

Because it is a crossroad of civilizations and interests, the Mediterranean Sea is also an area of transit; a zone of circulation and passage. Due to this position, every kind of concern had it been political, cultural, ideological and economic or military, will transit through and via this region.

Security concerns are amongst this wave of transits. They come to the region, threaten the local population for a certain period of time, and because they are in transit, security concerns are supposed to leave the space for other issues; other concerns. What is not said by the story is whether these transnational phenomenon's could definitely settle down in the region or not?

Notwithstanding this crucial question, it is clear that within the Mediterranean Region we have to deal with different kind of security concerns. Ask people, officials and also non officials or so-called "street perception", to submit memos outlining their country's perception of threats to its security and its security requirements, and you will be surprised by the broad range of views characteristic of the region diversity.

In this paper I will try to address three questions:

1. Regional security means many things to many people. While the Europeans, for the instance, generally focuses on terrorism and illegal migration, countries form the Middle East see that Geo-strategic realities pose threat to the regional stability (Arms race, Israeli-Arab conflict, etc.).

However most of the Maghrebian security assessments take into account broader issues than the Middle East Peace process and WMD proliferation. Threats to Maghrebian security come more from external factors than internal ones. For example, migration and European policies aimed at cutting off labor flows represent more important security issues for these countries than does terrorist violence intended to highlight the Arab-Israel Conflict.

A decrease in tourism due to a boycott by European travelers and traders alarmed by the expansion of violence does far greater harm to the region.

What do these differences mean in terms of security perceptions for the Mediterranean Region and at a special level for the Maghrebian countries?

The traditional concept of security starts and ends with an overwhelming emphasis on the military dimensions. However, currently security challenges are forcing a complete rethinking of traditional concepts of security and the emerging trend is in favour to new tools of statecraft to include non-military capabilities.

The idea of common security is also emerging. The call for a new concept of security that transcends the narrow notions of military defence and looks more towards a broader interdependence of various "tools" of national power is without any doubt the right approach for enhancing international or regional security.

As a result, the emergence of a new common security conception has broadened threat perceptions to include less common or autonomous threats in shaping government policies. Included in this concept that balances individuals' and State's concerns are non-military challenges such as environmental degradation, migration, narcotics trafficking, AIDS and global population growth.

2. At least, three issues for special concern could be identified:

- 1) Environmental security,
- 2) Cultural communication, and
- 3) Failure of the elements of democratization

But before, we would like to draw your attention on some facts. First of all, there are currently no published official studies on regional threat perception and security requirements in the Maghreb. Of course, official positions deal with the social, economic, cultural, environmental, but do not reflect any national threat perception or security requirements. These issues which are solely discussed within the public rather than governmental forums.

Secondly, any answer to these security issues has to be shaped by interactions between regional or national threats and States security policies.

2.1 Natural threats and environmental scarcity

While the inclusion by governments of an environmental dimension to the concept of security is increasingly necessary, it can lead in extreme cases to unilateral use of force. Therefore, environmental security is a new force to be addressed.

Two factors are at the heart of the environmental security theory: the increasing degradation of the environment and the lack of international mechanisms and laws.

Six types of environmental change can be attributed to future possible causes of regional or inter-group conflict: greenhouse-induced climate change, stratospheric ozone depletion, degradation and loss of good agricultural land, deforestation, depletion and pollution of fresh water supplies and depletion of fisheries.

Three possible conflicts are likely to emerge when national requirements/needs are unable to be met: 1) frustration-aggression reaction (civil wars, strikes, riots, coups d'Etats, revolutions and guerrilla wars); 2) conflicts involving nationalism, ethnicity and religion; and 3) interstate and trans-boundary conflicts.

Despite the serious challenges that the global environment offer to both national and international decision-makers, there is also an opportunity for unprecedented regional and international cooperation. Much greater emphasis is needed on proactive policies and a systematic integrated and coordinated approach to environmental resource management and international law. National laws, as well as regional and international agreements, have to reflect high-level concern for the protection of the environment as an integrated component security.

The interaction between local, regional and global environmental standard-setting, can only heighten the awareness of our international environmental interdependence and elevate local threats to globally shared concerns. This trend would affect the nature and the scope of State and regional entitlement to the use of environmental resources, by redefining its "supra" national sovereignty as well as associated security implications. Also required will be an examination of trans-boundary risks, rights, and obligations bearing on the protection of the interest of environmental resources, for the benefit of all regional parties.

The latter proposal would also give rise to comprehensive mechanisms and international laws responsible not only for damages resulting from illegal activities, but interestingly for any negligence.

2.2 Cultural Frustration:

Lack of National Identity and Disenfranchisement

Cultural identity has not yet reached the level in States to become a matter of national security or detractor of the State's stability and prosperity.

What is interesting to ponder with respect to State's policy is the degree to which to find how far the cultural interests are taken into account in the State's assessment of actual threats. The potential links between culture and security might be demonstrated antidotally.

Rather than focusing on traditional cultural functions such as education, we view the issue in more complex terms of identity, stability and more interestingly in terms of security. It was clearly stated that a strong cultural identity may negate what is viewed as social inequalities and positively contribute to a shared "national" identity.

Frustrations often arise from the inability of individuals to find a common national bond within the State. More than a feeling of frustration, it is at the base of increasing protestations among groups, even escalating to violence against other social/ethnic/religious groups or against the State itself.

It's not surprising that those who suffer from cultural disenfranchisement would sink into despair. More and more exasperated and disconnected from the cultural mainstream they could revert to using force and violence to win recognition by the State.

The recent events in the French Banlieues (neighborhoods) are very relevant. They showed how dangerous is the resentment of an unequal access to the required cultural system. Those who are victims of the standardization of the cultural patterns, often end by using force and violence.

2.3 Failure of the Democratic Process (Declining State Legitimacy; External and Internal Support/Pressures for Democratization):

Experiences reveal a high degree of vulnerability for states struggling with concepts of freedom and pluralism. The premature failure of experimental democratic reforms puts the very legitimacy of the State in question.

Increasing popular expectations added to political pressures from within, as well as, set in motion all the necessary components for unrealized promises and the outbreak of violence and riots. Again the dilemma – does the state continue with long term, slow reform on efforts or abandon them altogether in preference for short-term stability of the regime.

Ultimately, the threat comes from either manipulation of democratic elements (elections, referendums, etc.) in an attempt to strengthen or rebuild the weakened legitimacy of the governments, or from the increasing pressure that external actors (democracies, NGO's, International Organizations, etc.) exert. In either case, the state justifies governmental repression and violence as necessary evils in maintaining security, stability within the State and region.

Neither internal nor external pressures necessarily impact the stability of the political regime. The real threat rests, however, in the systematic rejection by the State of any political reform. The scenarios could vary from isolate cases of violence and successful oppression by the State to anarchy and the entire collapse of the State.

Thus, it is upon the success or the failure of the democratic process by the State that security and stability ultimately rely.

Having said that, what are the basic security requirements, at least in terms of approaches?

3. Globalization of security concerns has helped identify the common interests shared by all the nations. Sharing of the national solutions or approaches enriches the comprehensiveness of options for countries to counter national and regional threats (computing terrorism, immigration, ecological terrorism). Countries no longer have to address these issues in isolation. States of the south Mediterranean river are not necessarily aware of the high level interest that the northern States are giving for transnational threats. Based on perceptions of “national” security threats, many of these might feel forced to respond to out-of-border problems with some use form of limited police/military force.

The inability of current policies and the inability for the entire region to cooperatively (and successfully) address these security issues produce a dangerous threat environment. The divergence of national “threats” perceptions among the European States demonstrates how complex the security policy conception is. While each Government is responsible to protect its people from any threat the interdependency and implications for the entire region’s stability and security cannot be overlooked. In this world of the 21st century, cooperation among states and within regions will determine the survival of states and the stability and security of regions.

At the end, we are compelled to say that the move from the military perception of security issues to a more open conception for security concerns has made the Mediterranean Region not only an area of transit, but also a zone of turbulences.

What are the trends for the extension of security approaches or cooperation?

- 1) From the security of nations to the security of groups and individuals. This first form will put more emphasis on individual rights, outlaw and punish acts of aggression perpetrated against civilians, ethnic groups and other cultural or religious entities (genocide). This first form reminds us the NATO military campaign during 1999.
- 2) From the security of nations to the security of international system. In this instance the security interest is expanded upwards from the single state to the international community. In some cases we may face a sort of supranational security. A single state argues the right and the duty to ensure the security of non-national entities. This state will act on behalf of others.
- 3) From military to political, social, environmental and other forms of human security. This third pattern would entail an extension of terrorism’s due definition, in the same way that it would enlarge the security conception.
- 4) Non vertical, nor horizontal, the fourth dimension of extension is diffused. What should be considered in this case is the responsibility to ensure security. Even though no common responsibility was framed until now, it seems the state response relies on a unilateral reaction rather on a collective one.