

**DOCUMENTI
IAI**

**DEVELOPING DIALOGUE BETWEEN WEU AND
MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES: SOME PROPOSAL**

by Thanos Dokos

Paper presented at the conference on
"WEU's role in the Mediterranean and the Euro-Mediterranean partnership"
Rome, IAI, 4-5 December 1998

IAI9840

ISTITUTO AFFARI INTERNAZIONALI

DEVELOPING DIALOGUE BETWEEN WEU AND MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES: SOME PROPOSAL

by Thanos Dokos

From a British-dominated region in the 19th century, the Mediterranean became an area of superpower competition in the 20th century. On the eve of the 21st century, the Mediterranean is evolving to a fault-line between the prosperous North (the "haves") and an impoverished South (the "have-nots").

After the end of the Cold War, the Mediterranean is being perceived as a security region on its own merit for all European and Euro-Atlantic institutions as a result of a growing realisation that European and Mediterranean security are closely linked. The following characteristics of the -still fluid and evolving--Mediterranean security environment could be identified:

- (1) The traditional definition of security in military terms is inadequate. Economic, social, demographic and environmental factors have a considerable impact on security. A broader, more comprehensive concept of security should be adopted to encompass not only the *stricto sensu* military aspects (the so-called "high politics"), but also other aspects such as economic, social, demographic, environmental, etc. ("low politics"). In this context, the Mediterranean region constitutes a security complex" characterised by high interdependence, which makes co-operation among Mediterranean countries absolutely vital for the solution of various common problems,
- (2) It would be difficult and misleading to examine the Mediterranean, from a security perspective, in complete isolation from the surrounding regions of Transcaucasus/Central Asia, the Balkans and the Middle East, including the Persian Gulf. The factor of geography is very important, as linkage with other regions and conflicts may impede efforts for conflict resolution and regional co-operation;
- (3) Despite the alarmist predictions of some analysts, there is no direct military threat (in the form of "clash of civilisations") from the South towards the North, in the Mediterranean region. Most security challenges and problems in the Mediterranean are of a non-military nature and therefore cannot be dealt with military means.
- (4) The factors of instability, and therefore of vulnerability and conflict, are multidimensional. Some of them are mainly of a domestic nature and affect the very fabric of individual states and societies. Other security problems in the Mediterranean will be largely transnational, in the sense that they will affect the security of many states and their resolution will require the co-operation of all states involved.¹

¹ Thanos Dokos "Security Problems in the Mediterranean", Occasional paper 97.4, Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, Athens, 1997, p. 1-2.

Regional Cooperation: Problems And Prospects

The end of the Cold War has lifted many of the constraints on regional cooperation in the Mediterranean. There are several diplomatic initiatives under way, including the Mediterranean Dialogues of WEU and NATO² and, of course, the Barcelona process (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership/EMP). The large number of initiatives raises the issue of cooperation between organisations.

The relative lack of success in efforts for regional co-operation in the Mediterranean can be attributed to the following factors:

- (1) The existence of the Arab-Israeli conflict (and to a much lesser extent other conflicts such as the Greek-Turkish one) frustrate efforts to explore cooperative arrangements in CSBM and arms control fields
 - (2) Some of the rivalries and conflicts in the region are overlapping with out-of-region antagonisms and conflicts, complicating even more the efforts for conflict resolution and co-operation);
 - (3) The lack of homogeneity between the North and the South and of shared values (like in the case of the CSCE), where states despite their ideological differences had strong historical and cultural links. In addition, there are great differences in the level of development, in the size of states and their military capabilities;³
 - (4) The relative lack of south-south relations;
 - (5) The lack of territorial contiguity among the two shores of the Mediterranean (at least by land), although this can be seen as an advantage in some cases;
 - (6) Colonial memories in the south of the Mediterranean.⁴
- Of course, not all of the above factors weigh equally.

Europe and Mediterranean Security

In the not-so-distant future, as the U.S. will be shifting their attention more and more to the Eastern Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, the rest of the Mediterranean will become

² On NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue see for instance: Nicola de Santis, "The Future of NATO's Mediterranean Initiative" NATO Review, no.1, Spring 1998; Larrabee, Green, Lesser & Zanini "NATO's Mediterranean Initiative Policy Issues and Dilemmas", Santa Monica, RAND, 1998; Alberto Bin, "Strengthening Cooperation in the Mediterranean: The Contribution to of t the Atlantic Alliance"

³ According to Stephen Calleya, "The three sub-regions encompassing the Mediterranean arc southern Europe, the Maghreb, and the Mashreq. Each of the sub-regions continues to follow different evolutionary patterns and there is very little to indicate that any of them will integrate with their counterparts across the Mediterranean any time soon. Relations across Southern Europe are largely co-operative dominant, with this group of countries increasing their intergovernmental and transnational ties with the rest of Europe on a continuous basis. In contrast, conflictual relations have consistently hindered closer co-operation between countries in both North Africa and the Levant. Relations in these two sub-regions of the Mediterranean remain primarily limited at an intergovernmental level, with cross-border types of interaction limited to the energy sector and Islam. (Stephen Calleya, "Is the Barcelona Process Working? EU policy in the Eastern Mediterranean paper presented at a conference on the Barcelona process. Athens April 1998, p. 7).

⁴ Thanos Dokos, "Sub-Regional Cooperation in the Mediterranean: Current Issues and Future Prospects" in "Sub-Regional Cooperation in the New Europe Current Issues and Future Prospects institute for East-West Studies (JEWS) (forthcoming, January 1999).

an EU sphere of influence, provided the EU develops a common foreign and security policy.⁵ Indeed, the fluid nature of contemporary international relations in the Middle East certainly offers the EU the opportunity to upgrade its role in this important region.⁶

The main instrument will continue to be the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. One of the three basic tasks of the Barcelona process is the creation of a political and security partnership with the aim of establishing a common area of peace and stability. Top of the agenda was the endorsement, or at least elaboration, of a security chapter that will lay the foundations for the peaceful resolution of crisis situations and conflicts throughout the Euro-Mediterranean area.⁷ Such a charter would enable the partners to identify the factors of friction. So far, there hasn't been much progress toward this objective.

It is argued that the Barcelona partnership is "still a Commission-driven and not a CFSP-driven process; WEU is therefore still kept out of it, even as CSBMs are being slowly developed. Yet, with respect to countries where geopolitics still prevail over geo-economics, the economic and financial leverage of EU is marginal, at times confined only to post-conflict rehabilitation".⁸

It should be emphasised that WEU's Mediterranean Dialogue is not a reaction to a particular event but rather a part of WEU's overall cooperative approach to security, especially towards neighbouring countries. A major shortcoming in this dialogue would appear to be the lack of consensus between the EU and WEU over a division of their various responsibilities in relation to Mediterranean developments as well as an overall political strategy.⁹

However, as argued by the Director of WEU's Institute for Security Studies, Dr. Guido Lenzi after Amsterdam, the EU and WEU "can jointly operate essentially in crisis-prevention and peace-building contingencies, rather than with the peace-enforcement aspects. WEU's comparative advantage with respect to NATO lies in the fact that it is the security instrument at disposal of both EU and NATO".¹⁰

⁵ In the interim the EU will continue to contain instability that may emerge along its southern periphery in the short-term its priority will be to achieve internal cohesiveness through the successful introduction of economic and monetary union. In the medium term, the EU's objective will be to integrate as many central and eastern European countries as is feasible (Calleja p. 10).

⁶ Europe cannot just be a provider of economic assistance. Many Arab countries are anxious for Europe to play a major role in the peace negotiations, which are marked by far too much domination by the US. A prerequisite for this is agreement among the European countries on a common policy towards the region.

⁷ The underlying philosophy of Barcelona Declaration points to a comprehensive security conception, giving a low profile to military issues, although emphasising in the first chapter arms control, the non-proliferation of WMD, the prevention of excessive accumulation of conventional arms, the principle of sufficiency for defence requirements, equal security and mutual confidence with the lowest possible levels of troops and weaponry. (Antonio Marquina, "Experiences, Institutions and Instruments for Conflict Prevention in the Framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference", EUROMESCO Working Group on Confidence-Building, Conflict Prevention and Arms Control, p. 7).

⁸ Guido Lenzi "Cooperative Security in the Mediterranean". Paper presented at a Conference on the "Future of NATO's Mediterranean Initiative", Rome, November 1997. p. 2.

⁹ Martin Lipkowski, "Security in the Mediterranean Region". Working Paper. Political Committee Assembly of WEU, October 1996 p. 27.

¹⁰ Lenzi p. 3.

Promoting New Ideas for Cooperation: Some Pre-Conditions & Caveats

A number of systemic, domestic and institutional constraints hinder the development of a comprehensive security regime. Therefore, for any EU/WED effort to build confidence and increase stability in the Euro-Mediterranean region to have a realistic chance for success, a number of pre-conditions should exist and some factors should be taken under consideration:

- The Mediterranean is a region with its own specific dynamics and security challenges. The European model of cooperative security (with all its conditionalities) can be proposed, but not imposed to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership area.¹¹ For instance, whereas some elements of NATO's PfP initiative (which was quite successful in Central and Eastern Europe) may be applicable to the Mediterranean, the relative heterogeneity of the region would require specifically tailored solutions;
- It would be unrealistic to approach the region as a single entity. Consequently, the same solutions cannot be applied wholesale to the entire region;
- The interests and priorities of the EU countries and those of the southern Mediterranean countries are, in most instances, not the same. Dialogue should show that Europe long ago discarded the sombre remnants of imperialism and that it is not seeking to impose solutions inspired by its own systems on its neighbours in the south. On the economic front, more care must be taken not to impose an economic model with a worldwide perspective that does not take into account of local situations in such countries. They can only adapt gradually to a market economy and will wish to maintain state control in some sectors;
- Topics for cooperation should, of course, be acceptable to the partners as well as practically feasible;
- If we set the lower common denominator as our objective, then we risk ending up with very insignificant activities; if on the other hand we set very high expectations, subsequent failure could endanger the whole initiative. Finding the right balance is a very delicate and difficult process;
- No progress can be achieved without the active participation and contribution of WEU's Mediterranean partners.

The Arms Control Environment

The Mediterranean region is not a vacuum with regard to multilateral or bilateral commitments in the fields of arms control and CSBMs. Security regimes, either in operation or as agreed blueprints cover various parts of the Mediterranean area.¹²

¹¹ Lenzi p. 4

¹² Fred Tanner "The Euron-Mediterranean Security Partnership: Prospects for Conventional Arms Limitations and Confidence-Building". EUROMESCO Working Group on Confidence-Building, Conflict Prevention and Arms Control, Rome, July 1997, p. 12.

The Mediterranean states are signatories of a number of arms control agreements. NATO member states have signed the GEE Treaty and the Wassenaar Arrangement (which replaced COCOM), most states in the region have signed and ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention (some, such as Egypt, Syria and Libya have not signed, linking the issue with Israel's nuclear capability), the Biological Weapons Convention, the Ottawa Treaty, and of course, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Some states are also participating to the UN Register for Conventional Arms.

Regional arms control efforts (such as the ongoing ACRS talks in the framework of the Arab-Israeli peace process, and discussions for a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone [NWFZ] in the M. East) have not been successful so far. It is becoming more and more apparent that in the Mediterranean and the M. East, arms control can only follow the resolution of security problems. There seem to be better prospects for confidence- and security building measures (CSBMs). However, the issue of CSBMs will be discussed only peripherally in this paper, as it will be the focal point of another study. It would suffice to stress here that confidence-building in the Mediterranean would be a gradual process and that ill-prepared efforts or unwarranted optimism would probably be counter-productive.

For any CSBM or arms control agreement in the Mediterranean region, there would be two major issues:

(a) Verification Procedures;

(b) Area of application: What kind of format should be found for CBMs or negotiations for any arms control proposal in the Mediterranean? Options include (i) the 12 Mediterranean partner states (ii) all of the Euro-Med community (12+15), or (iii) a smaller number of willing states on a sub-regional basis.¹³

Proposals

The complementary role of WED Mediterranean Dialogue should be kept in mind and the WED should concentrate its efforts on fields where it has a clear comparative advantage and something constructive to offer as a contribution to the solution of the problems in the Mediterranean region. In other words, we should look for the "added value".

What -if anything-- can the WEU do better than other organisations to promote stability in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership area? The question is especially pertinent at a time when there are calls even for dissolution of the WED and when the organisation is trying to define its role in the context of the European security architecture.

According to Dr. Lenzi, "WEU deficiencies may prove to be its advantages: it involves many European countries in a differentiated and looser (and therefore more flexible) relationship; it will follow in the wake of EU (in the words of the Ostend Communiqué: "[WEU] will contribute its expertise to the Barcelona process, in response to the requests

¹³ It is argued that politically the most appropriate format seems to be the 12 + 15 option, as the larger framework may be helpful to overcome sub-regional rivalries, which threaten to stalemate the Barcelona process. The principle of indivisibility of security is supporting that option. The threat assessment of some partner states from the Middle East may however, break tns areas of application of sestirity commitment Israel, Turkey and some Arab states include in their military planning any threats coming from outside the EMP area, such ass Iran, Iraq of Libya. (Tanner, p. 31).

from EU"); for the moment, it consists in exchanges of information on crisis management, early warning and training in peacekeeping operations or humanitarian missions".¹⁴

In the eyes of European and Mediterranean non-member states, NATO is perceived as militarily more powerful and efficient than the WED. However, the WED is perceived as less "aggressive", perhaps because of its membership. In fact, U.S. 's non-membership to the WED may in some cases be a disadvantage, but in other cases may be an advantage. Finally, the linkage between the WED and the ED is a clear advantage, since Mediterranean partners perceive the latter not only as their main trading partner, but also as the only credible source of developmental aid.

At the same time, factors "obstructing" the development of the Mediterranean Dialogue include the following:

- Desire of some countries not simply to link but to actually subordinate the Dialogue to the Barcelona process;
 - An effort to avoid duplication of efforts with NATO's initiative'
 - Direct initiatives of the four countries participating in EUROFOR & EUROMARFOR;
- The misperceptions between the northern and the southern Mediterranean countries (as demonstrated, for instance, by the reactions to EUROFOR & EUROMARFOR).¹⁵

Some of the proposals that will be outlined below may fall under the category of CSBMs, but in many cases the distinction is difficult and, anyway. CSBMs are an integral part of security cooperation.

- Euro-Mediterranean partners' major objective should be the creation of favourable conditions for future negotiations on arms control and disarmament and the development of a culture of dialogue and cooperation in the politico-military sector.¹⁶ (The main emphasis should be on the continuation of the search for a charter for stability, where a cautious approach is necessary. Only a cautious European approach will bring success and would seem to be the most appropriate course of action in a first phase that could consist of:

- "Low cost" confidence-building and transparency measures whose application would be voluntary;
- The notification of future military activities (discussion of a code of conduct for military activities);
- An exchange of information among military staff.

Potential activities in the context of the WED might include discussion -through the reactivation of multilateral meetings-- of national perceptions on a number of issues

¹⁴ Lenzi, p. 2.

¹⁵ An urgent task for the WED to provide detailed, constantly updated information on the reasons for establishing forces answerable to WEU (FAWED) -such as EUROFOR & EUROMARFOR, formed by France, Italy, Spain and Portugal in the framework of the WED- which continue to be a source of concern to the countries in the south. As argued in a 1996 WEU Assembly Report, "If these forces are to carry out Petersberg-type missions humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping and peace-enforcement missions, prevention of armed conflict, etc.) without excluding military operations under Article V of the modified Brussels Treaty, the southern countries may well speculate as to whether such missions are in anticipation of possible conflict between North and South or on the contrary, whether the southern countries could benefit from the assistance of these forces should the need arise and even take part in their activities . (Lipkowski, p. 28).

¹⁶ Tanner p. 20.

including de-mining operations, crisis management (such as observation, and eventual participation to CRISEX), non-proliferation and military doctrines, military contacts and visits, joint exercises, maritime CSBMs and, at a later stage, creation of Regional Security Centres/Conflict Prevention Centres.¹⁷ Furthermore, since the WED does not have schools like NATO's in Oberammergau (SHAPE) and Rome (NADEFOOL), the WED-Institute for Security Studies should continue and even intensify its successful seminar activities with increased participation of Mediterranean partners (with emphasis on information seminars). Finally, the WED should contemplate port visits of EDROMARFOR to Mediterranean partners (following the example of NATO's STANAVFORMED).

A number of other measures have been suggested:

- Encyclopaedia of security and defence terminology;
- Euro-Mediterranean network of institutes of defence studies;
- Euro-Mediterranean security yearbook;
- Information seminars held in the Mediterranean partners' territory.¹⁸

It is also argued that cooperation between the armed forces of Mediterranean countries for non-traditional military purposes should now be promoted. Potential areas of cooperation would include natural disasters, control of sea-lanes, illicit traffic of all kinds, intelligence cooperation against terrorism, police cooperation against transnational crime¹⁹, civil reconstruction and eventually crisis management and peace support operations.²⁰

In this context, an interesting idea was put forward by Stephen Calleya: the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Maritime Coastguard, which would be mandated to carry out stop and search exercises in four principal areas: maritime safety, maritime pollution, narcotics trafficking and the transport of illegal migrants ("3rd Pillar" issues).²¹ Calleya takes this idea further by suggesting that, in the longer term, 'the creation of a flexible security framework that is already addressing soft security issues as those outlined earlier will set the stage for tackling more sensitive security challenges which include intolerant fundamentalism, demographic expansion and outright conflict'²²

Another possible area of cooperation was suggested by Dr. Guido Lenzi. It could involve a common European and Arab assistance to sub-Saharan countries, for conflict prevention and crisis management under the aegis of GAD.²³ Indeed, in the last few years, we witnessed several conflicts (mainly civil wars) in the Sub-Saharan Africa (in Mali, Niger, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Central African Republic, Rwanda, Burundi Democratic Republic of Congo, etc). What is more, new worrying tendencies are making

¹⁷ Lipkowski, p. 28 & 31-32.

¹⁸ Reflection Paper by the WED Institute for Security Studies on "A possible WEU Contribution to the Barcelona Process". ISS (98) 23 E. 2() October.

¹⁹ See for instance the study by Alessandro Politi on "European Security: The New Transnational Risks", Chaillot papers 29, October 1997. Paris, WEU-ISS.

²⁰ Lenzi, p. 3.

²¹ Calleya, p. 14.

²² In order to ensure that such a security model can become operational in the shortest period possible, it is envisaged that the EMMC should consist of sectoral types of soft security cooperation. For example, any two or more EMP members can formulate cooperative alliances in specific sectors without having to wait until all partners are in a position to introduce such actions. (Calleya, p. 14).

²³ Lenzi, p. 3.

themselves felt which will affect both sides of the Mediterranean: migration from sub-Saharan Africa of economic, political and environmental refugees.²⁴

An Arab peacekeeping force or a mixed Arab-African peacekeeping force would probably be more acceptable than a European or European-led force. Already three Mediterranean Dialogue countries -Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco-have experience in cooperation in peacekeeping operations through their participation in NATO-led IFOR/SFOR in Bosnia. The WED could provide additional training for peacekeeping operations to military units from Mediterranean partner countries or even create multinational European-Arab peacekeeping units. The establishment of a peacekeeping training centre could be contemplated, perhaps in the model of the recently established Balkan Peacekeeping Force. The peacekeeping force could under certain circumstances be deployed in other regions.

Such cooperation would serve a dual target: (a) deal with Sub-Saharan conflicts through peacekeeping/peace-support operations; (b) increase confidence between northern and southern Mediterranean states.

Finally, the WEU should consider the extent to which it might use its good offices to resuscitate the activities of the ACRS Working Group, which has continued, since the Madrid peace conference, to bring together the countries involved in the conflict in the Middle East. The group, boycotted by Syria from the outset, has reached a stalemate since the change of government in Israel.²⁵ Any substantive discussions in the ACRS context progress would be unlikely, however, unless there is real and irreversible progress in the implementation of the peace agreement.

Conclusion

We appear to be approaching a rather critical point concerning the future development of the WED Mediterranean Dialogue. Despite opposition in some circles, this author is cautiously optimistic about the evolutionary potential of the Mediterranean Dialogue. However, there continues to be uncertainty over the direction of the Dialogue. Behind this uncertainty lies an essential question mark over the role WEU and the European Union wish and should play in the Mediterranean region. Even after the initial period of implementation of the Barcelona Process, there is no clear answer to the question of whether and to what extent Europe should give greater priority to the Mediterranean.

There is an evolving debate on "expansion first" or "deepening first". In principle, expansion should be given priority in order to alleviate some of the membership problems of the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Barcelona process. However in practice there are very few if any candidates that meet the criteria.

Therefore, the emphasis should be on deepening the Dialogue, while, at the same time, keeping the door open for new partners.

The scope and depth of the WEU's Mediterranean Dialogue will be influenced to a large extent by developments taking place within the framework of two other important

²⁴ Nadji Safir, "The Question of Migration in John Holmes (ed.), *Maelstrom: The United States, Southern Europe and the Challenges of the Mediterranean*, Cambridge, Mass., 1995, p.74.

²⁵ Lipkowski, p. 27.

initiatives, namely the EU Barcelona process and the Middle East peace process.

This paper will conclude by urging all interested parties to address security challenges in the Mediterranean as quickly as possible. Especially concerning problems of a socio-economic nature, time is a luxury we may not have. Indeed, it would be rather fitting to quote David McTaggart, founder of Greenpeace:

"The dinosaurs might have been as intelligent as ourselves, and decided like ourselves to set up sub-committees, which would set up working groups to submit reports on the possibilities of examining the situation further.