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**Vortex of a Regional Security Complex:
The EuroMed Partnership and its Security Relevance**

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Vortex of a Regional Security Complex: The EuroMed Partnership and its Security Relevance[♦]

Astrid B. Boening[♣]

Introduction

Studying the Mediterranean as a geo-political region, Pace (2003, 161) states that “the study of regions must in some way include the study of meaning and identity”. Other authors, such as Shamsaddin Megalommatis (2007) are of the opinion that, pertaining to the Arabic and Islamic neighbors of the EU, only Turkey and Iran matter at all.

In this paper I seek to assess security-related dynamics in the EuroMed Partnership (EMP). To re-think the Mediterranean region (Euro-Med) in a relational, political context, Pace (2003, 161) suggests focusing on agency and structure in the analysis of the “*processual*” (emphasis mine) aspects of region making. This paper focuses on the Euro-Mediterranean region and the role of the European Union (EU) and its southern Mediterranean neighbors in “constructing” this space, and hereby giving it meaning, as well as potentially leading to reciprocal “re-construction” of their self-identity in the context of a potential Euro-Mediterranean Regional Security Complex (EMRSC). This would contrast with the Middle Eastern Regional Security Complex (MERSC) which Buzan and Waever (2003) had suggested, but rather this paper suggests a slight theoretical shift to Buzan and Waever’s Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT).

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In terms of security relevance of this topic, when approaching MENA from the geo-political perspective of Iraq today (not to mention Iran), the instability in these countries has only added to existing instabilities in the Middle East, such as apparently fuelling Syria's alleged activism in Lebanon, and the Palestine-Israeli conflict becoming exacerbated by further inflamed Islam fundamentalism and militancy. Against these millennia-old instabilities of the Euro-Mediterranean region, and the prospect of increased terrorism in the Magreb and the Mashriq, and its spill-over to neighboring countries and regions, I examine the role of the EuroMed Partnership (EMP) for its potential to contribute to regional stabilization and development to compensate for the intra-regional struggles for political influence by e.g. extremist non-state actors as well as state-sponsored terrorism.

The Euro-Mediterranean as a Regional Security Complex would also be a way to address the inter-regional demarcations highlighted by some authors (compare Haass 2006) beyond economics or cultural rapprochement in terms of the synergy between the different security sectors Buzan, Waever and de Wilde (1998) have identified in terms of regional security complex theory, such as environmental security, human security, energy security, and of course of classic military security. Other authors (compare Christiansen, Petito and Tonra 2000) would forge the role of the EMP in a political and ideational collective identity, rather than letting the countries bordering the Mediterranean to develop even greater fault lines among them.

The writing of this paper coincided with the evolution of the Union for the Mediterranean (UMed) from the original French proposal for a Mediterranean Union by Sarkozy during 2007 and early 2008; so the writing of this paper about the EMP represented a "moving target" and "EMP" will not unlikely have to be replaced with "UMed" sooner than later. Traynor (2008, 2) writes that it is to be hoped that the UMed, upon its official "debut" at the French EU summit in July 2008, will contribute not only to "pushing the Mediterranean issue up the EU agenda", but also to streamline the EU's Mediterranean policy which some authors had referred to as being "impaired by a guerilla war among the EU institutions over the allocation of competencies" (Philippart 2001, 124 quoted in Schumacher 2005, 374).

Until the official "inauguration" of the UMed, this paper cannot make predictions or declarations in what relationship it stand to the EMP. While the UMed's original announcements lead one to believe that it represents the successor paradigm to the EMP, to paraphrase Mark Twain, a premature declaration of the Barcelona Process as dead is at the time of writing this article not yet appropriate.

A Euro-Mediterranean Regional Security Complex *Structure*?

EMP-member states, in addition to their shared history and geographical space, and through their formal inter-linkage of the “three-basket”-parameters¹ of the Barcelona Process per se are also formally linked beyond mere diplomatic and foreign policy ties through a complex structure of “formal” hard and soft security ties, including conflict resolution, anchored on the part of the EU in a “thickening” institutionalization of its governing bodies, i.e. the Council, the Commission and the Parliament to a degree.

The Common Foreign and Security Policy and the European Security and Defense Policy

Beyond the three-basket parameters of the EMP, I also consider positioning the EMRSC i.a. within the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and potentially with the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). With the end of the Cold War, the EC recognized “the transition to a new European order as a positive opportunity to develop its external role” (Pace 2003, 164). With the establishment of the CFSP as part of the Maastricht Treaty a renewed Mediterranean Policy was introduced in December 1990. The CFSP was enhanced by significant changes introduced by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999 with the establishment of the Common European Security and Defense Policy (C)ESDP to “safeguard the common values, fundamental interests, independence and integrity of the Union” (European Commission website 2008 CFSP), promote international cooperation and development, consolidate democracy and the rule of law,

¹ These are: a) The **political and security partnership** with the aim of strengthening the political dialogue is based on “observance of essential principles of international law, and to reaffirm common objectives in matters of internal and external stability” (EU Commission website 2006: Barcelona Declaration). EMP partners agreed to act in accordance with the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (such as guaranteeing “the effective legitimate exercise of such rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression, freedom of association for peaceful purposes and freedom of thought, conscience and religion, both individually and together with other members of the same group, without any discrimination on grounds of race, nationality, language, religion or sex”(EU Commission website 2006: Barcelona Declaration) as well as other obligations under international law, including their regional and international agreements.

b) As both Abdullahtif Ahmida (2000) and Joffé (2001, 34) point out, already the 1957 Treaty of Rome made specific provisions for the economic relationship between the Maghrib and the EC. However, while these were based stronger on colonial patters of the former as a raw material and labor supply, and market for EC/EU goods, **the economic aspect of the EMP** is directed towards economic *development* in MENA to reduce the gap between the northern and the southern periphery of the Mediterranean.

c) Some writers view the **social-cultural** “basket” of the EMP as “mainly aspirational in nature..., primarily devoted to supporting the growth of civil society in the South” (Joffé 2001, 38), while the EMP’s documents also indicate plans to develop human resources and to promote understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil societies (e.g. European Commission 2000, 2006, 2007), aims which have been substantially supported in turning them into reality by NGOs such as the Anna Lindh Foundation. The EMP participants recognize that the traditions of culture and civilization throughout the Mediterranean region, the dialogue between these cultures and exchanges at the human, scientific and technological levels are essential factors in bringing their peoples closer by promoting understanding between them and improving their perception of each other.

as well as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (Ibid.) by i.a. adopting joint actions and common positions and strategies. Nevertheless, the EU still had not adopted long-term policies to address the increasing disparities between the two sides of the Mediterranean (Pace 2003, 164). Pending the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, a new post of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (superseding the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy) will be instituted (rather than an EU “foreign minister”, as the failed Constitutional Treaty had foreseen).

The CFSP is augmented by the work of the European Union Satellite Centre (EUSC) in Torrejón de Ardoz, Spain, to produce information derived from space imagery of the earth, the European Union Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in Paris to contribute to the creation of a common European security culture and support the strategic debate (EU commission website security agencies 2008), as well as the European Defence Agency (EDA) in Brussels to develop a comprehensive approach in defining the needs and anticipated restructuring of the ESDP specifically (Ibid.).

The recognition that no European country can tackle today’s complex security challenges alone led in December 2001 to the adoption of a declaration on the operational capability of the European Security and Defense Policy (European Commission CFSP 2008) by the European Council at Laeken, recognizing the EU’s capability – and responsibility – to conduct some crisis management operations. This expansion of cooperation and harmonization in the EU’s foreign policy and defense with member states’ policies is shared in Brussels by the Commission, the Council and to an extent by the European Parliament which is consulted on budgetary matters. The first concrete steps of the ESDP were to outline existing capabilities (in the Helsinki Headline Goal) for implementation of the Petersberg Declaration.

It must be noted that the institutional shifts within the EU in the meantime, such as with respect to the integration of the Western European Union, which had been actively involved in these tasks (in close cooperation with NATO as well as their Partnership for Peace, involving the former Soviet States), added unavoidable delays and led to a new timetable to be set in the “Headline Goal 2010”. It is against the background of this shifting foreign and security policy environment that the next section will expand specifically on the EU’s foreign policy relating to those states neighboring the EU to the south.

The European Neighborhood Policy

The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), of which the EMP is a part, was founded nearly ten years *after* the EMP itself. The EMP's origins are multilateral beyond the EU, as they can be traced to initiatives by US President Bush and USSR President Gorbachev, who had sent an invitation for a peace conference on October 30, 1991 in Madrid to the governments of Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the Palestinians (as part of the Jordanese delegation), Egypt, the European Community, and the Gulf Cooperation Council and the UN as observers (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website "Madrid Letter") in order to take advantage of the opportunity for reshaping the basic political order in the Middle East following the breakup of the Soviet Union and the "Second Gulf War" (Iraq's invasion of Kuwait) (Boening 2007d, 2/3). The EMP's mandate is based on the political, economic and culturally strategic significance of the Mediterranean region to the EU, and seeks to develop a relationship between its partners based on "comprehensive cooperation and solidarity, in keeping with the privileged nature of the links forged by neighbourhood and history" (EU Commission website 2006: Barcelona declaration).

The ENP overall "remains a core priority of the EU's foreign policy" (ENP Presidency Progress Report 2007). It does not provide an accession prospect (nor does it prejudice a later membership application) for its members, but seeks to strengthen security and stability by reinforcing bilateral relations, including a significant degree of integration, and seeks to encourage human rights, the rule of law and good governance. The ENP is bilaterally based between the EU and the neighborhood countries², to facilitate each individualized progress and integration, while working to avoid new dividing lines, but enhance the "privileged relationship, building upon a mutual commitment to common values (democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development)" (EU Commission website 3/12/2008). The added value of the ENP to the EU's neighborhood are a.

an enhanced and more focused policy approach of the EU towards its neighborhood... [b] the perspective of moving beyond cooperation to a significant degree of integration... [c] the ENP will upgrade the scope and intensity of political cooperation with partner countries (EU Commission Strategy Paper 2004), 8).

There are a multitude of considerations for Europe's engagement in MENA. The EMP constitutes the EU's main multilateral foreign policy instrument (as part of the ENP) in the

² The EU's goal to integrate Libya towards full membership in the EMP is proceeding slowly and has not been fully achieved nor has an association agreement even been signed yet at the time of writing this article.

Middle East and sub-Saharan and North Africa (MENA)³. Security in many forms of course has been front page news in this region for 3000 years, with its mystical beginnings in the Trojan Wars, and are catapulted to even higher priority almost daily for a number of reasons. Beyond the security implications of the *economic* disparities within MENA and the EU, and terrorist attacks such as in Madrid, indirect issues arise also e.g. in *societal* security e.g. when thousands of mostly economic refugees leave North Africa continually on a dangerous Atlantic and Mediterranean crossing to EU territory, such as (often via the Canary Islands) to Gibraltar or Italy. While this journey results in numerous fatalities among the refugees due to the treacherous transportation devices used, the arrival of the refugees in the EU represents a problem in terms of illegal and undocumented immigration at a time of increased border security world wide, and also forces the EU to undertake expensive repatriation to the sometimes uncooperative countries of origin.

MENA member states often view the EMP “as a series of ‘irreversible’ and ‘strategic’ choices that are seen as prerequisites for the necessary liberalization of ... [some] econom[ies]” (Thiele et al. 2005, 65), and is favored on occasion because it is not predominated by a hegemon⁴, such as the U.S. Nevertheless, many MENA EMP members consider soft security and developmental policies as insufficient to deal with international threats, and are very interested in assistance to carry out policing and security tasks effectively, such as having technical equipment and training made available to them more readily through e.g. NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue (Ibid., 66).

The Union for the Mediterranean

The recently agreed upon EU’s Union for the Mediterranean appears to have evolved from the suspiciously French neo-colonial sounding original proposal for a Mediterranean Union (Barber 2008). It is now an approach anticipated for a re-invigoration of the Barcelona Process⁵, as Dependencia-objections by some to the originally proposed Mediterranean Union gave way to the compromise agreement worked out among all EU member state. This Union for the Mediterranean’s is hoped not to distract from, or dilute the potential cohesion, solidarity and

³ Although the relations between the EU and individual MENA countries are predominantly based on bilateral agreements (“action plans”) today. Additionally, although the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy is presented externally as unified, EU member countries, especially those on the EU’s southern shore, continue to maintain bilateral diplomatic and economic relationships with MENA countries.

⁴ i.e. in keeping the term “hegemon” in a state-context. In “neo-“ or “post- Westphalian” terms the EU itself could of course be viewed hegemonically.

⁵ upon its official debut in July 2008 as mentioned above. Since the final details of the UMed are not know today, it is not possible at the time of this writing to definitively state whether the Barcelona Process received a “face-lift” with the UMed, or whether

concerted socio-political evolution between the EU and Arab countries by not adding more bureaucratic layers without true identification with, or shared values and visions, beyond Sarkozy's original fantasy of guaranteeing France and French (especially energy) companies a privileged position vis-à-vis the Southern Mediterranean, to the exclusion of other Southern European countries, and most certainly the EU's commitments overall. The reassertion of pooled sovereignty and harmonized positions within the EU on the occasion of the UMed agreement also represents an important confirmation of the CFSP as representing all EU member states, rather than yielding to the re-emergence of split European colonial spheres of influence in its Neighborhood (Hall and Benoit 2008): an important example for non-EU EMP member states who are still unsure of supra-national mechanisms in regional integration.

In the meantime, the EMP's goal of a Free Trade Zone by 2010 remains a priority for the Union of the Mediterranean, as well as the continued interest in energy security, Mediterranean Sea pollution control, Mediterranean maritime security in light of human and material trafficking in conjunction with the continued expansion of civil security cooperation, the expansion of the Erasmus exchange program to students of Southern Mediterranean partner countries, as well as a new emphasis on scientific epistemic communities pioneered by Peter Haas in this area already several decades ago (EurActiv 14 March, 2008). In this way the UMed will re-invigorate the Mediterranean region and contribute to a strengthening of the political, economic and socio-cultural security dynamics inherent in this Regional Security Complex. Only this approach will avoid the "divide and conquer" approach of Sarkozy's original proposal for a Mediterranean Union, which sought to exclude and create a "second tier" degradation for the Southern neighbors from their current neighborhood-status (Khader 2008). At the moment, the UMed represents more of a "plus ça change, plus c'est pareil" in terms of *goals*, with the institutionalization yet to be sorted out, and the question of a possible expansion to include Croatia, Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia not yet answered (Emerson 2008), but plausible. One hopes that EU procedures will become simplified rather than turn into more muddled, complex overlays.

NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue

In comparison, NATO's mandate also shifted post-Cold War from defending a clearly delimited territory to a new strategy of committing member states to defend

unbounded interests beyond Europe's theater of operations: NATO's new mandate is as global as the Western interests it has pledged to defend ... [implying] that the Arab world will received its fair share of NATO attention ... [such as] crisis operations ... to

keep risks at a distance by dealing with potential crises (which could affect Euro-Atlantic stability) at an early stage (El-Gawhary 1999, 16/7).

NATO changed post-Cold War from that of a collective *defense* organization to a collective *security* organization, seeking to avoid new polarizations and the creation of new dividing lines between former friends and foes, but to seek cooperation between former adversaries through integration in Allied progress, e.g. Partnership for Peace (PfP) and special relationships as mechanisms for exporting stability to new member countries.

NATO's Mediterranean Initiative specifically was formally launched in December 1994 as the "Mediterranean Dialogue" ("Dialogue"), reflecting the alliance's recognition of the Mediterranean's unique regional security challenges. The Dialogue was also intended to reach out to non-NATO member countries who might be interested in collaborating with NATO's Mediterranean security and stability projects. These "partners" would not be allies at the beginning but would be involved in confidence building programs, to become members when some major qualifications were met, e.g. irreversible commitments to democracy, civilian control of the military and development of a nation's military capability to a level of interoperability with those of NATO members" (Kaplan 1999, 195).

The "soft" power ideas and programs of the EMP/UMed to co-constitute structures for peace hence would be balanced in an EMRSC e.g. with NATO's Article 5 mission: "Security is indivisible within the Euro-Atlantic region"⁶ as a pact against war (Yost 1998, 6) as well as the (now favored) non-Article 5 missions of collective security of an alliance to "deter, and if necessary defend, against one or more identifiable external threats". This goes back to the Wilsonian conviction that collective security is an international morality superior to that on which the realist balance of power system is based (Yost 1998, 8) – and it has always been understood that NATO would not undertake a mission without UN Security Council approval (especially after the U.S. overcame this restraint on national action with the invasion of Iraq with limited success at the time of this writing, partially due to this unilateralism).

Conclusions

The EMP's specific mandate is based on the political, economic and culturally strategic significance of the Mediterranean region to the European Union (EU) and seeks to develop a relationship between its partners based on "comprehensive cooperation and solidarity, in keeping

⁶ Comparable to the theme of the League of Nations that "peace is indivisible"

with the privileged nature of the links forged by neighbourhood and history” (EU Commission website 2006: Barcelona Declaration). This reflects dynamics of a security community.

From Security Community to Regional Security Complex?

Reverting from this hard/soft power constellation in the Mediterranean, I return to Buzan (1991, 190, quoted in Pace 2003, 166) introduced – and contrasts between - the concept of a *security community* and a *security complex theory*. *Security community*, according to Buzan (1991, 218) represents the far end on the scale of security interdependence, wherein “disputes among all the members are resolved to such an extent that none fears... either political assault or military position on his continuum security configurations, related to the idea of a ‘security community’”. A *security complex* represents “a group of states whose primary security concerns are linked together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another (Buzan 1991, 190, quoted in Pace 2003, 166).

While NATO remains committed to Europe, the CFSP continues to evidence incidents of dis-harmony, especially with a downgrading of the commitment to unity in favor of nationalist impulses in the Lisbon Treaty. To what extent this will affect the ESDP remains to be seen. Additionally, the European NATO-members’ hesitations in Afghanistan (Schreer and Toje 2008) raise some questions about the EU’s ability to coordinate the ESDP with NATO (in line with M. Albright’s “Three D’s”: no decoupling of NATO from Europe, no duplication of efforts, no discrimination against non-EU members, such as Turkey). Let us hope that the Union for the Mediterranean will be a fresh breath to strengthen the Euro-Mediterranean region for the security challenges which Europe, the Arab nations bordering the Mediterranean and, via the transatlantic umbilicus, North America, face as a region as well as inter- and intra-regionally in all a security sectors, from the political, the economic to the socio-cultural in the future, as security *is*, in fact, largely indivisible especially in the Euro-Mediterranean region despite the political-cultural variations to it among EMP members.

While some authors are pessimistic about the role of the EMP in the regional integration of the Euro-Mediterranean region, such as Christiansen, Petite and Tonra (2000, 401), who write that

while shared geographic and climatic conditions have shaped regional cultures and peoples – what the French historian Braudel has termed the common ‘material culture’ of the Mediterranean Civilization – they have failed to forge any significant degree of political or ideational collective identity [due] ... to the complex and conflicting geopolitical history of the area.

The Mediterranean region is an example of the interplay between

the destabilizing consequences of uneven economic development in states lacking democratic accountability as a sub-state-problem, and the transnational links of organized criminal networks engaged in trafficking people, drugs and arms as a supranational problem (Spencer 2001, 12),

and the development of a common security identity overshadowed by the breakdown of the Middle East peace process, most recently by the Palestinian intifada of 2000 and its aftermath of accelerated Muslim militancy.

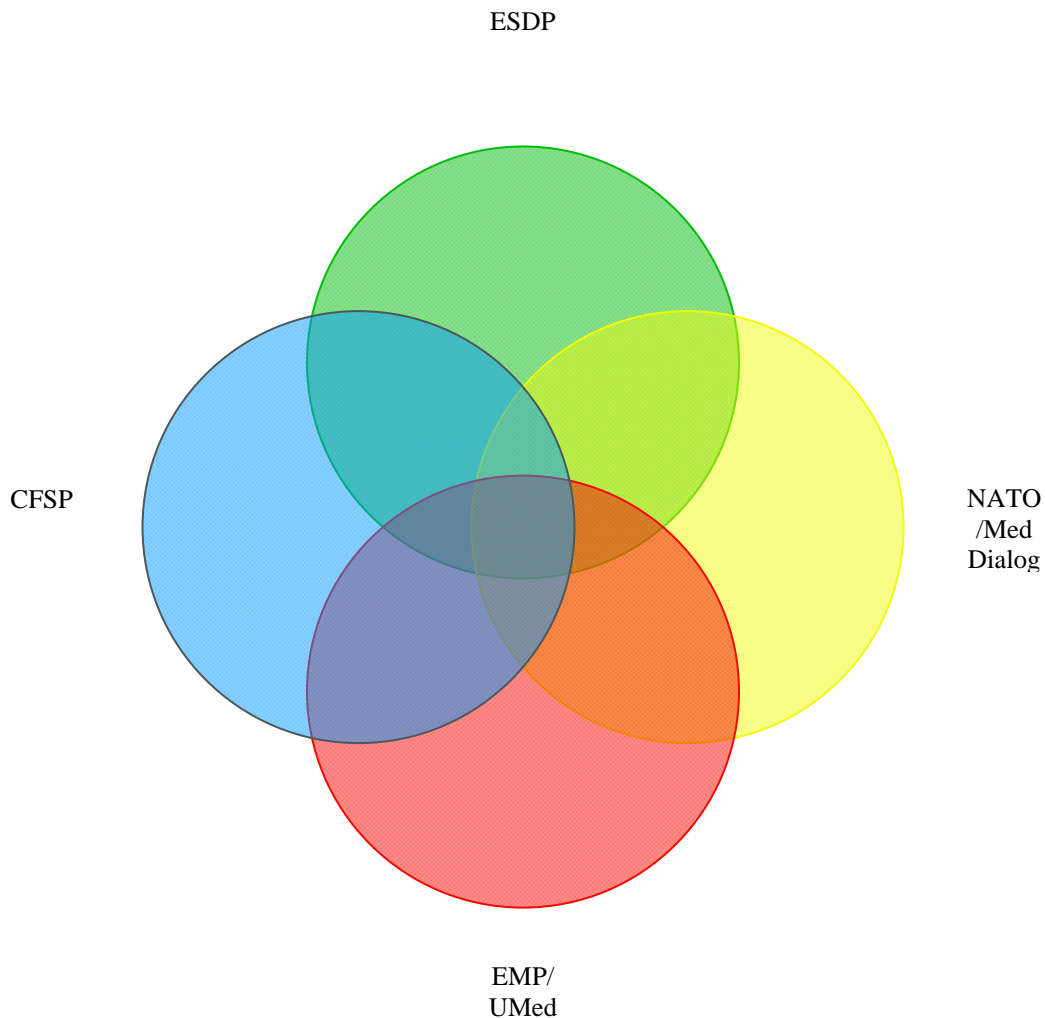


Fig. 1: Euro-Mediterranean Regional Security (Super) Complex (copyright Astrid Boening 2007)

It is in this context of socio-political shifts that opportunities for new perspectives in the CFSP, especially with respect to the ENP, arise. Klotz and Lynch (2007, 3) write:

The end of the Cold War shattered stable antagonisms and alliances... This destabilization widened the political and intellectual spaces - and increased the need – for scholars to ask questions about the cultural bases of conflict, alternative conceptions of national identity, [and] the ethics of intervention... Individuals and groups are not only shaped by their world but can also change it. People can ... set into motion new normative, cultural, economic, social, or political practices that alter conventional wisdoms and standard operating procedures.

Hence I maintain that the EMP (in conjunction with, or in its new “edition” as the UMed⁷) as the soft-power manifestation of the EU’s ENP nevertheless also incorporates the hard-power potential of the ESDP, backed, as the EU has since its inception, by NATO, and in this case specifically, NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue. Hence the EMP embodies a strategic significance – and wide-reaching opportunity - in terms of a Euro-Mediterranean Regional Security Complex. This can, in Buzan and Weaver’s (2003) terminology, be extended transatlantically to include North America (as NATO partners), and the U.S. in particular, into a Regional Security Super Complex.

This analysis of course gained prominence following the emergence of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) of 1999 and “the need to examine the security and defence dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership” (Heisbourg 2001, 5). The role of the EU in the EMP, however, is so far one of predominant and significant soft power in all the security sectors identified by Buzan et al. (1998)⁸ - sectors, which are also reflected in the EU’s CFSP. I argue in this paper that the processes, e.g. norming, complex social learning, complex (post-hegemonic?) interdependence, agent-structure co-constitution of identities and interests within the “three-basket”- paradigm of the EMP contribute to the development of a regional security complex identity in the Mediterranean (which would deviate from Buzan and Waever’s (2003) suggestion of a Middle Eastern regional security complex). Hypothetically, part of the significance of this would be an extrapolation of these vestiges of a Euro-Med international society (per English School theorists) forming from the current international system in this region.

This paper then argues that in order to transcend millennia of clashes, we should explore the possibility of changing the assumptions about peace in the Mediterranean definition of security to

⁷ in light of the little which is known about it specifically at this time

⁸ With NATO’s Mediterranean Alliance addressing hard security issues under a large number of partnership-building programs

identify post-structural, sub- and supra-state agents (such as terrorist groups, NGOs and of course the post-Westphalian EU) post-Cold War. Although the tradition referent object in matters of war and peace has been the state, its centrality is questioned as criteria like the mutual co-constitution of interests, identities, agency and structure of the individual or society have been identified as decisive in the security community discourse (Bicchi 2001, 2). Bicchi (2001) also favors a constructivist approaches to the European security concept: rather than the existence of a “natural” threat, we need to examine instead how security and the security threat were constructed through discourse and practice (Adler and Barnett 1998), such as the importance of language and the definition of security. For example, does “threat” emphasize the existence of a “real” threat which underlines aggregate power, proximity, capability (these three factors being objective), and offensive intentions (relating to mutual understandings and communications, whereby a threat does not exist unless it was perceived as a threat) (Wolfers 1962). Whether this process leading to a new “we” will be successful – or *has* to be successful in light of the bigger extra-regional challenges – will to some degree be potentially continue to be affected by the Israeli-Palestinian dilemma. A solution for this may have to be jumpstarted by the U.S. again, possibly after the presidential elections at the end of the year and its effect on the U.S.’ own Broader Middle East and Africa Initiative.

In any case, the EMP/UMed are a manifestation of what van Langenhove (2008) has termed not a post-Westphalian world order, but a neo-Westphalian world order:

The old world of states has made positive developments in governance, but has also created what Nobel prize-winning economist Amartya Sen called an illusion of destiny that has resulted in incredible violence. The multiple world of regions could be a way to replace the illusion of a single national identity with the more realist view that people hold plural regional identities. As such, the world of regions might not only be a more complex world but also one with more chances of peace and freedom. (van Langenhove 2008, 15).

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