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Multi-Dimensional Security

Towards a shared approach to security in the Mediterranean?
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Ten year anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (1995) was marked by statements of disappointment over the limited nature of progress achieved, notwithstanding the commitment and contributions of myriad governmental and non-governmental actors on both sides of the Mediterranean (see, for example, Solana, 2005; Al Mubadara, 2005; Amnesty International, 2005). Indeed, the US-led invasion of Iraq (2003) and the predicament of the Iraqi people, al-Qaeda linked bombings in Istanbul (November 2003) and Madrid (March 2004), Israeli operation in Lebanon (2006) and the rise of anti-immigrant (often anti-Arab and/or anti-Muslim) feelings in Western Europe, when coupled with the impasse in Palestinian-Israeli peacemaking and the omnipresence of the threat of 'global jihadism' in 'Western' policy lexicon, have alienated the two shores of the Mediterranean and left little reason to celebrate.

Yet, while making statements of gloom and doom, many failed to note a singular achievement of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: revitalizing the Mediterranean as a framework for shaping the thinking as well as actions of those willing to take up the challenge of 'change'. Even those who express disappointment over the little progress that has been made in securing the 'Mediterranean', nevertheless remain within the 'Mediterranean framework' in expressing their disappointment. The focal point of the discussions between the European Union (EU) and its southern neighbors is no longer the Euro-Arab dialogue (EU's former focus) or the Eastern Mediterranean (a.k.a. the southern flank, one of NATO's Cold War focal points) but the 'Mediterranean', which is increasingly considered as a shared environment, a region in the making (Adler, Crawford, Bicchi & Del Sarto, 2006). Notwithstanding its shortcomings, creating a new framework for thinking differently about security in this part of the world is no minor achievement of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Prevalent accounts on the shortcomings of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership put the 'blame' on either of the two sides. Whereas the EU is found lacking in 'sincerity', the non-member Mediterranean partners are criticized for limited cooperation. Some have pointed to the discrepancy between northern and southern priorities as the problem, namely the clash between 'regional stability and democratization' vs.

1. The calls for including other, non-Mediterranean Arab countries in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership have not been as vocal. Nor were they rooted in similar concerns.

'regime security' (Haddadi, 2004). Others went so far as to identify the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as a "contract between democratic and non-democratic states which bribes the latter for accepting some interference in their affairs through the exercise of EU financial and normative power" (Nicolaidis & Nicolaidis, 2004: 20). Arguing against the more cynical understandings of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as a neo-colonial project in post-colonial garb (Crawford, 2005: 16), this article finds fault with the broader security conception shaping the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership—or lack of it! Rather than locating the roots of the problem in EU's 'insincerity' or southern actors' 'reluctance', this article maintains that what has failed the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is a misdiagnosis of the nature of Mediterranean insecurities and inappropriateness of the model chosen in addressing them—that of Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). In what follows the argument is built in the form of five interrelated arguments.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, notwithstanding its shortcomings, has been successful in so far as the EU and its southern neighbors have begun thinking about themselves as sharing a common space, the 'Mediterranean'

Geographical labels and regional definitions are not unimportant. There is nothing 'natural' or 'neutral' about them. Throughout history, identification and labeling of geographical sites have had their roots in the politico-bureaucratic and military-strategic interests of some (Lacoste, 1976). What is at stake is not merely one of choosing one label over another ('Latin' or 'South' America?) or plotting boundaries (where is 'Europe'?) but also policy; to be more precise, what is at stake is the kind of foreign policy considered 'appropriate' for that part of the world. For, "to designate an area as 'Islamic' or 'Western' is not only to name it but also brand it in terms of its politics and the type of foreign policy its 'nature' demands" (Agnew & Corbridge, 1995: 48). That is precisely the reason the 'Middle East' was received critically by some Arab intellectuals: it was considered as breaking up the 'Arab homeland', thereby allowing for non-Arabs to position themselves in this part of the world (Bilgin, 2004a; 2005).¹

The Mediterranean, as a new framework for thinking about security, has proven relatively successful for the same reason. It constitutes an alternative to the Middle East framework which has, over the years, disillusioned many (Bilgin 2005). More recently, the Middle East framework has been discredited by the US-led war on Iraq that was packaged as a part of a democracy promotion effort a.k.a. the 'Greater Middle East initiative'. The Mediterranean framework has proven 'successful' in so far it has been able to get the EU and its southern neighbors to begin thinking about themselves as sharing a common space, the 'Mediterranean' (Bilgin, 2004a). Given the connotations of the Mediterranean as a birthplace of civilization/s, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has a different ring to it compared to the alternatives. Since region-building (as with all kinds of community building) is about appealing to the hearts and minds as well as the

'pockets' of myriad actors (Adler & Barnett, 1998), the advantages to identifying the common space as the 'Mediterranean' as opposed to 'Euro-Arab' or 'Euro-Maghreb' cannot be denied.

If 'thinking' about security in this shared space is yet to be backed up by 'doing'—an issue picked up by most critics—this is mostly due to the absence of a common vision as to what 'security in the Mediterranean' should look like. Whereas EU member states have had their own expectations from the Barcelona Process, non-member Mediterranean partners had different ideas in mind when they agreed to join. More than a decade into the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership process, there is little movement towards generating a common vision of what 'security in the Mediterranean' should look like. This article contends that what has failed the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is this long-lasting lack of a shared approach to security. Needless to say, this contention goes against representations of the limited success of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as a consequence of the failure of Middle Eastern peacemaking (Solana, 2005) and/or EU irresoluteness and southern unwillingness. Notwithstanding the weight of the past (Moulakis, 2005), which is significant, what would be helpful in mobilizing a variety of actors from all sides of the Mediterranean to work together within the Mediterranean framework is a shared understanding of security.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has not yet been successful in producing a common vision of 'security in the Mediterranean'

The EU documentation through which the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has been written into being are ridden with notions of 'peace', 'stability', 'partnership', 'solidarity', and 'development'.² Yet, there is very little agreement among the various parties ('Southern' and 'Northern', governmental and non-governmental) as to the precise meanings they attach to these notions within their specific context. Although such ambiguities may have allowed the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to rapidly become popular among Mediterranean-littoral states in the early 1990s,³ they can no longer be tolerated if the Partnership is to fulfill its promise of bringing 'peace' and 'stability' to this fragile 'region'.

Having said that, while joint declarations on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership are characterized by ambiguous rhetoric on the issue of a common vision, the European Union has never been less than precise as to its own insecurities and what it seeks to achieve. As early as 1992, Presidential Conclusions of the European Council declared that:

"The Southern shores of the Mediterranean as well as the Middle East are geographical areas in relation to which the European Union has strong interests both in terms of security and stability. The Union has therefore an interest in establishing with the countries of the area a relationship of good neighborliness. The goal should be to avoid a North-South gap in the region by favoring economic development and promoting full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the development and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law."⁴

2. See "Euro-Mediterranean Partnership/Barcelona Process". Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/euromed/. Accessed January 25, 2007.
3. Signatories to the Barcelona Declaration were a record number of twenty-five, including Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Syria.
4. European Council, "Presidency Conclusions and Annex. European Council in Lisbon" 26 - 27 June 1992. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lisbon/li2_en.pdf. Accessed January 25, 2007.

5. People-to-people diplomacy and civil societal dialogue have proven to be difficult in the 'South' where civil society suffers from both the grip of the state and the intellectual hold of the colonial past. See: Pasha, 1996 and Blaney & Pasha, 1993.

The tri-fold set up of the Barcelona Declaration covering 'politics and security', 'economics and finance' and 'social, cultural and human affairs' revealed what was at stake for the EU: preventing problems of the 'South' from becoming problems for the 'North'. Encouraging economic development and growth while providing support for stable transition to democracy and strengthening the rule of law have emerged as the twin tools of reaching this goal.

The rationale behind the set up of the tri-fold structure rested on past practices of the European Community/Union towards the former Soviet Bloc. The Helsinki Final Act and the CSCE, on which the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is modeled, were designed to generate people-to-people diplomacy and exchanges at various levels so as to build confidence and enhance security cooperation between the eastern and western parts of 'Europe'. Both institutions contributed to the relatively peaceful end of the Cold War. Notwithstanding Reagan administration's claim to having won a 'victory' over the Soviet Union (Schweizer, 1994), the end of the Cold War was made possible by the efforts of various state and non-state actors who operated through official and non-official channels (Kaldor, 2002).

No matter how successful the CSCE model may have proven in helping to secure 'Europe', seeking its transfer to the 'Mediterranean' context have failed so far. This is not only because the model is not fit for a different geography occupied by a different culture—the usual explanation. This is also because the model is not 'applied' fully in the Mediterranean context. Two examples should suffice.

- During the Cold War, the 'West' considered (and insisted on) human mobility and the right to leave one's country as 'human rights'. Throughout the Cold War years, the two 'rights' were utilized as a way of contesting the legitimacy and/or efficiency of 'Eastern' regimes (Noll 2006). The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, on the other hand, denies that very right. People-to-people diplomacy and cultural exchanges are designed to keep Southern peoples in the South. Whereas CSCE sought to work with people in the attempt to influence governmental behavior, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has sought to work with governments influence people's migratory behavior.⁵ There is no mistaking the differences in the philosophical outlook of the two efforts.
- CSCE rested on the assumption that peoples could work together only if the obstacles put on by the governments could be overcome. A similar pattern does not emerge in North-South interactions in the Mediterranean in that in EU actors' interactions with their southern counterparts, the very identity and value system of the 'South' has emerged as a major part of the problem. It is not only the southern governments (as was the case with the 'East' during the Cold War) but also the southern peoples (or their 'Muslimhood') are viewed as contributing to the tension between the two shores of the Mediterranean Sea. In the CSCE framework, when 'Western' citizens looked to their 'Eastern' counterparts, they saw potential partners. Now, the northerners when they look to the South see people who are impossible to co-exist with and therefore must be kept where they are. When southerners look to the north, in turn, they see former colonial actors who speak about the virtues of 'European values'.

Thus, if the CSCE model designed to seek security in 'Europe' has so far not worked in the context of the 'Mediterranean', this has to do not only with southern lack of willingness but also northern ambivalence (not insincerity) in its relations with the 'South'.

The two sides of the Mediterranean do not see eye-to-eye on security issues

One way of accounting for EU ambivalence towards the 'South' is to blame the intellectual hold of 'Eurocentrism'. As various EU actors' hesitance towards Turkey's membership also suggests, the European Union is not immune to civilisational (not to say hierarchical) categorizations when thinking about and acting towards those who are located in the 'non-North' (Bilgin, 2004b). Although moving beyond such 'Eurocentrism' may not be a feasible goal, raising awareness of the EU's predilection to discriminate along 'civilisational' lines may constitute a good starting point if the aim is generate genuine dialogue on cooperating for security. Needless to say, such awareness would also need to be matched by an increase in Southern neighbors' different insecurities.

Another explanation as to why the EU has remained ambivalent in fully applying the CSCE is that it has mistaken its own security concerns for that of the 'Mediterranean region'. The EU's broadening of the security agenda to include non-military issues such as migration, drug trafficking and Islamic activism has not been helpful in that these concerns do not constitute a priority for the South in the way that they do for the North. On the contrary, they have been quite divisive for North-South relations insofar as they have lead to claims of anti-Arab/Muslim 'racism' and 'xenophobia'.

Arguing against the charge that the EU prioritizes security above all else, some have sought to show, through careful discourse analysis of EU documentation, that the problem has less to do with the EU's intentions than its irresolute approach to prioritizing security concerns. The EU, it is argued, operates with two security discourses, which compete with each other thereby complicating EU policy-making towards the Mediterranean. "[T]he Mediterranean is constructed as a threat and as a partner, as an inferior and underdeveloped subject that is to be reformed, and as an equal partner with whom the EU shares security perceptions and threats" argues Melle Malmvig (2004: 18). Indeed, EU documentation stresses regional stability at times and democratization at other times. Putting aside the debate as to whether the two are incompatible in practice or not, what is significant for the purposes of this article is the problematic nature of such characterizations of the current impasse as due to EU's irresoluteness in choosing between two different security concerns. For, it conflates 'security understanding' and 'security strategy'. The difference between the two discourses of the EU is one of 'security strategy' and not 'security understanding'. Both discourses rest on an understanding of security that prioritizes the EU's own concerns. Whereas 'values' and 'human rights' are central to the definition of 'European identity' and therefore 'European security' in one discourse,

6. On different approaches to understanding and escaping the security dilemma, see: Booth & Wheeler, 1992.

they are marginal to the other one. The EU remains to be the object to be secured in both discourses. Whether they are represented as a 'partners' or an 'inferior and underdeveloped subjects that are to be reformed', non-member Mediterranean partners' concerns do not make it on to the definition of what constitutes 'security in the Mediterranean' in either of the two discourses. The broader point being that if the CSCE model has not worked in the Mediterranean context, this is because it has not been fully applied, which has to do with EU ambivalence towards its southern partners and their insecurities.

A common vision of 'security in the Mediterranean' would begin to emerge when parties recognize 'insecurity' itself as the enemy

The two sides of the Mediterranean are locked in a 'security dilemma'. Already existing frictions and mistrust between the North and the South has deepened since September 11, 2001 and al-Qaeda linked bombings in Istanbul, Madrid and London. To quote Ulla Olum, "[t]he European fear of the return of the past in the form of the destruction of European values by terrorism gives rise to the Southern Mediterranean countries' fear of return of the colonial past" (Holm, 2005: 25).

Identifying the security dynamics between the two sides of the Mediterranean as a 'dilemma' need not render it more intractable. The essence of the 'security dilemma' is in the structure of the relationship. Mistrust between the two parties is both a function and a quality of the security dilemma in the Mediterranean. Diagnosing the 'security dilemma' as such could potentially help move cooperation for security forward by helping to identify a common 'enemy': 'insecurity' itself. After all, there is no escape from a security dilemma other than recognizing that the problem is 'us' as much as 'them' and that 'we' need to work with each other in order to escape it.⁶

Pointing to 'insecurity' itself as the enemy may come across as tautological. The current impasse in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, as argued above, rests on a misdiagnosis (lack of sincerity for the EU, lack of will for the non-member Mediterranean partners) of the problem, which rests on another misdiagnosis as to the identity of the 'enemy'. Invoking the term 'security dilemma' often rests on a denial of such ambiguity regarding who the enemy is: the enemy is 'them' for 'us', and 'us' for 'them'. Yet, it is often forgotten that for the two parties locked in the security dilemma, the enemy is in the structure of the relationship, a particular zero-sum way of approaching international relations that reproduces itself.

Diagnosing East-West insecurities as a security dilemma had been central to the CSCE process. Hence the logic behind the adoption of the CSCE model for the Mediterranean. However, before the CSCE, there was EC/EU, which evolved as an ingenious way of approaching the problem of 'in/security in Europe'—not vis-à-vis the 'East' but within 'Western Europe'—among a group of states which had fought each

other in two world wars during the 20th century alone.⁷ The ‘enemy’ was not only the Soviet Bloc, but also ‘mutual security policy’ (Wæver, 1998). European policy-makers at the time recognized that the best way to approach the security dilemma in ‘Europe’ which gave way to two destructive wars, was not

“a question of assuring a good, stable security system, but of avoiding security concerns being directed as each other at all, by somehow circumventing this traditional logic, directing energies elsewhere” (Wæver, 1998: 83).

This ‘novel’ approach to ‘security in Europe’ allowed European policy-makers to channel their efforts into setting up the European Coal and Steel Community, the precursor of the European Community/Union. ‘Insecurity’, which was located in Europe’s own past, was the enemy. Securing ‘Europe’ required learning new ways of relation to each other internationally. During this period, European policy-makers invented a new way of ‘doing security’ while downplaying the securityness of what they were doing (Wæver, 1998).

Amidst all the talk about the European Union as a ‘postmodern entity’, a ‘civilian’ or ‘normative power’, its origins as a security project is often forgotten. While this forgetting may be a part of the success of European integration as a security project, remembering that past would prove helpful in relating to southern insecurities and addressing the security dilemma with the ‘South’. The model that helped to maintain ‘security in Europe’ was that of the EC/EU itself, not the CSCE, which came later and helped to address the question of ‘East Europe’.

Doing ‘security in the Mediterranean’—the EC/EU model

Jean Monnet’s strategy for avoiding going back to the era of instability (that characterized Europe’s modern history and gave rise to two devastating world wars) was that of integrating European countries to the point that war would become unthinkable. Encouraging further democratization and respect for human rights was and is at the heart of the project of European integration that has, over the years, Europeanized ‘Europe’. In the wake of the Cold War, EU policymakers have sought to secure Europe’s future by expanding towards the ‘East’ while deepening integration. Even where the CSCE model had worked (i.e., the ‘East’) it was not considered satisfactory in that the EU put into effect its own model of expanding towards Central and Eastern Europe.

Seemingly oblivious of that background, some EU actors interact with non-member Mediterranean partners through projecting an image of the EU as a ‘postmodern’ entity, a ‘civilian’ or ‘normative power’. This is an EU that relates to its neighbors through exporting ‘European values’ through non-military (and sometimes military) means. Arguably, such a stance not only runs the risk of slipping from the mission of ‘civilian power’ into ‘civilianizing power’ (Manners, 2006) but also goes against Jean Monnet’s vision of Europe as contributing to peace by setting an example of a different way of doing international relations.

7. On the emergence of ‘common security’ as a different way of ‘doing security’ with the ‘East’, see Independent Commission, 1982. On a reading of European integration as security policy, see: Wæver, 1998.

8. What is understood by 'Europeanization' here is the transformation EU members and candidates go through when responding to (and shaping) political processes in the European Union. Understood as such, 'Europeanization' has two dimensions. The top down dimension involves members and candidates making the necessary reforms to meet EU conditionality. The bottom up dimension involves members changing existing understandings and practices in the EU (e.g. Sweden actively lobbying for the EU to ban the export of dangerous waste to developing countries). In the early years of the accession process, countries are usually on the receiving end. Once their 'Europeanness' is recognized (with the beginning of accession negotiations and later full membership), they get the opportunity to export their own understandings and practices to the rest of the members. See: Featherstone, 2003.

Notwithstanding their won not-so-distant experiences, EU policy-makers' approach to their southern neighbors have so far demonstrated a lack of empathy. Such lack of empathy has not allowed northern actors to recognize that the European Union itself went through a similar period of insecurity. 'European values', which are sought to be exported to the southern neighbors as a solution to their insecurities, did not exist during those turbulent times amidst the militarism of the 1930s and 'anti-communism' of the 1940s and 1950s when it would have been difficult—to say the least—to think of 'Europe' as a 'normative' or 'civilian power'. 'European values' were invented as part and parcel of the project of securing Europe through integration (a.k.a. Europeanization)⁸. Understanding 'European values' as a product of a security project (which, in turn, was a response to European insecurities) could help EU policy-makers to empathize with their southern counterparts. Representing 'European values' as a product of a security project, would also ease their embrace by southern actors. If values such as human rights and institutions such as the rule of law and democracy are seen as the products of conscious human action and not a heritage specific to European geography, it might be easier for non-European others to seek to build similar values and institutions. What the South really needs from its northern partners is a degree of humility cognizant of the difficult processes through which 'European values' have been (re)invented in 'Europe'—which, in turn, has allowed inventing the image of 'Europe' as a 'normative power'.

Conclusion

This article has sought to point to the possibility of arriving at a shared approach to 'security in the Mediterranean'. It is argued that arriving at a shared approach requires an accurate diagnosis of the problem at hand. Arguing against those accounts that put the 'blame' on EU 'insincerity' or southern 'reluctance', the article has identified the problem as the absence of a common understanding of security, which, in turn, is rooted in incongruities between the understandings of security between the North and the South on the one hand and governmental and non-governmental actors on the other. Contra popular representations of EU being divided between 'stability' and 'democracy' and the 'South' seeking stability at all cost, there are, on both sides, those who seek to achieve security through establishing and/or democracy, human rights and the rule of law on both sides. Insecurity, and not each other, is their enemy. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has so far failed to tap this potential, not only because of inherent difficulties (democratization may not produce stability in the short-term, see Mansfield & Snyder, 1995) but also because of EU preconceptions regarding an inherent (cultural) incompatibility between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. This is evident in the different ways in which the EU has approached its eastern vs. the southern northern neighbors, which smacks of 'civilizational geopolitics' (Bilgin, 2004b) at best and 'orientalism' at worst. This could be overcome by changing the model—that of CSCE—which clearly is not working. What non-member Mediterranean partners need from their EU counterparts is not the 'European values' but learning about the ways in which those values have been (re)invented in 'Europe' in the aftermath

of two devastating world wars. What the southern partners need is to learn from the *experience* of 'doing security' in the EC/EU way.

Thinking of democracy, human rights and the rule of law as the means and ends of 'doing security' in the EC/EU way would be a good starting point in revamping the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for at least two reasons.

1. It would help the north rid itself of the burden of neo-colonialism. The mission for the EU would not be that of exporting 'European values' but 'European experiences' of 'doing security'—the experience of (re)inventing 'European values', finding democracy and human rights in Europe's own heritage when they had, for so long, been forgotten by the practitioners. The difference between the two (exporting values vs. exporting experiences) is not insignificant. One is ridden with assumptions of culturalism—thinking of democracy, human rights and the rule of law as culture specific commodities. The other allows for similar values and institutions to be found in the experiences of or (re)invented by the others.

2. It would empower southern actors to seek these values and institutions in their own experiences. The South has focused so much on others' experiences (either accepting them or rejecting them) that it has paid little attention to finding moments of democracy and human rights in their own past. Such instances do exist, however momentary. Arguing against claims of lack of respect to women's rights in Islam (and among Muslims), Fatima Mernissi has written about *Forgotten Queens of Islam* (1997), and has therefore sought to open up space for Muslim women's participation in politics. Mustapha Kamal Pasha (2002) likewise has argued that moments of secularism in 'Islam' could be found and utilized by those who consider secularization as an essential aspect of democratization in the Muslim world.

Re-thinking the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership along the lines suggested above could be liberating for both sides. What is more, it would help to go beyond the current impasse by embracing democracy, the rule of law and human rights as essential *components* as well as *ways* of 'doing security'.

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