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SHARING NEW CONCEPTS OF SECURITY IN THE EMP

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In November 2000, after five year of talks between the representatives of the participating countries, at the ministerial conference in Marseilles the Euro-Med Partnership (EMP) failed to adopt the Euro-Med Charter on Peace and Stability, i.e. the statement tasked to provide a common ground to Euro-Med co-operation.

There is no doubt that any possibility to reach even a partial agreement was prevented by the crisis unleashed by the second *intifada* at the end of September 2000. Furthermore, the crisis discontinued the diplomatic process and is now making the resumption of working political relations within the EMP ever more difficult.

Still, it must be stressed the fact that the four-year talks on the Charter had anyway shed light on some fundamental disagreements existing between the North and the South, in particular the Arab Partners, about ways and means to reach out to shared security and stability. Two major disagreements have emerged in the Barcelona process.

One concerned the implementation of security co-operation according to the terms of the CSCE-like project sketched out by the first chapter of the Barcelona Declaration. After long talks, the Ministers agreed in Malta that in the heterogeneous Euro-Med “security-complex”¹ that project was not feasible and shifted, in fact, from the idea of implementing CBMs, as a precursor of arms control and limitation, to that of Partnership-Building Measures (PBMs),^k as the basis for sharing a more comprehensive and essentially civilian concept of security. In more explicit political terms, this decision was to mean that no Arab-Israeli EMP security co-operation, in a narrower political and military sense, could precede the completion of the Middle East Peace Process.

The second disagreement does not depend on the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is about democracy, human rights, and globalisation, respectively regarded by the Europeans as building-blocks on the road to stability and by the Arabs (and others) as a recipe for assured destabilisation.

While the Partners managed to overcome the first area of disagreement by putting off the question of security co-operation in the framework of the Declaration’s first chapter, the second one has proven intractable. Had Arab-Israeli relations improved, the disagreement could have perhaps resulted to be attenuated. It would have emerged anyway, though, and prevented the agreement on Euro-Med security common ground or made it very uneasy and uncertain. This suggests that, even if the Middle East Peace Process were resumed, the problem of a Euro-Med common ground would remain intact. It would concern Euro-Med relations even if these relations would take up another format, for instance a more sub-regional format separating the Maghreb from the Mashreq.

Consequently, pending the crisis generated by the second *intifada* and its consequences, it does not make much sense to go back to the question of security co-operation in a narrower, prevailingly military sense: a kind of Euro-Med CSCE. In fact, the varying drafts of the Charter make clear that the Partners have agreed to postpone this question and adopt an essentially civilian concept of security in the Partnership. In contrast, it makes sense exploring the question of what security common ground would be possible in trans-Mediterranean relations in a more comprehensive, prevailingly civilian and political sense. The disagreement on the broad North-South security relationship is at the heart of the EMP and it is to a large extent independent on the Arab-Israeli conflict and less transient than the latter. Exploring this broad, essentially civilian security

¹ In the sense this concept has been worked out in the theory of international relations: Ole Wøever, Barry Buzan, “An Inter-Regional Analysis: NATO’s New Strategic Concept and the Theory of Security Complexes”, in S. Behrendt, C.-P. Hanelt (eds.), *Bound to Cooperate - Europe and the Middle East*, Bertelsman Foundation Publishers, Gütersloh, 2000, pp. 55-106.

relationship and identifying the EMP's possible security common ground is the task of the present paper (and that of the EuroMeSCo Working Group on the Common Ground).

Many analyses have pointed out that the two halves of the EMP, the North and the South (broadly understood), have different if not opposed security agendas in military terms². When coming to security in its broader significance, this remains true and, perhaps, the difference is even more important.

The Northern countries are most of all concerned about the spill over effects triggered by Southern instabilities and tensions. What concerns mostly the Southern countries refers to the effects on its political, economic, social domestic stability stemming from interference and interdiction coming from the North.

Policy responses are also different. The North wants to conduct a proactive range of long-run policies aimed at deep political and economic reforms in the Southern countries with a view to eliminate or attenuate their systemic political instability. The South, vis-à-vis this Northern proactive policy, conducts defensive and reactive policies, with an opportunistic component: obtaining resources by eluding as much as possible the conditions the North seeks to attach to them. This difference reflects well in the EMP.

In sum, for the sake of its security, the North try to impose policies on the South, that the latter perceives as factors of insecurity and instability domestically. It is in this sense, that the Southern Partners charge the Northern ones of using the EMP unilaterally.

Any attempt at establishing a security common ground must address this basic contradiction and put the conditions for preventing unilateralism. It must be noted that the long talks in the Charter, albeit inconclusive, have strongly helped to narrow this area of contradiction, perhaps more significantly than the Partners seems to be aware of. For example, by agreeing on the essential civilian character of the EMP co-operation. Still, as of today, the Partners continues to be divided by this fundamental disagreement we have just mentioned about. The South does not share EU's systemic link between political and economic reform in order to fight the root causes of instability and conflict. Most EMP Southern Partners maintain that the EU should help remove structural economic and social imbalances and leave Partners free to find out their way towards political stability and reform.

Established to make the North and South co-operate and share security across the Mediterranean Sea, the EMP will be able to perform its task only if the Partners will manage to identify a common ground which would make them succeed in reconciling present oppositions.

The EU has developed so far, and it is still developing at present, a wide and articulated policy of external co-operation. This policy is now firmly predicated on long-term conflict-prevention and short-term crisis-response capabilities³ and can use instruments as diverse as development aid, elections monitoring, humanitarian assistance, peace support operations and so forth. All these policies are conducted in a framework of co-operative security in a broad sense. In fact, co-operative security accomplishes its ultimate purpose of providing security "through institutionalised consent rather than through threats of material or physical coercion"⁴. In this sense it concerns something more than military policies only.

² EuroMesco, Working Group on Political and Security Co-operation, Working Group on Arms Control, Confidence-Building and Conflict Prevention, *Joint Report*, Roberto Aliboni, Abdel Monem Said Aly and co-operative Álvaro Vasconcelos, April 1997.

³ *Communication from the Commission on Conflict Prevention*, COM (2001)211 fin., Brussels 11 April 2001.

⁴ Janne E. Nolan, "The Concept of Cooperative Security", in Janne E. Nolan (ed.), *Global Engagement. Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century*, The Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., 1994, pp. 3-18, p. 4.

Out of this important and laudable project, two elements of it should be attentively considered and possibly modified or adjusted (in particular when it comes to Euro-Med co-operation): (a) what could be called as the EU external co-operation policy's "embedded unilateralism", i.e. its inherently unilateral character; and (b) the weak capabilities of this policy to respond to the adverse effects stemming from long-term change and reform. To these adverse effects, shorter-term responses in terms of co-operation are not lacking. More often than not, however, in the short term co-operation is coupled by or substituted for policies of containment or coercion, as it happens presently with immigration. Long- and short-term responses are generally poorly co-ordinated. Let's comment on these two points.

As it emerges clearly from its rhetoric, the EU vision of security is strongly influenced by its own experience of integration, co-operation and democratisation. In this rhetoric, the root causes of conflict and instability - as in Western Europe after the Second World War - can be eliminated by adopting economic co-operation and integration and democratic political institutions predicated on the rule of law. EU external policies are primarily based in the promotion of its own model. This model is promoted by providing, among other things, support to international and regional frameworks of integration and co-operation (e. g. to the Mercosur or the Asean) and to programmes aimed at fostering human rights and democratisation.

This same purpose is pursued by the direct involvement of the EU in programmes of regional and inter-regional co-operation. In fact, this direct involvement concerns adjoining regions (those more likely to generate spill over effects) and are clearly inspired by a geopolitical logic. There are presently four such programmes. They concern two European regions, Central-eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, on one hand, and two extra-European ones, on the other: the Mediterranean and the ACP countries (essentially Africa south of Sahara). Between these two groups of EU's partners there are many significant differences - political, economic and, what is more, cultural - which could be epitomised by saying that the schemes of co-operation with the two European areas are regional whereas those with the two extra-European areas are inter-regional in their respective character.

Such difference is very relevant and would demand for an as much relevant policy differentiation between the two groups. The two inter-regional schemes should be more distinct and autonomous from the EU than the two regional ones, because the latter are destined to forms of assimilation and integration into the EU the former are not at all. In contrast, in all the four schemes the boundaries between the EU and partners are blurred, and the institutional and organisational machinery is heavily dependent on the EU, in particular the Commission. The bodies of political dialogue are practically pegged to EU political and security co-operation (the CFSP) rather than bodies with a distinctive profile. This institutional entanglement is partly due to EU institutional features (and the need to retain control on financial facilities). However, while in the case of the regional programmes of co-operation it is justified by the fact that sooner or later the partners will become full members of the EU, it is by far less justified in the case of the two extra-European schemes of co-operation. Here, it turns out to be a form of embedded unilateralism on the part of the EU.

This inherent unilateralism of the EMP institutions is not to leave much room to reconcile the opposition between the proactive EU policy aiming at deep reforms in the South, and the reactive defence of the latter against what they see, rightly or wrongly as a factor of destabilisation. Consequently, the EMP is inherently prevented from addressing its basic contradiction and look for common ground. In such conditions the political dialogue can hardly work with a view to generate a common security vision.

The political dialogue in the EMP could be strengthened, had the Partners set up a number of Euro-Med proper instruments to take action. This would have helped the EMP to assume a more distinctive profile with respect to the EU. However, the lack of a shared security vision since the

beginning has prevented the Partners from proceeding to the setting up of some common instruments and this, in turn, has prevented a security common ground to emerge. There is no doubt that a more positive trend in the Middle East Peace Process would have helped the Partners to break this vicious circle. As a matter of fact, the EMP today has no instruments at all to act and, in case it were to act it had to ask the EU to make available its instruments. This is an important manifestation of today's EMP inherent unilateralism: for the EMP to act, instruments must be asked for to the EU. The EMP has almost no instruments of its own. This state of affairs, of course, is to reinforce the alienation of the South and the embedded unilateralism of the EMP.

To get out of this predicament and give the EMP the opportunity to overcome its contradictions and reach out to a security common ground, the political dialogue should be enhanced. A convincing enhancement of the political dialogue would give way in turn to more willingness to establish common instruments. These common instruments would help a common security ground to emerge. What one has not to overlook is that the enhancement of the political dialogue is less an institutional than a political question. The Southern Partners should be assured that their security concerns, especially when related to the effects of the long-term changes the EU wants to promote, are seriously and inherently taken into consideration. This political clause is the one that fit to enhance the political dialogue.

How can this happen? To allow for a joint consideration of respective security concerns, a firmer concept of human security should be included in the EMP. This is the second element in the EU overall project of external co-operation we wanted to consider beside "embedded unilateralism".

As it is known, EU's capabilities to reach out to its objectives of stability are in the process if being articulated and strengthened on both the civilian and military side. Military co-operation having been put off by previous negotiations in the EMP, let's consider the civilian side. On this side, the central development is constituted by the evolution of the EU's policy of conflict prevention as a basic long-term task of the Union and its external policies. The way the EU is to act in conducting its external relations is very clearly pointed out in the already quoted statement on conflict prevention released by the Commission in April 2001. Building on the concept of "structural stability", already worked out by the Commission in 1996 (and taken up by the OECD Development Aid Committee in 1997), the Commission says that "Characteristics of structural stability are sustainable economic development, democracy and respect for human rights, viable political structures and healthy environmental and social conditions, with the capacity to manage change without to resort to conflict" (p. 10).

The mainstreaming of conflict prevention and structural stability in EU external policy is bound to confirm and reinforce the opposition we have noted in the EMP between the EU long-term objective of structural stability and the instabilities that the implementation of this objective may set in motion in the shorter-term with respect to the Southern Mediterranean countries involved in the process.

Now, the need to solve the contradiction between long-term change and the adverse short-term effects deriving from such change are at the core of the concept of human security. Structural stability is pursued by introducing sweeping political and economic reforms. As gradually as these reforms may be introduced, they bring about "crisis-like disruptions"⁵ which affect, either economically, or socially, or politically, the welfare and security of groups and individuals. The argument on which the human security concept is lying sheds light on the fact that long-term policies of economic development or political change bring about unavoidably areas of vulnerability affecting individuals or groups. These short-term instabilities and tensions have to be

⁵ Astri Suhrke, "Human Security and the Interests of States", *Security Dialogue*, vol. 30, No. 3, September 1999, pp. 265-276.

managed in order to provide security to human beings involved (that is “human security”) and, at the end of the day, to prevent long-run processes from being derailed.

Human security is today an official foreign policy of a set of countries under the initiative of Canada and Norway (the so called “Lysøen process”). In the framework of this policy a number of “vulnerabilities” have been identified, like “landmines” and “children soldiers”. Some of these areas of vulnerability have been already included in EU policies as well as specific issues to be pursued in a conflict prevention shorter-term perspective. What is suggested here is that the concept of human security itself should be explicitly included in the co-operative frameworks the EU is participating into, especially the extra-European ones and, for the sake of this paper, the EMP.

The beneficial effect of such explicit inclusion of the human security concept in the EMP would be twofold. On one hand, the Partners would acquire a policy to implement jointly and which would allow them to co-operate to alleviate the contradiction between the long-term stability sought for by the EU and the adverse short-term consequences it may have on Southern stability. On the other, the prospect of being enabled to fight short-term instability may encourage the Southern Partners to implement EMP proper instruments with a view to take joint action, thus alleviating EMP’s dependence on the EU and its ensuing unilateralism.

Including the “human security” concept in the Euro-Med Charter would help to manage, not to solve, though, the difference between Northern and Southern perceptions of stability in the EMP. On one hand, there are instabilities stirred, in particular, by the processes of political reform which do not regard “human” security but, for instance, the security/stability of political regimes. For sure, incumbent regimes may get vulnerable to reform. Whether they have to be protected from change, however, entails a political rather human evaluation or - if the indirect human repercussions of such a change are taken into consideration - a complex political-human evaluation.

On the other hand, the attainment of structural stability may be prevented not only because of the lack of democracy but because of unsolved conflict, like the Israeli-Palestinian and Arab-Israeli one. The EU’s rhetoric tends to assert, somehow expeditiously, that the attainment of regional economic co-operation and integration brings about peaceful conditions. It is clear, however, that the lack of peaceful conditions may prevent regional economic and political co-operation from taking place. As a matter of fact, this is the reality of the Middle East and, consequently, of the EMP. This means that political reform may be hampered by exogenous factors.

Hesitations towards political reform in the Southern Mediterranean is largely due to the radicalisation impressed by unsolved regional conflict on domestic political processes. Unsolved conflict strengthens religious and nationalist oppositions to secular and moderate regimes and to their co-operation with the West. These exogenous factors weaken or prevent attempts by the regimes at introducing reforms. In these conditions, in fact, reforms may bring about instability or even destabilisation.

In front of these situations the EU and its members face a dilemma, that is not new and regards whichever international strategy of change and stabilisation, that is the dilemma between the risk of increasing instability and that of supporting “dictators”. Finding out the right balance between the two extremes is not an easy task. There is no recipe to deal with this dilemma. It asks for uninterrupted steering and painful political choices. Should these choices be made by the EU on its own account? Of the EMP is to be strengthened, they should be made in co-operation.

In the course of the talks on the Charter, the principle that could help steering North-South co-operation with respect to the challenges we have just referred to, has been identified as the principle of “global security”. The French Ambassador in the Senior Officials Committee of the EMP has worked out this principle by pointing out “la nécessité ... d’une approche globale de la stabilité considérée dans ses aspects non seulement externes mais aussi internes (lesquels incluent aussi bien le facteur du développement que les principes du respect de l’Etat de droit et de la proscription de

toutes les formes de violence, y compris bien sûr celle du terrorisme)” (which alludes here to religious extremism)⁶. In the perspective of this paper, global security means that the pursue of the long-term structural stability by the North must not be at the expenses of Southern domestic stability, and the other way round.

This principle should be included in the Charter beside that of human security. The vulnerabilities it would unveil, however, have a subjective rather than an objective character. The case is different from the application of the human security principle, which allows for the identification of objective categories of vulnerabilities (children, refugees, etc.). The application of the “subjective” global security principle means that the relevant questions must be taken into consideration by the EMP institutions and that decisions would be made only upon consensus. The relevant point here is not the procedure, which is obvious, but the stipulation by the Partners to adopt the principle and abide by it. From the point of view of the EU, this would be a difficult decision, for it would affect the application of political conditionality on funding.

This paper has explored the North-South broad security relationship in the EMP. Coming to a common ground in this relationship is made difficult by the asymmetry between the structural stability sought by the North to prevent instabilities from spilling over in its territory and the domestic, short-term stability sought by the Southern countries. These two objectives cannot be easily reconciled, also because the search for structural stability by means of sweeping economic and political reforms tends itself to generate short-term, domestic instability in the Southern countries.

The paper has tried to show that these contradictions may be solved or alleviated by the inclusion of the human security and the global security concepts in the political dialogue (and in the Charter). In fact, such inclusion would reassure the Southern Partners without detracting from Northern interests. This mutually beneficial development would contribute to enhance the dialogue, help the Partners to overcome their basic contradictions, and make the identification of a common ground easier and firmer.

⁶ J.-P. Courtois, *Elements de l'intervention de J.-P. Courtois sur le projet de Charte de Paix et de Stabilité*, Séminaire de Wilton Park sur le Dialogue Euro-Méditerranéen, 19-22 Octobre 1998, p. 4.