SECURITY AS A COMPONENT OF COMPHERENSIVE POLICY[1]

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All the signatories of the Barcelona Declaration claim to support a comprehensive security concept, as is the case with the members of the Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (Mediterranean Forum). It is not clear, however, that they all share a common understanding of what that concept is and we need to ask the question, to what extent comprehensive security means the same thing for all the states concerned, and for the different national constituencies within them? Furthermore, to what extent is the dominant role given to the war on terrorism generating ambiguity over such a concept, on the one hand, and contributing to mutual suspicions between North and South? What has been the contribution of post-11 September attitudes towards the adoption of a security vision towards issues that are really concerned with social and law-and-order issues? These are fundamental questions for the future of the European-Mediterranean relations, in particular for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (emp) and initiatives such as the Mediterranean Forum. In troubled times such as those that we are living through now, it is all the more important to clarify concepts, to make sure we understand what we mean and to avoid dangerous oversimplifications.

In short, is there a particular security culture which the emp, given its nature as an integrative and co-operative process, aims to promote? Is it possible to build a consensus around this issue? In order to clarify the nature of the security culture the emp aims to promote, it is useful to look at the European integration process itself, and identify what comprehensive policy means in this context. We can then go on to analyse different interpretations of comprehensive security arising from the different security cultures across the emp, whether in individual countries or in sub-regional groupings. Based on these concepts and principles, how can we develop security and defence cooperation between the European Union and the southern partners? Which role should the Mediterranean Forum play?

Security by inclusion vs. power politics

The Barcelona Process is a North/South integration project that aims to ensure security through inclusion. In other words, it aims to expand the area of peace and security based on principles of democracy and inclusiveness inherent in the European Union towards the South. At the core of the process of European integration lies an explicit rejection of power politics in relations amongst member-states. The main characteristics of the security culture of a civilian power such as the EU are as follows:

a) Differences between member-states are resolved according to jointly-developed norms.

   It is security by rule-of-law.

b) Peace is further guaranteed by the democratic nature of member-states. It is a form of democratic security.

c) Policy is comprehensive or integrated. Economic integration, political convergence and security cooperation make conflict a lose-lose proposition by bringing to the fore an awareness of shared interests and a common destiny. The Stability Pact for aspiring members is a primary example of this culture.

The principles of democratic inclusion are reflected in the Barcelona Declaration. The declared aims of the Partnership are that peace and security should be achieved through an integrated or comprehensive approach. This is, indeed, the principle inherent in all three emp baskets since, that they should integrate with each other, thus making the Barcelona Process itself viable. The linkage between the three is not always as strong as it should be, however, and the three-pillar system of the EU is partly to blame for the lack of coherence between economic and political issues within the emp.

Nonetheless, both the instruments of the Partnership and its long-term aims are clearly framed by a comprehensive political concept. The question remains, however, whether the interpretation of the concept is actually common to all. Eight years after the signature of the Barcelona Declaration, there is still not a clear answer.

2. The dilemma of a comprehensive security concept

It is obvious that 'comprehensive' or 'integrated' security does not mean the same thing to people from different security cultures. All may declare their allegiance to an integrated concept that ensures security in all arenas, and yet be speaking of entirely disparate things. For one person, it may mean that democratic inclusion is the only way to attain a durable peace; for another it may reflect the view that most threats are domestic and of a political or economic nature. The latter can be a reflection of the fact that fear of internal enemies and mistrust of civil society activism dominates the concept; but it can also reflect the view that economic development rather than political reform is the best way to combat instability – a view which is the exact reverse of the experience of the EU. More often than not, it means the involvement of the armed forces in ensuring internal law-and-order. This view of security is not really comprehensive but all-embracing, instead. This inherent ambiguity and the abuse to which it can lead, particularly through the blurring of the distinction between external and internal challenges and the military and civilian realms, is a serious obstacle to democratisation.

The elasticity of the word 'security' and its abuse means that some people even place culture at the heart of the concept. This is clearly the view of radical Islamist forces or of Europeans and North Americans who accept the thesis of the 'clash of civilisations'. This view of security can properly be described – parallel to the term 'identity-based politics' – as 'identity-based security'.

3. The dangers of a post-11 September 'total-security' concept

The dangers of an all-embracing security concept have become particularly evident since 11 September 2001 for five main reasons:

a) The tendency to conflate internal and external security has been reinforced in the North, so that defence polices have taken over priorities that have been traditionally the preserve of home affairs. Whilst this may not constitute a serious threat to fundamental freedoms and rights in consolidated democracies, it is certainly not the case in fragile democracies, in transitional regimes or even in authoritarian contexts. Whatever the circumstances furthermore, guarantees of fundamental rights and freedoms protected by the rule-of-law are

weakened. This becomes all the more dangerous in the cases where armed forces might become involved in internal security because the relationship between armed forces and the exercise of justice is not the same as that with police forces which are directly subordinated to the judiciary.

b) The fact that the Bush administration sees terrorism as the overriding threat that shapes the whole international security agenda, has allowed some states to justify their own strategies in similar terms. Such an approach is having a devastating effect on state policies in societies that face terrorist activities and in those states where islamist political forces are excluded from the political process. The reason for this is that such approaches are used to justify repressive strategies and, in some cases, to reinforce authoritarian practices.

c) Migration and refugee issues are increasingly regarded as security problems. Although the European Commission has expressed its opposition to such an all-embracing view of security, many EU member states not only do not criticise this tendency but even promote its application. Indeed, migration is listed as a security risk within almost all strategic concepts currently in vogue. This serves not only to legitimate the anti-immigration rhetoric of European far-right political parties and movements, but also contributes significantly to Southern perceptions of the triumph of the 'clash of civilisations' thesis in Europe.

d) The increasing habituation to the use of violence and terror perpetrated against civilians, and the tendency to disregard the rules of warfare and international humanitarian law are some of the most worrying aspects of the new security environment that has become one of most disturbing manifestations of the 11 September events. This has a profound impact on the countries of the Mediterranean, and generally represents a major regression in attitudes towards the use of force in international and domestic affairs.

e) The EU continues to be a civilian power that has failed to adopt significant defence and international security responsibilities. It continues to be viewed as a soft-security actor for whom inclusion is the primary instrument to ensure peace and security. To date its new defence policy has not generated adverse reactions in the Mediterranean and, in some instances, has even raised hopes that the European Union would take on a more active and decisive role on the world scene. In the future, however, internal security policy – Justice and Home Affairs issues and in particular policies towards immigration and Europe's own Islamic communities – will decisively affect the image of the EU as an international actor. It may be

the case that the EU will not become an effective problem-solver in the Middle East, for example, but there are hopes for it to act as a beacon of the values that paved the way for peaceful and prosperous European integration.[2]

4. An integrated and transparent security concept

The Euro-Mediterranean relations could become an example that counters an international tendency to revert to 'identity-based' security concepts. It provides a unique opportunity for a joint North-South clarification of the principles governing an unambiguous comprehensive policy. This, however, requires a prior exercise in conceptual clarification. The following principles should be used to shape a common concept of security:

a) 'Security' must be restricted to issues that imply the use of force.

b) Integrated or comprehensive policies must make a clear linkage between security, democratisation and economic development – as well as between the latter two concepts as mutually reinforcing sides of the same coin.

c) Special efforts should be made to integrate the different pillars of the Barcelona Process. This implies the reform of emp institutions, as well as progress in developing a coherent foreign policy for the EU, so as to ensure overall coherence amongst the pillars.

d) Comprehensive partnership measures that involve the different emp baskets must be launched. These must be based on the explicit principles of 'open co-ordination', as employed within the EU.

e) All internal security issues, including anti-terrorism measures, must be strictly linked to co-operation over issues of justice, fundamental rights and freedoms.

f) Migration must be separated from security.

g) Immigration policy must consider fully economic and human dimensions, and its security dimension must only focus on combating illegal trafficking in immigrants.

h) Measures to ensure transparency must be adopted where there is no clear-cut distinction between internal and external security. A starting point would be comparative analysis of national legislation in these domains.

i) The EU must clarify the aims of its overall defence policy, particularly with respect to the Mediterranean, in order to ensure mutual trust and efficiency.

j) The role of civil society should be reinforced as a vital element to generate mutual trust and to ensure good governance within a comprehensive policy.

5. A role for the Mediterranean Forum

While conceived of as a sub-regional 'proximity' circle within a wider Euro-Mediterranean circle, the Mediterranean Forum can play a very active and specific role in promoting a multilateral cooperation agenda in the Mediterranean in what concerns particularly defence and regional security issues. The membership of the Forum makes it easier to tackle defence cooperation issues and should be the ideal framework to start off a Euro-Mediterranean dialogue on hard security issues. A multilateral dialogue would thus emerge within the Mediterranean Forum, a harder task within the esdp framework and, due to current circumstances, impossible at the emp level. This dialogue should have the following priorities:

a) A regular dialogue about defence issues with the EU's political and military representatives is required, at least every semester. Cooperation in this domain could be complementary to the dialogue, namely through peacekeeping operations in regions of common concern, such as Sub-Saharan Africa.

b) A serious dialogue on Mediterranean security issues implies a realistic assessment of risks and threats to security in the Mediterranean (North-South and South-North) and at a later stage a cross-Mediterranean assessment. Moreover, issues such as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which have a global dimension, will add the wider framework to the debate. The proposal of 'declaratory' measures is feasible in this case. Furthermore, proposals of a multilateral dimension should be added to the list of bilateral measures suggested. As an example, we could mention the measures suggested in the EuroMeSCo working group

report[3]: systematic information about the csdp; development of a common language in the security domain to overcome inaccurate estimates due to lack of understanding; political dialogue on security to achieve consensus in main international and regional security issues such as proliferation; this debate should allow a frank discussion of the links between democratisation, fundamental rights and security; organising training courses in defence should be another aim, taking advantage and boosting existing ones on a bilateral level but also launching new Mediterranean Forum initiatives in that domain (i.e. an annual course for senior military officers).

c) The former WEU dialogue should be resumed by csdp as such, separately from the emp context, by establishing a regular defence and security dialogue. Establishing a regular dialogue between the EU and its southern partners is important to address Mediterranean security concerns. A possible format could be to revive the old WEU dialogue, through regular meetings in Brussels between the Presidency of the EU and the ambassadors and military attachés.

d) Dealing with internal security issues should currently be a priority: terrorism and how defence issues are dealt with in different countries are at the top of the list. Judicial cooperation, training and education are essential in this context and should be discussed in the Mediterranean Forum; however, concrete forms of co-operation should be dealt with at the emp level.

e) Immigration is a core issue of the Euro-Mediterranean relations. This is another issue, as we have seen, to be developed at the emp level or at a multi-bilateral level in its political and social dimensions. Nevertheless, the Mediterranean Forum should begin a multilateral programme to fight human-trafficking mafias, which exploit immigrants and infringe their fundamental rights.

From an institutional perspective, the multiplicity of initiatives reflects the fragmented nature of policy and strategy in the Mediterranean area as well as the different sets of obstacles to regional cooperation in the South. In order to avoid excessive overlapping and to allow for complementary to arise from such Euro-Mediterranean initiatives as the emp, the Mediterranean Forum and the Five-plus-Five, as well as the nato and the osce dialogues, a number of considerations should be taken into account. Firstly, it is essential that any such initiatives conform to the inclusive nature and the overall ambition of

the Barcelona project and help to reinforce it, which can be achieved also through smaller groupings – such as the Mediterranean Forum – concentrating on specific security issues that cannot be usefully tackled at a wider level. Secondly, that the EU role, eventually performed through individual participating member states, should be linking together these initiatives and ensuring their smooth interplay, while keeping mindful that supporting sub-regional cooperation in the South remains a crucial objective. This approach could help overcome present blockages within the emp political and security basket. The key for all Euro-Mediterranean initiatives remains, however, the European Union's institutional coherence and political autonomy.[4]

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[1] This article reflects the main conclusions of the EuroMeSCo Working Group on *ESDP: Impact on the EMP* 2002/2003 research program. For more results see www.euromesco.net.

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[2] See EuroMeSCo Paper nº16, *European Defence – Perceptions vs. Realities*, First Year Report of the Working Group on *ESDP: Impact on the EMP*, June 2002.

[3] Idem

[4] See, Álvaro de Vasconcelos (coordinator), *A European Strategic Concept for the Mediterranean,* Lumiar Paper No.9, Lisbon,2002.