

Security as an Interregional Concern: The EU and the Middle East

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Abstract

In this paper European-Middle Eastern security relations are being investigated with particular reference to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The study underlines the European Union's important role in the Middle East in terms of economic cooperation and development assistance, but it also highlights the obstacles the European Union faces in reaching a unified position in the Middle East security discussion. The paper asks how and with what success the European Union has tried to promote regional security through the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, in particular in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is argued that the European Union's attempt to advance regional security through the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership remains elusive and fragile. EU policy towards the Middle East Peace Process still depends largely on particular EU presidencies. The fact that the Middle East is so poorly organized as a region and tends to favor bilateral negotiations with the European Union and individual member states results in a divergent mixture of foreign policy relations and competing visions of the Middle East.

Introduction: Regional Security in the Middle East and the EU

In recent deliberations about 'regionalism' and 'regional cooperation', the Middle East is often treated as an exception, as there is a lack of integrative schemes and mechanisms. Nevertheless, the recent decade has spurred discussion about why the conflict endures as the defining feature of the region. The decade has also seen intensified efforts by external actors to create an integrated 'region'. Such efforts are found within European initiatives promoting interregional relations.

This paper explores interregional relations between the European Union (EU) and the Middle East with a focus on conflict management and security. The intention is to analyze European-Middle East security relations as they have been articulated within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) framework, which is seen as "the most important regional process that currently exists in the Mediterranean" (Calleja 2005: 1). Particular emphasis is placed on how the EU has approached the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an intransigent issue of great concern to the EU, and yet the EU has been starkly absent from the issue as an actor in the arena of conflict management and has instead played an important role in other contexts. In addition, the paper has the broader goal to explicate the terms 'security' and 'security cooperation'. The issue for exploration is thus: how and with what success has the EU tried to promote regional security through the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, in particular in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

The concern here is primarily on state-led or government-based interregional relations. Hänggi, Roloff and Rüland (2006: 3) define interregionalism as "institutionalized relations between world regions". This definition implies that for interregional relations to exist, and for interregionalism to be a meaningful analytical term, regional institutions must have been formed; that is, some form of regionalism on behalf of the interacting regions must exist (ibid.: 6). EU-Middle East relations could, according to this perspective, only be truly successful if both regions are based on firm institutional soil. However, interregional relations need not be formally state-based; they may take other forms. Institutions are thus important, but not necessary conditions for interregionalism.

Regionalism and interregional cooperation are seen as inextricably linked to globalization. In terms of security, globalization has triggered a diversification of threat perceptions, which, on the one hand, have created multilateral pressures to

cooperate and on the other, new modes of fighting and sources of conflict. Thus, security globalization involves the ways in which military networks and alliances expand and the ways in which security affairs of different regions interact and influence one another (Held et al. 1999). This has, in turn, altered the meaning and content of national security perceptions. Deterritorialization and diffusion of new actors mean that the state is being increasingly challenged as the sole security agent. The security agenda has widened with the inclusion of 'soft security' issues, which alters the relevance of national military power and increases the importance of multilateralism. Consequently, security is increasingly being sought through regional institutions (Buzan and Waever 2003). Deterritorialization (Held et al. 1999) obviously has a tremendous impact on security, and the regional level of security has become manifestly more important since the end of the Cold War (Buzan and Waever 2003: 11). Regional and interregional schemes of cooperation can thus be seen as responses to changes in threat perceptions and to altered ways of defining security. Different regional constellations can therefore be meaningfully analyzed as responses to security perceptions and images of threat.

Lack of Regional Integration in the Middle East

The Middle East is a region more frequently defined by its conflicts than by meaningful cooperation and remains only loosely integrated on an institutional basis (Aarts 1999; Guazzone 1997; Schulz, Söderbaum and Öjendal 2001). The flow of intra-regional trade is low, common interests and needs are not framed into integrated policies, and institutions remain weak and tend to be arenas for competing state interests rather than vehicles for cooperation. There is a marked dearth of regional institutions and mechanisms for conflict resolution and confidence building (Brauch, Marquina and Biad 2000; Biscop 2003). As many observers have acknowledged, for a region exhibiting a history of prolonged conflict characterized by numerous internal as well as inter-state wars in the context of decolonization and the emergence of state building, conflict is inevitably a defining structure of the region. As Hinnebusch (2003: 154) described it: "War has profoundly shaped the Middle East regional system". As a "regional security complex", the Middle East is defined through complex patterns of security interdependence (Buzan and Waever 2003: 187). Indeed, "the Middle Eastern RSC [regional security complex] was born fighting" (ibid.: 188). The dominance of security issues and the conflict patterns of the region

have also relegated interregional cooperative relations to lower importance (ibid.: 200).

The Arab League has historically been the prime vehicle for Arab integration in terms of cooperative initiatives. It was formed in 1945 as part of the regional order post-World War II, and has, as most observers have acknowledged, remained an ideological and discursive construction, with few initiatives relating to more material or institutional regional cooperation (Kerr 1997; Barnett 1998). The Arab League has served as the main institutional representative of the "Arab regional system" (Bilgin 2005). Its main focus has been the question of Palestine, and its political energy has been directed towards Israel and the construction and maintenance of an enemy. National security concerns and the strong push to consolidate state-making projects have taken priority over cooperation (Luciani 1990). The Arab regional system has been defined on the basis of national security concerns. The end of the Cold War saw a marked decline in common Arab security perception (Barnett 2002), which has been further emphasized since 2003 by the Iraq war (Bilgin 2005). More relevant regional institutional organizations have been formed on sub-regional levels, such as the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

When the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was signed in September 1993, hopes were raised for change towards closer cooperation in the Middle East (Peres 1993; Fischer 1993; Lindholm Schulz and Schulz 2001). As the Palestinian-Israeli conflict drifted away from the centre of the Middle East regional security complex, the time was considered right to build a regional structure built on shared interest as well as comparative advantage. Regionalization gradually came to be seen as an embryonic, but developing, process. Interregional initiatives and schemes in the form of EU-initiated programs also emerged.

New 'regionalist discourses' included Israel as a partner to the Arab states. The 'New Middle East' was one of the grand images of this time, illustrated by the US-sponsored MENA concept (Middle East and North Africa). The multilateral peace talks on environment, water, arms control, refugees and regional development were components of these schemes (Peters 1996). The summits on economic development in particular attracted a great deal of attention.

The key issue in all of this was whether Israel would become a more integrated member of the Middle East; in other words, whether the Arab regional system would transform into a Middle Eastern one. Aside from the political issues surrounding this

discourse, there were also different economic motives and interests. For many Arab parties, the incentive for such a transformation would be to attract foreign capital and investment, rather than to promote a free trade area. A Middle East Free Trade Area was seen as a road to Israeli hegemony (Abdel-Fadil 1997: 130). The inclusion of Israel in the region, involving a shift towards a 'Middle Eastern' definition of the region, away from a solely 'Arab' identity, would, according to this perspective, threaten the 'Arabness' of the Arab world. From this point of view, the peace process represented 'fragmentation' rather than 'integration'.

According to this perspective, 'normalization' of relations should be a result of the peace process and should not precede final peace agreements. A contesting vision and definition of the Middle East would define the region as "the Arab Middle East" (Ibrahim 1996). Indeed, a return to the Arab regional system was advocated from the mid-1990s. Skeptics on the Israeli side argued that there was much less for Israel in the "regional integration paradigm" than conventionally argued (Korany 1997: 138). As relations between Palestinians and Israelis deteriorated from 1996,¹ the enthusiasm for regional schemes also declined and the multilateral talks in effect ceased functioning. The halted multilateral talks were planned to resume in 2000, but this did not materialize; instead, the Arab economic boycott of Israel was reinstated from 1998.

Bilgin (2005: 113) observed: "the origins of regions have had their roots in security thinking and practices of their inventors". He is of the opinion that there are four major representations of the region: the "Middle East", the "Arab Regional System", the "Euro-Med Region" and the "Muslim Middle East" (ibid.).

The EU and the Middle East

Europe has since the 1950s taken a backseat role towards the Middle East in terms of security and conflict management, compared to the US. The EU remains an important player in Middle Eastern matters mainly in the realm of trade and development assistance; in terms of economic aspects, the EU is far more prominent than the US. More than 50 per cent of Middle East trade is with the EU. For the southern Mediterranean countries, the EU is a particularly important market. The

¹ Following a devastating series of bomb attacks in Israeli cities carried out by Hamas, Likud and Benjamin Netanyahu won the Prime Ministerial elections of May 1996. The Likud-led government was far less empathetic towards the Palestinian Authority, and the peace process entered a cold phase.

Union is also the largest direct foreign investor and the largest provider of financial assistance to the region (European Commission 2005: 1); the Palestinian Authority (PA) is the primary recipient of this assistance. Although the Middle East is less significant for the EU's trade (only about two percent of imports and three per cent of exports, respectively), the Gulf region is an important provider of energy (ibid.). Thus, the high profile of the EU in economic and financial terms is not matched by its low-key role in terms of conflict management; however, recent EU initiatives can be seen as attempts to strengthen its role in the Middle East.

The EU has never succeeded in securing an official key role as a broker in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, although individual EU states have clearly attempted to facilitate negotiations and to influence the actors in certain directions. It was Norway that in the 1990s played a crucial strategic role in the negotiations, rather than the EU or a member state. The reasons behind this apparent lack of EU initiatives include the fragmented nature of the EU's policy towards the Middle East region, the lack of EU military capacity compared to the US, the strong ties between Israel and the US, and Israel's lack of interest in the EU as a broker (Biscop 2003).

Evolution of EU-Middle East Relations

The Palestinian-Israeli and Arab-Israeli conflicts are the security issues that have received the longest historical attention from the EU; from the early 1970s, following the Yom Kippur war, the Arab-Israeli conflict was brought into the framework of European Political Cooperation. The position of the then six member states was that UN Resolutions 242 and 338 should be implemented; they emphasized the 'legitimate rights' of the Palestinians.

Through the Euro-Arab Dialogue – an initiative that stemmed from the oil crisis – diverging European positions were gradually brought closer. Throughout the 1970s, the Europeans maintained a relatively clear position, implying that the Palestinians had the right to a national identity and that there was a need for a Palestinian 'homeland'. The right of the Palestinians to a homeland, coupled with Israel's right to exist within secure borders, have since been cornerstones of EU policy. However, this consistent position has not matured into a coherent position; diversified sympathies in the conflict have to some extent hindered a coherent Middle East policy (Smith 2004: 116). European policymaking towards the Middle East is still largely formed through bilateral policies by individual member states and through internal skirmishes, and in this way, individual state politics have superseded a united European front.

The role of Germany has been complicated, given the historical implications of World War II and the Holocaust. The UK, although not always taking identical positions as the US, favors American negotiation and involvement. French political involvement in the region is colored by its own historical record and colonial past, implying closer relations with Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. Thus, France has advocated a more independent European policy. The southern European states – Italy, Greece and Spain – tend to sympathize with the Palestinians and Arabs, while the Scandinavian countries have favored mediation and negotiation based on a more neutral stand. The eastward expansion of the EU will also inevitably have consequences for policymaking, since many of the new members favor positions closely aligned to the American view. EU policymaking is thus, by necessity, the result of internal negotiation.

Since 2000 and the eruption of the second intifada, Israelis and Palestinians have been engulfed in a vicious cycle of violence. The intensity of this violent period has had far-reaching repercussions for the prospects of resumed negotiations between the parties. The EU has acted as broker, a role that was underlined in the Taba talks in January 2001, when Israelis and Palestinians moved closer to a common position. EU Special Envoy Miguel Moratinos was the only outsider present at the Taba talks, although he did not participate in the negotiations directly (Taba Negotiations 2001). Moratinos produced what was to become known as the ‘Moratinos non-paper’ on the Taba negotiations (based on interviews with the negotiators).

The EU is a member of the Quartet on the Middle East, consisting of the EU, the Russian Federation, the UN and the US. These actors were brought together in April 2002, formulating a joint response to the escalation of violence in the region. The Quartet’s main achievement has been the formulation of the Roadmap for Peace (A Performance-Based Roadmap 2003), which was produced in the midst of the al-Aqsa crisis. A core element of the roadmap concerns Palestinian reforms, where Security Sector Reform (SSR) constitutes an important role. The security performance in the Palestinian territories has been widely criticized, while the purpose of SSR is to maintain law and order. The EU, partly through its participation in the Quartet, has become involved in ‘hard security’ issues. It is externally supporting the SSR with the main attempt for the security institutions to play a larger, more effective and trustworthy role in protecting the Palestinian population. Although the Roadmap has lead to nowhere and the security situation has not improved, it contains the parameters that most outside actors believe the parties should ultimately return to.

EU-Palestinian relations reached a low point after the victory of Hamas in the Palestinian 2006 elections as a result of the international decision to boycott Hamas. The EU and the US froze development assistance contributions to the authority, but elaborated a mechanism through which to reach the Palestinian people with aid flows. Aid contributions and diplomatic activities and approaches resumed after a Palestinian coalition government was formed in early 2007. At this point, the Europeans embarked on frenzied activity, with several foreign ministers as well as Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, visiting the region in attempts to revitalize the peace process. The year of 2006 (until today) was a time when the EU had a great chance for conducting effective reform in the peace process. However, the international boycott of Hamas did not have any effect of decreasing the local support of Hamas. Also, the continuing financial support by the EU to Fatah and the Palestinian Authority during the same period had the opposite effect of creating an even larger gap internally between the fractions (Tocci 2007).

The EU's Role in the Lebanon and Iraq Wars

The role of the EU in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has also been affected by other conflicts in the region, such as the Lebanon war in the summer of 2006. During the Lebanon war, rifts between US and EU perspectives were in clear evidence, most clearly when US President Bush advocated Israel's right to defend itself, while the EU countries, led most vocally by France, labeled Israeli actions "totally disproportionate" (Euractiv 2006a). The EU did acknowledge Israel's right to defend itself but urged that it must be proportional and with restraint vis-à-vis the civilians. Despite France's president Jacques Chirac strongly urging a more accentuated role, the EU once again failed to act coherently. After the crisis, however, the EU was concerned that the Lebanon war was a threat to peace and security in the region. As a result, the EU proclaims, in the 'Lebanon Country Strategy paper of 2007-2013', security to be of highest concern in Lebanon and neighboring countries after the war of 2006 (European Commission 2007). Moreover, the EU became involved in 'hard security' issues as a consequence of the 2006 war in Lebanon with its 7000 peacekeeping troops, mainly Italians and French. The EU's post-war center-stage role in Lebanon further led directly to the EU adopting a stronger voice in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Even if a stronger military role clearly facilitates a more accentuated position in conflict management, the EU's military credibility did not increase after

the Lebanon war of 2006. However, the EU tried to push for a return to diplomacy and negotiations between all parts after the war. In September 2006, the EU's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, pushed for a two-state solution based on 1967 'borders' (Euractiv 2006b).

The EU has also played a muted role in Iraq. This may be traced, in part, to the early 1990s, when, during the first Gulf War, the EU appeared fragmented as an actor, without a coherent vision, policy or strategy, despite the fact that this war took place with the sanction of the UN Security Council. The American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 revealed the ruptures within EU policy. Whereas the UK sided with the US, and has been continuously committed to the US strategy, France and Germany were vehemently opposed to a military attack on Iraq. France and Germany, along with some others, such as Sweden, insisted on a leading role for the UN in formulating and implementing the strategy regarding Iraq.

EU member states that have committed troops in Iraq include the UK, Italy, Denmark, Poland and the Netherlands. But since the military strategies of EU member states' involvement in Iraq vary significantly, the ruptures of the EU increase even more and many Middle Eastern countries continue to question the credibility of the EU's military strategy (Schulz 2009). Throughout the US involvement in Iraq, the European policy has been to "transfer genuine sovereignty, including all security issues, to the new Iraqi government and put the UN in charge of helping the Iraqis define their own political future" (Everts 2004: 667). The 2004 Commission Communication 'The EU and Iraq: A Framework for Engagement' places the emphasis on "rehabilitation and reconstruction" (European Commission 2004). The eventual EU role in Iraq focused on providing assistance to the 2005 elections, assisting the transition phase and providing humanitarian assistance. Given the ongoing violent fragmentation of Iraq, reconstruction appears a distant possibility. While Arab states are generally critical (or at least skeptical) of the US strategy in Iraq, the EU has not been able to provide an effective alternative role to that of the US (Bilgin 2005: 117). An example is the Greater Middle East Initiative (GMEI), which was launched at the G8 meeting in 2008 and rather promotes the cooperation of the G8 members (including the US and the EU) than the cooperation of Arab states (Schulz 2009).

The EU's future role and involvement in Iraq is directly linked to the post-Bush era and the Obama Administration's plan for a military withdrawal in 2011. The US and EU withdrawal does not mean an end of conflict and problems in Iraq but will

most likely challenge the security of the country as such, the Middle East as well as Europe. In that sense the EU's role in this new phase might be similar to its position after the Lebanon war: involvement in 'hard security' issues in form of sending troops under the UN umbrella. At the same time, some argue that there is little interest of the EU being involved in this new phase, as a proposal by the Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt to appoint an EU Special Representative for Iraq was rejected.

The Quest for the Euro-Med Region

The representation of the Euro-Med Region has come into fashion in a more comprehensive way since the 1970s. The basis for this definition is the 'Mediterranean'. Of the Arab Middle East states, Egypt and Lebanon have historically been most predisposed to identify as Mediterranean. Ambitions to more clearly stake out a Euro-Med Region came to the fore during the 1970s and were based on the changing security perceptions of the European Community (Bilgin 2005: 120). Another early initiative in this regard was the Western Mediterranean Forum, initiated by France. The official aim of the process was to transform relations between Europe and the Middle East/North Africa and to integrate the Mediterranean countries within a European framework.

The most comprehensive initiative of interregional relations, thus far, has been the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), born in Barcelona in 1995. The EMP – or the 'Barcelona process' – was initiated in an optimistic climate during the heydays of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Its establishment was contingent on the peace process, but the peace process itself was seen as separate from the EMP. The Barcelona process brings together the EU member states and 12 Mediterranean non-members (Biscop 2003). The process was preceded by the Conference for Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean, launched by the Italian and Spanish governments in 1990. The Barcelona process could to some extent be seen as Europe's attempt to enter the business of 'region-making', as a response to the position the US was taking in international relations; the EMP is a project of "constructing a Euro-Med region" (Bilgin 2005: 118).

Both the American and the European initiatives have aimed at supporting the creation of regional institutions as a means to increase their own respective security. In the European approach lies an explicit view of multilateralism and "good neighborly relations" (Biscop 2003: 20) as the preferred means of conducting interna-

tional relations. The EMP is based on a different notion of the Middle East, since it involves the countries connected to the Mediterranean (with some exceptions), but excludes the Gulf countries Iraq and Iran. The European definition of the Euro-Med Region is thus based on its security concerns and focuses on North Africa and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, whereas the US focus is oriented towards the East of the Middle East, with a strong emphasis on the Gulf region. The preferred US configuration links the Middle East with Central Asia and other countries in the region, such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. Divergent security concerns thus bring the EU and US to diverging regional definitions. This could be seen as a 'division of labor'. However, it could be argued that the EU preference for a Mediterranean definition of the region is what explains its absence as an actor having any efficiency on the stage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This conflict is firmly situated in the Mashreq region and contains few linkages to the Maghreb (although the PLO maintained its headquarters in Tunisia for a decade).

European motives for closer engagement on a regional level are related to the fact that the Middle East is a geographically close neighbor (Biscop 2003). In early 2001 then Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten stated: "The Mediterranean is our 'near abroad' on our Southern flank. Thus, it should enjoy a special place in our external relations" (Patten 2001). The Regional Strategy Paper for the EMP states (EMP 2002: 4):

The Mediterranean region is of strategic importance to the European Union. A key external relations priority for the EU is thus to promote prosperity, democracy, stability and security in the Mediterranean basin. This not only because of the political, economic, administrative, ecological and social challenges the basin is faced with, but also in view of the recurrent conflicts/instability in this region on the EU's southern flank.

There are two primary reasons for involvement in the region revealed in such formal statements. Interregional relations are pursued to promote economic development in the region and to create peace and stability. Middle Eastern insecurity has become a security issue for an EU wanting to ensure stability at home. As the EU expands, and with discussions about Turkish membership also on the table, defining the borders of the EU and of securing its relations with neighbors that are anticipated to grow closer to the Union become incredibly important.

The EMP was directed towards steering the new efforts towards regional cooperation and integrating the Middle East within the global system in a more 'European direction' and towards competing with the US in modeling a regional

entity out of the Middle East. The EMP is based on much the same notions as the EU itself. The EU here perceives of itself as a role model: economic cooperation and development as a prerequisite for peace. As Rüländ (2002: 8) argues:

Fostering 'regionalism through interregionalism' [...] may be intended or unintended [...] In the case of the EU, which is deliberately pursuing the role of an 'external federator', such a policy has a rationalizing effect on its own external relations because it enables Brussels to negotiate policy frameworks with entire groups of countries where previously it had to deal with them individually.

To foster interregional relations is thus a way to construct or establish a region in order to create a counterpart, a new actor, someone to relate to. The Barcelona Declaration (1995) established a three-tiered partnership: a Political and Security Partnership, an Economic and Financial Partnership and a Social and Cultural Partnership. The Economic and Financial Partnership has been based on a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area, which is to be established by 2010.

Conflict and Security

"Economic integration and political dialogue are means through which to foster security" (Christiansen, Petito and Tonra 2000: 405). One of the EU's strategic objectives is to extend the 'zone of security around Europe'. An insecure neighbor is seen as a potentially destabilizing factor. The Barcelona process could therefore be seen as a comprehensive security approach, linking a lack of development in the Middle Eastern region to security concerns (Malmvig 2004). EU priority has focused on illegal immigration, organized crime and terrorism, at the expense of the security concerns of the Middle East (Malmvig 2004: 5). EU documents discursively argue for cooperative security and common security concerns, leaving unspecified what this would mean in practice and how the process would alleviate insecurities in the region.

The Political and Security Partnership officially includes enhancement of stability, fostering of democratic institutions, preventive diplomacy, confidence- and security-building measures and joint efforts against transnational threats, such as terrorism. Peace and stability are to be established through the "promotion of common values and better understanding; conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation; the fight against terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking; promotion of disarmament and arms control" and promoting confidence-building (EMP 2002: 9). Discussions about confidence-building measures have also

evolved outside of the EMP framework as a way to create a similar structure to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for the Middle East (Wohlfeld and Abela 2000). Confidence-building is, however, controversial in the Arab world, as Arab states tend to see confidence-building as contingent on the implementation of international law (Biscop 2003: 54).

The Security Partnership aims to adopt a Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Peace and Stability, envisaged at the 1999 meeting in Stuttgart, where guidelines for this process were discussed (Calleya 2005: 3). Such a Charter would promote comprehensive security, but would at the same time eschew interference in ongoing conflicts. Discussions were also held over crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction, representing a step in the direction of enhanced cooperation. Here, confidence-building measures were acknowledged as difficult (Biscop 2003: 43). The 2000 meeting in Marseille was to a large extent paralyzed by the outbreak of violence in Israel and in the Palestinian-administered areas. At the 2002 Valencia meeting, further steps were taken to enhance the dialogue on politics and security, such as the inclusion of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) on the dialogue's agenda (*ibid.*: 50). European security concerns are also entering other arenas of cooperation, a process that has accelerated since 11 September 2001.

Although the Middle East does not constitute a direct threat towards the EU or European countries, the Middle East as the 'Other' is often characterized in Western discourse as a source of threat and insecurity (Pace 2004: 293), in the form of illegal migration, drug trafficking and weapons of mass destruction; and as the home of Islamism and enmity to the West and, at the utmost extreme, terrorism. So constructions and perceptions of the 'Other', and thus the claims for a need of an intercivilizational dialogue, are indeed securitized or based in threat perceptions and security discourses. This discursive construction dates back to colonial days and 'Orientalist' discursive practices.

The portrayed instability and chaos in the Mediterranean is perceived as a source of insecurity for Europe. The hierarchical division that the EU has created with reference to its southern partners always portrays the European partner as superior and the Mediterranean partner as inferior. Thus, security discourses separate the alleged (assumed) victim of insecurity – Europe – and the cause of insecurity – the Mediterranean (Pace 2004).

Terrorism

Global terror has rapidly entered European threat perceptions, as emphasized by the attacks in Madrid and London. The terror attacks in the midst of European capitals have underlined both the sense of vulnerability of the EU and the core role of the Middle East in EU security.

Both the 2001 meeting in Brussels and the 2002 meeting in Valencia placed particular emphasis on the issue of terrorism, but also on the need to foster a “dialogue of cultures and civilizations” (Calleya 2005: 58). From the perspective of Arab counterparts, EU member states place too much emphasis on terrorism and security issues, at the expense of socioeconomic development (Biscop 2003; Attina 2004). From the Arab states’ perspective, terrorism is more of a security concern for Arab countries than it is for the EU (Biscop 2003: 48). At the 2005 summit in Barcelona – the 10th anniversary of the EMP – most Arab states sent only low-level officials, indicating the skepticism in the Arab world towards the process. To some Arab observers the EMP is simply another Western strategy in the pursuit of hegemony and control of the Arab world (Habeeb 2002). Nevertheless, the summit concluded with a joint code of conduct, condemning all forms of terrorism (EMP 2005):

To enhance the security of all citizens, particularly through more effective counter-terrorism policies and deeper co-operation to dismantle all terrorist activities, to protect potential targets, to manage the consequences of attacks, and to implement the Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism they have agreed today. To condemn terrorism, wherever it is committed, without qualification and rejects all attempts to associate any religion or culture with terrorism.

The statement condemned terrorism and simultaneously declared that no religion or culture should be associated with terrorism. It appears that the declaration to “act jointly against racism, xenophobia and intolerance, stressing respect for all religions, rejecting extremist views which attempt to divide us and incite violence and hatred, and joining together to promote common understanding” (ibid.) could be interpreted as the EU’s contribution, whereas the Middle Eastern states accepted the wordings on terrorism quoted above.

Migration as Security

Migration has, through a series of accords and agreements, been increasingly securitized (Salamé 1998: 38). Initially, migration was treated within the cultural and

social basket, but after 11 September 2001 migration issues and terrorism have become increasingly linked in various policies.

For the EU, illegal migration should be halted, whereas the perspective of Middle Eastern countries is that migration is caused by structural inequalities and requires that EU countries adopt more open migration policies and liberal asylum practices. Further, the Middle Eastern partners see migration as a means of alleviating pressure on domestic labor markets and as a way of generating remittances (Testas 2001: 68). It is clear why interests diverge.

Migration and the movement of people are also intrinsic aspects of globalization and a sphere of policymaking where Europe's borders are indeed clearly 'fuzzy' (Christiansen, Petito and Tonra 2000). The desperation of migration and the difficulties involved in getting to Europe are obvious in the many incidents of migrants perishing on the waves of the Mediterranean in desperate attempts to reach European shores. Sad incidents such as these are of great concern to the EU, both for their humanitarian consequences, but also in producing images of a Europe highly protected against global movements of people.

The riots in the suburbs of France in 2005 underlined the strategic role that migration plays, particularly in relations between the EU and North Africa. Migrants from the Middle East (North Africa as well as Turkey) constitute a large and excluded minority in European countries whose integration policies have clearly failed.

Some of the largest communities of legal migrants present in the EU come from the Mediterranean partners. The perception of these migrants of their situation has a significant effect on the political relationship: cooperation should therefore aim to reduce the causes of tension. On the other hand, geographical proximity and the large prosperity gap between the EU and the partners gives rise to flows of illegal migration and trafficking in human beings; costly in terms both of human misery and social repercussions, which the EU and the partners have a joint interest in addressing. Finally, concerns about the treatment of visa applicants by EU authorities also need to be addressed (European Commission 2002).

The EU's cooperation with some Mediterranean partners (for example Morocco) around curbing illegal migration has led to concern and criticism from human rights organizations (Human Rights Watch 2006). In fact, such cooperation is a new form of security subcontracting, in which the EU delegates to its southern partners the responsibility for stopping potential illegal migration.

In the 'Regional Strategy Paper 2002-2006', terrorism and migration are treated under the same heading: "Enhancing the rule of law, human rights and, good governance: Justice and home affairs"; indicative of the fact that the EU perceives migrants and migration as being potential security threats (European Commission 2002). The fact that, for example, some of the perpetrators of the bomb attacks in London in the summer of 2005 were young UK citizens whose parents were migrants of Pakistani origin has amplified for the EU the increased difficulties in distinguishing between 'inside' and 'outside'. Globalization of movement means that it is no longer meaningful to secure a border from outside threat.

The spheres of justice and home or domestic affairs are becoming increasingly infiltrated by a new security thinking, as in the US (although in different degrees and ways), implying the implementation of new policies as well as techniques of control and surveillance of citizens and, in particular, of immigrants. New anti-terror legislation is among the instruments used by EU countries in their ambitions of fighting terrorism (Dalgaard-Nielsen 2004: 166). These policies and procedures may, however, well obstruct efforts towards democratization and the introduction of liberal politics (Gillespie 2003: 34). The globalization of both security and threats means, in one sense, that threats are moving closer to states. No longer can states 'secure' themselves through defending their borders; globalization means that the enemy is within as well as on the outside – hence the perceived need for the utilization of institutions to handle domestic affairs in security-related goals. The global security agenda post-September 11 has meant that interregional relations and institutions are interpreted as a means of dealing with the threat of terrorism (Rüland 2002: 4).

The Middle East Peace Process

As has been emphasized, the EU's conflict management role in the Palestinian–Israeli conflict has historically been understated. The Palestinian–Israeli conflict is also excluded from the EMP process, despite the fact that the Middle East Peace Process and the EMP were contemporaneous, and despite the magnitude of the issue within the region and in the context of interregional relations. The EMP is highly dependent on the peace process, as the latter has an immediate effect upon all parts of the EMP. When relations deteriorate, the climate is also immediately sharpened within the EMP discussions (Biscop 2003: 71). However, the growing economic role of the EU has gradually implied more leverage on issues related to peace and conflict, and

the EU is increasingly coordinating as a single actor, which is evident in the formulation of visions and policies for the Middle East (Hollis 1997). That the EU is one of the most prominent financial contributors to the Palestinian Authority has seen the EU become increasingly eager to contribute to dialogue in the peace process. However, the escalation of the violence that broke out in late September 2000 caused such uncertainty and unease that the parties retreated, and no agreement was signed. The EU's policy towards the Middle East Peace Process still depends on particular presidencies and their respective stances. In terms of policy position, the EU is clear in that a two-state solution is the aim and that international law is to be the basis for any agreement. Institution-building is to be the cornerstone of a successful resolution of the conflict.

As Calleya (2005: 54) points out, the Barcelona process has failed to influence the Middle East Peace Process and has instead become hostage to it. However, it should also be emphasized that the EMP is one of the few initiatives that includes both Syria and Israel that has survived the current impasse in the peace process.

Conclusion

The EMP has not been a success in establishing an interregional security regime (Biscop 2003; Youngs and Gillespie 2002), and although a framework for interregional cooperation exists, it remains fragile. Interests diverge both within the two regions and between them. It may be argued that the Euro-Med definition of the Middle East remains elusive and without strong advocates in the Arab Middle East. It could also be emphasized that although this may be true, the ideas associated with the EMP framework have not met with any significant opposition (Bilgin 2005). The Euro-Med definition is thus a potential alternative vision to the American-based regional representation and might serve the function of 'balancing' the dominant US position. The weakness of the Euro-Med construction, however, remains its strong security underpinnings, aggravating interregional asymmetries (Bilgin 2005). Thus, the US 'Middle Easternism' is based on security militarily defined, whereas the European security concerns are broader and bring in 'softer' issues. EU security perceptions are based on European points of reference and fail to acknowledge the security concerns of their Arab partners.

Fundamental security concerns are terrorism and migration and the perceived linkage between the two. Although the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is also at

the heart of European security interests, the EU has failed to play an active role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in that sense. US interests in the region and the US and Israel accusing the EU of being pro-Palestinian are a hindrance to EU activities, at least in the sense of playing a practical visible role in the conflict. But on the other hand, as the US has virtually neglected the Palestinian needs, the EU plays a very important role in recognizing these needs, and it is in a position to push for a more democratic Palestinian state. The EU has also played an important role as a legitimizer of the PLO. Further, the mere fact that most funds to the PA stems from the EU has in itself created the PLO/PA as a viable Palestinian representative vis-à-vis Israel in the overall conflict.

This implies that, for all the rhetoric proclaiming 'partnership', relations are strongly asymmetrical. Furthermore, the interregional relationship between the EU and the Middle East is hostage to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, and the deterioration of relations between Israelis and Palestinians also means that prospects for deeper regional and interregional relations are diminished. Interregionalism remains nascent, as the EMP still lacks institutional strength as well as a common agenda. The EU's initiatives have thus far been defined more by the agenda of the EU than by the needs of counterparts. Despite the rhetoric, the EMP is not an institution of partnership based on equal relations. The EU's interregional ambitions are to be seen as a means to balance US power and to create a greater scope for European action.

Finally, globalization has meant more porous borders, so that the movement of peoples from other regions – such as the Middle East – to Europe is one of the greatest security concerns of European countries. Also, violence has become globalized, in the form of networks of informal violence and terrorism, providing a new threat to Europe. The Middle East Peace Process is also a significant security concern of the EU, in particular because of the ways in which this conflict has an impact upon Euro-Mediterranean relations. Despite all this, there is as yet no conflict resolution mechanism within the EMP.

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