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A Euro-Mediterranean Regional Security Complex?**

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Regional Security through Synergistic Integration: A Euro-Mediterranean Regional Security Complex?♦

Astrid B. Boening*

Abstract

In this paper I argue that the recent Iraq war shows that there are, at least with respect to the Greater Middle East, no “quick fixes” for regional security, but that the painstaking process of political, economic and social development and harmonization (e.g. the “EuroMediterranean Partnership-paradigm”) between the northern and southern members of the EMP has to be accomplished step by step to not only be inclusive of the great heterogeneity of peoples and systems in the Euro-Mediterranean region, but to also ensure that all share in the fruits of this development. Hence the commitment by all EMP-members to this collective security region is essential, as in its absence the consequences are felt by all, such as the illegal migration of economically desperate North Africans to Europe, or the militancy of Palestinians.

Since the social, political and economic interdependence – and herewith the mutual security interests - among EMP-members is so complex, I propose in this paper to change Buzan and Waever’s conception of the Middle Eastern Regional Security complex (MERSC) to the epistemologically more appropriate concept of a “Euro-Mediterranean Regional Security Complex” (EMRSC), operating within the Euro-Med Partnership.

Introduction

Security in the regions bordering the Mediterranean has eluded us frequently since at least the Trojan wars more than three thousand years ago. Why has the love story between the Greek Zeus and the Phoenician Europa not yet resulted in a stable marriage?

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In this paper I assert that, while we are not sure about the marriage, perhaps the engagement between the southern and northern Mediterranean might stabilize in the foreseeable future. With other words, while the EU has defined its Common Foreign and Security Policy more and more, the EuroMed Partnership (EMP) has survived its self-critical “Barcelona +” (tenth) anniversary in 2005 and found that progress in its regional integration process is not only concretely being made, but in fact that outsiders have their eyes on joining this union, namely Iraq, Albania, and Mauritania (the latter two having succeeded). This paper focuses on the past and current status of the EMP, and refer to its “successor”-program, the Union for the Mediterranean (UMed) only when referring to a (speculative) future, its ratification set for July 13, 2008 at the French EU summit in Paris.

While some in Old Europe and its southern neighbors were unsure of the EU’s ability to absorb twelve new Central and Eastern European countries in just a few years, these enlargements now show that the EU not only coped admirably, but has not neglected its southern neighbors in the process. On the contrary, the recent commitment by the European Union (EU) to its neighbors, i.e. the European Neighborhood Program (ENP), only strengthened. In particular the Southern Mediterranean neighbors experience a new EU commitment (and increased Middle East Development Authority (MEDA) funding) to them in addition to the “upgrade” of the EMP into the UMed.

This paper seeks to delineate the dynamics in the Mediterranean as a macro geo-political region in which the nations around its rim are joined through their common concerns and shared interests. In this paper I process-trace some of the theoretical and ideational concepts contributing to, and the re-imagining of the Mediterranean ‘region’ (Euro-Med) politically, geographically, and socio-culturally through an overview of its past social construction and the underlying assumptions. Additionally, I seek to delineate a conceptualization of how the future of this region appears to be evolving under the soft power approach within the EMP. In particular I posit this in relation to a “hypothetical” Euro-Mediterranean regional security complex (EMRSC) identity which I propose here as a revision to the theoretical concept of the Middle Eastern Regional Security Complex (MERSC) proposed by Buzan and Waever (2003) .

There are two facets to this research problem: (1) What are the socio-economic and political dynamics of the EMP in the Euro-Med today? And (2) What is the security relevance of these dynamics in terms of regional integration?

This analysis is significant for two reasons: First, this paper focuses on the Euro-Mediterranean region and the role of the European Union (EU) and its southern Mediterranean neighbors in the context of the EMP in “constructing” this space, and hereby giving it meaning in the context of regional stability.

Secondly, this integration could additionally lead to a reciprocal “re-construction” of EMP members’ self-identity and interests in the structural context of a EMRSC. This would be significant in terms of the EMP’s role in contributing to the regional integration among countries surrounding the Mediterranean, and the overall Euro-Med regional development and security. This would contrast with the Middle Eastern Regional Security Complex, which Buzan and Waever (2003) have proposed. If the development of such a EMRSC can be observed through the evolving dynamics of the EMP, this would have potential reverberations vis-à-vis a hypothetical transatlantic Euro-Mediterranean Regional Security Super Complex (EMRSSC).

Theoretical Perspective

The EMP can be analyzed through a variety of lenses, and its hypothetical evolution into a EMRSC understood in the amalgam of the following dynamics: According to Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) ((Buzan and Waever 2003, 53) a Regional Security Complex (RSC) must fulfill the following criteria:

a) It requires “boundary”. In the case of a (hypothetical) EMRSC I would suggest that its boundaries would be those of EMP-member states.

b) An RSC must have “anarchic structure”. In the case of a EMRSC, there are in fact two+ autonomous units, namely the nation states of the EMP.

c) An RSC requires “polarity” to indicate the power distribution among its units. In the case of a EMRSC, the polarity is the Euro-Mediterranean region with its particularly intense dynamics of trade, history and shared security concerns, and an indication of the dynamics of buffer states, insulator states, great powers, subcomplexes etc. surrounding it, which will be elaborated on further below.

d) part of the essential structure of an RSC is “social construction”, i.e. obvious patterns of amity and enmity (Buzan and Waever 2003, 53), such as the “three basket”-paradigm of the EMP to formalize the goals for cooperation and harmonization between the EU and the southern and south-eastern countries bordering the Mediterranean, which is also discussed further below.

Furthermore, a EMRSC fulfills the geographic descriptors proposed by Buzan and Waever (2003): the buffer states of a EMRSC would be for example the eastern EU neighborhood states (in contrast to Scandinavia and the Balkans as Buffer States in a MERSC). The insulator states of a EMRSC would be i.a. equatorial Africa, a super-and great power would be Russia, a subcomplex would be e.g. the Gulf Cooperation Council, and there is an Asian supercomplex (compare Buzan and Waever 2003).

In terms of overarching theories pertaining to a EMRSC from the standpoint of regional integration, the theories range from functionalism to neo-functionalism, and to neo-liberal theories of complex interdependence, such as international regime theory.

Starting with a neo-liberal institutionalist approach, the assumptions underlying it were often to view regional integration as institutions resembling a restricted club, in which members gain the mutual benefits of a restricted and divisible good, i.e. more members would mean less benefits. Smaller organizations would, under neorealist and neoliberal assumptions be viewed as more advantageous for their members, and an expansion of the institution would become more problematic in terms of less benefits for its members, with more free-riders (Olson 1971). This has not proven true, since institutional membership is not a zero sum game. Bearce and Bondanella (2007, 703) empirically confirmed the “constructivists’ institutional socialization hypothesis, which posits that intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) make member-state interests more similar over time, and hence promote interest convergence”, both in global and in regionally restricted samples. They argue that these results are consistent “with a longer-term socialization process and cannot be explained by the short-term effect of institutional information” (Ibid.). This also indicates that the benefits are not necessarily reduced with increased membership. There is no uniform consensus in the literature, however, about whether institutions can transform interests that are fundamentally in conflict. In the case of the divergence between the EU’s and MENA’s political, economic and civil institutions, the EMP was designed to assist both regions e.g. to harmonize trade practices by providing financial and technical know how and assistance. And from a development standpoint, the dynamics of the EMP are related to its structure of promoting political harmonization and socio-economic development to reduce the gaps between the northern and southern Mediterranean. This type of harmonization between the Southern and the Northern Mediterranean countries can in turn also be analyzed from a global governance perspective.

Lastly, from the standpoint of collective security, the EMP can be analyzed in terms of security community, and (new) regional security complex theory (RSCT). 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). A *Euro-Mediterranean* region as a Regional Security Complex, in contrast to the Middle Eastern Regional Security Complex suggested by Buzan and Waever (2003), would also be a way to address the inter-regional demarcations

highlighted in the Euro-Mediterranean region by Richard Haass (2006), president of the Council on Foreign Relations. A EMRSC could be viewed beyond economics and cultural rapprochement in terms of the synergy between those different security sectors which Buzan, Waever and de Wilde (1998) have identified in terms of RSCT, such as environmental security, human security, energy security, food and water security, and of course classic military security.

In Christiansen, Petito and Tonra's (2000) terminology, this would forge the role of the EMP in a political and ideational collective identity rather than leaving the countries bordering the Mediterranean to develop even greater fault lines among them and vis-à-vis the Northern Mediterranean. In light of the stalled Middle East peace plan during the last few years, some authors emphasize that European security concerns in the Mediterranean have "become more immediate than long-term" (Spencer 2001, 20). However, Spencer questions whether the recent Eastern enlargements of the EU might impede the EMP's role in advancing the immediate security risks in MENA (Spencer 2001, 21), since these new EU members might have own developmental needs which could conflict with the resources the EU dedicates to its Southern neighbors. I would argue, however, that these newcomers to the EU, as well as the more trans-Atlantically oriented England in terms of security cooperation recognize the EMP's role in solidifying a Mediterranean regional security identity and hence cannot be considered an impediment to its success. On the contrary, some instabilities with (potential) EU candidate countries, such as Serbia and Kosovo, following the EU's eastern enlargements increased the priority of regional security in the southern EU neighborhood, due to the potential for intensified inter-regional security threats, be they trafficking in drugs, arms or humans, terrorist threats, or the continued need to address Mediterranean pollution as an environmental threat.

Lastly, and possibly unifying the above processes, the EMP can be analyzed from a constructivist viewpoint in terms of the (re-)construction of a new space ("Euro-Mediterranean"), and identity and interests ("Euro-Mediterranean Regional Security Complex") (Wendt 1999). 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. Traynor (2008, 2) writes that it is to be hoped that this 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).

It is in this context that the "Second Generation Regionalism"-concept proposed by Van Langenhove (2008b) to identify integration additionally to non-economic matters such as justice, security, and culture gains relevance. It represents a multidimensional form of integration, which includes economic, political, social and cultural aspects in the political ambition of establishing regional coherence and identity (Hettne, 1999), as well as a "type of post-hegemonic regionalism" (Teló, 2001). It distinguishes itself (Van Langenhove 2008b) as more extroverted than the first generation regionalism in terms of a blurring of borders, where purely internal and external *policies* also become increasingly blurred, where foreign policy *formulation* partially "migrates" to the *regional* level, and where regional *organizations* partially build foreign and security policies. This "second generation regionalism" is also more concerned with the search for a *foreign policy identity on a regional level*, and has a greater potential to promote certain 'world values' such as security, development, and ecological sustainability better than globalism (Hettne, 1999).

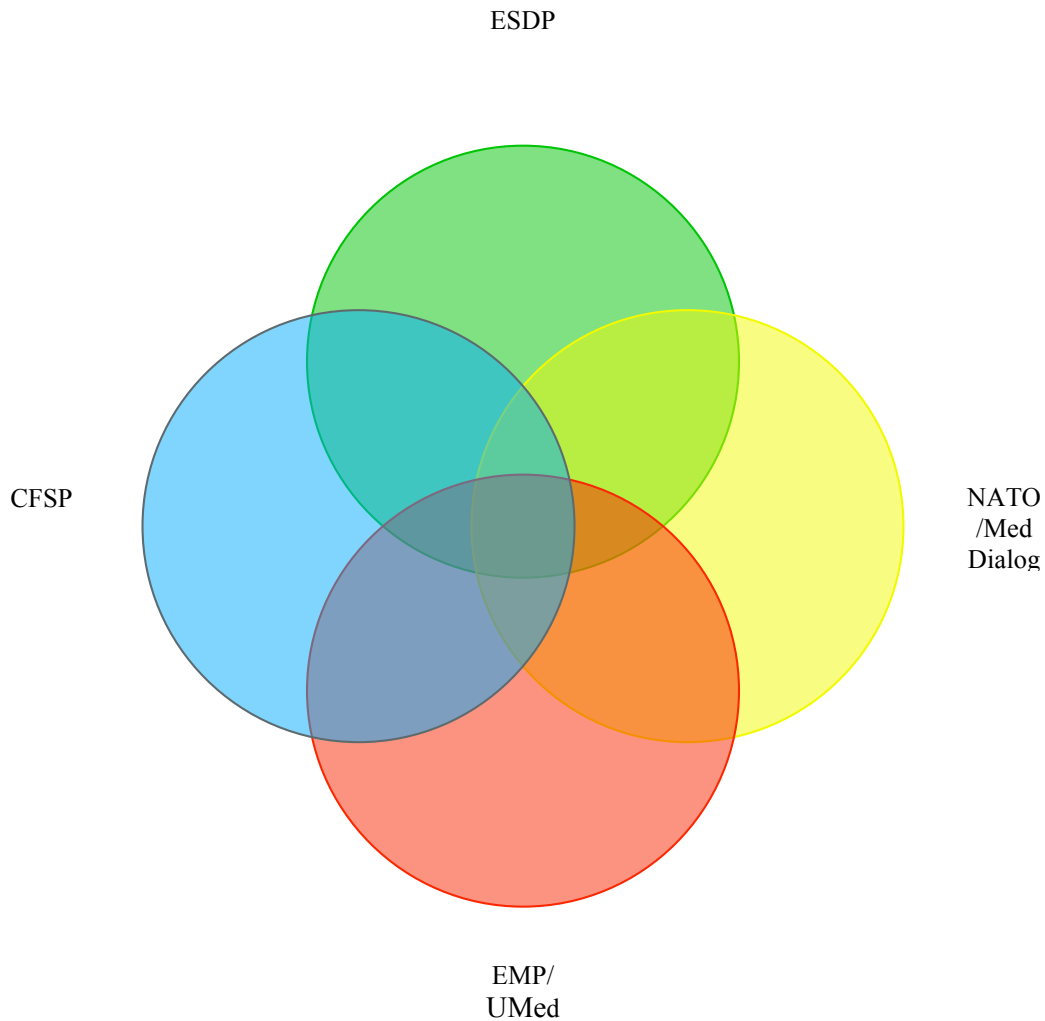


Figure 1: Schematic representation of a hypothetical Euro-Mediterranean Regional Security Super Complex as a dynamic, and as an identity

Sectors and Levels in a Regional Security Complex

Romano Prodi (compare 2001) has, among many scholars and politicians on all shores of the Mediterranean over the years, even decades and centuries, emphasized the centrality of the relations between Europe and the Mediterranean

as a human social and historical reality: a reality that calls for ever-greater urgency for courageous and long-term action... the Mediterranean in all its diversity as a girdle of peace and cooperation, the focal point of a vast political and economic region stretching from Spain to the Black Sea and the Persian Gulf... We must base our approach on a certain idea of belonging together which in essence already exists within the processes already under way, but needs to be bolstered with firmness and vision (Prodi 2002, 1/2).

This paper stresses the significance of regional economic relations and their expansion as reciprocally embedded in other security concerns, rather than viewing them in isolation overall, and specifically in the Euro-Mediterranean region, for millenia – and the recognition that they need to be pro-actively addressed and pursued. Buzan (1991, 188) states that “in security terms, ‘region’ means that a distinct and significant subsystem of security relations exists among a set of states whose fate is that they have been locked into geographical proximity with each other”, and that are addressed on a broader regional level, as the new Umed for example might indicate.

R SCT (Buzan and Waever 2003, 53) suggests three possible pathways in its evolution: a) maintenance of the status quo as referring to an absence of changes to an RSC’s essential structure; b) internal transformation of essential structure in relationship to an RSC’s outer boundary (whether due to a change in its anarchic structure, such as due to regional integration, or due to a change in an RSC’s polarity, such as merger, disintegration, differential growth rate, etc.) or as a result of a change in the dominant patterns of amity/enmity); or due to c) external transformation, such as through expansion or contraction of the RSC’s outer boundary, e.g. when two RSCs merge.

Below I will look at examples of changes in the sectors and levels to determine a an indication for my hypothesis that instead of the MERSC proposed by Buzan and Waever, the Euro-Mediterranean region can actually be more appropriately viewed as a EMRSC. It can be argued i.a. that the EMP has undergone internal and external transformations (compare the “widening” and “deepening” sections below) to confirm my hypothesis of an emerging EMRSC.

To operationalize an epistemology for a EMRSC, I will apply the concepts of *Sectors* and *Levels* pertaining to a Regional Security Complex (RSC) as suggested by Buzan and Waever (2003), and Buzan, Waever and de Wilde (1998). In this paper I will trace the evolution of a EMRSC from a “deepening” and a “widening” perspective with respect to levels and sectors through the use of brief examples. The following section will give an overview over how this widening and deepening of the levels and sectors in the EMP could be interpreted as an indication of its evolution into a EMRSC. For simplicity’s sake in such a brief paper, I have examined “levels” in terms of “widening”, and security “sectors” in terms of “deepening”, although many other constellations are of course imaginable.

This analysis could also be viewed as delineating those ties between MENA and the EU which Prodi (2003, 2) referred to as “specific traditions, situations and interests...[that] must be seen in a dynamic of openness and cooperation” in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Widening of the Euro-Mediterranean Region: Levels

Referencing the sectors and levels proposed by Buzan, Waever and de Wilde (1998) in their new framework for security analysis, the “levels” pertaining to a theoretical EMRSC are i.a. the sub/intra-regional (e.g. from some viewpoints the Israeli-Palestinian conflict), the inter-regional (e.g. the Euro-Mediterranean region and the Black Sea region), the bilateral level (e.g. France and Morocco), the international level (i.e. the foreign relations among the states within and outside the regions in question), and, lastly, as Van Langenhove (2008b) proposed, a neo-Westphalian level. This last level is from a viewpoint of global governance where the world of states gradually becomes “a world of states *and* of regions” (Van Langenhove 2008a, 115) (italics mine), as already briefly referenced in the preceding theoretical background of this paper. This concept of neo-Westphalian “Second Generation Regionalism” (Van Langenhove 2008b) identified integration in non-economic matters such as justice, security, culture (Ibid.). A EMRSC could be interpreted as evolving into a “Third Generation Regionalism” (Costea and Van Langenhove 2007) in some parts of the world, whereby the regional institutional environment for dealing with ‘out of area’ consequences of regional policies would become fully consolidated. As such regions become more proactive engaging in inter-regional arrangements and agreements, going beyond purely trade issues, with a multidimensional character with the potential to affect more relations

at the global level. And ultimately, in third generation regional integration, regions would become more actively engaged at the U.N.

Another aspect of a EMRSC literally “widening” would be an increase in member states such as the Palestinian Authority, Albania and Mauritania joining the EMP in 2007 (Republic of Slovenia 2008).

Deepening of the Euro-Mediterranean Region: Sectors

The EMP’s specific mandate is based on the political, economic and culturally strategic significance of the Mediterranean region to the EU. It 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), reflecting dynamics of a security community.

Soft Security

The “Soft Security”-aspects of a EMRSC would relate mostly to the original “three-basket”-structure of the EMP. Its three main objectives are: a) the definition of a common area of peace and stability through the reinforcement of the *political and security* dialogue; b) the construction of a zone of shared prosperity through an *economic and financial* partnership, and the gradual establishment of a free-trade area; and c) the rapprochement between peoples through a *social, cultural and human* partnership aimed at encouraging understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil society (Horizon 2020 Bulletin 2005, 2).

a. Political

i. The European Neighborhood (ENP)

One example of the political deepening of a EMRSC is the adoption of the new European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) (EurActiv.com, 4 Sep. 2007) as a comprehensive fund to support the cooperative efforts within the ENP (of which the EMP is part). Through the ENPI the EU can be said to back its political goals of “neighborhood” integration overall also financially in order to reciprocally support economic goals, such as comprehensive Free Trade Agreements, ensure energy supplies, improve the movement of peoples through visa-free or favorable visa procedures, and to support governance objectives of member countries by leveraging “a larger sum of money from other international financial institutions, such as the European Investment Bank” (EurActiv.com, 4/4/08).

ii. Turkey’s potential EU membership – a new ENP: Iraq, Iran, Syria...

The deepening of a EMRSC would be particularly poignant upon Turkey’s transition from EU candidate country to EU membership. Not only will it result in the EU’s neighborhood to extend substantially south-east, i.a. to Iran, Iraq and Syria, but the socio-political integration of the wider Euro-Mediterranean region will become exponentially more complex.

b. Economy

The traditional wisdom, that the deeper the economic integration, the lesser the interest to start a war between the parties, has been applied successfully by the EU as a soft power tool in contributing to the prosperity and stability in its neighborhood .

i. Free Trade Area

The FTA planned for 2010 among EMP members will formalize the institutional harmonization and maximize the benefits for all members countries, as well as deepen the economic inter-relationships overall in the region.

ii. Energy: oil more than an economic factor, but as a political weapon?

The low ambitions between the EU and MENA to address energy issues in the past, partially due to lacking intra-regional cooperation, e.g. such as between Algeria and Morocco, have been overcome to a considerable extent over time. The energy inter-dependence (in terms of energy security pertaining to secure, reliable, accessible and sustainable energy for all to ensure stable

economic growth and a steady reduction of poverty) between the EU and Africa has been formalized by the EU-Africa Partnership of December 2007. Hence increased energy-interdependence in terms of supply (security) between MENA and the EU represents a deepening of the EMRSC beyond trade as an energy security issue. An example of the delicate security balance between economic considerations and politics is the recent French trade agreement with Libya of oil for nuclear power installations.

An additional example of the securitization of petroleum as a security sector in a EMRSC would be the recent inter-regional oil exploration/transport contracts between Russia, ENI and Libya.

iii. Environmental Security

The environmental security sector in particular is largely “indivisible” across borders, and much more likely to become a regional issue of dispute, in need of deepened cooperation and agreement. The clean-up of the Mediterranean as an example represented not only the original case study which led Peter Haas (e.g. 1992) to develop the concept of epistemic communities to describe the modus operandi by which non-political experts from different countries cooperate on a common project; but under the new Mediterranean Sea Environment Strategy, the EU will contribute financially more to those countries bordering the Mediterranean which fall under the ENP to help in its clean-up and re-stock fish for the economic and environmental benefit of all peoples in the EMRSC. Similar to water as discussed below, food is becoming more, rather than less of a security sector recently again.

iv. Water as a security sector

“Water is peace”, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said recently (Steinmeier 2008), and it is anticipated that the increasing scarceness of water as a result of climate changes will make it a strategic resource soon. Access to water, such as in Palestinian territories and Israel, is interminably linked to economic development and political stability. Hence this securitization of water availability pertaining to the EMRSC contributes to its widening.

c. Socio-Cultural:

i. Israel-Palestine

While this paper does not provide sufficient space to discuss the effect of this conflict on Euro-Mediterranean stability overall, and the deepening of a EMRSC in particular, it should merely be reiterated that the “fusion tradition” (Sen 1999) as a liberal tradition concerned with social justice, is one which the EU also promotes towards its southern neighbors in terms of “development as freedom” (Ibid.), including the Palestinians for example. While this extraordinarily complex topic cannot be addressed here adequately, it reminds the reader that this example could represent an indication of the deepening of this hypothetical model of a EMRSC from a soft power perspective.

ii. Expansion of the EU Erasmus program to facilitate university student exchanges

As part of the forthcoming UMed, an expansion of the Erasmus program is planned for student exchanges between MENA and the EU, not only to teach a new generation alternate models to peaceful regional integration at EU universities, but also to assist i.a. in knowledge and know-how transfer to facilitate political promotion and economic harmonization among the regions bordering the Mediterranean. This program could be an indication of a deepening of the social-cultural sector of a EMRSC.

iii. Religion as a non-state declaration of war, a police-problem or a question of cultural rapprochement?

Enhanced understanding, e.g. through Erasmus program student exchanges, between the cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean region is theorized to not only enhance a cultural harmonization among all shores of the Mediterranean, but also has security implications in terms of mutual understanding the different religions in the Euro-Mediterranean region and the relevance of their traditions to each other today. As such the persistent religious conflicts represent a deepening of a “soft” (as well as a “hard”) security sector in a EMRSC.

Hard Security

In a EMRSC, which I argue is beginning to emerge from the original EMP, there are beyond soft power also hard power “aspects”. Beyond the military sector it would also include i.a. asymmetrical warfare (e.g. terrorist threats as transnational, mostly non-state actors, and often civil law enforcement threats), as well as energy, food and water, drug and arms trafficking, economic/financial, and individual (e.g. human trafficking) security “sectors”.

a. European Security and Defense Policy: counter-terrorism

While Washington had traditionally viewed the EU’s plans to develop independent military capabilities as lessening their NATO commitments, the U.S. now appears to welcome the complementarity between the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) and the U.S.’s hard power capabilities now (Fidler and Blitz 2008) – especially since in the “War on Terror” it is a shared NATO goal. This transatlantic mutual acceptance of EU military capabilities is exemplified by President Sarkozy’s bid for France to re-join the alliance (The Economist April 3, 2008). This hard power dynamic from the lens of a EMRSC indicates the levels of a RSC (i.e. with respect to NATO as the umbilicus to a EMRSC could make the case for a “super-complex” in Buzan and Waever’s words).

It can be expected that with the anticipated ratification of the Lisbon Treaty the ESDP will benefit from the EU’s greater policy coherence, effectiveness and visibility (Missiroli 2008). While there are many unknowns in this regard, a deepening of the hard security sector would radiate throughout the entire EMRSC – added by the prospects of future NATO enlargements (such as the membership of Albania, Croatia and Macedonia agreed on at the last NATO summit (gulfstreamblues.en 2008), and especially the future development of its Mediterranean Dialogue .

b. Border Control: Illegal immigration

Border control as a hard security sector has been intensified (deepened within a EMRSC-model) in terms of the relentless stream of African immigrants into the EU, and includes increased coordination with the “sending” countries for assistance with re-patriation.

c. Trafficking: Human, drugs, arms

The further eastward push of the EU’s borders has challenged its law enforcement especially in terms of all types of trafficking, and has not been brought under control adequately. Especially as a consequence of the latest EU-enlargement of 2008 and continued economic and political instabilities in the former Soviet Republics result in continued illegal arms sales and human trafficking, such as those seeking work, and those selling their organs, not to mention the drug pipeline, especially along the historic “Silk Road . The deepening in these hard security sectors across a EMRSC has intensified security cooperation throughout it.

Conclusions

This paper then posited the international political economy of the Euro-Mediterranean region in the context of the EuroMed Partnership’s internal and external transformations. From a theoretical perspective it traced this region in terms of a Heterogeneous Security Complex (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998, 16), as it abandons the assumption of being locked into specific security sectors, but rather interactions across several sectors such as states, nations, firms (incl. NGOs) and “confederations” (in the widest sense the EU), and across political, economic, and societal *sectors*. Buzan, Waever and de Wilde (1998, 17) state that there is a “cause-effect nature of the issues around which securitization” and takes place: the ‘facilitating conditions’ for securitization”, and secondly the process of securitization as the extreme version of politicization (Ibid., 23) itself. Other writers framed this regional uncertainty as follows:

Without tested models, without long-term strategies, and amid rising political violence, the Middle East has entered a period of uncertainty. In part, the successes of recent decades, especially the establishment of a

diverse, better educated middle class with growing expectations, will make the immediate future particularly challenging. At the same time, the talent upon which future development and economic security depends is embodied in these classes and the new institutional arrangements that they will devise (Richards and Waterbury 2008, 413).

The changes in the perceptions of its populations and the modernizations taking place in EMP member states give rise to a new generation of better educated citizens who look beyond the borders not only for somewhere to emigrate to, but to expand the perspective of their own country and its role in a larger regional reality. A region which beyond just a free trade area¹ is also instrumental to effective and meaningful security within the Euro-Mediterranean as well as inter-regionally with neighboring regions, such as the Black Sea for example.

The proposed UMed can be expected to provide that sense of direction and synchronicity to accelerate those projects that fit within the multilateralism already established with the 1995 Barcelona process,

seeking in the Euro-Mediterranean region a partnership covering political, security, economic, financial, social and cultural cooperation... [and especially] concentrate our dialogue on subjects which bring us together and which are also of urgent common interest to us all such as energy security and affordability, climate change, development, the dialogue of cultures and religions, reform and respect for human rights (Frendo 2007, 1/2).

The UMed has been designed on the same multilateralism as its predecessor, the EMP², but with considerable enhancements. Since many aspects of the UMed at the time of writing this article are still in the planning stages, one can only hypothesize largely. It is significant to note, however, that not only the economic integration via a Free Trade Area will be a top priority, but the significance of their reciprocity with regional hard and soft power security sectors affecting intra- and inter-regional stability and prosperity is securitized by member countries, regardless of their individual status quo with respect to fundamental rights, democratic freedoms etc. Hence in light of the preceding findings with respect to the particularly complex – and increasing – socio-political and economic interconnectedness in the Euro-Mediterranean region, an adjustment of the term “*Middle Eastern Regional Security Complex*” (Buzan and Waever 2003) to “*Euro-Mediterranean Regional Security Complex*” appears indicated.

Hence, the rainbow on the horizon of the EMP is no longer a mythical love story, but, after a difficult courtship, the engagement between Europa and Zeus might become formal with the ratification of the UMed in July 2008. While it may have been dreamt of on all sides of the Mediterranean for millennia, a lot of human effort in terms of bridging the cultures and economies, and many celestial blessings will be necessary to sustain the necessary commitment required to make it a happy and strong marriage at last.

¹ Although the Free Trade Area (FTA) between the EU and MENA is not even scheduled to become reality until 2010, progress in Euro-Mediterranean regional integration is accelerating, and further goals are within reach to expand the “zones of peace” into other regional security sectors. Nevertheless, one must remember that, realistically, an FTA represents only the first stage of regional integration, and is neither a customs union nor common market yet.

² rather than giving in to Sarkozy’s neo-colonial “divide and conquer” original proposal for a Mediterranean Union by the EU vis-à-vis its neighborhood, as France’s immediate announcement of an arms deal with Libya following its efforts in the release of Bulgarian nurses in that country was interpreted by some – arguments that this type of trade as contributing to the reduction of the poverty gap not being supported by those economists, who speak of a “natural resource curse” (such as in Nigeria) (Ulgen quoted in Fisher 2007, 3).

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