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**SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN PERCEPTIONS AND
PROPOSALS FOR MEDITERRANEAN SECURITY**

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The security of the Middle East and North Africa –the MENA region- has acquired greater salience since the 1990s. However, only after a short period of improvement, which continued until the mid of the 1990s, the security structures and dynamics in the MENA region have gone through a period of deterioration. Central to the negative developments in that regard is the failure experienced by the Middle East peace process. The renewal of violent confrontations in the occupied Palestinian territories has released a wave of negative attitudes and unrest all over the MENA region. The destabilizing effect of this wave of violence and hatred can hardly be exaggerated. For a considerable extent, developments in the Palestinian territories is among the causes of the rising threat of terrorism in the past few years. Moreover, conditions in the Palestinian territories contribute to the tolerance which considerable segments in MENA societies have shown toward terrorist activities.

Even before the eruption of violence in the occupied territories, the nascent security dynamics in the MENA of the early 1990s have received serious blows. The assassination of Israel's prime minister Yitzhak Rabin followed by the ascendance to power by the Israeli right wing government of Benjamin Nathanyaho have interrupted the then ongoing processes of multilateral talks in the fields of security, refugees, environment and development. The Middle East peace process created the conducive conditions for the EMP to take off. Consequently, the slow down of the peace process, and later its complete nonexistence, has deprived the EMP of much of the needed wind to keep sailing.

Over the past eight years, the security concerns in the MENA region have not only persisted but rather got aggravated. Efforts to improve regional security could not catch up with these developments. It is against this background the security perceptions and proposals coming from the Southern Mediterranean should be addressed. The aforementioned developments have brought many of the Southern incumbent elites and intellectuals back to their long-established cautious attitudes towards domestic and foreign policy. The new policies and attitudes served by MEPP and EMP were too young and immature to survive the political hardships experienced during most of the past 8 years.

Developments in the MENA region have put more constraints on governments' policies of openness and regional cooperation. The radicalized public was not at ease experimenting with new policies while the same traditional concerns continue to impose their heavy burden. Under these circumstances, the balance between reformists and conservatives within governments was tipped back to the benefit of the latter. By and large, the two factions reached to a new compromise according to which new economic policies of reform are to be maintained while reviving traditional approaches to security and politics. The Southern Mediterranean countries are going through a period in which the outcomes of the inconsistent policies applied to the different fields are, for a great extent, canceling each other. The resulting stagnation further worsens the security situation in the MENA region.

The purpose of this paper is to delineate the southern vision for Mediterranean security. Engaging the southern vision(s) should help identify and explain its nature and limits. The few southern proposals geared for Mediterranean security will be identified and put into the wider perspective of southern vision for Mediterranean security.

The Context

The concept of Mediterranean security is relatively a new concept. Although Mediterranean security has been on the agenda for decades, it gained more salience only in the post cold war era. More important, the definition and connotation of Mediterranean security have experienced radical change recently. Two new elements should be mentioned in that regard. First, the increasing focus on the domestically-based security threats, i.e., economic development, good governance, human rights, terrorism and migration. Second, the trans-regional nature of the Mediterranean is increasingly emphasized. For decades, Mediterranean security used to refer to the security of the Mediterranean as a water way that should be kept open and safe for sailing. Mediterranean security has been transformed from the security of a strategic way point to guarding against the threats spilling over from certain countries or regions around the Mediterranean to other countries and regions. Europe, the Middle East and North Africa have been for long conceived as 'stand alone' security regions. The modern Mediterranean security concept brings the three regions together to make them three interdependent security regions, and look even further to make them one integrated security region.

Mediterranean security is fairly developed on the conceptual level. The fact that developments in any of the sub-regional components of the Mediterranean are impacting the other components is widely recognized in the three sub-regions. However, operationalizing Mediterranean security has proved much more difficult. The agreement between the Mediterranean countries on the conceptual level is not matched by their capacity to develop the relevant common security policies. This failure might be attributed to the prevalent political and institutional cultures in the Mediterranean. While the challenges addressed in the Mediterranean are trans-regional in nature, the institutions in charge of addressing them are essentially designed to deal with straightforward national or regional challenges. There are, nevertheless, important variations in that regard. The EU enjoys a far developed institutional structure with higher capacity to deal with trans-regional challenges. The deficiencies the EU's institutional structure might have in that respect are nothing compared with the almost non-existent southern Mediterranean institutional structure of that kind.

Contrary to the EU, the Southern Mediterranean countries don't share the same vision of the Mediterranean. Southern views on the Mediterranean are the views of the different countries rather than the view of a homogeneous south. However, the Southern countries' views share some characteristics. First of all, perceptions and proposals of southern Mediterranean security should be studied against a background of limited interest in the subject among the southern policy makers, scholars and intellectuals. So far, the Mediterranean does not score high among the priorities of the Southern Mediterranean countries. Few examples could help explain this point. A humongous volume with thirty four chapters on Egypt's foreign policy did not include any single chapter about Egypt's Mediterranean policy (Ahmad, 1990). In their

landmark book on the Foreign policy of Arab states, Korany and Dessouki did not include the Mediterranean among the priorities of any Arab state (Bahgat and Dessouki, 1991). A more recent book on a similar subject only slightly touched upon the Mediterranean (Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, 2002).

This is the negative side of the picture. On the positive side, interest in the Mediterranean has rapidly increased during the 1990s. Regardless of the variations among the Southern Mediterranean countries in this regard, the focus is made on the economic dimension of cooperation across the Mediterranean. Moreover, the Southern countries tend to perceive economic cooperation in the Mediterranean in vertical rather than horizontal terms, where economic cooperation in the Mediterranean is perceived as equivalent to the economic relations with the EU. Introducing the Mediterranean to the political and developmental discourse of the southern countries meant to accentuate the increasing importance given to the relations with the EU, rather than integrating the Mediterranean as an organizing concept of foreign policy in the fields of economics and security. It also meant to allow the southern countries' policies a better fit into the rising process of regionalization of the international political economy and to adjust to the new EU Mediterranean policy.

Although the southern countries' perception of the Mediterranean has changed during the process, the original characteristics of their perceptions remain, by an large, unchanged. Lack of interest in Mediterranean security is among the characteristics that persisted over time. The good news is that such negligence of Mediterranean security is derived from a deep cultural tradition not to perceive the Mediterranean in security terms. To the contrary, the Mediterranean as a cultural identity, foreign policy orientation, and a venue for progress and modernization has been for long among the influential cultural and political alternatives in Southern Mediterranean politics, especially in Egypt and Lebanon (Abbas, 1986; Shehada, 1996). In a survey of threat and security perceptions among Egyptian political parties' officials and intellectuals, the Mediterranean was not mentioned at all as a source of security concerns or threats (Abdel Salam, 1999). Also, in the annual report "The State of the Arab World" produced by a number of distinguished pan-Arab intellectuals, the Mediterranean was never included among the security threats facing the Arab World (Hal Al-Umma, 1996; Hal Al-Umma, 1999; Hal Al-Umma, 2000).

In a survey of Jordanian intellectuals' attitudes towards security threats, the Mediterranean was not mentioned among the security threats by any of the 316 surveyed intellectuals (El-Twaisy, 1998). The closest to Mediterranean security in that regard is 'foreign military presence in the Gulf and the Mediterranean', which was considered by 56% of the respondents as a principal security threat (El-Twaisy, 1998, p. 96). Considering the troubled security environment in the Gulf, it could be argued that the Mediterranean could have been defined as a security threat by much smaller number if it were put in a separate category. Major economic regional blocks have been perceived as a security threat for the Arab World by 49% of the respondents (El-Twaisy, 1998, p. 96). This is a kind of generic concern that applies for the increasing number of economic blocks mushrooming everywhere while Arabs fail to build their own.

The Security Dimensions

The debate about Mediterranean security in the Southern Mediterranean has a number of characteristics as follows.

1. Mediterranean security is synonymous to relations with Europe. The literature about Mediterranean security in the southern Mediterranean tends to deal with the subject as another way of addressing relations with Europe. Mediterranean security in itself does not seem like having its own *raison d'être*.

2. Mediterranean security is extension of the security of the Middle East and North Africa. The case for the independent nature and identity of Mediterranean security has not been made yet in the Southern Mediterranean. Countries in the Southern Mediterranean try employing Mediterranean security to enhance their positions vis a vis their traditional security concerns.

3. Economic development, not security, is the main concern in the relations with Europe. It is not widely believed in the Southern Mediterranean countries that the Mediterranean as a security concept can help enhance their security. This is particularly the case on the short and medium terms. The contribution of the Mediterranean to security is mainly in the field of economics. But this, thus far, is seen as development rather than security.

4. More focus is put on the political role of the EU, both globally and in the Middle East. A great deal of the political debate in the southern Mediterranean is focused on the impact of changing international system on the south. The U.S. global hegemony is a major concern in the southern Mediterranean. Scholars and intellectuals express disappointment with the unipolar international structure. The commons wisdom in the south is that a bipolar, or preferably multipolar international system better serves the interests of the southern Mediterranean countries (Ahmad, 1991, p. 197; Saif, 1998, p. 98). This is particularly the case with the security interest of the south, which is revolving around the Arab-Israeli conflict and limiting the interference of external powers in the domestic affairs of the southern countries. The increasing political role of the EU is closely and passionately watched by Arab scholars and intellectuals hoping it could help limit the U.S. hegemony¹. Not infrequently, analysis in that regard is tainted with wishful thinking, where normal developments are interpreted as signs for the rise of European power at the expense of the U.S. (Zaki, 1990; Abdel Ghani, 1990; Umrán, 1990).

The prevalent tendency in the Arab World is to confine the concept of security to issues of hard security. Consequently, it is more common in the Arab World to limit perceptions of threat and security to interstate relations, including the interstate conflicts in the Mediterranean. But the existing interstate disputes in the Mediterranean have for long been classified either as Middle Eastern or inter-Arab conflicts. While European policy makers and scholars tend to classify these conflicts as Mediterranean security threats, Arabs, on the other hand, find no need to redefine them in a way that relates them to the Mediterranean.

There are important variations among the Southern Mediterranean countries in that regard. By and large, the Maghreb countries' perceptions of Mediterranean security are less influenced by the Middle East conflict. On the other hand, the Mashreq countries'

¹ This view is expressed by Gamal Amin and Ahmed Sidqi Al-Dijani in (Abdel Maguid, 1990).

perceptions of the Mediterranean are highly influenced by their concerns with the Middle East. To a great extent the Mashreq countries perceptions of Mediterranean security are extension of their Middle East policies. However, there are still some important variations among the Mashreq countries. As a rule of thumb, the higher the preoccupation of a Mashreq country with its immediate Middle Eastern concerns, the lower the level of interest it demonstrates toward Mediterranean security. Another rule of thumb is that the higher the tendency to open up the economy and society to the outside world, the higher the tendency to demonstrate interest in the Mediterranean security. A third factor is the extent to which the respective country's security is provided for by commitments of Western powers, whereas the higher the respective country's security is provided by Western security assurances, the higher its tendency to actively engage with Mediterranean security.

Applying the three rules, a continuum could be drawn with Syria at the very far end with the least interest in Mediterranean security, and Jordan at the other end with the highest level of interest in Mediterranean security. The conflict in the Middle East stands at the top of the political agenda of all Mashreq countries. Nevertheless, the fact that Jordan and Egypt have signed peace treaties with Israel helps ameliorate their Middle Eastern security concerns. Syria, on the other hand is still struggling to win back the Syrian territories occupied by Israel since the June 1967 war. Jordan and Egypt have been applying policies of economic openness for years. Syria, on the other hand, just began experimenting with economic openness. Jordan is a unique case among the Mashreq countries. For decades, the security of Jordan has been provided for through different kinds of assurances from Western countries, particularly the U.S. and the U.K. This reality has helped Jordan to develop greater traditions of trust and security cooperation with Western countries, traditions which can be easily extended to security cooperation with the EU. The joint Jordanian-Italian project to establish a conflict prevention center in Amman is indicative in that regard.

However, there are few in the Southern Mediterranean who do not exclude the possibility of Mediterranean cooperation vis a vis hard security issues. Habib (1993, p. 32) lists a number of actions Europe can do to help the Southern Mediterranean and the Arab World. Among these is banning of arms transfer to the region. He suggests that Arabs, under the auspices of the Arab League, should launch a process of regional disarmament and arms limitation, both conventional and non-conventional in the region. He argues that such a policy is good for inter-Arab relations as well as the larger region. Cooperation with Europe could be instrumental in achieving this goal (Habib, 1993, p. 37). Others in the Southern Mediterranean believe that their countries can and should play a proactive role in Mediterranean security. Nafi' and Khallaf (1997, pp. 83-85) list a number of policies the Southern Mediterranean countries might pursue. These include engaging Arab think tanks, including the ones affiliated with the Arab League, in developing Arab policy toward the Mediterranean; develop an inventory of the CBMs already employed in the region and come up with common denominators that can be applied in the Mediterranean; contribute to the development of non-military CBMs; enhance cooperation in response to natural disasters and civil protection; and intensify the security dialogue with European partners to get assurances that military force in any reform will not be used to interfere in the domestic affairs of the Southern Mediterranean countries.

Hard security issues, however, are not the only cause of tension between the two sides of the Mediterranean. In reality, there is a much more serious tension between

European and Mediterranean governments over soft security issues. The two sides perceive soft security issues differently. While the Southern Mediterranean partners tend to perceive them as developmental or police problems, European partners tend to conceive them as important as the hard security issues as long as they put at risk their fundamental values and interests. By and large, differences in judgment stem from the transitional phase through which soft security threats are passing. As has been explained by Hitti (1998, p. 37) “the traditional demarcation line between hard and soft security issues has been blurred, because some of the soft issues, if not dealt with properly, could become hard issues. Others are extremely important in the shaping of certain hard issues, for example economic disparities, as they relate to ethnic or national-based conflicts.” The different attitudes towards the “transforming” soft security issues across the Mediterranean could be attributed to the different levels of tolerance towards security risks characterizing the security cultures of the partners. Southern partners “enjoy” higher level of tolerance toward potential security risks, while Europeans tend to deal with them as if posing immediate threat. The different levels of feelings of urgency could explain, but only partly, differences between partners vis a vis soft security issues.

Another reason for the partners’ different attitudes toward soft security issues is derived from the direction of the Mediterranean soft security challenges, where threats originate in the south and spill over to the North. Variance in levels of urgency is not unusual in such a situation. More important, the dominant feeling in the south is that the south, both the countries and the region, is the subject of any common security policy designed to address such threats. The southern countries are asked to introduce major changes to guard against soft security threats. Change is always costly. While Europe is contributing, mainly financially, to this process, it is the south that is going to incur the heavy political and social cost of change. The issue at stake here is the stability of the southern countries. The cost sharing formula offered by Europe is not sufficient to encourage southern elites to take the risk of change. The European vision of change in the Southern Mediterranean is depicted as simplistic due to the European economic bias about problem solving (Hitti, 1998, p. 39). Ignoring the non economic nature of many of the Security challenges in the Mediterranean does not help Euro-Med cooperation in that regard.

Arab policy makers and scholars, however, do not neglect intrastate and threats of soft security nature. Al-Aiari (1994) identify three security threats haunting the Mediterranean: the gap in human and social development, the gap in levels of economic development, and the technological gap (Al-Iarry, 1994; Awad, 2000). Faragallah (2002, p. 139) recognizes the security threats caused by poverty and economic hardships in the Southern Mediterranean countries. However, southerners tend to suggest that the conventional means of development and economic cooperation are sufficient to deal with these problems and that putting unnecessary emphasis on their security nature could be counter productive. Many among the southern partners argue that Europeans unjustifiably exaggerate the importance of the security dimension of the EMP. They believe that abandoning such skewed policy toward a more balanced and comprehensive approach should facilitate cooperation across the Mediterranean (Al-Fehry, 2000). The same view was expressed by Mohamed Bin Isa, Morocco’s foreign minister during the ministerial meeting of the Mediterranean Forum in October 2001 in Aghader (Al-Shark Al-Awsat, 27 October 2001). It is, for a great extent, uncomfortable and may be insulting for many in the Arab World to see the EU dealing with

development and democracy in their countries from the narrow angle of security (Shahin, 1998). A more subtle way of addressing this problem on the European side might help winning the cooperation of the Southern countries.

The Cultural Dimension

There is increasing concerns in the Southern Mediterranean vis a vis the cultural dimension of security, where concerns have been expressed regarding the impact of Mediterranean relations on the cultural identity of the Southern Mediterranean. Selim (2001) has developed a cultural approach to Mediterranean security. He emphasizes the influence of cultural characteristics on relations between countries and argues that the future of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership is highly dependent on the way through which the cultural aspects are addressed. He argues that the cultural dimensions of the EMP are the most serious problems that could obstruct the whole project. Selim emphasizes the importance of cultural dimensions as causes for conflict and cooperation between nations. He recognizes the cultural pluralism characterizing the Mediterranean and argues that security and other dimensions of the EMP cannot proceed in the right direction unless based on conducive way in the handling of the cultural dimension. He also argues that cultural confidence building is the base on which confidence building on security issues can be established (Selim, 2001, p. 6).

The problem of the cultural dimension is aggravated by the gap dividing ruling elites and masses in the Southern countries (Selim, 2001, p. 8). The Southern ruling elites are more influenced by European cultural norms, while the masses, which are also excluded from the southern political communities, are more influenced by the authentic cultures of the south. A cultural dialogue, or any other instrument to bridge the cultural differences across the Mediterranean, cannot be effective without including the masses. Therefore, Selim suggests that the intergovernmental relations that can be instrumental in promoting north-south cooperation in the fields of economics and politics don't suit the cultural field where going beyond the ruling elite is a must.

The cultural argument has gained considerable validity after the terrorist attacks of September 11. It is reasonable to argue about the ultimate social, economic and political causes of terrorism. However, it is equally reasonable to argue about culture as the immediate cause and the instrument that has been used to legitimize terrorism. Therefore, if the challenge of terrorism is to be addressed in the security cooperation between north and south of the Mediterranean, which is the case, culture as a dimension of security should also be included. Consequently, cultural relations between north and south of the Mediterranean should be upgraded from the typically neglected third basket.

It is definitely helpful to pay more attention to the cultural dimensions of Mediterranean security. The cultural argument could serve the Mediterranean cause by accentuating the importance of culture. However, the problem with the cultural approach to security is the inability to operationalize it. By virtue of its nature, cultural changes cannot be achieved through intergovernmental agreements or the implementation of few programs. Contrary to economic or security cooperation, the desired outcomes of cultural cooperation cannot be reached by the mere implementation of certain programs. Change of cultural values is a gradual process. Moreover, the societal receptivity of

cultural change is a function of large number of factors that can hardly be manipulated in orderly fashion.

Another problem with the cultural approach to security is its ideological nature. Although the cultural argument is adopted by many in the Arab World, it is primarily the pan-Arabist and Islamist movements who tend to subscribe more to it. The common perception among followers of these movements is that the goal of the cooperation between north and south of the Mediterranean, particularly in the security field, is to not to allow these movements to ascend to power in the southern Mediterranean (Balquiza, 1993, p. 141).

Dynamics and the Way Ahead

It should not be surprising against the background discussed above to see only few security proposals coming from the Southern Mediterranean. It should be spelled at the outset that the southern Mediterranean countries have, thus far, neither produced a solid vision for Mediterranean security nor come up with solid proposals to address the issue. All what has been produced, so far, is essentially rhetorical statements not enough to go beyond a mere very ambitious wish list. As has been put by Hitti (1998, p. 37), in the Mediterranean “too many ideas, concepts and initiatives emanate from the northern shore, while in turn, too many expectations emanate from the southern shores, accompanied most of the time by frustration due to a feeling that they are falling behind and are threatened by potential encroachment and interference.” Mediterranean countries tend to move in reaction to European and Western ideas (Saif, 1998, p. 104).

Things look only little better on the other side of the partnership. Europeans have made a larger number of security proposals. However, the real value of such proposals is doubted, at least because most, if not all, of them could not fly high. The failure of the two sides to come up with coherent visions for Mediterranean security is due to the specific nature of the Mediterranean region itself. The fact that the Mediterranean falls short of making a security region in conventional terms has been stated over and over. The region does not readily lend itself to conventional security treatment.

The differences between the European and Southern Mediterranean perceptions of Mediterranean security can be summarized as follows. Europeans recognize the hard security aspects of the Mediterranean. But they also recognize the limits imposed on the EuroMed framework to address the hard core components of them. In particular, Europeans recognize the very limited EuroMed capacity to deal with the core components of the Arab Israeli conflict and the proliferation of WMD in the Middle East. But these difficulties don't discourage Europeans from addressing the peripheral aspects of the hard security issues in the Mediterranean. Developing measures of confidence building has been the approach pursued by the Europeans to serve that purpose.

Southern Mediterranean countries, on the other hand, are highly concerned with hard security threats in the Mediterranean. These threats are after all the southern countries main security concerns. The southern Mediterranean countries recognize the limits of the EuroMed setting in addressing these issues. They however, want to use the EuroMed setting as additional forum to raise their concerns. Moreover, Southern Mediterranean countries are not ready to take part in the confidence building approach

suggested by their European partner. In the Arab view, taking part in the peripheral components of hard security issues could jeopardize their central security interests.

Europeans tend to put more focus on the soft security threats haunting the Mediterranean. These afterwards are security threats that can be managed within the EuroMed framework. Some of these soft issues are straightforward security threats, such as drug trafficking, organized crime and illegal labor trafficking. Others are rather political issues, such as poverty, good governance, corruption and migration. But Europeans fail to make a distinction between these issues. They tend to perceive them in holistic fashion, and offer a comprehensive package of political, economic and security instruments to deal with them.

Southern Mediterranean countries classify soft security threats differently. They tend to conceive the security issues as police rather than clear cut security. They also tend to conceive the political concerns as being developmental in nature. Therefore, we could talk about three different categories of security issues: hard security issues, soft security issues, and political issues. Cooperation between the Southern Mediterranean countries and their European counterparts are more likely to progress in the fields of soft security/police issues. Hard security issues are more amenable to be gently addressed through the declaratory measures and dialogue. Political issues are the most difficult to be handled. They are considered by the Southern Mediterranean countries as sovereignty-related issues that should be guarded against interference by outsiders.

For obvious reasons, there is implicit reluctance in the southern Mediterranean to admit the domestic, south-originating nature of the security threats in the Mediterranean. Southern countries prefer classifying the threats of political instability, terrorism, migration and drug trafficking as developmental rather than security problems. Instead, there is a tendency in the southern Mediterranean to emphasize the importance of traditional hard security issues. Abdel Halim (1998) identifies two Egyptian security concerns in the Mediterranean: presence of foreign naval powers and nuclear armament. The underpinning Egyptian security concern, according to Abdel Halim, is preserving Egypt's independence and limiting the interference of foreign powers in Egyptian internal affairs (Abdel Halim, 1998, p. 21-22). Guarding against foreign influence is among the most important features of Egyptian political culture and objectives of Egypt's foreign policy. Among the approaches applied to achieve this goal is the denial of the security dimensions of domestic southern problems. The obvious rationale behind this view is to avoid providing a justification for foreign interference in domestic affairs.

Another example of the same approach can be found in Selim's criticism for the guidelines to the Mediterranean security charter produced by the Euro-Mediterranean meeting in Stuttgart (Selim, 2000). Selim criticizes the guidelines for focusing on conflict prevention not conflict resolution; granting Europe a role in Southern Mediterranean security without granting the Southern countries a role in European security; emphasizing regime transformation in the south while ignoring interstate conflicts in the region; focusing on confidence building measures without ending the current conflicts, which perpetuate the unjust status quo; and failing to respect the culturally pluralistic nature of the Mediterranean through imposing Western definitions of human rights and democracy under the assumption of the universality of these values.

Such criticism is widely shared among the state elite, nationalists and islamists. Some of the criticism raised by these important groupings is quite valid. Engaging these

views is a must if common Mediterranean security were to progress. This is especially important to counter the prevalent feeling that keeping radicals away from power is high among the goals of the EMP (Chourou, 1998, p. 45).

The gap between the attitudes prevalent among conservatives in the Southern Mediterranean and the attitudes prevalent in Europe obstruct the progress of the EMP in the field of security. Partnership assumes the presence of common values and goals between partners, which is not the case in the EuroMed. The diversion of values and goals is the major challenge facing the EMP. The dilemma of the EMP is that each side needs to win the cooperation of other sides but in different fields and to achieve different objectives. Surfing through the 'not-that-harmonious' needs and goals of the different partners is the challenge the EMP has to overcome.

Southern Mediterranean reformists, on the other hand, view things differently. For instance, some argue that the focus on conflict prevention should rather be enhanced (Al-Sa`aïdi, 2001). They stick to the promises of Barcelona, including democracy, human rights and gender equality, but find progress difficult because of the poisoning effect of the Arab Israeli conflict (Al-Yousefi, 2003). Reformists would rather try limiting the negative impact of the Arab Israeli conflict on the EMP. The latter approach looks more reasonable. But in any case, settling down only for modest security cooperation in the Mediterranean looks unavoidable. Under these conditions, Mediterranean security cooperation should aim at two goals: elimination of suspicions and mistrust and the promotion of new security culture.

Regarding security culture, two dimensions still need to be introduced to the Southern Mediterranean. Concepts of collective security, cooperative security and sufficient defense are new to the Southern Mediterranean. Even though a significant number of officials, especially diplomats, and scholars are very much familiar with these concepts, they have not influenced security policies in the South in a meaningful way. Raising the awareness of such concepts and demonstrating their practical value and applicability could be helpful towards enhancing security cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

Talking security in multilateral setting is also new to the Southern Mediterranean (Gillespie, 2002, p. 8). Creating larger number of multilateral forums designed to serve this purpose could also be helpful. Considering the position of Southern governmental organs in charge of security in the institutional structures of most Southern Mediterranean countries, it is important to involve the relevant institutions in this process.

Cultural dialogue and fighting terrorism are areas that lend themselves to security cooperation within the EMP. Those two areas have been identified by Southern officials in different occasions, including Jordan's foreign minister in his speech at the mid-term conference of the foreign ministers of the Euro-Med Partnership and Ahmed Maher, Egypt's foreign minister, in the Mediterranean Forum Aghader meeting in October 2001. The value that cultural dialogue can bring to Mediterranean security is important. The cultural underpinnings of the differences between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean countries have not yet been addressed properly.

Counter terrorism readily lends itself to greater level of cooperation among the Mediterranean partners. Terrorism is no longer a soft security threat. It rather links soft and hard security risks in one combined issue. European and Southern Mediterranean countries, more or less, equally feel the burden of terrorism. Cooperation in counter

terrorism could help overcome the different approaches and attitudes toward security cooperation across the Mediterranean.

It might be helpful in that regard to capitalize on the presence of multiple forums for Mediterranean cooperation. In particular, the Mediterranean Forum could provide additional venue for cooperation in certain areas where the EMP framework might not be conducive. Fighting terrorism could be among the field in which the Mediterranean Forum could prove instrumental. It has been noticed by the Spain's foreign minister that the absence of Israel from the Mediterranean forum could better help the member countries improve their cooperation in the fight against terrorism (Al-Shark Al-Awsat, 27 October 2001).

Certain aspects of the threat of illegal migration can be also subject to similar cooperation. Coordinating efforts to counter human trafficking, consultation on European migration policies and considering the developmental needs of Southern Mediterranean countries could provide for a comprehensive package toward this purpose.

Conclusion

The outcomes of the EMP are not by any means impressive. But this is particularly true vis a vis security cooperation. The general belief in the Southern Mediterranean is that the Mediterranean is not relevant to address the real security issues of the region (Chourou, 2000). This belief could explain the lack of progress achieved in that regard. The Mediterranean countries avoid making such a point in a clear way not to alienate their European partners. The Southern Mediterranean countries willingness to accommodate the needs of their European partners should be appreciated, reciprocated and capitalized upon.

Settling down for less ambitious plans for Mediterranean security should be the approach of the near future. Lowering the partners' expectations should help avoid frustration and tension. A selective and partial approach toward Mediterranean security might be more effective in this respect. This could be achieved through the careful selection of areas of cooperation. Illegal migration, organized crime and terrorism are good candidate in this respect. Adjusting the collective multilateral approach to the variant security concerns of the Southern Mediterranean countries could also be helpful in serving the same purpose. In other words, compromising the comprehensiveness and indivisibility which characterized the original Mediterranean security concept seems inevitable in the foreseen future. The long term might bring better news for Mediterranean security. But this is in any case pending upon developments most of which fall beyond the mandate of the EMP.

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