

THOUGHTS ON EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP PROBLEMS

Rachid Driss*

I first have to mention some basic facts : geographical, historical, demographic and environmental considerations. Tunisia is situated in North Africa, at the junction between the East and West Mediterranean sea, just across the water from Sicily, which means close proximity to Europe, with whose history it has always been involved. From Carthage and Hannibal to the present time, the Euro-Mediterranean connection is one of the most striking aspects of Tunisian political life, its observer at the Helsinki Conference in 1975 insisting on the interconnection between Tunisia and Europe. Security does not mean military matters only, but also economic and cultural ones. The Barcelona Declaration of 25 November 1995 mentioned three aspects necessary to achieve a community of interests, assuring peace and stability for the peoples of the region. The participation of Tunisia in the elaboration of this famous declaration and its support for it raised big hopes for its achievement.

After years of experimentation, however, we have noticed a tendency to slow down the Barcelona process . There was even an attempt to stop it due to setbacks in the peace process. The Israeli- Palestinian conflict and the occupation of the Golan Heights have been considered an obstacle to the pursuit of the Euro- Mediterranean partnership (**EMP**). Furthermore, the lack of a specific structure for the EMP has made the intervention of the European Union a necessity for any decision in this field.

The EMP seems to be a department of the European Commission, while in fact it is an initiative for co-operation between the European Union (15 members now and later 25 or 27) and 12 countries east and west of the Mediterranean sea. This anomalous situation has had an impact on the fulfilment of the projects.

Other reasons have to be considered to evaluate the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation and analyse its environment, remembering what were the conditions and the evolution of the EMP. After the oil crisis of 1973, an Euro-Arab dialogue was started to overcome the difficulties of reaching a common position regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict. Then there was the Mitterrand initiative for occidental Mediterranean cooperation, which

would have put aside that conflict. At the same time, the Italian Foreign Minister, Dr. De Michaelis, advocated the idea of Mediterranean security and cooperation organisation similar to the European one. At that time, the occidental concept of cooperation among the Western countries of the Mediterranean prevailed: meetings among the foreign ministries were held and a calendar of meetings and actions was initiated. A summit was to have taken place in Tunis in the beginning of 1992, but at the end of 1991 the meeting was postponed. The main reason was the supposed responsibility of Libya for the explosion of a Pan Am aircraft carrying 260 passengers over Lockerbie, in Scotland, on December 21, 1988. Later, on September 19, 1989, a French UTA DC10 exploded over Nigeria and on November 14 1991, two Libyan citizens were accused of having organized these acts. The postponement of the Tunis meeting had been decided before the Libyan implications which made us suspicious of the true motive of the postponement.

The project of an European-Mediterranean partnership, the Gulf war of 1990-91, the Madrid Conference of October 1991, the launching of the Middle-East-North African economic partnership (Morocco, 1994) did facilitate and accelerate the Barcelona Process. In spite of the assassination on 4 November 1995 of Yitzhak Rabin, a symbol of the reconciliation between Palestine and Israel, the Barcelona Conference took place and issued its famous declaration (November 1995). The hope of many participants in that conference lay in the contribution of the EMP to the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through pursuit of the Oslo peace process.

However, the conflict started again, and was even aggravated by the visit of the Likud leader Ariel Sharon to the Haram al Sharif -- called the Temple Mount by the Israelis -- in Jerusalem on September 28, 2000, provoking the rise of the second intifada and the failure of the Camp David meeting in July 2001.

The situation in the Palestinian territories is a source of concern to all Arab countries. It is not only a question of political rights but of human rights. Deploring this situation, we have to reorganize its specific character because of the specificity of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Responsibilities are not to be ignored but priority has to be given to resume the peace process in conformity with UN resolutions. It does not seem that Israel's intention for the time being is to speed up that process. On the contrary, Israel's occupation of Arab territories has become more aggressive and its colonisation is expanding. The policy of the Sharon government after the elections of January 27, 2003,

confirms and comforts the aspirations of the Israeli hawks. The support of the American administration for the Israeli government and its attitude towards the Arab territories is far from being even-handed or respectful of UN resolutions and international law. The recognition of a Palestinian State, as stated by President George W. Bush Jr., referred to Security Council resolution 1397 of March 3, 2002 and the project of settlement agreed upon by the Committee of Four (the Quartet), composed of the UN, the US, the EU and Russia. Are these initiatives the beginning of a solution, or only a political attempt to reduce tension in the region while allowing the occupation --- the main factor in the suffering, violence and mounting number of victims -- to continue ?

The Arab-Israeli conflict is not a new one. Israeli policy has been to ignore UN resolutions and to proceed step by step to the realisation of its domination on the Arab territories. This policy allows Israel to ignore UN Security Council resolutions while a war is launched against Iraq for failing to respect the same council's resolutions. In this context President Bush's commitment to the recognition of a Palestinian state could be considered as empty words. The conditions required for the emergence of the Palestinian state, as indicated in several American and Israeli declarations, are such that no Palestinian state is likely to be seen in the near future. President Bush's declaration on February 27, 2003, that the war against Iraq could facilitate such an event, is not consistent or logical: how could a victory against the Iraqi regime solve once and forever the Arab-Israeli conflict?

The process of the EMP, as long as that conflict continues, cannot advance rapidly. This conclusion may have motivated the reconvening of the meeting of the 5 + 5 group, the ministers of foreign affairs of which have had consultations. Their Heads of States have been scheduled to hold a summit meeting in Tunis in December 2003. The five European Mediterranean countries are France, Spain, Italy Portugal and Malta: the southern countries are Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. Mauritania is not a Mediterranean country, but a member of the Maghreb Arab Union (**UMA**). This means that this group, undisturbed by the Arab-Israeli conflict, will concentrate on economic relations. The western wing of the Mediterranean sea is not without its problems : the Western Sahara, which has been the main reason for the difficulties encountered by the UMA, whose summit (planned for June 2003) could not be held yet; and the Spanish settlements near Morocco,

Ceuta, Mellila and Lila island. The European countries also have problems concerning NATO and their policy towards the US. Thus the general situation in the Western Euro-Mediterranean is cloudy as well.

We have the feeling that we are at a crossroad of events, that a new international order is on the way. The war on Iraq may be a turning point. The perspective of that war has already divided European countries: the consensus has separated those following the US policy, and those against the war, especially France and Germany.

It is very stimulating to observe and analyse European and US relations through the evolution of the NATO and the EU. NATO has been challenged since the fall of the Berlin wall (9 November 1989), which was followed by the collapse of the USSR, the end of the cold war and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. The NATO organization could also see changes coming: a new function, the possible inclusion of former members of the Warsaw Pact and a new relationship with Russia among its future activities. NATO's participation in the Balkans conflicts could be regarded as an extension of its traditional role. The enlargement of NATO at the Madrid Summit of July 1999 allowed the inclusion of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, while at the Prague Summit of 21-22 November 2002, the three Baltic states, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, were added along with Slovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria and Slovenia. An agreement for periodic consultation was reached with Russia and the dialogue with other states -- including those of the Maghreb -- continues.

We see in the background a new policy for NATO, not only a military one but one that embraces also political, economic, social and environmental questions. This global vision is well suited to the interests of southern Mediterranean countries, and will enable them to cooperate more positively than in the military field in which NATO's interest was previously concentrated. Here, we can raise two questions: how far will the NATO leadership go to associate the southern Mediterranean countries with its actions, and how long will it take to reach such an agreement with them? What about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in relation to NATO and its partners?

Furthermore, NATO is not the only organisation in Europe dealing with the southern Mediterranean countries, and how would it treat its weak partners? They have the initiators of the Barcelona Dialogue, the EMP, and naturally the European Union. This organisation, on its side, is also undergoing a deep change. A new constitution is being

drawn up and at the Copenhagen Summit on 13 December, 2002, a few weeks after NATO's enlargement, its members were increased from 15 to 25 with the addition of Estonia, Lithuania, Lettonia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta. The applications of Bulgaria and Rumania are to be decided in 2004. The case of Turkey will be considered later. We cannot avoid seeing the process of integration of Eastern European countries into NATO as well as the European Union.

The EU has given these countries 40 billion euros in development aid. NATO has given them additional necessary support. As we are linked to the EU by the Barcelona Declaration of 25 November, 1995 and several bilateral agreements, we would like to extract from the last Copenhagen Declaration, the following (point 24): 'The enlargement will tighten its relations with Russia. The European Union hopes to enlarge also its relations with Ukrainia, Moldova and the countries south of the Mediterranean in order to promote, in a long term approach, democratic, economic and commercial reforms and elaborate new initiatives for that purpose. The Council is satisfied that the Commission and the Secretary General will offer propositions to that end'.

It is to be remarked that the countries of the southern Mediterranean are only mentioned at the end, with no reference being made to the Barcelona Procedure and the EMP. Forty billions euros have been reserved for Eastern European countries, while we know that less than one billion has been set aside by the EU for the EMP. In addition, the possible impact of the enlargement on southern Mediterranean countries could be mitigated. Let us wait and see! In the meantime, we have the impression, after the two enlargements in Europe and NATO, that we are at a crossroad, with numerous difficulties created by the Iraqi conflict but particularly with the chronic Arab-Israeli conflict killing innocent people, bringing destruction and misery and raising passions across the Middle East and in the Maghreb.

The consequences of the Iraqi war will show the direction in which the world is heading. Towards a reinforcement of international solidarity, emerging from the movement of opposition to the war, involving greater understanding and the development of closer ties between states, with the US cooperating with other countries to achieve more justice and democracy? Or a more troubled world, with more conflicts, terrorism and the triumph of the law of the jungle? In these conditions, what will be the destiny of the EMP? Will the Arab-Israeli conflict remain unsolved, and what will be the relations between

Europe and the US? War would not solve problems but create new ones. It is only lasting peace, diplomacy and the implementation of international law that could create the best conditions for change.

Unfortunately, the world is too often subordinated to short-term interests. The aims of the US war against Iraq are still not clear: was oil the main objective? And what about the destiny of the people and the whole area? While we can dream about the better future promised by President George W. Bush and the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, we can undoubtedly figure out that, essentially, our part of the world, the southern Mediterranean countries, will not change. Our needs will remain. Our relations with the EU and the US will be the same as those that have prevailed since the emergence of the US as the sole superpower: they will be governed as before by the laws of geo-politics and historical destiny. In these conditions, we still need an efficient partnership: we want to see the Barcelona Declaration being implemented in letter and spirit without having to wait for the fulfilment of the latest Copenhagen process. We do not want southern Mediterranean countries to be placed at the end of the list of European concerns. To accelerate this process, we, in the Maghreb area, have to reanimate the process of UMA (Maghreb Arab Union).

The UMA was established by the Treaty of Marrakesh, signed on 17 February, 1989 between the Heads of State of Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania, Libya and Tunisia. These five countries have a total surface area of 6,197,000 km² with a total population of about 78 million and a Gross domestic product (GDP) of \$US1,29400 million. By comparison, Metropolitan France has an area of 551,000 km², 60 million inhabitants and a GDP of \$US1,470262. German area is 356,580 km², a population of 82 million and a GDP of \$US2,079 million. These statistics are only useful for a comparison between the United Maghreb and part of the EU, as we cannot compare UMA with the whole of the EU and its 15, if not 25 countries, the whole area of which would be 4,278300 km² and 481.2 millions inhabitants.

These figures give us an idea of the importance of UMA and its potential. If we further compare five European countries with a population similar to the UMA and we arrive at the following figures:

MAGHREB		EUROPE	
Area			
Mauritania	1,025,520	Portugal	91,980
Morocco	445,500	Spain	505,990
Algeria	2,381,741	Belgium	30,521
Tunisia	163,610	Austria	83,860
Libya	1,769,540	Greece	131,960
Total	5,785,911		844,311
Population(inmillions)			
Mauritania	2,670	Portugal	10,013
Morocco	28,778	Spain	39,466
Algeria	31,471	Belgium	10,246
Tunisia	9,619	Austria	8,094
Libya	5,114	Greece	10,596
Total	77,652		78,415
GDP			
Mauritania	959	Portugal	107,716
Morocco	35,238	Spain	562,245
Algeria	47,015	Belgium	245,700
Tunisia	21,189	Austria	208,900
Libya	35,000	Greece	123,934
Total	139,401		1248 495

Other elements could help to understand the question

Individual GDP			
Mauritania	359	Portugal	10,757
Morocco	1226	Spain	14,246
Algeria	1440	Belgium	24,510
Tunisia	2203	Austria	25,970
Libya	6844	Greece	11,697

Sources : l'état du Monde – 2002 éditions La découverte

If we select two countries that can be compared, one from the south (the Maghreb) and one from the north (Europe), this is what we find:

	TUNISIA	GREECE
Area	163,610km ²	131,960km ²
Population	9,619,000	10,596,000
GDP	21,185	123,934
IGDP	2,203	11,697
H.D	0.703	0.875

If we read the above statistics carefully, we can easily conclude that the north is materially superior to the south. The Maghreb naturally needs the cooperation of the north and a substantial exterior investment to reach the level of the less advantaged European countries like Greece and Portugal. In its exercise of world leadership, and in the interests of its presence in the Mediterranean area, the US has tried, though very timidly, to show some interest in the Maghreb. This interest is known as the Eisenstadt project. Mr Eisenstadt was deputy secretary to the Secretary of Treasury in the Clinton administration. In June 1998, he visited the North African capitals. At a meeting of the US-Tunisian Chamber of Commerce, he announced his proposals for a US-Maghreb economic partnership to be established between the UDS and the Maghreb countries of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. The cases of Mauritania and Libye would be considered later. In his press conference held in Tunis on 16 June 16, 1998, Mr Eisenstadt stated that the initiative would have the following components:

1. a significantly enhanced dialogue on a more regular basis by senior US officials with Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.
2. without in any way lessening bilateral relations with Tunisia or any of the Maghreb countries, 'we want to treat the Maghreb as a region for economic cooperation. We hope to encourage the Maghreb Arab Union and other vehicles for regional integration to break down barriers between the Maghreb countries which are preventing the full flowering of trade'. Mr Eisenstadt added that 'it is our hope that this improved economic integration will lay the groundwork for improved political relations among and between the Maghreb countries'.
3. greater emphasis on the central role of the private sector as the engine of sustained long term growth for the region.

The new economic partnership would also stress the importance of governments making structural economic reforms to lay the groundwork for a flourishing private sector. In his remarks to journalists, Mr Eisenstadt did not clarify the case of Mauritania and about Libya: he stated that Libya could play an honourable role in North Africa and in the international community, but not until it had turned over the two Lockerbie suspects for trial, in accordance with UN resolutions and international norms. We know that this question has been settled. The trial took place, and one of the defendants was jailed. Nevertheless the sanctions against Libya have been only suspended and the relations between US and Libya are at a stalemate.

Furthermore, the Deputy Secretary raised the question of US investments in the Maghreb countries concerned, answering the question that investments should increase over the five following years, starting in 1998. We have some figures published by the US Department of Trade:

US investments in three Maghreb countries				
In millions of dollars				
	ALGERIA	MOROCCO	TUNISIA	
1997	1,890	83	149	2271
1998	3,330	77	150	3557
1999	1,923	31	65	2019
2000	2,333	36	26	2395
2001	2,484	35	22	2541
				12783

US GENERAL EXPORTS				
In millions of dollars				
	2000	2001	Jan. Aug 2001	Jan. Aug. 2002
Algeria	867	1047	622	582
Morocco	525	286	148	434
Tunisia	289	278	165	117
Total	1681	1611	935	1133

US GENERAL IMPORTS				
In millions of dollars				
aa	2000	2001	Jan. Aug 2001	Jan. Aug. 2002
Algeria	2724	2694	1627	1250
Morocco	444	435	230	176
Tunisia	119	122	58	35
Total	3287	3251	1915	1461

Sources : US department of trade

All these figures are given to indicate the importance of the financial and economic relations of the US with the three Maghreb countries, Morocco, Algeria and

Tunisia, which cannot replace the relations between these states and the EU, but US participation, as we have already mentioned, is complementary to the contribution to the EMP as well as cooperation with Japan, China and other countries.

The Maghreb countries are looking to a reinforcement of their potentialities and in order to do it, Morocco, Jordan, Tunisia and Egypt signed on 8 May, 2001, the Agadir Agreement which creates a zone of free exchange between the Mediterranean Arab states and other Arab countries. If implemented, this will mean an addition to the project of the EU mentioned in the bilateral agreements with the southern Mediterranean Arab states. Such a zone of free exchange should be established by the year 2010. Financial and economic ties have priority in the agreements, keeping in mind that the partnership has to deal with the three chapters of the Barcelona Declaration. The three sections express a consensus dealing with the different perceptions of the partners, southern and northern. Before the Barcelona Declaration we had the impression that we did not think on the same line, and that was understandable before the agreement. As the different perceptions could remain in the background of the consensus, we can mention them to explain the difficulties in the implementation of the agreed approach.

The questions are: security, politics, economy, culture. For the north, security is essentially a military matter; for the south, security is global in nature, the military element being only one of several fields; a policy of development is basic to ensure stability and peace. In the political arena, the north advocates democracy, good governance, individual human rights. The south seeks stability, good organisation of the population and collective rights. This means authoritarian governments, with control of the press and political life, with many differences according to the countries. To deal with the economy, the north is more interested in trade and the south in investments and development, a co-development kind of relationship. As for culture, the north has a tendency to occidentalize the southern societies through language, cultural productions and values, while the south is interested in modern technologies, and the protection of its traditional values, social or religious.

The theory of the 'clash of civilisations' proclaimed by Professor Samuel Huntington in his famous book can be justified by a difference of perception. Immigration from the south to Europe illustrates this phenomenon. The Barcelona Declaration stressed the importance of dialogue between civilisations. Unfortunately the debate preceding the Barcelona Declaration has not been followed by substantial action: discussing differences is

not enough to overcome them. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has been more productive in order to reach the level of true association. The enlargement of the EU should not be a handicap for working honestly and intensively to reach that aim. Actions should not be conceived without prior thought. Discussions, attempts to reach consensus by dialogue and planning common projects are to be as frequent as possible and at all levels, including the NGO actors. NGOs have been important actors in EMP since its inception.

We can mention as an example the role of EUROMESCO, which started as only MESCO (Mediterranean Estudios Commission) in 1993, and which, after the Barcelona Declaration, became an important organisation working to consolidate the Partenariat. Our association the International Studies Association of Tunisia (AEI) is one of the main promoters of EUROMESCO, taking an interest in Mediterranean security and cooperation with Europe, from the beginning of the eighties. Since then, we have maintained our interest in Euro-Mediterranean relations, all the more important as they constitute a central axis in the policies of our governments.

At the seminar we organised on 26 November, 1994, just a year before the Barcelona Declaration (25 November, 1995) we explained our motivations and stressed the necessity of a pact between northern and southern partners. The idea of such a pact was included in the final declaration of the Barcelona Conference, either by coincidence or by common thinking. Our conclusions in a final statement, are the following:

Relations between North and South of the Mediterranean have existed for thousands of years. They foster the birth and ripening of civilisations, the influence of which has reached much further than the Mediterranean region. They gave birth to the peaceful exchanges of men, ideas, ideals and goods but are also stamped by many long wars. These violent exchanges have not been hampered by the long distances. Three centuries ago, the Mediterranean sea looked bigger than the Pacific Ocean today. In the 16th century a letter from Alexandria to Venise took about 65 days.

Nowadays, we are witness to events as they happen around the world. Wealth as well as extreme poverty can be seen, distances have shrunk and the Mediterranean is becoming smaller and smaller. The Maghreb and Middle East are close neighbors of Europe. History speeds up as well : after two world wars, yesterday's enemies are today allies and form a community of peoples close to Maghreb and Middle East. In Eastern

Europe, the communist empire has disappeared and its countries are entering the European Union, which unite them and has created a development bank for them, the BERD.

But, if the Berlin wall has fallen, another one has been reinforced between the peoples of the north and the south of Mediterranean. This wall has existed for centuries. Now new generations are consolidating it with egotism, xenophobia and exclusion. The Euro-Maghreb agreement signed in Brussels since the sixties has barely opened a few gaps. Aware of the problems, we together have to reconcile cultures and civilisations on both sides. To reach this goal, both partners urgently need to take positive measures ahead of unforeseen developments. On our side we have to reinforce Maghreb institutions in order to show that we want a common project, and a new approach to relations between Maghreb and the EU. What is needed is a treaty of cooperation and security between the Maghreb and the EU. The new approach would integrate cultural, political, economic and social aspects of the relationship:

1. Cultural action

This would focus on changing mindsets, eliminating secular prejudices, erasing stereotypes giving false images either of Islam or the Occident. Schools, books, newspapers, radios and televisions, films and theater shows would be the arena in which each side could stimulate a more positive image of the other, its faith, customs or hopes.

2. Political action

The second axis of the pact would be on one side the need of the populations for security and on the other, a common understanding of political questions. The European Commission has often warned that economic and social imbalances between the EU and the Mediterranean countries could threaten the security of Europe itself. At the European Council meeting in Lisbon (27 June, 1992) on the issue of PESC (External Politics and Common Security) it was said that actions of the EU towards Maghreb tend to create an area of peace and prosperity, respecting principles of international law and towards the application of disarmament treaties. It is legitimate for Europe to think about security. The Maghreb has the same problem, as well as the integrity a region which has suffered invasions and punitive expeditions in the past, mostly from the North. Security and peace

are for both a major concern. But neither force nor domination will win without an explosion. They will be guaranteed when the EU and the Maghreb pledge, in a solemn pact, to respect international law and implement a rapid reduction of the imbalances between them. Such a pact should also bring confidence and, if necessary, measures of disarmament and arms control. It should moreover tackle the question of human rights and democracy. It is of prime importance to preserve the dignity of men and protect them from xenophobia. It should also reaffirm an equal protection from discrimination. Democratisation should also be included in the pact. This noble goal is compulsory in the respect of conventions and other international actions.

3. Economic and social action

Already, in 1990, the European Commission had considered that ‘relations between the European Commission and the South Mediterranean countries should improve quantitatively and qualitatively, following the political, economical and social interests of the area ‘. Has that been realised? Except for a timid increase in the financial contribution, the relationship has been dominated by long mercenary discussions. It is urgent to abandon this fruitless approach and plan an ambitious policy. A precise economic objective should be fixed in the pact, together with the means of realising it. To achieve this, an European financial contribution will be necessary, Its volume and use will be fixed according to the objective and within an institution like the past European organization of economic cooperation whose aim was to distribute Marshall Plan aid, help trade and cooperation among member States. In this way the economic problems facing the Maghreb and specially that of debt should find a solution.

This ten years plan should involve two phases : the first would be focussed on the development and modernisation of Maghrebi infrastructures (water, energy, housing, telecommunications, roads, railways, ports and airports, transportation, warehousing, sanitation etc.). A large scale organisation for professional training and development research should also be part of this approach. An attractive environment for private investors would thus be created. which would be attractive to private investors. Diversified industrial development is the only way to avoid migratory pressures on Europe. Future development will bring co-prosperity linking forever the two sides of the Mediterranean. This integrated and harmonious development of cultural, political and economic relations would be the safeguard for peace, stability and prosperity of the region. Our thoughts,

together with those of other experts and NGOs as well as official dialogue produced the text of the Barcelona Declaration. We considered that this declaration will serve as a solid basis for the future. Four years later the concept of a Charter of Peace and Stability between all of Mediterranean countries has been formulated, a Charter that by reinforcing the Barcelona Declaration would give legal status to the EMP. However, the enlargement of both the EU and the writing of a constitution constitute new obstacles to agreement: the project has had to be postponed and all the working groups now have to wait for further developments.

In spite of the follow-up of traditional exchanges, the Meda program (the financial instrument of the EMP) and general cooperation, there will be new elements in our relations. Once again, to assert our policies and secure our interests, we have to emphasize and explain our concerns and our aims. At the outset we aim at building a true partnership with a legal structure for discussing, planning and evaluating periodically the results of the cooperation. However, this idealistic vision of the partnership may not be shared by all the partners. In Barcelona, in 1995, 27 countries were represented. Fifteen of them were EU members and 12 were from the southern Mediterranean. Of these 12 Cyprus and Malta will be now become EU members while Turkey may join later on. By the year 2004, there will be 25 European countries and only nine southern countries which will make for a curious equation.

Putting aside the future composition of the EMP and considering the situation as it is nowadays, we try to understand the different conceptions we may have of the partenariat and our vision in that matter, the commitment of each partner and his field of action. We can study the nature of the problems of each country and its reactions; we may conclude that there could be a consensus among the southern Arab countries, though the Arab-Israeli conflict constitutes an enormous field of misunderstanding while the Northern European countries will have to consider this conflict together with their own internal problems.

We understand the lack of deep commitment, if not disengagement towards the EMP. However, the responsibilities lie on the shoulders of the rulers and the leaders of public opinion to look to their future and build the foundations of a better world. Security, peace and development of the Mediterranean area are guarantees for a European Union in need of a common foreign policy and constructive relations with the southern Mediterranean states and peoples. The EU has acted in the same spirit towards the eastern wing of Europe. We then

continue to believe, in spite of all difficulties that the EMP has to be consolidated and made able to deal with such questions of common concern as:

- the struggle against terrorism
- the struggle against organised transnational criminality
- the struggle against cyber-criminality
- the struggle against narcotics
- the struggle against all kinds of illegal traffic
- the struggle against xenophobia, intolerance and racism
- the promotion of good governance and democracy
- the reinforcement of good neighborly relations and cooperation
- the struggle against the deterioration of the environment (sea and earth)
- the struggle against insecurity in maritime transportation
- the struggle against natural catastrophies
- the struggle against poverty.

All these items have been raised by a Tunisian expert^[1] at a conference at the NATO College in Rome on 2 November, 2000. To these items, we have added the need for the following:: an instrument to prevent crises by concentrating on all economic, social, cultural and human problems; an instrument of solidarity (such an instrument has been adopted by the UN following a Tunisian initiative. The International Fund of Solidarity has been entrusted to the UNDP to promote and manage it); a fund of proximity to help new generations in the framework of cooperation between neighbouring countries.

The concept of soft security, illustrated by all the items concerning northern and southern Mediterranean countries are a part of the concept of global security, a priority in international relations and especially in the EMP. Military security, defence, arms control are considered in many northern institution, such as NATO and are of prime interest. The southern countries seem to be less interested in this aspect of the partenariat. They watch, nevertheless, the evolution of the matter and in due time, may take part in the process. This motivates the dialogue they maintain in their bilateral relations with specific cooperation in the military field and exchange of information with NATO.

The new strategic concept of NATO considers security as a global matter that involves a range of diverse issues, political, economic, social and environmental together with the defence dimension. On this basis, the North-South dialogue may be useful : it is an open dialogue with no commitment. NATO is now opening to the south, following the expansion of its field of activities brought about by the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War. . A few years before the march had started towards globalisation, with expansion of the free market its main goal. International developments have transformed economic globalisation into full globalisation of which communications and the expansion of the Internet system is an important part.

The conception of a global world is not new but at early times unity was only a concept and the reality was quite different. Today, with rapid communications and mass travel, unity is more evident. We would like to report what a Tunisian Ottoman reformer Khairuddin Pasha wrote in 1869, after visiting France and other European states, in a book entitled *The best way to know the State of Kingdoms*. Khairuddin held the post of Prime Minister in Tunisia from 1873 to 1877 and was the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire in 1878-79. At the beginning of his book he wrote: 'If we consider what is being currently achieved by *communication means* [author's emphasis] which have brought peoples and minds close to each other, we cannot help imagining the planet being reduced to a small united village, inhabited by many nations in urgent need of each other.

From this, we see that globalisation is an old reality with an extended meaning. Sometimes it takes the colour of Americanisation, the US being, since the fall

of Berlin wall and the USSR, the only superpower, the events of September 11, 2001 reinforcing that role.

The MEP has a role to play in the globalisation process : on one hand it allows the partners to take benefit from the advantages of an international market and universal values and on the other one, it protects them through its solidarity from the power of finance and egoistic interest. Global security which could be gained by a well-oriented globalisation cannot be only economic. *Le Monde*, the French daily newspaper published in its issue of Saturday 29, 2003, an article under the title 'Irak, première leçon'. The author was Laurent Fabius, former French Prime Minister and Finance Minister. From his text, we extract the following sentences: ' if we want after this war to build a stable world of progress and peace, we need the establishment of a new international order that is able to control globalisation. The order has to be really multilateral and respectful of the law. Multilateralism should apply not only to the solution of a crisis but more widely to all international relations... '

Another lesson has to be drawn at this phase of the conflict, which is that there can be no global security without generosity and without solidarity. Security is not just a question of military means. Solidarity with the south also means joining the struggle against hunger, disease and poverty. They are a global responsibility. This notion of solidarity should apply broadly in international relations. In an EMP that is not isolated from international relations and plays an important part in the globalisation process, we have to respect of the high principles of justice and a balance between all actions. In EuroMeSCO meetings and in our seminars or writings, we have reached the conclusion that hard security and soft security are to be considered as a global one. We have different positions among northern and southern partners . We note with interest that some of our northern partners, such as Mr Laurent Fabius, have reached the same conclusions, which may constitute a basis to reinforce or renew the commitment to international law.

We would like here to add another item, not forgotten by the Barcelona Declaration : the cultural dimension. In 1979 we raised the problem of cultural confrontation at a special seminar held in Hammamet (Tunisia) . We have since encouraged our partners in EUROMESCO to consider culture as one element to secure security. In November 1994 we have already indicated that our proposal should be part of any understanding on cooperation and security between the Maghreb and a united Europe. We

thought that the political, economic and social items were generally the concern in negotiations between states. The economy, especially, was the main subject in the relations with the EU.

The cultural aspect, more than politics and the social fields, has often been overlooked but in the analysis of international events and regional conflicts we discovered, in many cases, cultural motivations. We are interested in the necessity of dealing with cultural problems and creating the necessary structures for the discussions of culture policies, enabling us to avoid a 'clash of civilisations' as foreshadowed by Professor Huntington. Dialogue, respect for each other, mutual understanding and cooperation should prevail. This is the real war against terror and hate. We are surely not alone in advocating such behaviour. We may have the satisfaction of seeing that this question is now being considered with greater interest. Mr Roman Prodi, President of the EU, announced during his visit to Tunis on 1 April 2003 the creation of a cultural foundation, a project urgent at this time and an answer to the problem of the clash of civilisations. We hope that it will be realised and not remain a dream of the intelligentsia. The project was adopted by the Valencia Conference of the Euro Mediterranean ministry of foreign affairs (April 23, 2002). In point 20 of the final statement, the conference underlined 'the importance of promoting cooperation in the field of culture, involving the general population with a view to furthering mutual understanding and combating misconceptions and stereotypes. The conference agreed to the principle of creating an Euro-Mediterranean Foundation to promote a dialogue of cultures and civilisation and to increase the visibility of the Barcelona Process through intellectual, cultural and civil society exchanges. The Foundation should be based on the principle of co-ownership and work in close coordination with other similar institutions, including private sector entities. The modalities concerning the organisation, the activities and the financing of this Foundation will be studied fully '.

An European-Mediterranean Cultural Foundation should not duplicate UNESCO, created in 1946 with the aim of maintaining international peace and security by promoting cooperation among nations in the fields of education, communication and respect for human rights. The essence of its objectives is contained in this formula, written by Paul Valery in 1930 which became the slogan of UNESCO : *Wars are born in the minds of men. It is in the mind of men that the defenses of peace should be built.*

A society of spirit is the condition of a society of nations. A Mediterranean-European cultural foundation has to concentrate on our region and reserve the largest part of its preoccupations for the cultural motivations of our behavior and how to inspire peoples to understand each other, to treat their differences with tolerance, to avoid hate, racism and fanaticism on the path to genuine cooperation. Thinking of the ways and means to eradicate the germs of war and plant the seeds of peace in the souls and minds of peoples and their leaders should be a priority in the work of the projected Foundation. Its most urgent task is to deal with this question, the interpretations of religions, the social traditions, the popular ones. The wounds of colonialism seem to lie at the origin of the conflicts among peoples, and the 'clash of civilisations' as it has been predicted by Professor Huntington.

To avoid such a clash and promote dialogue, to transform confrontation by understanding and cooperation, what a wonderful achievement this would be for the planned European-Mediterranean Foundation! And it would be achieved by using the brains of thinkers and cultural agents. The Euro-Mediterranean Foundation would need experts both male and female. Their consensual thoughts would be shared and would not remain in the archives like much academic knowledge that has accumulated through the ages. What is needed is to transform societies by actions inspired by civilised and moderate teaching. The foundation would need also adequate financing for research and follow-up. Let us hope that in spite of the circumstances, an effort will be made for that purpose and a balance be found between eastern and southern wings, Europe and the Mediterranean.

President Roman Prodi, in a press conference in Tunis, dealing with economic and political relations mentioned the new policy of neighborhood the European Union is going to realise in its relations with the Southern countries of the Mediterranean area. He then expressed his awareness of the negative aspect of the fear of the EU and added that enlargement constitutes an historical necessity of history. But he did not exclude a strong policy toward the south. The EU intends to give more importance to the partnership. He suggested that this new interest is a message to the US, to tell it that Europe has a voice in this highly turbulent region. We hope that the European Commission and the high authorities in the European Union share his interest and optimistic view.

Certainly, close cooperation between Europe and the countries south of the Mediterranean will reinforce European unity and prestige and could constitute a counterfoi to the unique power of the United States. Without neglecting the reality of American power,

we consider that the reinforcement of our ties with the EU is of great interest to our stability and development.. Global partnerships in all fields of human activities and global security have to be our aim on both sides.

What a passionate and rewarding task to accomplish ! To secure progress and peace for all of our peoples and for the future generations for whom we are morally responsible !

* * Tunisian diplomat, historian, poet, novelist and journalist. The author stresses that the views in this article are non-official and personal

^[1] Abdrazak Attia, a conference published in "Etudes Internationales" n°79 January 2001