instruments for military purposes proper (defence, pre-emption, combat, etc.) or the purpose of security co-operation (military training, peace support operations, etc.). The EU has so far provided responses of essentially an economic and civilian character. Currently, it is developing a military capability for the purpose of security co-operation

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[15] Eberhardt Rhein, "Europe and the Mediterranean: A Newly Emerging Geographic Area?", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1996, pp. 79-86.

[16] Alessandro Politi, *European Security: the New Transnational Risks, Institute for Security Studies*, WEU, Chaillot Papers No. 29, October 1997.

(the Common European Security and Defence Policy). However, in the Barcelona process, as it was renegotiated in the Euro-Med Charter, there is no doubt that civilian purposes will continue to prevail considerably. Consequently, EU policy responses in the EMP framework will continue to focus on developmental and "soft security" co-operation.

A final difference between NATO and the EU regards the institutional framework: while NATO is the alliance of a Western group of countries, the EMP - though stemming from a EU initiative - is a shared framework for co-operation between Northern and Southern countries across the Mediterranean basin. Although NATO and the EU drew up a similar list of risks, it must not be overlooked that the EU/EMP list reflects a considerable degree of consensus among the Northern and Southern parties, whereas the NATO list is a unilateral statement. Consequently, while action is taken by NATO on the basis of its own decisions, the EMP must share decisions in order to take any kind of action. The existence of the EMP is for the EU (as well as its southern Partners) an important guarantee against misperceptions and mistaken action.

What matters here is less policy responses and decision-making than objectives. In terms of objectives, what distinguishes the EU's basic perception towards its southern approaches, in particular the EMP areas, is that risks relating to vital interests and the external environment (like WMD proliferation or oil supply disruptions) are almost ignored or, in any case, given much less importance than in NATO or the United States[17]. In contrast, perceptions concentrate on spill-over effects, which are perceived as factors intruding upon the political, social and economic order that, especially after the end of the Cold War, has grown so important in defining the identity and aspirations of EU countries and citizens.

Such perceived intrusions generate concerns. These concerns, in turn, trigger two kinds of significantly different responses. One kind is a rejection of "evils" that are assumed to come from outside and to be brought in by alien people. This response can be called "conservative" (or even "backlash"). The other kind of response - that can be defined as "open" (or "innovative") - is acceptance but, at the same time, involves a difficulty in actingto bring about effective and timely change in European polities and societies. The most common response in the EU today is the second. This response needs to be given at three levels: the state, the EU (i.e. the common policies relating to the so-called EU "common space of freedom, security and justice", intended to define and regulate the personal status of individuals -- be they citizens or immigrants -- in the whole of the Union), and the special frameworks for co-operation to which the EU countries are parties, the EMP being the one concerning the EU's more immediate southern approaches.

This threefold response is very difficult to provide, for it requires a change in EU members' long-standing perceptions and customs which have, at the same time, to be translated into shared common solutions at the EU level.

Let's consider EU perceptions with respect to (a) the kind of most commonly perceived spill-over effects, as listed by the Barcelona Declaration in its third chapter and - now in

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[17] On this point see the paper this author has presented to the meeting of experts organised by the Institut des Etudes Politiques Méditerranéens, *EU Security Towards the Mediterranean. The Role of Southern Europe*, Monaco, July 17-18, 2000 (mimeo)and F. Stephen Larrabee, *The United States and the Mediterranean*, paper presented at the conference organised by the Instituto de Estudos Estratégicos e Internacionais in Oporto, 22-23 June 1998 (mimeo), p. 13.

more detail - by the Euro-Med Charter and (b) the case of immigration from the Muslim countries of the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

The most commonly perceived spill-over effects, like terrorism, international crime, the different kinds of trafficking, are obviously universally considered negative. Immigration, in contrast, is the typical issue that gives way to a contrast between the "conservative" and "open" views we have just talked about. What characterises the conservative view on immigration is that it emphasises its links with other trans-national risks such as terrorism and crime, thus translating immigration into the source of all evils.

To start with, immigration is definitely not a threat to employment, though unemployment is currently fairly high in Western Europe. With European demographic growth approaching zero (particularly in Southern Europe) and a very poor propensity of young Europeans to accept menial jobs and mobility, immigrants are in fact necessary economically. Still, the perception that immigrants take over jobs is also a diffuse part of a wider perception of intrusion. Yet this misperception, like others, comes from the fact that Western Europe is poorly prepared to accept immigration (or more immigration) for political and, above all, cultural reasons.

Situations vary from country to country because of very different legal, historical, political and cultural legacies towards immigration and citizenship. While in Great Britain and other Northern European countries there is an articulated relationship between communities and the state, which allows for the presence of even numerous immigrant groups and a relatively high degree of cultural-political autonomy on their part, in Southern Europe and Germany this relationship is definitely less flexible. This lack of flexibility makes relations with culturally assertive communities, such as the Muslim community, very difficult: either they don't accept assimilation (a mainly French solution) or (as in Germany, Spain or Italy) simply feel discriminated against and marginalised since, as well as they may be treated (and this is definitely not always the case), they do not receive the identity recognition they wish. This most peculiar inclination by Muslim immigrants to identify themselves in community terms stirs strong perceptions of otherness and risk in most European societies.

Another set of perceived risk comes from political links between immigrant groups, notably Muslims, and respective sending countries. Europe's inability and unwillingness to integrate immigrants and the increase in xenophobic and racist criminal attacks to individuals and groups or mistreatment, is resented by Muslim and Arab public opinion in sending countries as evidence of a wider and fundamental European-Christian hostility towards Islam and Arabs. In this respect, it is linked to Europe'searly hesitation to intervene in Bosnia to defend the Muslims. This alleged European hostility stirs a sense of danger in Muslim communities and reinforces their spontaneous identity assertiveness. Islamist activism is widespread in Europe as a form of defence and identity assertion backed by substantive relations with religious-political organisations at home. In this way, migration brings the Islamist movements' anti-Western hostility inside Europe and tends to exacerbate difficulties in international relations.

To some extent, the link between migration and the Islamicist anti-Western attitude just discussed alsoexplains European perceptions of entanglement between immigration and terrorism. Immigration, in fact, creates an environment in which terrorists are able to move with relative ease. While MENA terrorism is a new development in the United States, Europe is not new to terrorism coming from these regions. Sometimes Europe is no more than a logistic base or battlefield, like during the Munich Olympic games or the

"Mikonos" affair. In other cases, Europe is more or less directly involved for its past colonial links (as inFrance with current Algerian terrorism) or because it is regarded as a more or less direct player with respect to Islamists' domestic and international interests. Finally, immigration and terrorism may link up with international criminality. Though an evil in itself, illegal immigration is increasingly becoming a business managed by international criminality, functionally or operationally associated with other kinds of trafficking, such as drugs and arms. Illegal traffic organised by international criminal gangs is another effect of instability. Intra-state and inter-state conflict as well as terrorism start the vicious circles of drug and displaced person trafficking in order to finance arms transfers. The unfinished cycle of conflict in the Balkans and in Northern Iraq-South-eastern Anatolia have shown the strict and formidable intermingling of criminality, conflict and migrations.

There are elements of truth in these views, still on the whole they amount to a set of serious misperceptions which give way to distorted and unacceptable reactions in most EU countries.

As a result, conservative views on immigration as well as xenophobia and racism are increasing in Europe. These trends are leading to the formation of organised political movements and affecting traditional political parties' agendas. Besides exacerbating the inevitable tensions and difficulties that stem from migration, these developments put strains on the democratic character of the European polities.

This is an important risk perceived in Europe today by concerned democratic individuals and leaderships (that is by those trying to bring innovative or open views to bear). At the beginning of the nineties, the EU Commission explicitly warned of such a risk and consequently advocated the need for a more articulated and important European Mediterranean policy.

In fact, this makes clear that, to a large extent, risks stemming from immigration come from inside Europe. Risks come, first, from European political developments (right-wing and conservative movements, xenophobia and racism[18]), which it is up to European governments and societies to contain and suppress. Also, immigration is a source of conflict and instability simply because the European states are unable to agree on common policies. Joint policies to regulate constabulary policies are now run within the Schengen agreement (which provides for constabulary co-operation with respect to the free movement of European citizens in a number of EU member states). Efforts to achieve joint policies in immigration and related issues (asylum, citizenship) were started within the third pillar of the Amsterdam Treaty, where difficulties are arising, however, due to the pillar's institutional mixture between intergovernmental and communitarian competencies. For these reasons, EU policies with respect to immigrants are either weak or non existent. The immigration-relating risks Europeans perceive are thus largely due to European policy inertia and institutional incoherence.

Finally, it must be pointed out that misperceptions affect Muslim immigrants in particular, whereas community assertiveness does not stem only from them (the Chinese are at least as assertive and, in addition , have a strong tendency towards segregation) and immigration does not come from the Mediterranean only.

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[18] See S. Borger, W. van Genugten, "Right-Wing Extremism and Violence: Practice, Root Causes and Countermeasures", in W. van Genugten and others, *Violence and Politics in Modern Society. The Case of Europe and the Middle East*, Amsterdam, Cairo, Tilburg, June 1999 (mimeo), presented at the EuroMed Seminar on "Violence and Politics in Modern Society", The Hague, 26 September 2000, sponsored by the Dutch and Egyptian Governments.

Conclusions

This paper has tried to identify political sources of instability in the Mediterranean and the Middle East as they are perceived by the West and, more particularly, the Europeans (while leaving aside socio-economic sources). It has discussed three such basic political sources: (a) the unsteady legitimacy of political regimes; (b) the relevance of systemic oppositions to the authority of the secular state and international order; and (c) unresolved and fresh conflict in the area.

The consequences of these instabilities are perceived by the West as risks for its assumed vital interests, as listed by the 1999 NATO updated strategic concept. NATO as well as the EU are also concerned by a set of spill-over effects, mostly regarding soft security issues like - to quote the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership - "terrorism ... organised crime and any kind of trafficking, especially regarding women and children, drugs, money laundering, cybercrime and illegal migration". While, in a global context, NATO (and the EU states that are members of NATO) perceive risks to vital interests and envisage military or military-related responses, in regional contexts like the EMP, the EU perceive essentially non-military risks and look for civilian and developmental responses.

EU responses to these intrusive perceptions can be either conservative or innovative. The case of immigration is illustrative and paradigmatic. While conservative responses bring about rejection, xenophobia and racism, innovative responses looks for integration and inclusion, but have to deal with very serious difficulties. The EMP initiative is one such innovative response. Its implementation, however, entails the very difficult task of changing long-standing EU national attitudes and policies with respect to complex challenges like immigration, while preparing shared common solutions within the Union. Its accomplishment will require a long time with respect to the challenges which demand, on the contrary, quick responses.

For this reason, co-operation in the EMP will not be as easy and prompt as could be wished. It is however, the right path to follow.

European perceptions may appear exaggerated or mistaken in Southern Mediterranean eyes, as is attested to by Prof. Selim's passage quoted at the beginning of this paper. In fact, risks are minor and sometimes come from the EU's ineffectiveness rather than external factors. Still, they are political realities that must be unveiled and investigated if they are to be changed and overcome.