ZEi

Discussion Paper

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The CSCE as a Model to Transform Western Relations with the Greater Middle East

**C137
2004**

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Content

Andreas Marchetti

Introduction

The last months have seen numerous proposals for a profound change of the relations between the Greater Middle East, Europe and the United States. One of the most far-reaching and ambitious plans was put forward by the United States, being labelled Greater Middle East Initiative. The initial plan, leaked to the public in February, was loosely modelled on the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). The issue has been a central topic on the agenda of numerous meetings and summits over the past months, including the EU-US summit in Ireland and the NATO summit in Turkey. The G-8 summit at Sea Island in Georgia, USA, agreed on a – watered-down – version of the initiative. The approved Partnership for Progress and a Common Future intends to reframe Western relations with the "governments and peoples of the Broader Middle East and North Africa".

However, the identification of a certain area is already where the problems of any grand design for the region begin, since there is no general consensus on the geographical limits to any kind of CSCE-analogous framework. The "V. Mediterranean Forum" held at the Center for European Integration Studies (ZEI) on June 24 and 25, 2004, addressed this and other issues that need to be considered for any new framework for the relations with the Greater Middle East. The "Mediterranean Forum" at ZEI is part of a larger project of co-operation between ZEI and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation on the Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue. It takes place in the framework of Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission (EuroMeSCo) activities. ZEI and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation graciously recognize financial support of the Fritz Thyssen Foundation.

The statements and interventions made during the "V. Mediterranean Forum" under the title "A CSCE-analogous framework for the Greater Middle East?" are assembled in this Discussion Paper. As fascinating and ambitious as a CSCE-analogous framework for the Greater Middle East might be, the concept is not totally new and revolutionary, however. Already in 1976, then-Israeli Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin proposed the establishment of a Conference on Security and Co-operation in the Middle East, framed on the CSCE accords of 1975. The idea of transposing the CSCE experience to the region was then again put forward by Jordan since the beginning of the 1990s. Little has been done, though, to identify potentials and obstacles of such a process. The contributions published in this Discussion Paper intend to give answers to some of the questions still and again being debated in Europe, the United States and in the Greater Middle East.

Ludger Kühnhardt

System-opening Cooperative Transformation of the Greater Middle East.
A New Transatlantic Project and a Joint Euro-Atlantic-Arab Task

I.   Redefining the strategic setting

It is impossible to predict what will be the course of world politics in the twenty-first century. Possible trends have to be extrapolated from past experience. And yet potential quantum leaps in science and technology, for example, are entirely unpredictable; indeed, no other development could have been less foreseeable in the early days of the twentieth century. Will mankind again witness comparable developments in science and technology over the next decades? Will they revolutionise health and energy supply, demographic patterns and the geographical distribution of success and failure? Will nuclear fusion become possible, with revolutionary consequences for the energy needs of a growing world population? Will food, water and health services match rising global demand? Will territorial conflicts arise as a result of unbalanced distribution of resources and wealth? Will migratory patterns, mostly involuntary in nature, have an impact on world stability, as was the case during much of the twentieth century? Will the two demographic giants, China and India, accompany modernisation with a sustainable relationship between homogeneity and pluralism, democracy and stability? Will Africa catch up developmentally and in response to globalisation?

Whatever future of the twentieth century, world order is not a given. It will change as it always has done in the past.[1] During the twentieth century Europe was at the heart of the struggle for world order and the root cause of world disorder. This chapter in world politics came to a close with the unique transformation of Europe into a continent of democracies, market economies, integration and cooperation. America's commitment made this transformation possible and gave rise to an exceptional Euro-American success story. It gave sense and value to the notion of an Atlantic civilisation. Transatlantic relations have become the strongest element of global stability and the most successful expression of trans-regional prosperity and peace in the world. The enlargement of the European Union (EU) and NATO laid the foundations for lasting Atlantic peace and prosperity, for democracy and security from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. While Euro-Atlantic relations with the Ukraine, Russia and Turkey are still evolving, they are most likely to follow the path of 'inclusion' that emerged after the end of the Cold War.[2]

The greatest danger for Americans and Europeans today comes from threats emerging from outside of Europe.[3] The danger of Americans and Europeans becoming victims in big numbers results more from terrorism and rogue and failed states in the Greater Middle East than from any threat – real or potential – within Europe. Dealing with this strategic challenge to stability and security in the Western world will be the most crucial test put to this generation of leaders on both sides of the Atlantic. This is true where the resolution of a new set of problems is concerned, but also as regards the ability to reinvent transatlantic relations as a cornerstone of a stable and prosperous world order. This new challenge should be seen as a great opportunity to revitalise an 'Atlantic civilization' and to change the relation-

1   Karl Kaiser, Zeitenwende. Dominanz und Interdependenz nach dem Irak-Krieg, Internationale Politik, 58, 5, 2003, pp. 1 ff.
2   Hüseyin Bagci, Jackson Janes and Ludger Kühnhardt (eds.), Parameters of Partnership: The US-Turkey-Europe, Baden-Baden, 1999; Jackson Janes, Oleg Kokoshinsky and Peter Wittschorek (eds.), Ukraine, Europe, and the United State:. Towards a New Euro-Atlantic Security Architecture, Baden-Baden, 2000.
3   Here I agree with Asmus and Pollack. Ronald D. Asmus and Kenneth M. Pollack, The New Transatlantic Project, at: www.policyreview.org/OCT02/asmus_print.html

ship between the Atlantic partners and the countries and people in the Greater Middle East through a cooperative system-opening transformation of that region.

The fierce transatlantic dispute over Iraq – which has generated an internal Western Cold War of sorts – has raised doubts as to whether the Atlantic partners will be willing and able to give a new sense and direction to their common future. Indeed, a new transatlantic project can only emerge from this dispute if both sides are willing to develop a shared understanding of the threat they face and the opportunities that dealing with it together presents over time. A new transatlantic project should not be based solely on dealing with a new threat; it can only succeed if it also defines new positive goals. Transforming the Greater Middle East must therefore be linked to cooperation between the transatlantic partners and the countries and societies in the Greater Middle East. Transforming the Greater Middle East through cooperation wherever possible, and with the help of legitimate deterrence whenever necessary, could become a joint Euro-American-Arab task for the next decades.

There are some obvious preconditions to make a strategic redefinition of a transatlantic project with implications for world peace possible. Any global partnership – indeed, any kind of world order – cannot be based on negative aims alone. Threats and fear may result in deterrence and veto-capacities over the potentially disturbing behaviour of others, but they cannot generate genuine and reliable stability. Such a limited horizon would be self-centered and autistic. On the other hand, putting one's faith only in cooperation and invoking a common interest of survival cannot resolve real conflict and disputes over interests, resources or political goals either. Such faith would be naïf and apolitical. A new transatlantic project for cooperative transformation of the Greater Middle East must therefore avoid both extremes.

Leading the Greater Middle East towards democracy and a market economy does not cover the universe of American or European interests. A positive agenda with both policy-consent and institutional mechanisms is necessary to bind interests in a sustainable way and to establish the limits

of partnership with the Greater Middle East. Only such mechanisms make sustainable and successful policies possible over time. A new Euro-American project has to look beyond threat perceptions and, due to its very nature, plan in terms of decades rather than years.

We are confronted with two challenges: redefining the 'frame of mind' of the transatlantic partnership and transforming the Greater Middle East. A differentiated analysis of problems, and a sober assessment of common interests and of the limits of commonality are called for. Different layers of operation and realistic considerations about timing and obstacles are also necessary. We face a challenge in the decades to come that is similar in scope and importance to that which confronted the US and Europe after World War II. We may look in vain for a new Truman for our times, but we must not be caught by the simplistic illusion that the Greater Middle East is the contemporary equivalent of the Soviet Union and any of their leaders the equivalent of Josef Stalin. A system-opening strategy that can generate cooperative structures between the West and the Greater Middle East over time is therefore necessary.

II. *Policies for the cycle of instability*

Differences in transatlantic approaches to new challenges stemming from the cycle of instability from "Marrakech to Bangladesh" (Asmus and Pollack) were intensely debated and experienced during the Iraq crisis in 2002-2003. Power and weakness, wimps and imperialists, asymmetric distribution of hard power and soft power – all kind of arguments and name-calling were trade during American Euro-trashing and European America-bashing. None of this fundamentally destroyed the underlying importance of transatlantic relations.

One can identify two sets of disputes: on the one hand, there are those that are a result of proximity (mainly debates about values and domestic developments). They are a part of trans-Atlantic domestic policy and evidence of the connexion between social and cultural developments on both sides of the Atlantic. On the other hand, there are the disputes that obviously reflect different foreign policy choices and strategic orientations in the aftermath

of the terrorist attacks of September 11.[4] Both kinds of disputes are inter-woven, emanating from differences in interpreting common 'Western values'. They prove the existence of strong links between the Atlantic partners. This is why the failure to generate a new transatlantic paradigm would be so devastating for the well being of both.[5]

The nature of the crises in the Greater Middle East, and their possible implications for the West, has often been underestimated. In an over simplification, the region has been seen mainly, if not solely, one of failure, threat and chaos, and the potential for a common agenda between it and the West has been underrated. Failed states, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, refugee migration, economic underperformance and political oppression are the key-words used to assess the Greater Middle East, the hotbed of future conflicts that can easily spill over into the West or be directly waged against it. There is also obvious positive potential. There are oil and gas resources, the dynamics of modernising societies, and the potential for joint initiatives to optimise Western and Arab use of resources in favour of the marginal regions of the Greater Middle East and Africa, our common neighbour. The path that Islam will take regarding the challenges and opportunities of globalisation is still unclear, however.[6]

If the US and the EU fail to define a new and lasting transatlantic project, their strategic divorce could be imminent. If both Atlantic partners fail to make the transformation of the Greater Middle East a common interest of the West and the peoples of the region, a strategic confrontation between both or some of its constituent parts could evolve. The dual challenge posed by a new era is enormous: how can it be dealt with best? Much de-

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4   Roberto Aliboni et.al. (ed.), North-South Relations across the Mediterranean after September 11. Challenges and Cooperative Approaches, Rome 2003; Carlo Masala (ed.), 'September 11 and the Future of Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation', ZEI Discussion Paper C 120, 2003, Center for European Integration Studies, Bonn.

5   Ludger Kühnhardt, Constituting Europe. Identity, Institution-building and the Search for a Global Role, Baden-Baden, 2003; Jackson Janes, Transatlantische Brüche? Partnerschaft in Schwieriger Zeit, Tutzing 2003. On the economic rationale for a continous transatlantic relationship: Joseph P.Quinlan, Drifting Apart or Growing Together? The Primacy of the Transatlantic Economy, Washington, 2003.

6   See "Islam und Globalisierung", Special edition of Der Bürger im Staat, 53, 2-3, 2003, Stuttgart, Landeszentrale für Politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg.

pends on the willingness to honestly analyse the challenge, courageously face implications and consistently work towards turning the challenge into a visible opportunity for all involved. This is what has happened in Europe over the course of the twentieth century. With the end of status quo-oriented crisis management came the pursuit of a strategy of unprecedented success of inclusive transformation of the continent based on common values and political systems. In the end, this benefited all Europeans, including the bitter enemies of the past. While the Greater Middle East is culturally different and politically highly complex, the challenges are comparable. At root, the challenge is that of establishing a world order through the transformation of regional structures and trans-regional relations. It is one that calls for intellectual honesty, moral and cultural farsightedness, and political leadership by all actors involved. This is why the cooperative transformation of the Greater Middle East will be the most important test case for building order and achieving progress in the twenty-first century.[7]

The Atlantic community – be it the US, the US and Canada, NATO, or either the EU or to the Council of Europe – is clearly marked by a common history and a mutually recognised identity. By contrast, the arch of instability spanning from 'Marrakech to Bangladesh' is less defined and definable. The EU emphasises partnership with the Southern Mediterranean countries, including Israel.[8] The NATO Mediterranean Dialogue includes only pro-Western countries, but is wider than the Barcelona-Process group, as it includes Mauritania.[9] The relations of the US or the EU with the countries of

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7   For an intrusive European perspective with policy implications see: Michael Emerson and Nathalie Tocci, The Rubik Cube of the Wider Middle East, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, 2003.

8   Stephen Calleya, "Is the Barcelona-Process working?", ZEI Discussion Paper C 75, 2000, Center for European Integration Studies, Bonn; Felix Maier (ed.), "Managing Asymmetric Interdependencies within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership", ZEI Discussion Paper C101, 2002, Center for European Integration Studies, Bonn; Massimo Silvestri, "Le Partenariat Euro-Méditerranéen", Revue du Marché Commun et de l'Union Européenne, March 2002, pp.183 ff.; Annette Jünemann, "Six Years After: Reinvigorating the European-Mediterranean Partnership", in: Christian-Peter Hanelt et.al.(eds.), Europe's Emerging Foreign Policy and the Middle Eastern Challenge, Munich: Gütersloh 2002, pp. 39 ff.

9   Sven Biscop, "Network or Labyrinth? The Challenge of Co-ordinating Western Security Dialogues with the Mediterranean", Mediterranean Politics 7(1), 2002,

the Arab peninsula, the Middle East strictly speaking (the region of the conflict that has absorbed the world for decades), or with the extended Middle East including Iraq and Iran, are neither identical nor overlapping. There is as much ambiguity regarding the inclusion in the region of the Caucasus region and the newly independent republics of Central Asia, as there is the inclusion of Afghanistan and even Pakistan (not to mention India and Bangladesh). Not all countries of the region are Arab, not all Arab countries are purely Muslim, not all Muslim countries are in the region, and Israel, Turkey and India fit neither category.

Since NATO formally took command of peacekeeping troops in Afghanistan, the rebuilding of the country has been recognized clearly as a common Euro-American task. In that sense, the Hindukush has become the natural eastern border of a region that is undergoing strategic and domestic transformation and is of concern for both the US and the EU. No matter how grave the potential for trouble and how great the opportunities for cooperation the republics of the Caucasus and of Central Asia must be included into the arc of instability. EU Commission President Romano Prodi has talked about an 'arc of stability at Europe's gates' stretching from Morocco to Russia, in which the EU is attempting to play a developmental role.[10] Asmus and Pollack provide a useful point of reference. However, like all geographic lines, the region 'from Marrakech to Bangladesh' falls short of responding definitely and authoritatively to some of the intricacies and contradictions of this vast region. Regions, like conflicts and opportunities, overlap depending on the criteria one emphasises.

pp.92 ff; Mustapha Benchenane, "Les Ètats-Unis et la Méditerranée", Défense Nationale 4, 2002, pp. 79 ff.; Thanos Dokos, NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue: Prospects and Policy Recommendations, Athens 2003.

10 Romano Prodi, "An Enlarged and More United Europe, a Global Player. Challenges and Opportunities in the New Century", Romanian Journal of International Affairs 8 (1-2), 2002, p 22. See also: Javier Solana, "A Secure Europe in a Better World", presentation at the the European Council, Thessaloniki, 20 June 2003 at www.ue.eu.int/newsroom, and Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours, Brussels, 11 March 2003, COM (2003),104 final.

III. A new "Conference on Security and Cooperation"?

There appears to be an Atlantic consensus when defining the 'Greater Middle East', a region that includes Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait. For a number of different reasons, Afghanistan as well as Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Yemen and Mauritania should be included in the search for a new regional order. The Arab world is the core 'problem area' and should therefore, strictu sensu, include Sudan, Somalia and the Comoros, and exclude Israel given differences in religion, governance and economic organisation. However, the prospects of the region will always be conditioned by the very existence of Israel, as will any post-Middle East conflict scenario.[11] As a non-Arab country, a member of NATO and the Council of Europe, and as a candidate for EU membership, Turkey is clearly on the Atlantic side of the equation, albeit involved in certain key ways in some aspects of the development of the Greater Middle East.

More difficult than the issue of geographical delimitation is defining the scope of the Greater Middle East 'problem'. Is it about the war on terrorism or is the latter only one dimension of a deeper structural crisis and a broader set of challenges? How to assess the relationship between the Middle East conflict and the evolution of the Greater Middle East?[12] Even if the most inclusive agenda is adopted, covering all the root causes of terrorism and regime instability, how should the region be viewed in the final analysis? Is it a permanent threat that can only be contained and tamed at best? Is it a region that faces irresolvable problems or a potential partner whose

11 For the best analysis of the current situation in the Arab world including Israel by a German-language author, see Volker Perthes, Geheime Gärten. Die neue arabische Welt, Berlin, 2002.

12 On overlapping dimensions in an historical and a structural context see also: Roger Owen, State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East, London/New York 2003 (2nd edition); about the European Relationship with the Arab world see the older study of Andreas Jacobs, Europa und die Arabische Welt. Bestandsaufnahme und Perspektiven der inter-regionalen Kooperation, Internal Studies 110, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Sankt Augustin 1995.

puzzling problems can be fixed? There is little Atlantic consensus regarding these questions. Until recently country and regional experts predominantly addressed these questions. After 9/11 the agenda became the key challenge for Western strategists and policy-makers who often have limited regional expertise. Contradictions and divergent views stemming from domestic considerations in the US or Europe are therefore natural and are likely to continue. One thing is certain, however: the Greater Middle East is no longer a region for regional experts only. For better or worse, it is a region that elicits all kind of feelings in the Western world. Likewise, perceptions of the West and its constituent parts are under intense discussion within the Greater Middle East.

One of the perennial marks of Arab or Greater Middle East discourse about the West is the expression of an obvious inferiority complex. While the West simplifies the Arab or Islamic world as non-rational, aggressive and dangerous, the Arab world perceives the West as superior, arrogant and imperialistic: equal partnership is impossible to achieve. The only source of contemporary pride in the Arab world that is not of a destructive nature seems to be the successful Al Jazeera TV station in Qatar, labelled the CNN of the Arab world. Many in the region are proud of the channel, which has revolutionized the media landscape in the Greater Middle East – not always to the delight of the regimes it unequivocally criticises.

It will be easier to find common ground between the West and the countries of the Greater Middle on practical issues rather than on questions of principle. Incremental progress is the most likely path towards cooperation than full-fledged comprehensive strategies and approaches. The Western ambition to comprehensively transform the whole region will require not just strongly differentiating specific countries, but also specific issues and future prospects. An ongoing obstacle will be the difficulties of finding common ground between 'us' and 'them' when defining common interests and the long-term potential of comprehensive cooperation. This asymmetry seems to be inevitable: whatever one might have wished the fact is that the urgent need for a new transatlantic project was imposed upon the West by the attacks of 9/11. The starting point is fear. Rarely has global transforma-

tion been driven by academic scenarios of good will according to convenient time frames.

Uniting the US and the EU to implement a project of the above mentioned scope will inevitably cause internal Western debates about priorities and outright power struggles over leadership as with the 'cold war' within the West over Iraq. Nevertheless, there is ample room for common ground, views, action and even interests and goals, and to ensure complementarity where necessary. The quarrel over Iraq was a wake-up call for both sides. Although the Atlantic partnership still stands, it has led to a reshuffling of power within the Western camp, not least within the EU – mainly to the detriment of the role of Germany.

The Atlantic partners must define the challenges and opportunities before engaging the countries and societies of the Greater Middle East. They must be aware of possible reactions and interests of the Greater Middle East for the project to succeed, whether they consult the region's representatives or not. Only a gradual development and implementation is realistic. The most crucial question to be addressed is regarding the definition of nature of the problem. The most obvious definition is the terrorist threat coupled with the possible use of weapons of mass destruction by rogue states or radical groups sponsored by such states.

The root causes of the multiple and interlinked crises in the countries and societies of the Greater Middle East are best summarised in the 2002 UN-sponsored Arab Human Development Report written by 22 eminent Arab scholars.[13] In it the main causes of the crisis of modernisation in the Arab world are lack of political freedom, corruption, economic stagnation, the absence of the rule of law and reliable legal systems, inappropriate market economies, insufficient education systems, and gender inequality. The report has been criticised for various reasons, not the least in the Arab world. However, criticism is part of the process that it was hoped the report would initiate. Public debate about the need to transform the societies and regimes

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13 United Nations Development Programme/Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, Arab Development Report 2002. Creating Opportunities for Future Generations, New York 2002.

of the Greater Middle East and the Arab world in particular is no longer a taboo. In fact it is becoming a visible part of political developments, as countries wave between resistance and closure and fear of the kind of radical change that could be counterproductive.

There is no other recent report about development in the Arab world that has been more outspoken about the harsh realities of the region. Three quarters of all global oil reserves are located in 13 countries of the Greater Middle East but their people do not benefit from this wealth. The average growth rate of 1.3 per cent is behind that of most other developing regions. Per capita income is shrinking. Yearly population growth rates of 2.5 are higher than that of most other regions and absorb the little economic progress there is. The world economy benefited from 651 billion dollar foreign investment in 2002, and yet Arab countries were able to attract only 4,6 billion, which were, moreover, unevenly distributed throughout the region. This is an under performing region, with 7.5 per cent of the world population but only 2.5 per cent of global gross domestic product[14]. These figures alone should be a source of concern for Europe, as they refer to an immediately neighbouring region.

All freedom and human rights indices paint a bleak picture of the Arab world. The region gets consistently low marks for political participation, legal security, corruption, stability, transparency, governmental efficiency or the quality of governance. Unsurprisingly, unresolved problems are accumulating in this neighbouring region and endangering European stability. The export of instability to Europe has many labels: illegal and legal migration, the threat of weapons of mass destruction, Islamic fundamentalism

14 Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 216, 17 September 2003, p. 15. The situation among the Southern Mediterranean partner countries of the EU is likewise bad. They generate only about 5 per cent of all direct investments in all developing countries of the world. See: Christian-Peter Hanelt and Felix Neugart, "Die Europa-Mittelmeer-Partnerschaft. Stabilität und Prosperität im Mittelmeer-Raum", Internationale Politik 56, 8, 2001, p. 57.

and terrorism. Lack of opportunities in the region has begun to threaten the stability of the Western world.[15]

This is why the relationship between the West and the Greater Middle East cannot be based solely on deterrence. The Cold War taught us that deterrence may freeze a conflict but it cannot resolve it. However, the relationship between the Greater Middle East and the West is not comparable to the Cold War relationship between the West and the Soviet Empire. There is no Arab equivalent to the Soviet Empire or an Arab Moscow, although Ryad could be a potential candidate. Further, and most importantly, there is no Cold War between the whole of the Greater Middle East and the West. Some analysts see it arising and some even seem to wish for it, but the relationship is much more complex and differentiated than the one that shaped the Cold War.

While there is no Cold War, recent trends debated over the past years indicate the potential for conflict and even confrontation between parts of the Greater Middle East and parts of the West. Thus, the future relationship between the two cannot be based on the promise of cooperation alone. The history of the encounter between the West and the cultures and regions of the Greater Middle East has witnessed as many periods of cooperation as of confrontation. The challenge for today's leaders is to define a framework for a relationship between the Atlantic and the Arab-Islamic civilizations that is broad and forward-looking enough to tap on the potential for cooperation and yet realistic and cautious enough not to neglect deterrence.

The strategy must be based on two pillars: a transformed relationship between the Atlantic civilization and the Greater Middle East to resolve existing problems, threats and obstacles, and internal transformations within the Atlantic civilization and the Greater Middle East to change attitudes towards 'the other'. The Harmel Report of 1967 defined the two-track strat-

15 In light of this it is astonishing that Europe tends to identify the quarrel over the Greater Middle East as an obsession of the US despite the fact that Europe is much more dependent on Middle East oil than the US. While the US imports 13 per cent of its oil from the Gulf region, Europe is importing 20 per cent; see: Friedemann Müller, "Gas für uns alle", Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 194, 22 August 2003, p. 6.

egy of NATO vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and its satellites for the following two decades of the Cold War: a similar two track strategy is necessary for the cooperative transformation of the Greater Middle East, which must see well beyond hard security and defence issues to succeed. It must be based on a system-opening strategy equivalent to the one that initiated the transformation of the communist world and its gradual integration into cooperative Western structures.

A two-dimensional implementation is also necessary. The US and the EU need partners in the region and the support of forces that 'aspire to the same changes' (Asmus/Pollack). This could lead to a new variant of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). A Conference on Security and Cooperation between the US, the EU and the countries of the Greater Middle East could be a crucial instrument to intensify a cooperative transformation of the region and its relations with the West. Optimists may see it as the key to system-opening cooperation; for pessimists the outcome of any cooperative rearrangement is the ultimate embodiment of a new regional system. Western strategic thinking must focus on this approach to bring about system-opening cooperation.

A Euro-American-Arab-Israeli Conference on Security and Cooperation would open a debate about the ultimate aims of a common project and about regime change and transformation. It is imperative to understand that the war on terrorism and regime change are not strategic goals in themselves. They are necessary answers to the challenges that became evident after 9/11. They are necessary preconditions to achieve strategic goals. By themselves they cannot be a long-range strategic goal of Western politics. There has been much talk since 9/11 about the need to develop 11a common threat perception in the EU and in the United States. We need a common threat perception but we also need a common goal for a new strategically important common transatlantic project to succeed.[16]

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16 On the European threat perception since 9/11 see Harald Müller, "Terrorism, Proliferation: A European Threat Assessment", Chaillot Papers 58, March 2003, Institute for Security Studies, Paris.

IV.   Advancing a model of statehood

The future and global position of the Greater Middle East must be defined in line with Western interests. The war against terrorism, regime change and structural transformation are tactical issues. The question of final aims must be addressed. The Western world – indeed modern complex industrialised societies as a whole – are both exporters and importers of the effects of globalisation. They depend on successful globalisation and so must deal with a specific domestic reform agenda to manage it properly. Successful globalisation calls for stability, transparency, efficient and accountable political and corporate governance structures, open societies and social conditions that distribute the benefits of globalisation. In turn, this means a solid state of rule of law and predictable public procedures in line with Western interests. All this flourishes best in an open society. During the twentieth century the struggle was between open societies and their totalitarian enemies; this century faces a struggle between global society and its enemies, who try to squash open societies and the evolution of a global society.

It is not easy to develop constitutional politics and procedures that are more or less in line with Western notions of an open society and democracy-based rule of law. The West views democracy as conducive to stable global development, but it has happily cooperated with many countries and societies that do not stand the test of democracy. Although transformation in the Greater Middle East may mean regime change, there is no certainty that this will lead inevitably to more democracy. The opposite could happen. This is because the West is unable to predetermine and manage the process of transformation in everywhere in the region at each stage of development. Democracy and the rule of law depend on locally rooted and created conditions, which have their own locally determined incubation period.

The West should therefore focus more on a specific model of statehood rather than on the details of democratic governance. The Western model of a secular, pluralistic state that protects human rights, which first and foremost includes the right of religious freedom requires the rule of law, predictability and transparency. As far as control and sharing power, accountability and the efficient management of public resources are concerned

these are best served through the mechanisms of parliamentary democracy. Here, the West has many experiences to share with the countries of the Greater Middle East – although it also has a good number of domestic shortcomings to address.

There is nothing wrong with basing the transformation debate on the principles of democratic rule and the universality of human rights. However, these values cannot be imposed from the outside nor should they be imposed by force. This would be counterproductive, as the case of Iran shows. One decade after the end of the war, Bosnia-Herzegovina is still an extremely weak state that has not really benefited from the more than half a dozen free elections and its constitution. The conditions that burden Bosnia-Herzegovina must be dealt with in their own right. This is also true for any country in the Greater Middle East undergoing change. Democracy may be the final aim, but it may not be the means to success.

This is not just a tactical question or a typical 'chicken and egg' problem. The issue must be addressed in light of global Western interests and time-horizons for action. The West shares three interests: a stable Greater Middle East that is a good economic and political partner, which cannot mean the absence of open and pluralistic societies; the end of the Greater Middle East as an exporter of instability, threat or terrorist violence, which means that its governments and regimes fight the root causes of terrorism and all possible expressions of violent movements out of self-interest; an open Greater Middle East, which means it must address the issue of successful integration into the globalising world.

Clearly, such goals are best achieved by democratic states that comply with the rule of law and support the idea of open and pluralistic societies. This Western vision is not matched by Western instruments or will. In order to prevail, stable democracies must grow over time and be domestically rooted. In the absence of traditions that are favourable to democratic rule, patience and a longer time-span must be factored in.

Regime change and transformation thus require the cooperation of the countries and societies in the Greater Middle East even after enforced regime change, as evident in Afghanistan and Iraq. Indeed, positive results

are only possible if the local population develops a sense of ownership of the new reality rather than just 'sitting on the fence', observing foreign intervention as a curse rather than a blessing. The majority of citizens must therefore be interested in regime change and transformation in order for such processes to gain enduring local legitimacy. This may be an uphill battle and a source of friction as it can produce local power struggles. It is therefore imperative for the West to develop a common Atlantic project that induces win-win-strategies for countries that undergo a fundamental transformation (such as Syria, Iran and definitely Saudi-Arabia). Although the reality on the ground will not be without tensions, the Western approach and attitude must at least be clear: the call for change must not be seen only as a Western interest, but as a mutual interest of the peoples of both hemispheres. If this is not the case, it will remain an artificial quest and an imposed process.

Asmus' and Pollack's initial proposal for a new transatlantic project based on the transformation of the Greater Middle East rightly notes that the West "needs a strategy that is more than a military campaign." Thus, it is necessary not only to fight terrorists and failed states, but "to change the dynamics that created such monstrous groups and regimes in the first place." They define 'transformation' as the need for "a new form of democracy in the Greater Middle East", and "a new economic system that could provide work, dignity, and livelihoods for the people of the regions" and thus help "Middle Eastern societies come to grips with modernity and create new civil societies that allow them to compete and integrate in the modern world without losing their sense of cultural uniqueness."[17] They offer no systematic outline of the implications of what they rightly describe as a "tall order." Developments in Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein in May 2003 demonstrate the potential for problems and the danger of Western scepticism and even cynicism: post-conflict situations or post-dictatorial transformation never evolves according to a blueprint.

There is evidence everywhere of the different approaches of the US and the EU. The US debate tends to be strategic, security-biased and driven by uni-

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17 Ronald D. Asmus and Kenneth M. Pollack, ibid, p. 4.

versal norms. The European debate tends to be regional, multidimensional and institutional. Superficially, the issues are the same: weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, failed states, democracy, human rights, and energy supply. Differences of a moral and political nature become all too apparent once one goes into details. The Iraq crisis shows that it will not be easy to develop a common Western strategy based on overlapping interests and commonalities, including the optimal use of complementarity. And yet, a common project requires a strategy that focuses on common ground and complementarity; if this does not happen, the frustrating internal Western Cold War will continue. The obvious differences between the US and many EU positions might engender new quarrels over the ability of either side to set the agenda, launch initiatives and gain diplomatic ground.

A US-led strategy for the region could well focus on military solutions and short-term effects.[18] The EU may well object as leading European opponents to US policy in Iraq have done since the 2002-2003 crisis. In fact, the US was forced to return to multilateralism when the stabilisation of Iraq came into play.[19] European opponents to regime change in Baghdad self-righteously tended to indicate that they were unsurprised with the obvious difficulties involved. And yet, they had to admit that it was the US led coalition that initiated change in the first place, whatever their plans to bring the US back the multilateral fold under the aegis of the UN. European partners could support the stabilisation of Iraq.

An EU-led strategy for the Greater Middle East will be based intuitively on the Barcelona Process experience, Europe's Middle East policy, the consistent reservation against the dual containment policy against Iraq and Iran, the insistence on a constructive dialogue with Iran, the cooperative arrangements with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the EU

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18 I am fully aware that this is a dishonest simplification of the US National Security Strategy, but it is the perception that prevails in Europe today. See: The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002.

19 See also: Anthony H. Cordesman, "Victory in Iraq and the Not so New Middle East", Discussion Paper at CSIS Washington DC at www.csis.org/features/iraq_ notsonewme.pdf. On US credibility see: Marina Ottaway, "Promoting Democracy in the Middle East. The Problem of Credibility", Working Paper 35, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 2003.

focus on economic cooperation, which obscures the fact that the EU is more dependent upon Middle East oil than the US. The US will not object to most of this – with the exception of EU policy towards Iran – but it will insist that it and not the EU should be the key mediator in the Middle East, despite the arrangements of the Quartet Powers[20]. The EU must recognise that many hopes attached to the Barcelona Process have been held hostage by the Middle East conflict notwithstanding the participation of Israel, all the Arab Middle East countries and the Palestinian Authority since the inception of the Barcelona Process in 1995.

A Western strategy driven by events in the Greater Middle East would be limited to ad hoc reactions to crises and therefore unable to contribute to transformation. It is in the interest of the US and the EU to approach the future of the Greater Middle East and Western policy in a comprehensive and pro-active way. Individual steps must be pragmatic and incremental, but they must be based on a comprehensive strategy to attain global goals. Otherwise they will time and again fall victim to 'events', what former British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan called the defining element of politics.

A flexible approach is necessary for a comprehensive Atlantic strategy for system-opening, cooperative transformation and for the inclusion of the Greater Middle East in the process of globalisation. The overlapping nature of issues and the need for gradual progress in the most daunting fields must be recognised, and patience and strict schedules and mechanisms of conditionality to cover all participants are necessary. The US and the EU must decide whether they will approach the challenge with enabling or vetoing intentions. Both have are legitimate and necessary (deterrence and cooperation) but the enterprise will be frustrated if the Atlantic partners quarrel and use veto capacities rather than working towards the same goals and offering system-opening support to the countries of the Greater Middle East that want to be partners in transformation. It is imperative for the West to com-

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20 See Gisela Dachs, "Vier Verschworene plus zwei Streithähne. Das diplomatische Quartett: Amerikaner, Europäer, Russen und die UN schmieden gemeinsam Friedenspläne für Nahost", Die Zeit, 25 July 2002, p. 12.

bine a comprehensive strategy with a pragmatic sense of priorities, possible next steps and an appropriate mix of goals and instruments.

V.   Priorities

The next most urgent test cases of the ability of the US and the EU to develop a new transatlantic project are:

1. Rebuilding Iraq and returning sovereignty to the Iraqis through constitution-based secular statehood, the rule of law and democracy, emerging from a new development bargain among Western and Arab donor countries;

2. Establishing a constitutional and multi-ethnic state in Afghanistan that institutionalises peaceful and democratic solutions for cleavages in Afghan society;

3. Resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict and creating a two-state solution in line with the Quartet 'Road Map', and engendering long-term cooperation between the two states;

4. Bringing about peaceful regime change in Iran by supporting domestic reform that promotes an open society and the rule of law and full compliance with the internationally recognised non-proliferation mechanism for nuclear weapons;

5. Introducing a comprehensive CSCE-like (Helsinki-Process) mechanism for the whole region that includes the EU and the US as well as Russia,[21] possibly under UN mandate.

The invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq and regime change in both has set the immediate agenda regarding the Greater Middle East. They have established the bases for a lasting US military presence, brought back multilateralism and NATO, and have made the West clearly aware of the existence of the Greater Middle East and its status as the most crucial challenge Western countries as a whole. While crisis management will focus on un-

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21 On Russia's internal dealings with Islam see Uwe Halbach, "Rußlands Welten des Islam", SWP Studies 15 April 2003, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin.

rest and the unpredictability of developments in countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia will remain crucial in light of potential global implications, the core issue is the overall development of the Greater Middle East.

From a global perspective, the successful system-opening and cooperative transformation of the Greater Middle East could stabilise the world order, lessen the danger of proliferation of terrorism that also threatens various countries in the region. It would facilitate the inclusion of the Greater Middle East in the global economic structures and thus critically support policies of inclusive development. In geo-political and geo-economic terms, the inclusion of a stable Greater Middle East that makes optimal use of its resources can contribute to a more stable, multipolar world order.

In regional and bi-regional terms, a successful system opening and cooperative transformation would enhance the potential for regional cooperation along the lines of the EU, NAFTA or the Council of Europe. It would leave room for sub-regional cooperation, as in the Maghreb and the Gulf, and for continuity in Barcelona Process mechanisms. It would increase the potential for enhanced trans-regional and bi-regional cooperation, although this leads to the question of the role to be played by the different Western partners: while the US might focus on strategic cooperation along the lines of Mediterranean policies of NATO, the EU might favour civil cooperation in line with the Barcelona Process model. Overlap and conflicts of interests could arise – over the relationship of the Gulf Cooperation Council with the Barcelona Process – for example.[22] This is all the more relevant for European policy makers as the Gulf Cooperation Council could cooperate to rebuild Iraq and even to foster change in Iran.

It is in the interest of the EU to broaden its horizon and develop strategies towards the Greater Middle East that focus on concentric circles and provide specific solutions to the range of existing problems. Some of the issues of what is a long and challenging agenda are supporting the development of human resources that are crucial for the rule of law and democracy in countries like Egypt, engaging Saudi-Arabia in a dialogue about a more open

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22 See Bertelsmann Foundation, Center for Applied Policy Research (eds.), The EU and the GCC. A New Partnership. (Munich: Gütersloh 2002).

definition of Islam that takes into account a modern secular and pluralistic state, encouraging the reconciliation of Islamic interpretations of society with state that is secular, inclusive and pluralistic, supporting the economic diversification of the Gulf economies, and encouraging Israel and Palestine to search for ways to link positively their development.

What are 'concentric circles'? The term refers to an overlap between institutional and policy mechanisms that are strongest at the core and overlap as they extend to outer regions. The Atlantic partnership between the US and the EU is clearly at the heart of any such scheme. A second layer is the Barcelona Process, which is directed by the EU, and the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue in which the US is in the driving position. A third layer must connect the US and the EU more comprehensively with the Gulf, where both pursue bilateral (US) and bi-regional (EU) policies with different priorities and density. In the medium term, Iraq will be considered part of the Gulf region. A fourth layer must link the US and the EU with the other parts of the Greater Middle East – with Iran and Afghanistan as special cases – the republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia. It remains to be seen how Russia is or wishes to be linked to one or another or all the layers of the cooperative concentric circles. Turkey is involved on the sides through NATO membership and EU candidate member status.

In terms of policy, the different layers of concentric cooperation establish different priorities and vary in density. The Barcelona Process is a largely civil and socio-economic enterprise. The NATO Mediterranean Dialogue is strategic and security-oriented in nature. Reaching out to the Gulf Cooperation Council countries means defining a common agenda that includes specific bilateral and bi-regional cooperation (on trade, security, and energy) and links to overall regional development (a role in the implementation of peace in the Middle East, and the reconstruction and constitutionalization of Iraq and Afghanistan). Both hold likewise for the countries of the Caucasus and of Central Asia, albeit with a special economic cooperation arrangement. A stable Afghanistan can be considered a part of Central Asia. A transformed Iran could be considered a Gulf country, eventually establishing a link with the Gulf Cooperation Council. This is an anticipation that goes well beyond the current situation and serves only as a compass to

outline the potential of a Helsinki-like process that encompasses the whole of the Greater Middle East.

As far as the Middle East peace process is concerned, a Helsinki-like Conference on Security, Cooperation and Partnership in the Greater Middle East could serve to guarantee the implementation of a final Middle East peace solution, whatever its final shape. Russia's participation in this global project is useful and a mandate of the United Nations for a new regional security and cooperation framework will be imperative as it was for the CSCE. A Conference on Security, Cooperation and Partnership in the Greater Middle East would eventually be able to make use of the US and the EU (and Russia and the Gulf countries) as guarantors and enablers. It would encourage the continuation of specific and dense regional schemes of cooperation such as the Barcelona Process, with the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue, and specific forms of cooperation with Central Asia and the Caucasus. Further, a global regional process must enable, support and gradually incorporate and transform the very focused activities that are necessary while Afghanistan and Iraq require external support for stabilisation and reconstruction, and while the relationship between Israel and Palestine has not produced a viable two-state solution. Ultimately, these countries could become 'normal' participants of the overall process, overcoming their current status as centres of conflict or post-conflict crisis management.

This kind of ambitious scheme can only materialise and work on the basis of a pragmatic and gradual evolution that takes into account the different levels of cooperation that already exist or dominate mutual perceptions. It is unlikely that the Barcelona Process can be extended as a model to the Greater Middle East as it does not include the US. It is insufficient to extend the NATO Mediterranean policy to the Greater Middle East, as it is too security-driven. The most difficult countries like Iraq and Afghanistan cannot set the priorities of a system-opening and cooperative transformation of the Greater Middle East. It is likewise important to encourage the constitutional development of the Gulf states, establish more frank and conditioned relations with Saudi Arabia, learn from the Algerian tragedy and prevent Tunisia and Egypt falling back more than their peaceful, open

and stable development can afford.[23] It will be useful for the West to support Libya's return to the international community and its transformation into a relevant regional partner. It will be important to support the countries of the Greater Middle East with fundamental development problems, such as Yemen, Sudan, some of the Central Asian and Caucasus republics.

The two most crucial issues for the next two years are the peaceful transformation of Iran and a two-state solution to the Middle East conflict. The fate of a common long-term strategy will depend on the latter, whether the solution is bilateral or part of the Quartet that includes Russia and the United Nations. Failure to coordinate a peaceful transformation in Iran and to bring about a sustainable two-state solution will be more critical test cases for the renewal and reorientation of the Atlantic partnership than any others. Scepticism is in order regarding the implementation of the Road Map within the allotted time frame. This does not enhance, but rather undermines, Western credibility in the region. As far as Iran is concerned, the US must abstain from unilateral and military solutions, while Europe must increase pressure through conditionality to give sense and teeth to its constructive dialogue with the Islamic regime in Tehran.[24]

While old and newly emerging conflicts will dominate the daily agenda of policy-makers and the media, it is critical that there should prevail a long-term realisation of the idea of a common Atlantic project to develop a framework for a bi-regional mechanism with instruments comparable to

23 It is interesting to note that Western initiatives that apparently support positive change in the Arab world could easily produce negative results. The countries of Northern Africa, for instance, are enormously dependent upon import taxes on EU goods, although this practice runs counter to European commitments to free trade. During the 1990s import taxes on EU goods resulted in 19,2 per cent of all tax income for Algeria, 10.3 for Morocco, 15,9 in Tunisia, and 7.9 for Egypt. On the ambivalence of an early free trade zone between the EU and its Southern Mediterranean partners, see Jörg Wolf, "Staatszerfall: Die riskante Stabilisierungsstrategie der Europäischen Union für den südlichen Mittelmeerraum", in: Christopher Daase (ed.), Internationale Risikopolitik: der Umgang mit neun Gefahren in den internationalen Beziehungen, Baden-Baden 2002, p. 248.

24 See Johannes Reissner, "Europas „kritischer" Dialog mit Iran", in: Klaus Schubert and Gisela Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet (eds.) Die Europäische Union als Akteur der Weltpolitik, Opladen 2000, pp. 173 ff.; Gawdat Bahgat, "The Future of US-Iran Relations", Journal of South Asian and Middle East Studies XXV(2) 2002, pp. 68 ff.

those of the Helsinki Process that brought the Cold War to a peaceful end. Peace in the Middle East could trigger the beginning of a process that should reach beyond the Israeli-Palestine problem.[25] It would be worth exploring the launch of a CSCE-type conference to prepare the final stages of conflict-resolution between the two parties. The presence of all relevant regional and international actors would increase the legitimacy of a solution and pressure to induce it. Israel and Palestine should not be merely two neighbours living separately: if the vision of a transformed Greater Middle East is to become a reality, these former adversaries must at some stage find a mechanism similar to that which brought about confidence, cooperation and integration between France and Germany. Water and energy, which are both scarce and abundant, could play the role in the Middle East that coal and steel played for France and Germany in the 1950s.

Cooperation must be part of a wider bi-regional framework that includes the US (and possibly Russia) and is supervised and legitimated by the UN. A Helsinki Process approach must include criteria and mechanisms for various 'baskets', and provide for package-deal solutions that are mutually satisfactory. The most relevant 'baskets' of such a process should include the following issues: security, the fight against terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and the transformation of military and militia forces into armies accountable to civil leaders; mutually beneficial economic and technological cooperation that addresses investor security, migration, and minimal social standards; greater free links between social and non-political actors, including media representatives, and a religious dialogue

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25 Volker Perthes, "The Advantages of Complementarity: US and European Policies Towards the Middle East Peace Process", in: Volker Perthes (ed.), Germany and the Middle East. Interests and Options, Berlin 2002, p. 53 ff.; Jerrold D. Green, "La politique américaine et le conflit israélo-palestinien", Politque étrangère 3, 2002, pp. 617 ff; Joseph N. Yackley, "Politikkoordination im Nahen Osten: Transatlantische Strategien zur Konfliktlösung?" Internationale Politik 57 (1), 2002, pp.45 ff.; Martin Ortega (ed.), "The European Union and the Crisis in the Middle East", Chaillot Papers 62, July 2003, Institute for Security Studies, Paris; Muriel Asseburg, "Die EU und der Friedensprozeß im Nahen Osten", SWP Studie S 28 July 2003, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin.

and search for the preservation and use of a common cultural heritage[26]; and sustainable human development, including training of human skills. The goal of this process should be the sustainable transformation of the Greater Middle East and of relations between it and the Atlantic partners for cooperation and common approaches to global challenges.

A burning question remains: who could launch this initiative? It is in the interest of the EU to do so. For the sake of a strong Union, both the European Parliament and the European Commission should take the initiative and seek the support of leading EU member states that can sustain the idea within the European Council. In June 2004, a new European Parliament will be elected; this will be followed by the nomination and approval of a new European Commission. Both elections come after the enlargement of the EU to ten new member states, and so both institutions will have added weight. Thus, the European Parliament and the European Commission should prepare a joint venture for the Winter of 2004-2005: a version of the Helsinki process for relations between the Greater Middle East, the EU, the United States and perhaps the Russian Federation, possibly under the auspices of the United Nations.

For Washington and Brussels alike, the Greater Middle East will be the centre of strategic, political and socio-economic as well as cultural and religious concern for many decades to come. It is important to consider the region as a whole. This means comprehensive approaches, not least within the foreign policy and academic communities, which tend to under use the potential for mutual interface. Sub-regional forms of cooperative development must be intensified without losing sight of the greater picture. Promising issues must be identified that can have an impact on cooperation inside the Greater Middle East, in a post-conflict Middle East or between the

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26 On the difficulties this already presents for the established Euro-Mediterranean partnership see: Ulrike Julia Reinhardt, "Civil Society Co-operation in the EMP: From Declarations to Practice", EuroMesCo Papers 15, 2002, EuroMediterranean Study Commission, Lisbon. For the broader context of culture and politics in Mediterranean governance see: Indra de Soysa and Peter Zervakis (eds.), "Does Culture Matter? The Relevance of Culture in Politics and Governance in the Euro-Mediterranean Zone", ZEI Discussion Paper C 112, 2002, Center for European Integration Studies, Bonn.

Greater Middle East and the West. The prevalence of a threat potential and the dangers stemming from the export of instability to the West must be addressed with cautious realism. A trans-regional or bi-regional framework should link the Atlantic partners with the countries and societies of the Greater Middle East.

Overall, the key to success is a clear focus: a transatlantic project must engage as many countries and societies in the Greater Middle East as possible, including Israel. This is the best recipe for sustainable success. This is a tall order for the EU and the US given that this is a region whose problems have divided the Atlantic partners in the past more than any other in the world. But the attempt must be made.[27]

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27 On the EU experience with the promotion of democracy in Northern Africa through the Barcelona Process see: Richard Gillespie and Richard Youngs (eds.), The European Union and Democracy Promotion: The Case of North Africa, London 2002.

Armin Laschet

Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Beyond the Iraq crisis

The administrative and political structure of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) is organised on a bilateral and regional basis.

The main instruments of this bilateral character are the Association Agreements between the EU and the Mediterranean partners. They vary from one Mediterranean Partner to another, but still have certain aspects in common. The Association Agreements contain political, security, economic and financial partnerships, and cooperation in social, cultural and human affairs. Once ratified by the national parliaments across the EU, the Associations Agreements are to be accompanied by the Association Council Meetings between the EU and each of the partner countries in question.

The Barcelona Process

In 1995 after 20 years of increasingly intensive bilateral trade and development cooperation between the European Union, its 15 Member States, 12 Mediterranean Partners, the Conference of EU and Mediterranean Foreign Ministers in Barcelona began a new partnership phase in this relationship, which included bilateral and multilateral or regional cooperation (hence called Barcelona Process or, in general, Euro-Mediterranean Partnership). The Barcelona declaration was the first attempt to combine all three chapters into one comprehensive policy, which attested that political, economic, cultural and security issues cannot be effectively approached separately.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was meant to alleviate genuine fears of a number of recent issues in Europe, such as the development of illegal migration into the EU or the overflow of widespread forms of violence in the Middle East and North Africa into the European countries. Among its objectives was the re-structuring of the national economy on the Southern shore, so that these economies become more receptive to investment and commodities from the North and, therefore, to partly fill the gap in terms of development and growth between the two sides of the common sea.

In comparison to the former Mediterranean policy of the EU, the proximity policy, inaugurated in Barcelona, innovated in three respects:

1. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is a global and comprehensive policy as has already been discussed above.

2. Regional cooperation has been introduced among Mediterranean states, to encourage South-South integration, which complements and supports bilateral actions and dialogue.

3. Increased funds were made available to the EU's Southern neighbours (for 1995-99 MEDA compared to the PHARE Programme for the EU's Eastern neighbours with a ratio of 3.5 to 5) without pre-established allocation of funds among Mediterranean Partners.

The Barcelona process has been an ambitious and innovative initiative, but there is still room for improvements. Its practical implementation has proved to be extensively complex.

The Mediterranean countries have to cope with structural problems of foreign policy-making in the European Union's multilevel-system. They find it difficult to comprehend the complex decision-making procedures regarding various protagonists within the European Union.

The democratisation process of the Mediterranean countries has been advancing lamentably slow. Regarding the economy, the Mediterranean region is far from being "a region of stability and prosperity" as it was intended in the Barcelona Declaration.

The political and security dialogue is the most stagnant area of this partnership.

Furthermore, it will continue to be so until the European Union becomes more clearly involved in the resolution of urgent conflicts, which have prevented, to date, the approval of the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Peace and Stability.

Nevertheless, we can also quote considerable progress on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

The grid of bilateral agreements is now close to being complete. Cyprus and Malta joined the EU in May 2004. Turkey has a customs union agreement with the EU. Association Agreements with Algeria (April 2002) and Lebanon (June 2002) have also been signed. The EU-Jordan Agreement entered into force in May 2002 and the interim EU-Lebanon Agreement in March 2003. A new trade agreement between the European Union and Egypt came into force in January 2004 and negotiations with Syria are in progress. Thus, of the twelve Mediterranean partners, four of the Association Agreements (Tunisia, Morocco, Israel, Jordan) and three Interim Agreements (Palestinian Authority, Lebanon, Egypt) have been now entered into force.

Nevertheless, the ratification process of the Association Agreements with the rest of the Mediterranean Partners must be sped up.

The introduction of the Agadir Agreement between Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia in January 2003 has been welcomed, because it encouraged the participants to conclude the agreement as soon as possible. The Agadir Agreement was an initiative launched in May 2001 to create a regional free trade area. The implementation of free trade agreements between the Mediterranean partners themselves is essential if the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is to acquire a genuine south-south dimension.

The proximity of the Mediterranean countries constitutes a geographical neighbour on our Southern flank. Thus, the stability of this region is extremely important for the security and prosperity of the European Union.

The EU and its Mediterranean partners share many common interests, varying from trade, investment, protection of the environment and energy supply, to maintaining internal regional peace and stability. The partnership established at Barcelona recognises the fact that common objectives and common interests need to be addressed in a spirit of co-responsibility, leaving behind the more 'patronising' approach which often marked European policy in the past.

Especially since the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001 the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership plays an increasingly important role for the dialogue between Western and Arab nations.

The European security and defence policy (ESDP)

A major Mediterranean concern is that the European security and defence policy (ESDP) has been operating outside the EU. Prior to the events of September 11th it did not look very likely that the ESDP would be ready in time for EU's self-imposed time-limit (scheduled for 2003). Intervention in Afghanistan brought the ESDP once again into the limelight and as a result such a development has accelerated.

Yet, as the ESDP comes closer to reality, EU's neighbours have become suspicious. The ESDP produces, in the same way as enlargement, contradictory feelings: it is desired and yet feared. In the Mediterranean, although some sectors would wish the ESDP to represent an assertion of Europe's power to provide peace enforcement forces in the Mediterranean area under an UN mandate, the ESDP is at the same time feared among EU's southern Mediterranean neighbours in that their particular country might become the involuntary target of a EU military intervention some day in the future. To remove the existing lack of information, or even outright misinformation among EU neighbours, regarding the ESDP, there has been a large scale information campaign explaining the ESDP to EU's neighbours during the regular meetings of the Senior Officials of the Barcelona Process. This has been going on to reassure southern Mediterranean countries through regular Euro-Mediterranean defence and security dialogue within the framework of

the Barcelona Process. We need a process of conflict resolution and crisis management.

After the regime change in Baghdad and the enlargement of the EU

The Euro-Mediterranean partnership will be affected by three profound changes:

- first, EU acquisition of new EU members such as Cyprus, Malta changes the geometry of the partnership, and leaves eight Arab partner countries and Israel.

- second, after the regime change in Baghdad it would make sense to attach Iraq to the partnership, but this will render the geographical basis of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership even more questionable.

- third, the new EU neighbourhood policy will offer non accession countries a share in the single market. Therefore the EU should envisage such an establishment of the Euro-Middle East partnership as a new umbrella for a number of bi- and multilateral cooperation cluster.

Impact of the war in Iraq

The war on Iraq and the split within the European Union into pro-war and anti-war camps will certainly have an additional detrimental effect on the Euro-Med Partnership. So, it will require more than cosmetic efforts on the EU's part to re-install new confidence in southern Mediterranean countries, not only towards governments but, equally important, towards the peoples of those countries.

September 11th and the Iraqi war seemed to underline the urgency to strengthen the policies previously outlined in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership initiative in order to avoid the Mediterranean becoming a new fault-line. Notably, the risk of popular support for terrorists among North African populations developing into further confrontations has become

more visible since the terror attacks on Madrid. Obviously, the maintenance of social stability in North Africa and the stability of Arab regimes is in the interest of the EU as much as it is that of Arab elites themselves. Therefore, the reinforcement of dialogue and co-operation in the fight against international terrorism, agreed in the Valencia Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference in April 2002, is just a coherent adjustment of national security policies into the new international situation.

However, the situation in Iraq has not yet been settled, despite resolution 1483 passed by the UN, which lifts the Iraq-Embargo, extends the oil-for-food program, and supports Iraqis in directing their own political and economic future. More importantly, resolution 1546 endorses the transfer of sovereignty to Iraq on 30th June 2004 and gives authorization for a U.S.-led multinational force. It has to be noted that this Resolution has not been able to prevent the continuation of terrorist actions in Iraq. The current security situation aggravates the implementation of reconstruction programs as much as the work of humanitarian assistance organizations. A great amount of effort is required in order to solve the current problems in Iraq.

The Mediterranean Arab countries, which were quick to condemn the suicide attacks in New York and Washington, have nevertheless become new subjects in the war against terrorism, which has put many of them in an increasingly uneasy situation.

Syria is one of the countries whose governmental statements regarding the war in Iraq correspond to internal public opinion. The war in Iraq has been denounced as a violation of international law and the UN-Charter, not only by Syria, but also by the majority of the Arab population.

Lebanon has followed its dominant neighbour, Syria, condemning the military operations in Iraq as an aggression.

Nevertheless, Jordan has taken a different position. Owing to economic circumstances (Jordan receives 420 Millions US-Dollars a year from the American Government), it participated in the war in Iraq, despite adversary avowals. Therefore, Jordan fears its next parliamentary elections, which have already been delayed.

Egypt has reason to be even more concerned by this issue. The reaction of the Mubarac government against illicit demonstrations, which call for the prohibition of US military use of the Suez Canal, has been so severe, that Human Rights organizations such as Amnesty International have been called upon to intervene.

At a time when America was criticized for its supremacy, the Moroccans were renegotiating a free-trade agreement, being very cautious about any statements concerning the war in Iraq.

Turkey`s parliament soured its relations with the United States, refusing to let American troops cross its territory. Further to that, Turkey's decision not to send troops to Iraq, where it was clear that such a presence would be unwelcomed by the Kurds, appears to be part of a rather wider revamp of Turkish foreign policy. Yet, the Turkish offer of military aid seems to have re-established their position, without having to suffer any consequences.

It is quite significant, that so many Arab countries officially endorsed the war in Iraq, though they are part of the Arab League, which expressly condemns the "American-British aggression" against Iraq.

However, there is also another group of the Arabic countries, which shares their condemnation of the situation in Iraq, particularly with European countries, such as Germany and France.

In fact, this apparent pro and anti war division can be found both independently within the European Union and the Mediterranean countries. Moreover, one can also recognise some similarities in regards to anti-war sentiments expressed by the people.

The joint position on Iraq has become evident after the 10th Mediterranean Forum in October 2003 (held by Foreign Ministers and top officials of Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey). The reunion in Antalya ended with the following statement: "The ministers shared the view that the presence of foreign forces in Iraq should be of a temporary nature and that their gradual departure should be completed in a certain time frame".

Despite the war in Iraq, the positive continuation of the Barcelona Process seems to be even clearer, regarding the Sixth Meeting of Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Naples in December 2003, which optimistically constituted the implementation of the Barcelona Process further.

Nevertheless, Europe and its Mediterranean partners find themselves in a similar situation in regards to the threat of possible terror attacks, which are meant to influence the political line in Iraq, such as Madrid. This resemblance intensifies the co-operation between the European Union and the Mediterranean countries in their fight against terrorism which comes under the domain of Justice and Home Afairs. The Euro-Mediterranean Mid-Term Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Dublin, in May 2004 did not only reinforce joint activity in preventing terror attacks, but also strengthened its common position to continue to help the Iraqi people to rebuild their country and to regain a proper place in the international community.

The European Commission has already made a gesture towards Iraq, by proposing a contribution of 200 million euros financed by the 2004 community budget. This can be seen as a way to encourage the Mediterranean partnership to view Europe in a favourable light.

The war in Iraq could possibly be regarded as not having an impact on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The well established relationship, (not only in political, security, economic and financial affairs, but also in regards to the cultural partnership existing between Europe and Mediterranean countries), led to a consolidation of relations, which were sufficiently strong enough to withstand a war in Iraq. This long-term relationship did in fact help to prevent a possible clash caused by the Iraqi crisis.

It must be recognised that – making any direct link between the Middle East Peace Process and the Barcelona Process should continue to be avoided – it is undoubtedly true that when there have, from time to time, been positive developments in the former, they have indirectly contributed in large measure to creating a more progressive atmosphere in the latter.

American position

America's war against terrorism can be said to have had an effect on most Mediterranean countries, since such countries have been encouraged to adapt their political regime to America's specifications.

The U.S. plays the predominant role in issues demanding military intervention, which may accentuate its role in security arrangements in the Mediterranean. The possible perception of the EU as coming second to the U.S. as a major military power may discourage security co-operation between the North African Arab states and the EU.

To accelerate progress in the Middle East and increase inter-Arab trade, President George W. Bush proposed to create a Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA) with the United States within 10 years. The conditions for integration into the MEFTA depend on economic, political and social reforms, implemented by the countries of the Middle East. The main instrument of such a progression is the Free Trade Agreement, which has already been ratified with Jordan and Morocco.

However, a quartet system established between the US, EU, Russia and the United Nations should still be regarded as the best means to involve Iraq in world policy and economic affairs.

Nevertheless, not everything is about hard politics, but the successful promotion of dialogue between cultures and civilisations, as has been developed by the Barcelona Process. This may signify an essential complement to the battle against religion-inspired intolerance and totalitarianism.

For the future

The regime change in Iraq is bound to result in relations between Iraq and the EU. At some point this will prompt the question of how Iraq can be integrated into the EU`s neighbourhood policies, which are currently divided into four different sections: EMP, co-operation with GCC countries, relations with Iran, and relations with Yemen. Given Iraq's close economic and cultural ties with the eastern Mediterranean territory, it would make perfect

sense to attach Iraq to the EMP, at least in the long term. Future Iraqi accession to the Barcelona process will render the somewhat artificial concept of the partnership with "Mediterranean" countries even more questionable, since Iraq, after Jordan would be the second southern partner country without access to the Mediterranean Sea. The introduction of Iraq into the EMP is certainly a more favourable option for the European Union than a long-term commitment to humanitarian assistance. This would avoid any need to implement defensive measures against terrorism, migration and drug trafficking, which are currently issues facing the EU since the Iraqi crisis. Solutions to such problems could be incorporated into the Barcelona process.

Lothar Rühl

Can the CSCE be a Role-Model to Frame the Political Processes of the Greater Middle East with Europe and the United States?

At the end of the East-West conflict, when the Soviet Union broke down, which was not the intended result of the CSCE process, but after all, was its result, the first idea that was thrown out was to create a Conference on Security and Co-operation for Central Asia. At the time, the ex-Soviet republics in central Asia were sort of on the loose. You will remember that in 1992, one year after the break-up of the Soviet Union, the then-German Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, and the US Secretary of State, James Baker III., made a speech together in Berlin, in which they suggested the creation of a Euro-Atlantic security zone or sphere from Vancouver to Vladivostok. That was, of course, a little bit large and in order to fill this out the idea was advanced, that between North America and Russia, which was part of the CSCE as were North America and the rest of Europe, one might organise Central Asia in such a manner, applying the role model of the CSCE. However, this was not really pursued, because it was quite obvious that the ex-Soviet central Asian republics did not want to be controlled by any international process beyond what they had agreed to anyway, because that was part of their international promotion. On the first of January, 1992, they found themselves as born members of the CSCE and Armenia and Azerbaijan, west of Central Asia, and Georgia found themselves as sovereign participants – as it was then called – in the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (TCFE). Thus, Europe was expanded beyond the Caucasus, onto the borders of Central Asia and the Caspian Sea.

So the idea has risen of applying the CSCE or the Helsinki process to create a possible framework for processes of conflict resolution, military confidence building and to agree on a rulebook for international conduct and on economic co-operation in the Near and Middle East – and what has now become something equivalent again – the "Greater, or Wider, or Broader Middle East". There are, by the way, different geographical connotations between the Bush exposition of this issue and what the British, the French, the Italians, the Greeks and the rest of the Europeans would have called "the Greater Middle East": Between the Russians and the British, the Greater Middle East was basically the Middle East plus Iran and Afghanistan as a land bridge to India. Bush, of course, has included – if I am not mistaken – North Africa to this, which you will quite often find as part of the Middle East in English books. In French and German literature, we make a difference between the Near East and the Middle East and for us, "Proche Orient" or "Naher Osten" is what the English sometimes calls "the Levant". The Levant of the Mediterranean, which did include, at the time, the Ottoman Empire with Syria, Palestine and Lebanon, and then Egypt, and Greece. That was the Levant. So between our perception of the Greater Middle East and the Bush geopolitical connotation exists a difference. There are layers of various Near and Middle Easts.

If we want to apply the CSCE rules of conduct, principles, and guidelines to the Middle East, we should first look at the situation in Europe in 1973-75, when the Final Act of Helsinki was prepared, first in Geneva and then signed in Helsinki. It was an attempt to bridge the East-West divide simply by limits to the political conflict, based on recognition of the existing territorial boundaries, notwithstanding legal objections to the de jure recognition, for example of the GDR, or of borderlines between Poland and Germany, which did not exist as a sovereign territorial entity. It was only the GDR that had a border with Poland. Notwithstanding these delicacies of international law and of diplomatic language on the definition of international frontiers, the general agreement was that the borders, as they stood, would be respected. That is the first part in the central piece of the CSCE. I shall not take you to the three baskets because this is bureaucratic, diplomatic language, which results from negotiations on criteria that have to be

agreed on between the participating governments in order not to prejudice any later solution. The recognition of the borders as they stood, with the rule that no unilateral or imposed change of international borders would be valid, formed the main part of the CSCE. What does this mean for the Middle East, especially for the Near East?, where we have a territorial conflict between Syria and Israel and an unresolved territorial issue between Israel and the surrounding former parts of the Kingdom of Jordan west of the river, which are destined to become an Arab state of Palestine

In 1973-75, in the preparation of the Final Act, all the governments of the participating states, the United States, the Soviet Union and all the European states, agreed that the main purpose of a conference would be to couple a renunciation of the use of force with the de facto recognition of the existing borders within this territorial sphere of Europe. This, of course, extended to the borders of China and Afghanistan and even to Japan, but was no problem since nobody proposed to divide the Soviet Union into a European and an Asian part. Therefore, the whole of Central Asia and Siberia were part of the CSCE area of negotiations and agreements. Now, when you apply the principle of the CSCE, that borders as they stand, shall be recognised de facto, and that the de jure considerations shall be reserved for further agreement, which might be multilateral or bilateral, you have a model for a possible multilateral agreement: not on recognition of the borders of either Israel with Syria, or Iraq with Kuwait, or Israel with the "Palestinian entity", as the Israeli government calls it, but you would have an agreement that these borders be respected. Further negotiations between the interested parties on how to change these borders would be possible and the result of this would then be the object of international recognition. When you look at the Arab League side, and of individual Arab countries, you do not see a joint position. We have the Beirut Declaration of the Arab League in 2002, which offers the recognition of the borders as they stand but expresses the Arab League's position, that these borders cannot be changed unilaterally against the will of the Arab neighbours of Israel. This, of course, creates a considerable problem, the kind of issue that did not arise during the CSCE negotiations.

The CSCE experience is based on the principle that standing borders will be de facto recognised and the rest will be reserved for whoever can resolve the problem without conflict, but the renunciation of the use of force to settle the conflict is the first and essential part of it. How this can be applied to the relationship between Israel and Syria and between Israel and the Palestinians is not clear. For reasons that I need not to go into, this is related, of course, to the settlements on the former territory, the Westbank territory and the Gaza territory, of the Kingdom of Jordan, which King Hussein had abandoned to the responsibility of the PLO. It is an extraordinary act in terms of international law, that a sovereign state abandons claims to recover parts of its occupied territory to a non-state organisation, which this state, the Kingdom of Jordan, releases from its own sovereignty. This problem of international law can only be resolved politically by the governments concerned, in agreement. In the CSCE this would not have been possible because the Soviet government was essentially interested in the territorial and political status quo it had itself created after 1944/45 in Eastern and Central Europe. Its goal was not "peaceful change" but stability of the fait accompli. Therefore, you have a chance that we did not have, that you can settle these points of conflict by simply agreeing politically to either reserve them for the future, what has been done in the Oslo Declaration, or to settle them by any agreement on the exchange of territory.

The second main point in the CSCE process is much more conducive to the creation of problems or to the aggravation of existing ones. When the governments started to negotiate on the criteria for security and co-operation in Europe they were all fixed on territories, on boundaries and the renunciation of the right to use force to settle a border dispute or other political conflicts. This, finally, was not to become critical. The critical area was what everybody in the beginning thought would be secondary: The general principles of relations between the countries and of dealing with human rights, minority rights and with the political or civic rights of your citizens. When you read the Final Act of Helsinki of 1975 and the statements that Brezhnev and Tito made before they signed the Final Act. They made it clear that they had their own interpretations, that they would not accept the Western connotations of what these civic rights, minority rights and nation-

ality rights meant. It is most interesting to look back at this and at what happened afterwards, especially between 1991 and 1999. It was Tito's qualification that the right of the people to determine their own destiny was the right of "the Yugoslav nation". Brezhnev had said the same thing about "the Soviet people". The lawyers and diplomats in the Western delegations agreed on the main point: This was an interpretation that would allow Russians and Yugoslavs to shove this entire agreement out of their way and to continue to act as they choose. That was to say, "the people", for self-determination, are determined by the sovereignty of the Soviet Union and not by nationality and they are not the people of federated Soviet republics. It is "the people of the Soviet Union", Brezhnev said. And Tito made a statement like this, saying, it is "the people of Yugoslavia", the Yugoslav nation. Everybody accepted this and it was written into the record. This was a main political concession by the West to the unified multinational states, and France, Spain, Italy and Britain benefited from this for their own unity against separatist claims for independence.

What would this mean for the Middle East? It means that if you apply not only the written principles and rules of the Final Act of Helsinki but the statements of the signatories, which were written into the record, which said, 'this is our interpretation, this is how far we oblige ourselves politically' – there was no legal obligation anywhere because the Final Act of Helsinki is not an international treaty, it is a political agreement between governments. This would mean that the existing state would claim the privilege of dealing with the question of autonomy or of the right of secession for independence and be responsible for a composite nation or a composite state and not for its various parts. In the case of Iraq this means that an Iraqi government, if we apply the CSCE rules and the accepted interpretations of the signatories of the Final Act of Helsinki of 1975, that the Iraqi signatory of such an act, or even of an agreement to enter into negotiations for this purpose, would say 'we do not recognise any right of the Kurds to secede from Iraq in the name of self-determination'. This must be kept in mind. Therefore, it is not necessary to transpose the CSCE process or the Final Act of Helsinki or the later agreements over the next 18 years and finally the Charter of Paris for a New Europe point by point into the Middle

East. The focal thing is to bear in mind that the renunciation of the use of force was based on the existing frontiers and the right of self-determination of the people was based on the composite states and on their territory as they existed at the time. This meant, in 1988, when the Baltic and the Caucasian Soviet Republics began to demand independence and when the Transdniestr problem arose between Ukraine and Romania, that the CSCE Final Act of Helsinki could not be invoked on these grounds. But the CSCE managed to treat the issue of Transdniestr with observers, not invoking any interpretation of the Final Act of Helsinki but just invoking its mandate as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and with the agreement of the concerned parties. Ever since, Transdniestr is not a resolved problem but is a neutralised problem. On the question of Nagorny-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan the CSCE also acted as an observer in the role of a mediator, very limited in its possibilities. Finally nothing was agreed upon apart from some particular matters and a sort of cease-fire control. Again, the CSCE as a corporate association receded from its principles and rules of conduct in order to do what was possible to do: a sort of limited mediation and interposition to prevent the worst – political damage limitations.

There again you have a possibility to apply CSCE rules and procedures and instruments to the situation whether in the Near East or in the Middle East, or in the Wider Middle East, if you apply them pragmatically. The beauty of the CSCE was that one could be pragmatic. It was drawing away from the front lines of principles, formal rules, and legal considerations that allowed you to be flexible and to apply the procedures and the guidelines for the process of solving complicated problems, ambivalent issues and to really exercise diplomacy instead of legalistic doctrine. This is very important in international politics and it is a positive aspect of the CSCE.

Now as to the third subject apart from the central theme, the "Confidence Building Measures" in the military sphere: What are these confidence building measures? There are essentially three. The least demanding one is the exchange of information on troop movements and exercises to be held in a border zone. Now the depth of the border zone has been discussed and has been changed between the Final Act of Helsinki of 1975 and later addi-

tions and changes and the 1986 Stockholm Conference agreement on confidence building measures and disarmament in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. However, that is not so important, because between Israel and Syria you have such an agreement on the removal of longer range heavy arms and missile systems and the deployment of aircraft. There and in the framework of what might be called the 'Madrid process' you have a beginning of mutual constraints on forward deployments, considering ranges of land-to land-missile systems, and also ground-to-air missile systems. You have the beginning of arms control. It is not quantitative arms control, it is deployment arms control. And this is an important point: I recall statements by General David Ivry, who was at the time Director General of the Israeli Defence Ministry, and before that he had been chief of the Israeli Air Force, who had participated in the Madrid conference and the follow-on talks with Arab countries. He said, that in the talks they had advanced much further, especially with the Syrians, than the Madrid conference had agreed upon, and were on firm ground with a positive perspective. Nothing much more has come of it, but this result was much and the effort could be resumed. If you had a CSCE-process you could re-activate the Madrid process because both the United States and Russia, which are the patrons, the protectors or the moderators of the Madrid Conference, are participants of the CSCE, since 1994 members of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. They can very well fit into such a framework if it was applied to the Near East, The Middle East, The Gulf region. It could be the Wider Middle East they could survey and manage such negotiations. Of course, these negotiations could also be resumed bilaterally between Israel and the Arab countries. Now these confidence building measures are exchange of information on such things as troop movements and exercises but also on deployment of certain larger range weapon systems. But this is where it stops. One has to bear in mind that the CSCE was started in the same year, in which the negotiations on Mutual Balanced Force Reductions in Europe began. This is a major point: The CSCE never was a negotiation on armed forces. It was a negotiation on constraints for troop deployments, movements, concentrations and other exercises, but on the armed forces themselves the negotiation was between the Warsaw Pact and NATO coun-

tries. In a different framework, therefore, transposing the CSCE process or the CSCE principles, rules of conduct, and guidance to the Middle East would mean to come to determine whether this would include armed forces and armaments or whether armed forces and armaments would be left out of it and be reserved for a distinct arms control negotiation. One will never understand the CSCE process if one does not bear in mind this separation of negotiations on the force levels of armed forces and later heavy armaments from the general matter of the CSCE and of the various later agreements.

Finally, there was economic co-operation and cultural exchange. And that was the least important part. At the beginning, since the Soviet Union and the East European countries were so interested in economic co-operation, one had thought that the main subject of the CSCE would neither be the general political conduct of affairs and political relations, because ideology and political systems where incompatible, but that the economic co-operation would be the main basket. It turned out that the economic basket remained empty, because the Soviet Union and all its Warsaw Pact allies were members of the socialist state and trade system and wanted to be on their own. They wanted to negotiate terms of trade with the Western countries not linked to questions of freedom, democracy, human rights, minority rights, or nationality rights. They wanted economic co-operation, period. And this is why it was taken out and the CSCE was not important on this point.

When you look at the possibility of transposing the CSCE criteria, principles, rules, procedures, and instruments to the Middle East, however you define the Middle East geographically, one has to understand that the result of the CSCE process in the end was disastrous for the Soviet Union. And the question then is: who would take the place of the Soviet Union in the Middle East? This is why I am always a little bit shy of making these comparisons, because the Soviet Union had a counter-productive operation running with the CSCE. Without the CSCE, the Soviet Union could have more easily suppressed or continued to suppress human rights, opponents, dissidents, or minorities that advocate nationality claims or autonomy. It is not for nothing that in Czechoslovakia and in Hungary the opponent groups

called themselves "Helsinki groups". It was the Helsinki opposition, it was the people who claimed – not the right, because there was no right – but the principles and rules of conduct contained in the Final Act and the follow-on agreements in their favour. That contributed considerably to the rise of the anti-totalitarian and anti-communist opposition in the Soviet Union itself.

So the important question to ask here is: What does the CSCE example mean for the major regional powers in the Middle East? What does it mean for Syria? What does it mean for Israel? What does it mean for post-Saddam Hussein Iraq, for Iran if it were included, for Saudi-Arabia or for Egypt? Now here we have to turn to the basics: Such a process as the CSCE was meant and engineered and steered as a process for transformation of the existing facts that had first been recognised. What had been recognised was not only the territorial status quo within the international frontiers, but also – not explicitly but implicitly, by the fact of the negotiation and the agreement – the political regimes. This is what Brezhnev and Tito and others meant in their statements at Helsinki: 'We are your partners, the stability is ours.' And this is why the Final Act of Helsinki was very often compared to the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and the "Holy Alliance": It was a 'status quo agreement', not only on boundaries but on regimes. Here you do have a problem when you apply this to the Middle East, whether to the Near East or the Wider Middle East, including Central Asia and North Africa. The issue is that of distinction between stability of the territorial status quo of international frontiers and the stability of the internal status quo of the political regimes. The whole thrust of the Eastern argumentation, the Eastern diplomacy and the Eastern refusal to subscribe to Western definitions of certain rules like self-determination, human rights, civic rights and so on, was to maintain, preserve and promote the self-interest of the existing political regimes and their continued existence. One will be confronted with the same issue in the Middle East. It is not an issue for Turkey, it is not an issue for Israel: There are issues of government, but not issues of political order, not issues of constitution, not issues of political regimes. But with the other partners, you are confronted with the essential regime interest of being continued and maintained in international agreements and to use the international agreement – as the Soviet

regime and the Yugoslav regime and all the others, the Polish, the Czecho-slovakian regimes tried, to use the CSCE Final Act of Helsinki and all the follow-up agreements over 18 years including the Paris Charter for a New Europe in 1991 – as means to consolidate their own already shattered and undermined existence. This is a major political problem, a strategic problem. It is not a diplomatic problem. This is the key problem that has to be solved together with the problem of territorial borders.

How can you accomplish all this? The essentials are recognition of mutual interests in regional peace and stable security; then the question arises: is this compatible with the teaching of the "Djihad" rhetoric and the glorification of war against "the infidel"? This is not an issue that is restricted to totalitarian Djihad Islamism or islamists, this is an issue with which are concerned the governments of all Arab and other Muslim states: The teachings in the Mosques, the teachings in the Coranic schools, the language used on television and on the radio programmes as well as in the press. When the CSCE process started out in 1973, there was of course hostile propaganda – especially from the Soviet Union against the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany, but it was not to the extend that we have seen so far in the Middle East. It was not that Soviet television, Soviet radio asked for the murder of the American president, or let people speak there who would ask for the murder of the American president, or let preachers speak on radio and television about killing – and now we have the internet websites encouraging to wage "holy war" against "the Jews, the Crusaders and all the Western Imperialists". This is entirely incompatible with the kind of negotiation that you would need to have to arrive at an agreement on the model of the CSCE. One wonders how the governments of the Muslim states – particularly the Arab governments – will act once you enter into such a process.

To sum up: The CSCE Final Act of Helsinki in 1975was the beginning of a change, it was not the result. The result took 18 years and many things changed. This is a positive remark. It is important when we talk about this, to note that we did not have a problem like that, we did not have a territorial problem like the war-like situation of occupation and opposition to the occupation in the Palestinian territories and we did not have a state of war,

a legal state of war between participants of the negotiation, let alone armed hostilities. There was no war in terms of international law in Europe between any European states, including the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and West Germany. But in the Middle East, you do have a state of war between several Arab countries and Israel. Therefore, when we look at post-Saddam Hussein Iraq, the interesting question is: How will the new Iraqi government or a future Iraqi government deal with these questions vis-à-vis Israel, also vis-à-vis Kuwait, and how will the Syrian government or Syria as a state accept rules and principles that will make it necessary to change the regime in Damascus? And how will the Arab League moderate all this? We talk about states in the CSCE process, because in the CSCE process we had only states, there were no official non-state organisations. We had the European Community and we had the North Atlantic Alliance, we had concertations between allies and between bordering countries. But they did not participate as such in the negotiations. Negotiations were being conducted by the governments, but here, you have the Arab League and this is not a side issue but a central issue, because it was the Conference of the Arab League in Beirut that has offered Israel certain terms of peace. Therefore it would be opportune, advisable and necessary to have the Arab League take part in this negotiation. Then we have the 'Barcelona' and the 'Casablanca processes' which are about multilateral co-operation; they are not directly about security, but they link all Mediterranean countries and they can be brought into such a general framework as to give it a more co-operative structure apart from the border and military security and arms control issues. There is no use trying to transpose the CSCE experience if you do not take care of the issue of arms control and disarmament and de-militarisation in the Middle East, in order to free politics and regimes from the fixation on arms and war, as well as public opinions, and to moderate political attitudes, language and teachings. There is an issue of militant Islam as there is one of Arab and Israeli militancy in dealing with each other, based on the use of force and on violence. As long as governments use or tolerate such attitudes and resort to or rely on terrorist acts and deny the other side security in order to continue the state of war as a matter of prin-

ciple, it would not serve the purpose of peace by applying the CSCE experience to the Middle East.

The general strategic-political problem of using the all-European CSCE experience for the Middle East lies in the difference between the geopolitical conflict structures: There are no "block politics" and no moderating "neutrals and non-aligned" countries within the confrontation frameworks of the Middle Eastern region: Iran has no declared or reliable allies, Iraq has been isolated and made the object of a foreign intervention with the declared objective to change its regime and to disarm it. Israel has only one conditional security partner in the region: Turkey, but a powerful ally in the USA as an external strategic corner for its security. Egypt and Jordan are formally at peace with Israel. All the other Arab states have maintained a state of war with Israel. The US does not directly participate in security arrangements in the region, but maintains bilateral alliances or coalition partnerships with countries like Saudi-Arabia, Jordan and Egypt. Turkey is a member of NATO. This configuration complicates negotiations on either "collective security" in a multilateral framework or on mutual arms control.

The US proclaimed objective of "strategic change" in the region, based on a new international security order and the induction of democracy, is not necessarily a policy of "stabilisation". It can lead to further crises and internal upheavals. The "stabilisation pact" proposals suppose a positive and peaceful development. The Palestine "peace process" and the continuing problems in Iraq as in Afghanistan show the limits of success of such an ambitious strategy. The CSCE had no such far-reaching and revolutionary goals. That it contributed to such change was not pre-ordained by any law or Lord "of history".

Nabil Alnawwab

Conflict of Mythologies: The Debate on Reform of the Greater Middle East

Background

On February 13, 2004 Al-Hayat, a leading Arab newspaper, opened the gates of hell when it published (or leaked) the Arabic translation of the US working paper in preparation for the June G-8 Summit at Sea Island, Georgia. The document represented the Bush Administration's plan to promote political, economic and social reforms in what has been termed as the Greater Middle East Initiative (GMEI). For the past five months, GMEI competed vigorously with Iraq and Palestine for the prime attention of policy makers and citizens alike, in the Arab region. Greater Middle East became the catch phrase in vogue.

The Initiative caused great commotion among Arab leaders. Not only did it cause (indirectly) the postponement of the Arab Summit, but also it prompted a flurry of initiatives (formal and non formal) by Arab countries. Also, there have been daily articles in the Arab press, mainly attacking the Initiative for lacking in transparency, "imposing reform from outside", and neglecting to deal with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The US working paper was a purely American initiative. On 26 February 2003, on the eve of Iraq invasion, in a speech before the American Enterprise Institute – a neo-con think tank - President Bush set out his vision to spread democratic values in the Middle East. Then on 9 May 2003, in a speech at the University of South Carolina, he proposed "the establishment of a US-Middle East free trade area within a decade". These speeches were

followed on 6 November 2003, with a speech to the National Endowment for Democracy, with its main theme democracy in the Muslim world.

The Initiative, however, is not a theoretical proposition or vision. It should be viewed within the duel context of the new thinking dominating the Bush Administration and its occupation of Iraq. The US is talking basically of Iraq destabilizing the Middle East in a positive way, of making authoritarian governments fall, and creating liberty and democracy in their place. The Initiative noted, "a region that stands at the crossroads. The GME continue on the same path, adding every year to its population of underemployed, undereducated, and politically disenfranchised youth. Doing so will pose a direct threat to the stability of the region, and to the common interests of the G-8 members. The alternative is the route to reform."

Regional Responses

Within the above context the Initiative was regionally viewed as an American tool for foreign policy, not a partnership for reform. It was considered by many Arabs as a form of punishment. With Iraq presence so violently visible, the stick was evident, and the carrot was absent.

The responses to the Initiative were varied, but generally unfavorable. In an interview with an Italian newspaper the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak noted the American Initiative could cause a "storm of violence and anarchy" reminiscent of the "Algerian tragedy", a pointed analogy with the 1991 Algerian elections when the Islamists won. He also pointed out, "freedom and impromptu democracy could lead to shock"; adding, "What will happen if a majority of extremists won in Parliament?" "We will not let the outside dictate to us norms that could lead to drowning and anarchy. We know our country more than anyone else." The President repeated that he believes reform must be gradual. Later, he was more studied and cautious in his opening speech to the Alexandria Library Conference for Arab Reform, when he pointed out, "If some reports showed deficiencies in implementing plans for development and modernization of Arab societies, they merely emphasize the need to push further the reform efforts with more assertiveness and seriousness; they also reflect, at the same time, the

need for strong outside support for our efforts for modernization and re-form, however, without forcing an outside unified norm, or to strive to achieve goals that do not agree with our plans".

Bahrain's Prime Minister asserted that "the imposition of any foreign view is not in the interest of the countries of the region". The Syrian Vice President went, as far as to claim "the GMEI is reminiscent of the situation after World War One, when major powers sought to carve up the region." Jordan, Morocco, Qatar were somewhat less critical, calling for discussions with the United States and European countries rather than dismissing the Initiative out of hand. All Arab countries, however, insist that any US plan to promote reform must be accompanied by serious diplomatic efforts to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

One of the main reference points for the Initiative's survey of present state in the Arab region, were the Arab Human Development Reports. The Initiative fully utilized the Reports, prepared by a group of independent Arab intellectuals and issued under the umbrella of the Regional Bureau of Arab States, UNDP. The Initiative borrowing heavily from the Reports, gave a grim bird's eye view of the situation in the Arab region (not the GME region, of course). Yet contrary to general belief in the West, the Reports were not appreciated by substantial numbers of the intelligentsia. The Reports were severely criticized, often unjustly, for failing to emphasize the role of outside pressures and interventions that led to derail development, its over zealous criticism of Arab countries and societies, and for neglecting to point out positive aspects of development in the Arab countries.[1]

On a regional institutional level, the opinions of Amr Mousa, the Secretary General of the Arab League, are always interesting. While he competently represents the Arab League and its 22 Member States, he has always been sensitive to the opinions of the Arab intellectuals as well as the average person, more than any other official with similar status. In a long interview with Al-Sharq Al-Awsat newspaper (19 March 2004), he noted that reform

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1   All too interestingly, the Initiative as approved by the G-8 in June, fully omitted any mention of the Arab Human Development Reports. It opted to cite official declarations and government sponsored conferences.

has been on the agenda of most, if not all Arab countries, well before GMEI. However, he went further in his criticism than other officials when he pointed out, "I question the logic behind the formulation of GMEI. I say the issue is not ballot boxes or a reform in this or that area, it is the general environment that is at stake and the great problems facing this region that affect peace and security. That is why I find the logic of these initiatives unclear, and their agenda not acceptable. They revolve around dropping or marginalizing the major problems that occupy the conscious and minds of our public opinion. They did not deal with the problem of the Middle East. And I question the intention to divert the minds away from problems, in particular the Arab-Israeli conflict. Is it a repeat of what was advocated by Shimon Peres in the nineties about the "New Middle East" and how it had become imperative to forget about existing institutions and arrangements, such as the Arab League and Arab Nationalism?"

While Arab intelligentsia was less sympathetic and more vociferous than many leaders in their opposition to the Initiative, there were many who gave different emphasis and nuances that could give a better indication of Arab public responses to the Initiative. Among the participants of the Alexandria Library Conference, 18 leading intellectuals published a statement noting, "Domestically based reform is a national demand that goes back to the middle of the nineteenth century, we reject reasserting this noble demand for the servicing of Arab totalitarian regimes, and for enhancing American control over the Arab countries." This statement raises the important issue of credibility of both parties to the present reform process, i.e., Arab regimes and USA.

However, other public figures, like Prince Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan, emphasized in an article on the subject, "critics (of the Initiative) are at fault for two reasons: our region needs reform initiatives, both domestic or external; also reform could accelerate the peace process rather than hinder it." He also noted that it was not wise to assume that the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli problem, Iraq's, or regional reform, should be resolved in any neat chronological sequencing. The resolution of any of the above problems should not be contingent on the resolution of others. They all could be handled simultaneously". Amr Mousa in his (above) interview

agrees with the later point. He thinks the issue is not that of predetermined linkages, but rather "balanced and parallel approaches."

The famed Egyptian intellectual Saad Al-Din Ibrahem, Amin Hewadi a leading Islamist writer, and Salama Nemat a leading Arab journalist, among others, while doubting the credibility of US intensions and the Arab regimes' strive for reform; all think the Initiative should not be rejected outright. The needs for reform are overwhelmingly urgent.

The G-8 Initiative

It is clear from reviewing the final version of the Initiative, approved by the G-8 in its June 2004 Summit, that considerable effort was made to take into consideration much of the criticism levied above[2]. The American Administration, unlike its usual practice manifested in the preparation of the earlier Initiative and their other policy issues, undertook serious consultations with the European Union and other members of the G-8 as well as Arab governments. Marc Grossman was dispatched for talks with Arab friendly governments (Jordan, Morocco, Egypt and Bahrain). The results of such endeavours became apparent. The disturbing references to the Arab Human Development Reports were omitted, clearer methodology on follow up were specified, the theme of partnership spelled out clearly, and urgent conflict issues were mentioned (though timidly). In addition, the two documents ("Partnership" and "Plan of Support") were presented as continuation of earlier Arab attempts at reform, or a serious push for "domestically based" reform efforts. The indications were for a gradual move towards a CSCE model with its famed Baskets. The Plan of Support calls for the formation of a "Forum for the Future", with basically three reform tracks: "Deepening Democracy and Broadening Participation in Political and Public Life", "Building a Knowledge Society to Combat Illiteracy and Advance Educational and Technological Systems", and "Accelerating Eco-

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2   "Partnership for Progress and a Common Future with the Region of the Broader Middle East and North Africa", and "G-8 Plan of Support for Reform", Sea Island, Georgia, June 9, 2004.

nomic Development, Creating Jobs, Empowering the Private Sector, and Expanding Economic Opportunities".

The landscape for US international involvement and intervention changed radically post 9/11. The clearest example for this change is not Afghanistan, but rather Iraq where an occupation was undertaken with limited international support and no legitimacy. It was undertaken not for oil, WMD, or democracy. It was the signpost for changing hegemony on the ground. It was/is an attempt at redefining the political and strategic map of the Middle East. It is within this setting that the "Partnership" and "Plan of Support" should be read. A Middle East lacking in development, stability and democracy will continue to be a source of destabilization. The Arab Human Development Reports clearly showed "the writings on the wall". Intervention was necessary, before destabilization becomes threatening. The response from the US and the G-8 was considered opportune.

However, given the US track record of interventions in the region, Arab governments' poor appetite for reform programs, and low credibility of the primary players, the viability of GMEI and its success were questionable. As one Arab journalist bluntly noted, are we in a situation where the well-known Arabic proverb holds true, "the mountain went into labour and gave birth to a mouse"?

Conflicting Myths

The present arena for GMEI is plagued with conflicting myths perpetuated by both, US and Arab regimes (i.e. the primary players). There is need to weed out mythology before an apt intervention is formulated with higher chances for success, and before the scene is set for a CSCE model with real political bargaining options is set on center stage.

Myth One, the Divergent Regional Membership

In attempting to establish links with on going regional reform priorities, the "Plan of Support" repeatedly referred to the Arab League Summit Tunis Declaration, the Alexandria Library Statement, the Sana'a Declaration, and

the Arab Business Council Declaration. In the earlier working paper the reference point was the Arab Human Development Report. All reference points are Arab countries; yet it is certainly not clear if the said Arab priorities are relevant to the none Arab countries of this Initiative. The membership modality for the regional partnership that encompass such divergent membership is not comprehensible.

The awkward formulation of the GME membership is a post 9/11 concoction suited as a US foreign policy tool, rather than a response to regional needs or realities.

Myth Two, Softening Hard Authoritarian Regimes

The basic question that needs to be competently dealt with is whether the authoritarian regimes prevalent in the Arab countries are capable of promoting socio political and economic reforms that could lead to a democratic regime change. Though most these regimes are not dictatorial in the strict sense of the term, yet they are authoritarian with tremendous concentration of power at the top of the power pyramid. There are certainly serious differences among the authoritarian regimes of the region, yet they are more homogenous when the issue of regime change or transfer of authority is at stake.

However, with modernization and globalization the expanding networks of interests that dominate the political-economic scene of present regimes, it is becoming increasingly difficult to enact radical reforms that could lead to fundamental changes. The balancing of these complex networks of divergent interests is leading to a form of stalemate.

Conventional wisdom has informed us that economic reforms could lead to more democratization and political reform. Yet experience in a number of developing countries has strongly indicated the adaptability of authoritarian regimes to a large variety of economic reforms. The Arab region is no exception to this phenomenon.

Myth Three, Domestically Based Reform vs. Externally Induced Reform

The Arab Human Development Reports excellently expounded the urgency of reform in the Arab countries. It is fairly accurate to note that demands for reform extended over a very long period of time, preceding GMEI and the Barcelona Process. The earlier demands for reform and initiatives took varied forms and approaches. Yet success has been limited or generally lacking. The very same regimes elucidating the primacy of domestically based reforms have studiously refused such domestically inspired reforms. The present GMEI does not seem to be fully aware of the lessons that could be learned from past experiences of reform and their failures.

Many Arab writers, such as Saad Al-Den Ibrahem and Salama Namat, while noting the urgency of reform, are pointing out that the issue is not the domestic vs. the external. With post 9/11 as the dominant political culture in USA, the options for choice are severely constrained. If the Arab countries do not choose to accept GMEI, the probability is that these countries will be "forced" to accept.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the debate in the Arab countries about the intrinsic value of domestically based reforms as opposed to externally induced reforms is basically an attempt to push USA into further dialogue and concessions. After all, the same Arab countries were willing partners with USA in its violent and externally induced regime change for Iraq.

Myth Four, Disaggregating Reality

GMEI is presented as a pathbreaking endeavour by presenting a wide-ranging package of reforms. The idea is to disaggregate complex reform concepts into their basic components. Thus democracy is disaggregated into programs on rule of law, independence of judiciary, civil society, accountability, etc.; and the same applies for the other concepts. Yet most of these disaggregated programs are mostly already present in existing US and other G-8 members' aid programs in the region[3]. GMEI is more of an as-

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3   Some of these programs have been implemented for many years, with limited success. A study on microfinancing projects in the Arab region studied 60 such

sortment of aid programs rather than an assertive and comprehensive framework for reform. As an editorial in Al-Hayat observed, the two G-8 documents were fitting to be issued by an Arab Summit. As far as authoritarian Arab leaders are concerned, cosmetic reforms through piecemeal programs could lead to gaining international legitimacy and "bleed off accumulating pressure" for real political reform.

What has been missing out in GMEI, is a more assertive policy framework towards authoritarian, but friendly, regimes that are non-reforming. The GMEI listed programs for reform are certainly worthy, but are essentially "secondary issues" to the primary issues of banning political parties, increasing political inclusion, enacting parliamentary elections and ensuring powers of the legislatures, among others.

Myth Five, Political Reform in a Crisis Situation

Neither the independence of Iraq, nor the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, is adequate pre condition for reform of the region. Reform cannot be put on the shelf awaiting political resolution of complex problems. As Prince Hassan Bin Talal noted, political reform could accelerate and facilitate the peace process. However, while pre conditionality is not appropriate, recognition of the crisis situations and dealing with them is a certain pre requisite for the success of GMEI. The assumption that a major regional initiative could lightly touch on urgent and violent regional crises is at best illusory.

It is true, as many writers in the Arab press have noted, most Arab countries have long ceased to give priority to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Yet many continue to use it as a pretext for delaying reform. This, however, does not change the fact that resolution of violent regional crises is imperative for the success of reform. Raghdad Dirgham, a senior Arab journalist,

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projects and came to the conclusion that out of the total, only two were sustainable and eight on the way to sustainability, with the remaining 50 lacking in sustainability, see Judith Brandsma and Rafika Chaouali, Making Microfinance work in the Middle East and North Africa, World Bank 1999.

succinctly put it when she advised European Arab friends; there are "no preconditions for reform", and "no preconditions for ending occupation".

Myth Six, the Message or the Messenger

In the Arab press, much of the debate on GMEI was on form not content. Hardly any discussion was evident on the viability of the suggested reform programs. This situation was largely due to the prevalent lack of credibility of both primary players. The issue was the messenger not the message. Even with the changes introduced to the Initiative after the publication of the working paper last February, there was silence on the content of the G-8 "Plan of Support". Public knowledge of such content remains absent in the region.

Conclusions

The GMEI faced a difficult birth with abundance of mistrust and skepticisms. The chances for success are vague and limited. This situation begs the question whether or not a different formula should have been introduced? The CSCE, with its long preparatory discussions, three Baskets modality, and public compliance reviews, could have been theoretically more appropriate. The GMEI certainly attempted to borrow some of the tool (the Baskets and the Forum for the Future). The analogy, however, is seriously flowed. The Arab countries have neither a towering Arab regional power (Soviet Union), nor a Warsaw Pact type organizational structure, suited for regional deliberations and bargaining. More importantly, unlike CSCE, GMEI lacks the clarity of what is at stake. There are no real bargaining situations among the GMEI partners.

It was noted by Al-Hayat newspaper, around 4000 journalists covered the June G8 meeting that focused on the Middle East, yet out of the 4000 only 12 Arab journalists took part: a sad comment on the regional enthusiasm for reform, or an appropriate comment on the mythologies of reform?

Carlo Masala

Is the Model of the Baskets Applicable to the Greater Middle East?

If you consider transposing the CSCE experience to the Greater Middle East, one of the trickiest questions is, if the basket model is really applicable to the Greater Middle East. It is tricky because if you look at the basket model, which is basically the CSCE model, it is impossible to talk about the basket model for the Greater Middle east without – very briefly – going back to the CSCE.

Why was the basket model in the CSCE so successful? From there you can start thinking about the basket model for the Greater Middle East initiatives. The end of the question, why the basket model was more or less successful in the CSCE is that, first of all, within the baskets we had more or less three stable blocs. We had the Western bloc, around the US, the Eastern bloc, around the USSR, and we had what was at that time called the neutral and non-aligned states. So we had a stable negotiation structure, which made it possible that from time to time during the CSCE annual conferences, you had interesting meetings between the two bloc leaders: the American delegate, the Russian delegate and then more or less the spokesman of the neutrals. Those meetings were much more important than the open debate among all participant countries because in those meetings certain things were negotiated, which were then presented to the rest of the CSCE-states and more or less accepted, with some minor changes.

The basket model worked, first of all because you had clear negotiation structures, you had leaders within each group who were able to negotiate something for the rest of the group. Secondly, the basket model was successful because there was a common interest between the western, the east-

ern as well as the neutrals and non-aligned. This common interest was to preserve the more or less stable situation in Europe between the two blocs. The CSCE took round the idea when the creation of the western and the eastern bloc, when the creation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, came to an end. We had a stable situation, and both sides were interested in preserving that and in getting some kind of legitimacy for their own bloc and for their own borders. This was the over-reaching goal and the common interest that all members of the CSCE shared. Thirdly, and this is of great importance for the Greater Middle East, we had a kind of bargaining deal. If you look at the interest of the Communist bloc at that time: concerning the CSCE, the interest was mostly economical. It was in their interest to have closer economic co-operation with the West. The West on the other side had another interest, which was more related to human rights, i.e. to human rights in the Eastern countries. Consequently, the bargaining deal was: You give us a little bit more of human rights and we give you a little bit more of economic co-operation. That worked at the time, together with the other two points mentioned, with stable bloc structures and with the overreaching interest.

These three things have to be borne in mind before talking about the question if the basket model is applicable to the Greater Middle East. If we look at the three conditions, one can be very sceptical, because first of all, I don't see any clear negotiation structure in the whole Greater Middle East Initiative. I am not only talking about the Arab world, where it is clear that we have no strong regional or sub-regional organisation that can take the lead to negotiate for the Arab states, we have the Arab-Israeli conflict, all things with which we are familiar with. But I think we also have no stable negotiation structure at the moment in the West. The G8-meeting showed that and I am quite surprised how the interests of certain NATO-members are diverging when it comes to the Greater Middle East. So we have no clear negotiation structure in the West. We are – I will not say deeply – but we are very much divided over the question how to deal with the Greater Middle East or even – put the "great" aside – with the Middle East. One of the conditions is lacking at the moment. In a Greater Middle East Initiative with a basket model approach we would have more than 50 countries

around the table. Each of them with a different interest, even the two sides, the West and the South, divided over their interest in the Greater Middle East Initiative. We have then in the West a division, we have in the South a division, not only because of the Arab-Israeli conflict but also because of the differences and divergences of the countries themselves and their interest in the Greater Middle East Initiative. If we look at North Africa, they have a completely different interest in being part of this initiative than probably the states in the Persian Gulf. So it will be quite difficult to define a common interest. Where is the common interest? We had a clear common interest in the CSCE, but where is the common interest in the Greater Middle East Initiative? I cannot see it at the moment. That is my basic problem why I say you can create a basket model but you will have difficulties to get to results within the negotiation, within each basket. This is exactly one of the problems in the Barcelona Process. The Greater Middle East Initiative is the Barcelona Process plus twenty others, so it will make things much more complicated. Therefore, I am quite sceptical if the basket model is applicable.

If it comes to security – and I was asked to talk about a basket for security basically – one has to raise two questions and the answers do not lead to optimism about the applicability of a basket model in the security field. First of all, if it comes to security, once again, the analogy to the CSCE is flawed. For the simple reason that if you go back to Helsinki, you will see that security issues were not dealt with within the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. It was outside; it was in the Mutual Balanced Force reduction talks only between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Both, the US and the Soviets, had an interest to keep those tiny, disturbing, little neutral and non-aligned countries outside and to negotiate on this clear alliance-to-alliance structure on Mutual Balanced Force Reduction. Those talks did not lead to anything until the midst of the eighties. I am not going back to history and telling you that this was the cause of SDI and then the change in the Soviet Union with Gorbachev etc. But then, the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction they really took off, they were integrated into the CSCE afterwards and led to the CFE first treaty and CFE second treaty, which were the basis for arms reductions in the nineties. But, most impor-

tantly, security issues, hard security issues, were not part of the original CSCE. So if you want to bring hard security issues – and some states, some countries have an interest in talking about hard security issues within the Greater Middle East Initiative – you have a two-fold problem: Firstly, there is no real military or powerful state in the Arab world you can deal directly with and who has also the power to convince other Arab countries to follow the results of that talk. So the bloc-to-bloc structure is absent, which is one of the problems. Secondly, the CSCE took off when we had a stable situation in Europe. We do not have a stable situation in the Arab world right now. And this is not only due to the Israel-Palestine conflict – I think the Israel-Palestine conflict is a problem for the Arab world but even if this conflict will be resolved, we will see inter-Arab competitions for dominant regional hegemony. So we have no stable structure in the Arab world. We have territorial conflicts between Arab countries as well as between Arab countries and Israel and also the special problem of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Therefore, I do not expect that the security basket in the Greater Middle East Initiative will have any result.

Secondly, if you take a closer look into the Arab world or the Greater Middle East world, you will find that the security situation, the security needs, and the security problems are too different within the sub-region. If we have a security basket and if we talk about security issues, we cannot put North Africa, the Middle East as well as the Persian Gulf in one basket. All those regions have different security interests, different security problems and different security needs. Therefore, a basket for all of those countries is extremely difficult. If we look at the Western side and the relation, I also see a problem here, because if we look at the United States, their main interest now understandably is in Central Asia: the Caucasus and the Persian Gulf. These are the regions, the US is most interested in when they are talking about the Greater Middle East Initiative, going then to Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Europeans are much more concerned about the situation in the Middle East as well as in North Africa. The Middle East is also an area of concern, partly for the United States. What does this mean? This means that you cannot put this in a whole basket. You need – if you want to talk about security issues within the Greater Middle East Initiative – a sub-

regional approach, which focuses on North Africa, which focuses on the Middle East, which focuses on the Persian Gulf and probably then on countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan, i.e. everything which is close to China. If you focus on this sub-regional approach, you need different players taking the lead in it. I would see the Europeans much more interested in the talks with North Africa. I see a shared interest of the United States and Europe in the Middle East, while I see a really strong US-interest in the rest of the Greater Middle East and no interest in letting the Europeans be part of that. So if you want to talk about security issues and want to have a basket model, you have to break the basket down into sub-regional baskets, where you have different countries or organizations taking the lead from the western side to negotiate on security issues. How this will fit together, I do not know, because it is geographically too different. Secondly, not even the issue of WMD is a unifying factor because it does not affect North Africa, more or less. It is more a problem of the Middle East, it is more a problem of the Persian Gulf and the areas bordering the Persian Gulf. If it comes to the modernization of military force – NATO is obsessed with that –, even here the situation is different. North Africa does not really need modernization of military forces, most of the countries in the Middle East need modernization of their military forces. But I am quite sceptical if the Persian Gulf countries need that. They are very well equipped, basically by the US and France. So even here I think the problems are too different. This leads to the general point: who is taking the lead in that security basket in the Greater Middle East Initiative? Here lies a further problem.

First of all, the EU still lacks military muscles and not all EU-countries are interested in taking the lead in those talks. Secondly, NATO is overstretched at the moment and NATO is deeply divided among its members about the role of NATO in the Greater Middle East Initiative, especially the role of NATO in countries like Iraq and the Persian Gulf. The basic problem is, however, that NATO has a perception problem in the Arab world. It simply is seen as an imperialistic alliance. It simply is seen as a US-led, not Western-led, alliance. So if NATO would take the lead in those talks, it would have a big perception problem in the Arab world, which will hamper any efforts of NATO to come to results with the Arab countries.

The US alone cannot do it because of the same problem NATO has, which is basically a perception problem. It is not only due to the intervention in Iraq; in the Arab world the US is seen as a colonialist power, more or less, due to the history of US engagement in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. Therefore, the US as well as NATO, cannot take the lead in that effort.

I would say that if we talk about security in the Greater Middle East, I would recommend, that first of all, every initiative should be founded on the basis of self-differentiation, we cannot expect all countries to join, we cannot expect all countries to participate in that basket, so it has to be on a basis of self-differentiation. Secondly, more successful than the current design of the Greater Middle East Initiative, which puts all those countries in one basket, is a sub-regional approach. And thirdly, probably, I am not quite sure about that, the involvement of different actors in the sub-regional talks about security. But if this is the solution, then it has little to do with the old basket model of the Barcelona Process and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Stefan Fröhlich

How much Regional Differentiation is Necessary to Establish a Successful CSCE-analogous Process?

Introductory remarks

After near-fatal fracture of the transatlantic relationship over the American-led invasion and occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, demonstrating that the US was determined to rather impose its vision of a new order in the Greater Middle East in which there will be no opportunity for terrorism to breed, Washington' message, maybe because of the upcoming elections, has become distinctly emollient and more promising. Over the past two years Washington thought to bring about radical change across the board in many countries of the region under pressure from the US and its allies, with the threat of military action looming in the background. The Bush administration, driven by the neo-conservatives, wanted to see the Middle East to adopt Western style democracy and to adapt to modern socio-cultural patterns. This meant giving up much of what the Islamic world holds dear in terms of social conduct. Hence the campaign to reorder the Middle East was to unfold in various phases, which were to be implemented in parallel but at different speeds and through different models. The first phase of the creation of the new order involved the ouster of the Taliban and Baathist regimes. Having won the war in these countries, the US since then has been attempting to keep the peace and bring about the change it wants to see. Although the situation is not "another Vietnam", this is proving harder than expected.

The second phase was targeting the remaining member of the "axis of evil" in the region, Iran, and other countries characterised as "rogue states". The US was likely to face more resistance from its Western counterparts to any sort of military action against targeted states in the Greater Middle East - such as Iran, Syria and Libya - and thus demonstrated that it is adept at applying pressure through non-military means. The cases of Iran and Libya were illustrative in this regard.[1]

The third phase involved targeting countries that Washington considered close allies throughout the Cold war – for example Saudi Arabia and Pakistan which persist in their refusal to democratise in the way America wants. By targeting them in the final phase of its efforts to establish a new order in the region, the US would also give these countries enough time to make the necessary changes on their own. Though most observers in Washington still believe radical reforms won't occur without considerable pressure from Washington, it is at that point where the idea of a new transatlantic initiative to build peace, security and democracy in the entire Middle East region is slowly starting to take shape. The US finally made a big move towards embracing some European ideas in its campaign for political and social reform in the region. Though there remains a difference in their approach with regard to the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the progress of reforms in the Arab world, both sides have agreed on basic principles.

Washington spelt out a three-pronged strategy, backing away from imposing reforms and instead insisting, as US undersecretary of state Marc Grossman put it, that "the best reforms would come from the people", countries should introduce and choose what reforms to implement at their own pace, and the US should stop viewing the Middle East as monolithic.[2] Such a strategy complements the EU's Barcelona process – the only multi-

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1   „The US is shaping a new order in the Greater Middle East" (3 parts), in: APS Diplomat Strategic Balance in the Middle East: Part 1 - A Survey, Oct. 27, 2003, v46, i4; Part 2 - "Rogue States", Nov. 3, 2003, v46, i5; Part 3 – Tackling the Allies, Dec. 29, 2003, v46, i6.
2   Financial Times, March 17, 2004, p. 3.

national forum so far that brings together most of the North African and Middle Eastern countries including Israel.

The Greater Middle East initiative

The idea that NATO extends a new form of partnership to the Middle East[3], including training for peacekeeping missions, border security and counter-terrorism, as well as reforms to encourage civilian control of the military, and to bring in both the EU and the Group of Eight leading industrialized countries to provide political and economic backing is very ambitious and still very vague. To link the existing NATO Mediterranean dialogue with the EU's Barcelona process, as the German Foreign Minister has suggested, will be not an easy task. The EU would expand these complementary exercises to include the whole of the Arab League, whereas the US would like to define the Greater Middle East as including all the Gulf States, Iraq and Afghanistan but is much more cautious about involving Syria and Iran. Who will be involved thus is one potential source of friction. Another is just how the absolute priority in the region, the achievement of a lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians, will be bound to the wider initiative; the failure to resolve that conflict will only undermine the finest sounding plans for stabilising the region. Even the White House has finally realized that its much trumpeted plan to promote reform in the Greater Middle East would be empty as long as fires still raged in the Israeli-occupied territories. That is why it has to push Sharon for an even-handed political settlement with the Palestinians avoiding any impression that the real intention behind Israel's departure from the Gaza is the *de facto* annexation of large parts of the West Bank. Last but not least, it is also not clear how many Middle Eastern countries will want the proffered partnership with NATO. Some may see it as just another back-door route to US control and dominance in the region.

Nevertheless, that Europe and the US need to join forces and demonstrate their constructive engagement is undisputed. Iraq has proven the fact that

US military capability and money alone cannot deliver peace and stability. The US now knows it needs friends and as most of the European allies are not prepared simply to ride behind the US, NATO has become the part of the multilateral system that an instinctively unilateralist US administration now values. Not to fight wars but to provide the peacemaking forces and the strategic security vital to Bush's broader ambitions in the Muslim world.

The logic is obvious. One does not have to be a supporter of the Iraq war or of Washington's policy in the Israel-Palestinian peace process to agree that the principal threats to European and US security are centred on instability and conflict in the Greater Middle East. And European allies are needed to help make the peace. Suspicion of US intentions is widespread in the Arab world, while European ties are more positive. There is a lot of frustration at the region's relative backwardness, poor economic performance and a re-cord of bad government became clear enough when the United Nations Development Programme released its damning report on the region in 2002 - written by Arab scholars. The Arab world puts more trust in the EU's im-perative that the agenda of modernisation, embracing education, the rule of law, democratic reforms and opportunities for women, should be "owned" (Chris Patten) by Arab countries themselves.

On the other hand the US is the only country that can influence Israel in the peace process, whereas the Europeans have more clout with the Palestini-ans. The two can and should therefore pool their resources, not only to reignite a sense of shared mission between the US and Europeans but be-cause its in the interest of an enlarged EU to shape its strategy for a wider Europe as an area of vital concern and the US to ensure that it receives the full backing of its allies, the UN and the American public in order to reach the goal that the promised elections in January, 2005 in Iraq confer real le-gitimacy and power on a future Iraqi administration.

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3   Jeffrey Simon, Partnership for Peace: Charting a Course for a new Era, in: Strategic Forum, 206 (March 2004), pp. 1-6.

Arcs of Instability on Europe's periphery

The borderlands of the enlarged EU are strung out like a long chain – from Murmansk down to Jerusalem and round to Marrakesh. Every link in that chain throws up concrete policy challenges for the EU. These are the places where the enlarged EU will find either its security or its insecurity; each conflict there will automatically affect the EU. "Arc of instability" is one expression that has tended to be used for the EU's periphery. But the attack on the US on September 11, 2001 showed that the region harbours security risks that now rank at the level of existential threats.

This is why the EU needs now to shape its strategy vis á vis a wider Europe as an area of vital concern. The area consists of three huge sub-regions, each having categorically different political characters: 1. the enlarging EU space, defined as all countries that are, or want to be full members, even if only in the long-run; 2. Russia, as the outstanding European state that does not seek membership but rather s special status; 3. the Greater Middle East, a region of which there is no single, agreed definition of its political or geographic boundaries but which, since 9/11, has become an area of vital concern like never before.

In the US one usually speaks of the "Near East", to include North Africa, the Levant, and the Gulf countries – not Turkey, since it is a member of NATO. Another geographic interpretation, often provided by the Department of Defense, includes Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, the Gulf Cooperation Council states, Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Excluded are Turkey, Israel, Syria, Turkey, and India.[4] With the breakup of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the newly independent republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia the question has been raised about where exactly the Middle East begins, where it ends, and whether it can be consistently delimited. One option was to use the phrase "Greater Middle East".

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4   Geoffrey Kemp, Arcs of Instability. US relations in the Greater Middle East, in: Naval War College Review, 55, 3 (Summer 2002), pp. 61-71.

Though there remains the question of which countries to include and which to exclude, say in terms of the line between Asia and Africa, it is usually accepted to include the traditional Middle East countries, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Turkey as well as South Asia in a broad definition of the "Greater Middle East". In this huge area we have several arcs of instability/crisis, the most obvious being the one from North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia) along the Mediterranean coast through Libya and Mauritania (often called the southern countries of a greater Maghreb), the Levant (Egypt, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan) and Syria into Mesopotamia (Iraq) and the Northern Persian Gulf. Another arc is running from Turkey through the Caucasus to Iran, the third from Iran through Afghanistan and Pakistan to India.

In these three arcs today's most dangerous conflicts and potential crisis spots are located – Arab-Israel, Armenia-Azerbaijan, Iraq, Iran, India-Pakistan, Afghanistan. The situation also is getting worse in the Maghreb, with possible radical takeovers in Algeria or Egypt that could create economic, political and social problems for the countries of Southern Europe, which have become destinations as well conduits of migration and could one day be within the range of ballistic missiles based in North Africa and elsewhere in the Middle East. Three countries in these three arcs already have nuclear arsenals (Israel, India, Pakistan), and Iran still aspires to be a nuclear state. If proliferation is continuing, Turkey and Saudi Arabia could also join this list.

The EU, even more than the US, is exposed to all these "threats" in the three arcs of crisis. Thus, at their meeting in December 2003, EU leaders endorsed a joint security strategy that cited terrorist groups acquiring WMD in the Middle East as "the most frightening scenario" threatening their countries. The EU also shares with the US a clear interest in securing the free flow of Energy from the Persian Gulf and the Caspian region at reasonable prices and in preventing the proliferation of WMD. In an area stretching from southern Russia to the southern Persian Gulf lies a "strategic energy ellipse" (Kemp) that contains more than 60 percent of the world's proven oil reserves and almost 80 percent of the world's proven natural gas.

A regionally fragmented area

The Greater Middle East is of course anything but a homogeneous and monolithic bloc. The Mediterranean alone has become more of a frontier. As disparities between the North and the South multiply the area is rapidly becoming a fault line between two separate and increasingly polarized regions. And while regional dynamics of integration are active in Western Europe, patterns of fragmentation continue to dominate regional relations in this part of the world. The North African sub-region seeks to shape closer economic and perhaps political ties with the EU (in addition to the Barcelona process, there are bilateral (Spanish-Moroccan and Franco-Algerian), and multilateral-bilateral (NATO-Egypt; NATO's dialogue with the Mediterranean states) relations), trans-national ties however are limited to areas of energy, Islam, and ethnicity, with comprehensive international-region features almost non-existent (see e.g. the Sub-Saharan conflict between Algeria and Morocco, or the border clashes between Libya and Tunisia).

In the Levant sub-region, in which Turkey is a political, economic and military player, intergovernmental cooperative regional links have recently supplemented dominant conflictual patterns of relations. Trans-national ties remain at an embryonic level and comprehensive interaction is completely absent. This region includes a strong American political and military presence, and a strong European and Japanese economic presence.

Last, but not least, an extraordinary realignment of relationships is taking place in the Middle East with the most challenging hot spots; as a result of the terrorist events, new ties with the US have been formed by many nations.[5]

Now all sub-regions are net importers of military hardware, but this is where similarities end. The northern shore is far superior when it comes to technological sophistication of military equipment or in terms of infrastructure (roads, ports, pipelines etc.) and industry (petrochemicals, crucially),

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5   Stansfield Turner, The Critical Nature of US Policy in the Middle East, in: Mediterranean Quarterly, 14, 4 (Fall 2003), pp. 42-55.

and in terms of modern communications, electricity grids, and the like.[6] This makes a matter of urgency not only whether the Middle East will be a "zone of turmoil" (Singer/Wildavsky), somewhat left out of globalization, but also whether part of it will continue to identify with the "southern" half of a North-South divide. Apart from that, the whole region can be broadly characterized by an absence of democracy, internal instability and endemic violence, and offer little encouragement that this region is at the end of major warfare and security rivalries.

Additional security challenges of course arise in the Caucasus and Central Asia, among them regional destabilization by the Chechen war and frozen conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Karabakh; growing authoritarianism in countries ruled by Soviet-era networks; ethnic and unsolved border conflicts (Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan); and the rise of militant and radical Islam.[7] Finally, ensuring that oil and gas from the Caspian region can safely reach the outside world is a fundamental reason for US engagement in that region, whereas the EU holds that without promoting democracy all the rest may be at risk.

Against this background there remain some doubts as to what there is real chance for the wholesale modernization of the swath of territory from Morocco to Afghanistan that the allies have taken to calling the Greater Middle East.

Prospects for the new initiative – a new kind of an OSCE for the Greater Middle East

For all these reasons, the Greater Middle East initiative, in theory, certainly is a great idea. The multiple security problems and challenges in the region certainly could be addressed by a meaningful multilateral security mechanism. Any approach that brings together regional leaders and outside pow-

6   Robert Harkavy, Geoffrey Kemp, Strategic Geography and the Changing Middle East, Washington DC: Brookings Institution 1997, chapter 10.
7   Jürgen Schmidt, Security challenges in the Caucasus and Central Asia – A German and European perspective, SWP-Discussion paper, March 2003, 6 p. Available at: www.swp-berlin.org/produkte/diskussionspapier.

ers alike to seek security in a more balanced way encompassing multilateral frameworks - where possible – and short-term bilateral deals is worth being persecuted. No other foreign policy issue divides Europe from the US as much as this area, whether it is the war in Iraq, the Israel-Palestinian peace process, or the question of constructive engagement in Iran. So if the two sides can come together, it cannot only help the region, but also revive transatlantic co-operation.

The purpose of some kind of regional security forum/conference to reduce political tensions, promote co-operation on common security threats and increase transparency on military postures comes close to the idea of Europe's Organisation for Security and Co-operation. Such a forum needs differentiation in several ways:

1. The Middle East, other than the former Warsaw Pact, does not constitute a power centre of that sort that can develop and exert integrative power; the region has been and is an object of several regional players and major power rivalries. Hence, a peaceful model of economic co-operation as well as social patterns of intercourse and some kind of common civic culture will be extremely difficult to develop in this heterogeneous area.

2. What will certainly not work is to send to this region the Copenhagen criteria catalogue as the standard model for their future. Their modernisation and democratization, according to their own model, needs helping along the way by the US and the EU, so also to facilitate the harmony of these different civilisations. But certainly most countries in the region are not as susceptible to any kind of westernization as the majority of former Warsaw Pact members. Rather democratization and change of systems along western lines are felt as interference into inner affairs in this Arab and Muslim world. Anyhow, these are long-term issues of societal evolution. In the meantime there are the dramatic, existential threats to be curbed. In other words, there are soft and hard security reasons for the US and the EU immediately to be addressed.

3. Earlier grand designs to remake the Middle East especially by the US have always given way to a more practical and pragmatic program of political and economic development in the region. This is why Arab govern-

ments are dismayed by and sceptical of Washington's decision to include Afghanistan and Pakistan in the geographical construction called the Greater Middle East. They fear that the parameters of the new initiative have been drawn to fit the US interests to fight international terrorism in that wider region rather than the particular challenges in the Middle East, with the Israel-Palestinian conflict being the most pressing one. Thus it also remains to be seen whether the new co-operation agreements would represent merely an extension of NATO's existing "dialogue" with Mediterranean states or whether the Alliance is really ready to offer deeper relationships comparable with the original PfP programs with former Warsaw Pact states, now having achieved full NATO membership. There remain deep suspicions in the Arab world that NATO still is just an extension of the US – a multilateral cloak for American power.

4. To increase the chances of success, it will be necessary to limit the membership and to focus tightly on key Gulf security issues either in multilateral or in a bilateral way. Like the Helsinki process the Greater Middle East initiative, in a first step should try to break down the barriers between the Arab/Muslim and the western world through confidence-building measures by finding creative solutions for the Israel-Palestinian peace process, Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia. After the transfer of sovereignty to Iraqis, the provisional Iraqi government, the Gulf States, together with the US and the EU, should develop plans to restructure Iraq's army and to integrate it into a broader regional structure. The main protagonists should also persuade Tehran that the development of a nuclear weapons capacity will not be an answer to its admittedly threatening regional perspective because of Israel's extensive nuclear arsenal and the US presence in Iraq and Afghanistan. Concrete steps on both the Israeli's and the US' side in terms of confidence-building measures to tackle these problems are as necessary as a clear message, especially by the EU, not to succumb to any blackmail attempts by Tehran in order to divide the transatlantic allies.[8]

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8   On Iran see Johannes Reissner/Eugene Whitlock (Eds.), Iran and Its Neighbors: Diverging Views on a Strategic Region, Vol. I (July 2003) and II (March 2004), SWP-Discussion paper, Berlin.

Such a regional security platform could also deal with Saudi Arabia's problems, including extremist Islamic groups, the declining authority of the Saud family, and the lack of political reforms in the country. Only if regional tensions decrease, the current regime might be willing to such reforms towards more pluralism. A more stable Saudi-Arabia, Iran and Iraq in turn could reduce threat perceptions of the smaller Gulf monarchies vis á vis their bigger neighbours and also their dependence on a strong US presence in the long run.

Finally, it is clear that without a serious Israeli-Palestinian peace process, progress with wider regional initiatives will never be achieved. A broader regional security forum can be of success if the Gulf States and the "Quartet" do not revive sustained political pressure on Sharon's government in Israel, as well as on Arafat and the Palestinians.

5. The EU and the US need a common approach also to the challenges in the Caucasus and Central Asia, but this process has to be separated from its Middle East initiative as to avoid the impression that the US and the EU treat the whole project as the geography of international terrorism, the problem of proliferation and failed states which have to be contained somehow. In other words, what is needed here is another, separated form of a regional security forum to come up with a strategic neighbourhood concept including the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as an energy policy that would comprise infrastructural concepts and their implementations as well as a political safeguarding in Europe and this second arc of crisis. In this context, it was important that the EU, after 9/11, last triggered a Council strategy on Central Asia to promote regional co-operation between the five countries regarding trade, fight against international terrorism and drug trafficking as well as water management.

Conclusion

The Greater Middle East initiative, understood as a multiple task in this sense and with a differentiated approach towards its many sub-regions, is a chance to break out of the loop of continuing wars and instability in the whole area. For the first time, there seems to be widespread support for a

regional security initiative in the USA and the EU as well as in the region itself. For the EU, criticising US Middle East policies, though often justified, simply is not enough and sometimes even sounds cynical due to its own dependencies and exposure to threats from the region. At least there are no convincing arguments against any common EU-US approach. The US willingness not to single out the Israel-Palestinian problem any longer is an important step in the right direction. If it were accompanied by sincere efforts to pressure Israel into withdrawing from most, if not all, of the West Bank, this would be another step to comply with European primacies. The EU on the other hand should give up its restraint towards rushing the process of democracy in countries such as Saudi Arabia or Egypt, where authoritarian regimes considered friendly to Western interests might be ousted in any free election by radical Islamists, on the ground of suspicion that Washington's initiative is more about public relations and the US elections than about practical progress. If the EU and the US would agree on these first steps, there would be a real chance for some lasting progress in this troubled region.

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The Greater Middle East Project and Turkey's Attitude towards it

1. Introduction

Although there has been a rising popularity and an enormous flow of information regarding "Greater Middle East Project" throughout the mass media nowadays, the term and the meaning attributed to it still continue to be vague for the most part of the public opinion. In general most of the comments on the issue come to the conclusion that this is part of the grand design brought on the international arena by US to continue its new world order by removing the barriers like international terror and weapons of mass destruction. The project is aimed to be a multidimensional regional initiative, which would bring fundamental political, social and economic changes to the region in the long term.

This paper attempts to examine the reasons and the bases, which leads to the preparation of the Greater Middle East Initiative by US and at the same time Turkey and EU's attitudes towards this project. Whether the initiative resembles the Helsinki Process or not will be my research question. My argument will be that considering the hurdles and pitfalls compared to the Helsinki Process, it will definitely be extremely difficult for US and her prospective allies to reach their aimed goals at the end of the GMEI process.

2. Background Information

We can see the term "Greater Middle East" used as back as in 1980 according to Washington Post newspaper. "US lack of experience and precision about the region is so great that there is continuing uncertainty about what to call it-The Middle East, Greater Middle East, Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf or Southwest Asia. All have been tried." mentions the newspaper regarding the confusion on terminology.[1] Under the directorate of Zalmay Khalilzad, "Greater Middle East Studies Center" at Rand Corporation was established in 1995. The aim of the research center was stated as to undertake integrated multidisciplinary studies of the underlying socioeconomic and political issues in the Middle East and adjacent areas of North Africa, Central Asia, and Southwest Asia. These studies proposed a series of practical strategies and approaches to achieve the goals of material well-being, political development, and respect for human rights that are the prerequisites for regional stability and enduring peace.[2]

2.1 Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)

The Middle East Partnership Initiative *(MEPI)* is a Presidential initiative founded to support economic, political, and educational reform efforts in the Middle East and to create opportunity for all people of the region, especially women and youth. MEPI is structured in four reform areas under four pillars. These are the economic, political, educational and women pillars. Economic pillar envisages to support trade, investment and small businesses. Political pillar concentrates on strengthening democratic practices and civil society, promoting the rule of law and accountable, effective government institutions and strengthening the role of free and independent media in society. Education pillar focuses on expanding access to basic and post secondary education for all people, especially girls and women, improving the quality of basic and post secondary education, promoting the

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1   Cited in the introduction of "Allies Divided-Transatlantic Policies For The Greater Middle East" Ed. Robert D. Blackwill and Michael Stürmer, 1997, Center for Science and International Affairs, p. 1.
2   www.rand.org.

development of employable skills. And the MEPI women's empowerment pillar strives to reduce cultural, legal, regulatory, economic, and political barriers to women's full participation in society.[3]

The Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, is the coordinator for MEPI and to date, the US administration has committed $129 million to the initiative.

2.2 Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Barcelona Process)

This partnership program was launched in 1995 to foster the cooperation on political reform, economic liberalization and social issues between the EU and the countries on the southern and eastern rim of the Mediterranean. The agreement calls for reform in three areas, known as the political, economic and social chapters. This process has made some limited progress towards the goals of the economic chapter, which contains specific trade liberalization requirements to culminate in the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area by 2010. But Mediterranean countries have been slow in enacting reforms for fear of angering key domestic constituencies. EU members have also refused to reduce agricultural subsidies for the same reason.

There has been limited or no progress on the goals of political and social chapters. Today Euro-Mediterranean Process does little more than host seminars, sponsor exchanges and provide a forum for dialogue.

2.3 Greater Middle East Initiative (GMEI)

US administration officials have been preparing this new initiative to be launched at the G-8 summit in Georgia in early June. This initiative is planned to bring together the US, Europe and the "Greater Middle East" including not only the Arab world but also Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Israel and Turkey around a far reaching set of commitments aimed at helping transform the region politically, economically and socially. Based on the 2002 Arab Human Development Report, the initiative sets three reform

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3   http://mepi.state.gov.

priorities: promoting democracy and good governance, building a knowledge society and expanding economic opportunities.[4]

It is not clear where the "Greater Middle East" stops. If it can include Afghanistan and Iraq, it can also include the Caspian, Pakistan, and Central Asia. In the process, the strategic rationale for a Europe and Transatlantic role becomes steadily more vague, and the risk that new tensions and differences will emerge over given cases grows.[5]

It is also expected that during the NATO Summit in İstanbul on 28th June 2004, functions of the NATO members regarding the "Greater Middle East Project" will be defined. It is also claimed that at this summit, it will be clarified in terms of military qualifications how the region level democratization procedures would be supported.[6] According to Anthony H. Cordesman, the Bush Administration sees 2004 as the year in which giving NATO new and expanded missions in the "Greater Middle East" can reunite the alliance behind meaningful missions and roles.[7]

2.4 Resemblance with the Helsinki Process

The GMEI idea resembles the Helsinki Process with the logic it brings up. Setting the issues apart under separate pillars and therefore receiving concessions on one side, while appeasing on the other have been helpful in the past.

A major policy of the USSR during the Cold War was decoupling the US from Western European planning and to promoter East West détente in Europe without the participation of US. In 1968, Soviets proposed that a conference solely of European nations be held to discuss general security issues. Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia and the concerns of the

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4   Marina Ottaway and Thomas Caroters "The Greater Middle East Initiative: Off to a False Start" Policy Brief, 29 March 2004, Carnegie Endowment, p. 1.
5   Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Transatlantic Alliance: Is 2004 The Year Of The Greater Middle East?" Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy, January 2004, Center for Strategic and International Studies, p. 14.
6   Faruk Demir, "İstanbul: Yeni NATO İçin Hazır Olmak" 2023 Dergisi, 18.5.2004
7   Anthony H. Cordesman, op.cit., in note 5, p. 2.

NATO members eventually resulted in the inclusion of US and Canada in the process.[8]

The Helsinki Process was launched in 1972 due to the pressure coming from the Soviet Union in order to win formal recognition of the post-WWII European borders. After long negotiations, which lasted for three years under the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), 35 countries signed the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. The Act was not a treaty binding the signatories, but rather a statement of principles. Over the next fifteen years, the Helsinki accords turned into an important tool through which the US and the Western Europe pressured the Warsaw Pact countries to improve their human rights records and move slowly towards political reform.

In 1975, the work of the CSCE was not considered as a major achievement. Rather it was symbolizing the acceptance of the status quo of the two blocks. This did not guarantee the possibility of eventual victory for neither side, but did mean to ensure avoidance of nuclear battle.[9]

Helsinki Final Act consisted of three baskets. The first one dealt with territorial and security issues and recognized the USSR's presence in Eastern Europe. Basket two called for economic, scientific and environmental cooperation. And the last one committed parties to support freer movement of information and people through family reunification, improved access to outside media and exchange programs. In addition the Final Act provided for regular follow-up meetings to review the implementation of the agreement.

Although progress was achieved slowly, more than a decade, through many meetings with the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries towards some concessions on human rights issues in return for gaining concessions on arms control issues, during the Vienna review between 1986-1989, the

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8   Cyril E. Black, J.E. Helmreich, P.C. Helmreich, C.P. Issawi, A.J. McAdams, "Rebirth-A History of Europe Since WW II" (Westview Press 1992) p. 127.
9   Ibid., p.128.

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real breakthrough on human rights issues was reached due to growing domestic pressure for change in Warsaw Pact countries.[10]

The CSCE became a permanent institution in 1995 and was renamed as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It is now involved in supporting democratic transitions in Central and Eastern Europe, the Soviet successor states and the Balkans.

Excluding the security side, one can easily see the similarity between the Greater Middle East Initiative and the Helsinki process. On the other hand US is not willing to offer the states of the region anything on security front in exchange for significant commitments on political and economic reform. Because it is obvious that the Arab countries would immediately bring up the Arab-Israeli conflict to be solved as a security issue.

3. Reasons of the Interest in the Region

3.1 US Interest in the Middle East

We can analyze the core US interests in the region under three main headings. These are preserving the security of Israel, maintaining the unhindered flow of oil and gas at reasonable prices and thirdly ensuring regional stability.[11]

Israel has a very close relationship with US due to their strategic alliance, historical relationship, religious and cultural bonds, and the enormously effective Jewish society in US administrative and economic environment. And recently they share the same threats from the same sources mainly international terrorism and religious radicalism. In line with its relationship with Israel, US has been promoting the Arab-Israeli peace process. But considering the fact that US-Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) relations are dependent on Israel-PLO relations, US does not play a role more than facilitating talks and transmitting messages between the sides.

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10 Marina Ottaway and Thomas Caroters, op.cit. in note 4. p. 6.

Maintaining the unhindered flow of oil and gas at reasonable prices is also vital for US, because almost two-thirds of the world's proven oil reserves are concentrated in the Gulf region. After the production cuts realized by OPEC during and following the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, there was a 5%GNP loss in the American economy.

And finally US has a strong interest in preventing any single power from controlling the Gulf or vital access routes to it, such as Egypt's Suez channel. In parallel with this aim, other than Israel, US has based its Middle East policy on three important regional countries which are Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

3.2 EU Interest in the Middle East

Keeping in mind that there is no such thing as a common European Middle East policy[12], it may be argued that EU and its major constituent states have a set of strategic interests in the Greater Middle East that are often complementary to US interests but sometimes divergent from them. The main EU interest in the region and especially North Africa, the Mediterranean basin and Turkey is to promote stability and prevent the spread of Middle Eastern conflicts to Europe.[13] As mentioned above Euro-Mediterranean Partnership initiated by EU, which would lead to the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area by 2010 is an important attempt on behalf of EU to contribute stability and welfare in the region. Taking neither the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, nor Iran and Iraq, proves that EU's concern about stability in the Mediterranean outweighs its concern about the security of oil and gas supply.[14]

Similar to US and maybe more powerful than it, EU has a major interest in maintaining the unhindered flow of oil and gas at reasonable prices. In con-

11 Robert Satloff "America, Europe, and the Middle East in the 1990's: Interests and Policies" in Robert D. Blackwill and Michael Stürmer (ed.) "Allies Divided-Transatlantic Policies For The Greater Middle East" (MIT Press 1997), pp.10-11.
12 Eberhard Rein "Europe and the Greater Middle East" in Robert D. Blackwill and Michael Stürmer (ed.) "Allies Divided-Transatlantic Policies For The Greater Middle East" (MIT Press 1997), p. 42.
13 Robert Satloff, op.cit., in note 11, pp.19-21.

trast to US, which imports less than 20% of its oil and gas from the region, EU imports nearly half of its oil and gas from the Middle East and is much more dependent on the region.

A third key EU interest on Middle East is to prevent migration from the Greater Middle East to Europe. Especially the booming Muslim migration into Europe during the 1960's and 1970's from North Africa to Southern Europe, from Turkey to Germany and from India and Pakistan to Britain, has provoked deep concern among many Europeans about the cultural, social and economic implications of the demographic change within societies far more homogenous than the American society.

In addition to these overall interests, particular EU states have close bilateral relations with regional countries because of their historical, geographical or commercial ties. French connection to francophone North Africa, Italy's relation with Libya, French-Lebanese ties, British-Gulf States' relations and German-Iran relations may be given as examples to these particular interests.

Although Europeans play a marginal political and diplomatic rule with the issue, EU's attitude on the Arab-Israeli peace process is more inclined towards the Arabs when compared with the Americans. EU constitutes the largest donor to Palestinian authority while Saudi Arabia ranks only as the third. Since 1993, EU has contributed $397 million to the Palestinian Authorities and other related relief projects. The basic reason for pro-Palestinian and pro-Arab stance of EU is the fact that Europeans no longer consider Israel's existence would be jeopardized by the Arab military and political power.[15]

3.3 Turkish Interest in the Middle East

First of all Turks has been in the region as the ruler and protector since the fall of the Abbasid dynasty in 1258 and particularly between 1516 and 1918 by the Ottoman power. This long duration of historical, cultural, political and religious ties have created strong bonds between Turkey and re-

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14   Eberhard Rein, op.cit., in note 12, p. 44.
15   Ibid., p. 50.

gion. Although there have been an alienation process on both sides after the I World War, both the Turkish and the Arab societies still feel deep sympathy for each other.

Turkey has long borders with three of the regional countries and as a neighboring country, stability in the region is vital for Turkey regarding its security concerns. For the last two decades, Turkey has been fighting with the PKK terror, which found shelter from the regional countries. The country has spent close to $5 billion each year and lost nearly 30 thousand lives during this struggle. Loses due to the frightened foreign direct investment and missing tourism income is not included in these figures. This threat has not been diminished yet. Related with this issue, the possibility of establishing a Kurdish state in Northern Iraq, provokes the idea that there may be future attempts to unify Turkey's Kurd dense areas with this would be newly established state.

Economic relations with the region also need a peaceful environment. The ongoing Iraqi crisis has brought up a huge trade loss on behalf of Turkey. As the closest industrialized economy to the region, Turkey cannot at the moment fully use its advantageous position.

As a petroleum importer, Turkey is directly affected from the rising tension in the region. Every 5 dollars increase in per barrel petroleum prices, increases Turkey's petroleum bill for $1 billion each year.[16] Oil price, which has been $35 per barrel at the beginning of May, has reached over $41 in three weeks because of the turmoil in the Middle East.

4. Reactions towards the Project

4.1 Turkey's Attitude

From the beginning, Turkey has been seen within the process by US, though she had some ups and downs regarding its participation. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated in October 2003 about the permission granted by the Turkish National Assembly to the government to dispatch

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16 http://www.milliyet.com/2004/05/13/ekonomi/axeko02.html.

the Turkish armed forces to Iraq, that contribution to security and stability of the country, creating a prosperous and democratic future free from any kind of oppression would be their aims.[17] Prime Minister also stated during his speech at Harvard University on Democracy and Middle East that he wouldn't accept the idea Middle East is not fit for democracy because of its cultural, religious, sociological and historical background. He explained Turkey was an example for a Middle Eastern country to be democratic. He added that democracy in the Middle East is an outcome that must be attained and the question is not whether such democracy is possible but how to meet the yearning of the masses in the region for democracy. Another point indicated by the Prime Minister was the method to be used for this aim. Methods can differ from country to country he explained. But the important thing is to maintain a social consensus and the mechanism to prevent the establishment of anti democratic regimes by means of democracy in these countries. He emphasized that together with human rights, gender-equality, supremacy of law, political participation, civil society, and transparency were also among the indispensable elements of democratization.[18]

When compared with the aforementioned goals in the Greater Middle East Initiative, it may be concluded that similar views are shared. But giving the priority to democratization and the method for reaching this goal may put US and Turkey at odds.

On the other hand, the question whether Turkey is a tool and model in changing the region, or one of the countries to be changed throughout the process needs to be answered. As stated by Brezinski in Hegemonic Quicksand, Turkey's regional role is seen limited by US due to two considerations stemming from its internal problems. These are Turkey's transformation process as a western country, which would be completed by the full membership to the EU. And the other issue is the Kurdish population and the problems related to it. If EU closes its doors there is the expectation that Turkey may go through a reorientation, which would make it difficult to

17 http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ai/Erdogan7October2003.htm.
18 http://www.mfa.gov.tr/Harvard.htm.

estimate its way of inclination. According to Brezinski these two issues tend to make Turkey part of the region's basic dilemmas.[19]

There are also various views from a wide spread of Turkish intellectuals, academicians, journalists which are suspicious regarding the moves coming from US. Dr. Bülent Aras from Fatih University brings up the question why the project considers a greater Middle East, even though the older Middle East is big enough and its chronic problems have been still waiting to be solved.[20]

4.2 EU's Attitude

As mentioned previously there isn't a unified, single European policy towards Middle East. Daniel Vernet from Le Monde describes the confused situation within the EU in his article. Every EU member country realizes that a US failure for controlling the situation in Iraq would spill over a destabilizing effect allover the region and eventually negatively affect EU too. But still their consensus on a common manner is missing. There is a gap between the members, which approved US's war in Iraq and the ones, which did not. Definitely the opposing states like Germany and France gained the support of Spain after Jose Luis Zapatero won the elections. On the other hand the public opinion in the pro-US members are against their governments. Although France did not approve the reasons for war in Iraq, she now wants contribute to make the transition period which will begin after 30th of June 2004 to be successful.[21]

Michael Stürmer in his article "What Strategy for the Greater Middle East- A European Perspective" summarizes the problem areas of this project. He points out that the geography considered by the project is more that 280 millions of Arabs, 70 millions of Turks and roughly the same number of Iranians, 5 million Jewish Israelis and 1 million Arabs carrying Israeli passports. An within this context he reminds that the majority of the Mus-

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19 Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Hegemonic Quicksand" KAS- The National Interest, Winter 2003/04, pp. 3-4.
20 Bülent Araslı, "Büyük Ortadoğu Staratejik Akıl ve Değişim İhtiyacı" Zaman, 10 April 2004.
21 Daniel Vernet, Le Monde, 11 May 2004.

lims live in the east of Tehran stretching to Central and South East Asia. He points out the fact that poverty is the number one issue in this geography. From poverty all other devastating issues, shown in 2002 UN Human Development Report on Arabs, like backwardness, illiteracy and ignorance of the modern world distance to the resources of the information age arise. He gives the manners of France and Germany at the Donors' Conference in Madrid, as examples regarding the realization of the project. US collected large contributions for Iraq, but France wanted its debts paid and Germany refused to forgo its $4.4 billion outstanding debt.

5. Pitfalls of GMEI Compared to Helsinki Process

When compared with the Helsinki Process in which it took almost one and a half decade for the Western Block to bring the end of the Communist block using human rights issues as leverage, GMEI's prospective goals are quite problematic to be reached in the foreseeable future. If the size of the geography, structure of the states which take place in this geography and the psychological situation of the population living there are taken into consideration, the issues get much more thorny and difficult. I will try to look on some of these problem areas.

5.1 Arab – Israeli Peace Process

After the WW II, Palestine stayed under British rule till 1947. At that time, due to newly arriving Jewish settlers there were equal number of Arab and Israeli population in the region. In the same year, Palestine land was divided by a UN decision (decision number 181) between the Jewish settlers and the Arab population. The following year, Jewish side invaded one third of the other piece given to the Arabs and declared the establishment of the state of Israel.

Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, there have been five wars between Arabs and the Israelis. Egypt opted out of the Arab-Israeli conflict by the Camp David negotiations in September 1978 and signed a separate Israeli-Egyptian treaty in 1979. Throughout this conflict procedure, Palestinians first became a major actor to the conflict, then since 1967 war Pal-

estinian Liberation Organization (PLO) reached the status of a quasi-state. Palestinians first set up a state within state on Jordanian territory. After they were driven out during the crisis of September 1970, this time Lebanon served them as a military base.[22] After the 1987 UN Security Council Resolution 242, independent state of Palestine was established in Algeria, Yaser Arafat became head of state and the same year the Intifada movement began in the Israeli occupied territory. By 1990 there were over seven hundred deaths from Israeli bullets.[23] The first serious step towards peace was taken in 1993 between Izhak Rabin and Arafat in Washington. The two signed a declaration an accepted to set up an autonomous Palestine State in Gazza and Eriha.

Resolution 242 was calling for a "just and lasting peace in the Middle East" to be brought by Israel returning territory it captured in the 1967 war in exchange for acceptance. But the resolution does not specify how much of the territory Israel is to return. The traditional Arab position is calls for the return of all territory and the reestablishment of the borders that existed prior to the 1967 war. On the other hand the position of the successive Israeli governments is that UN 242 does not require Israel to return all the territory and the amount of land to be handed over will reflect the quality of peace and security arrangements. Most Israelis including the pro-peace ones reject a return to the 1967 borders.[24]

Today because of the suicide attacks carried by Hamas and other radical Palestinian organizations on one side and the Israel policies, which gets tougher every day without indiscrimination on all the Palestinians on the other side, a vicious circle has been created. More and more killings on each side feed the social hate and thus today the Arab- Israeli peace process has arrived to a deadlock.

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22 Bassam Tibi, "Conflict and War in the Middle East: From Interstate War, To New Security" (2nd ed) NY Macmillan Press, 1998 p. 151.
23 Glenn E. Perry, "The Middle East: Fourteen Islamic Centuries" (3rd ed) NJ Prentice Hall, 1997, p. 312.
24 Richard Haas "The United States, Europe, and the Middle East peace Process" in Robert D. Blackwill and Michael Stürmer (ed.) "Allies Divided-Transatlantic Policies For The Greater Middle East" (MIT Press 1997), p. 64, footnote 3.

5.2 Nature of the Regimes in the Region

Since the second WW, most prevalent regimes in the region have been socialist republics. Excluding the oil rich countries and the kingdom of Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Algeria, Sudan, Yemen, Tunisia, Libya have all gone through this experience. The common characteristic of all these regimes was that the leader did not trust the citizens to choose or change the leaders. These regimes rest on the pillars of the armed forces, the internal police, the bureaucracy, the party and the clan.

Oil reach states in the region on the other hand, are rentier states. A rent is a reward for ownership of all natural resources. The surplus between the oil cost and price is state's rent, and with this surplus the state activities are run. Oil revenue represent 90 % of budget revenues and 95 % of export revenues in these countries. These states do not need tax income for state activities. With virtually no taxes, citizens are far less demanding in terms of political participation. Therefore in principle no taxation and no representation rule is valid for these regimes.

5.3 Radical Islamic Movements

Radical Fundamentalism may be defined as the supremacy of tawhid as the doctrinal and political foundation, superiority of the sharia and the necessity of establishing an Islamic state. For these radicals, the freedom of the individual is not important, since the individual must always be watched. The well being of the individual is secondary to that of the community. No splits like the parties, associations are allowed to destroy the social unity.[25]

The institutional structure developed out of shura and ijma, which are based on the sharia, is embodied in a state that expresses the general will and has the right to set the course for people's life. Such an environment is of course not conducive to the establishment of pluralistic civil societies or the flourishing of freedom.[26]

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25 Ahmad S. Mousalli, "Modern Islamic Fundamentalist Discourses" in "Civil Society in the Middle East" Ed. by Augustus Richard Norton, Leiden; New York: Brill 1995-1996, p.88.
26 Ibid., p. 89.

As Bassam Tibi emphasizes, there are two reasons for these movements. Politically they are a response to the ongoing general crisis in the Moslem world. And from the angle of cultural analysis, they have emerged as a response to the challenge of cultural modernity.[27]

Radical Fundamentalist Movements do not represent the majority of Muslims or Islamic movements, but they comprise a few groups spread all over the world. However equally uncompromising thoughts in the tyrannical policies of many Arab states that are no more democratic than these radical groups, have flourished these thoughts and their followers in the region.[28]

5.4 Negative US Image throughout the Region

US almost never had a positive image in the region, but it will be true to say that this image has been deteriorating ever since American soldiers invaded Afghanistan and Iraq. In an article written by Seymour M. Hersh in the New Yorker magazine, the issue of systematic torture in Iraq is analyzed.[29] According to Hersh, in the Abu Gharib prison, Iraqis kept as common criminals or suspects, were tortured by US army officials systematically under the chain of command. These tortures sometimes took the form of physical pain and mostly sexual abuse, humiliation and rape. The orders were coming from the military intelligence and the superior officers.

Regarding the Afghanistan side, the Egyptian journalist Fehmi Huveydi writes in the Şark-ul Avsat that the US forces have bombed 128 Afghan city and village with special types of bombs, which have been forbidden by international agreements. American airplanes used more than 600 of these types of bombs through the first 2 months of the invasion. Each of these bombs consisted of 200 smaller bombs and they explode 300 meters high before they touch the surface, and each piece scatters 300 lethal bullets.[30]

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27 Bassam Tibi, op.cit., in note 22, pp. 227-228.
28 Ibid., pp.116-117.
29 http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040510fa_fact.
30 Fehmi Huveydi, "An Arab Look On The Global Shame" Şark-ul Avsat, 5 May 2004.

6. Conclusion

As I have argued in the introduction, considering the hurdles and pitfalls in front of the GMEI, it will definitely be extremely difficult for US and her prospective allies to reach their aimed goals compared to the Helsinki Process. Other than the aforementioned difficulties, US have to deal with multiple players whereas during the Helsinki process in front of the Western Bloc there was practically one single authority, the USSR, to deal with.

Whether Turkey could promote democracy and stability in the Middle East within recent developments as a ''model'' is widely discussed among Turkish scholars. According to Prof. Kemal Kirişçi, for example, Turkey would contribute in following points immensely.

- Turkey setting a modest example as a concrete reference point of the benefits of a democratic and liberal market economy provides in terms of stability, relative prosperity and security.

- The consequence of economic growth in Turkey are bound to spill-over into neighboring Middlee Eastern countries. It is already doing it in the form of exports but also in terms of providing an expanding market to Middle Eastern exports. Business interactions will help to increase as well as assist emergence of a civil society.

- The more Turkey becomes engaged by the EU the more Turkey can become a ''soft security'' player in the Middle East replacing its image as a ''hard security''' player on behalf of the US. Even US officials have begun to better appreciate Turkey's ''soft security potential recently. In many ways the 1 March 2003 debacle for the US in the hands of the Turkish parliament may actually be turning into a blessing. The situation in the region would have been much more volatile had Turkey become militarily involved in Iraq. Turkish democratization and economy would surely have been adversely affected by it.

- A Turkey engaged by the EU would also be a Turkey that carries its experience in the area of regional integration and cooperation to the Middle East. Turkey has long been part of many European regional

organizations including the OSCE. This experience could become vital for efforts to revive regional cooperation schemes that were attempted under Madrid Peace Process. The Middle East, with the exception of the Gulf Cooperation Council, has a severe absence of expertise in the realm of region wide inclusive economic and political cooperation too.[31]

A recent suggestion which created interest in Turkey but no details yet worked out came by Samir Salha from Kocaeli University as an alternative project to Greater Middle East Initiative with OSEGİT (Middle East Political Economic and Security Cooperation Organization. In his suggestion Salha suggest that Turkey, Iran, Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan should come together under one umberalla in order to create stability and peace in the region. However, it seems that this suggestion far away from the realities in the region there will remain only as an suggestion.[32]

In conclusion, the way to reach the aimed goals of GMEI is full of problems and success seems challenging if not elusive. Therefore, the wind of change also there as a political reality. Indeed, the future will bring more challenges to the region then it was the case in the last century.

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31 See Kemal Kirişçi, Talking Points prepared for the Security Seminar on Turkey:A NATO country between the EU and the Middle East, 23 April 2004, Royal Danish Defence College, Copenhagen.
32 Samir Salha BOP'a alterenatif proje: OSEGİT, Zaman 11.06.2004.

Ashot Voskanian

South Caucasus within the Perspective of Contemporary Integration Processes

Our Oukumene and we

When referring to the post-soviet realities certain gathering names are usually used –Baltic States, Central Asia, South Caucasus. These names are, of course symbolic and certainly reflect the realities of soviet times. Attempts to revaluate them have had a superficial character. The name of our region for example has undergone a minor editing – Transcaucasus has become South Caucasus. The aim of this change was to take the region away of its 'post-colonial' status – a perspective forced upon by Russia. However this solution does not seem successful, at least for Armenia. Historically Armenia has closely been linked with territories located 'trans' Caucasus – Mediterranean and Middle Eastern. And it was also open towards the Italian peninsula, Balkans, Arabic world and Iran. This reality is reflected in a classical XIX century Armenian song:

> I saw the fields of Urmia, the Mount Lebanon and its cedars,
> I saw the country of Italy, Venice and its gondolas,
> No island is more wonderful than our Cyprus, and no place, indeed is more beautiful
> Than our Cilicia, the country which gave me sun…

This arrow that goes from Persian Urmia lake to Italy sharply layouts the frames of regional activity conducted by Armenians for ages. While within the Soviet Union Armenia found itself in border lock – the communication with immediate southern and western neighbors was possible only via the North, thus, to reach Iran one had to cross the Caucasian mountains, go to

Moscow and from there take a plane to Tehran. In this context the definition of 'South Caucasus' takes us back to the narrow perception of the Soviet times, associating us with North Caucasian peoples, with whom our historical and cultural links are, in fact, minimal.

A similar problem emerged when Armenia joined the Council of Europe. If no one questions that Russia, Ukraine or Moldova belong to Europe, and if Central Asian states' being out of Europe was not discussed, it took several years to state the right of South Caucasian countries to join the Council of Europe.

During the first years of South Caucasian state's independence the issue of their geopolitical classification was rather formal. Now, when at least three concrete globalization projects exist in perspective, whose links with the region cannot be questioned, the problem has become actual. Those projects are 'Wider Europe: New Neighborhood' of EU, 'Greater Middle East' of USA and the post-soviet CIS and CDT, patronized by Russia. In the situation of common fight against terror, as well within the context of EU's actual enlargement and NATO's geopolitical shift towards the East the developments in South Caucasus become more dynamic and the emergence of new units is being accelerated.

The Regional Players

The issue of linking the region with different globalization projects would have been much easier if South Caucasus and its immediate neighbors presented a more or less homogeneous unit, which exists, for example in the case of Baltic region. But in South Caucasus one deals with an extremely complicated historical-cultural and political mosaic, which needs a different approach. The immediate neighbors of Armenia are Georgia and Azerbaijan, and also Iran and Turkey. Below are presented brief characteristics of these regional players within the context of their relationship with Armenia.

Georgia – a country with similar cultural and religious traditions, which faces now numerous problems of transitional period and also bears the

weight of Abkhazian and South Osetian ethnic conflicts. Georgia's relations with Russia are marked with great amount of problems, from the issue of Russian military bases there and to the Chechen terrorist activities at Russia-Georgia state border. Georgia tries to balance the situation by developing and broadening its relationship with Turkey, and centering not only on economic, but also on military issues. Cooperation with Armenia intensively develops. The relationship of two countries is being regulated by more than 80 agreements. For landlocked Armenia, which for a decade has been in a state of blockade by two countries (Azerbaijan and Turkey) the roots, which via Georgia lie to Europe and Russia have an extreme significance. But the obstacles here remain major. Russian railroad is closed because of the conflicts in North Caucasus, the European roots which lie through Poti and Batumi are not reliable, because the state institutions of Georgia are not strong enough yet to ensure necessary control all over the state's territory. Nevertheless Georgia remains the most important part of Armenia's communication chain.

The other substantial neighbor from the point of view of ensuring the communication roots is Iran. Armenian-Iran relationships are positive. The parties are interested in enlarging the trade and economic links, cooperation in energetic systems' sphere, strengthening of traditional historical-cultural ties and retaining the regional stability. The strategic programs of economic cooperation involve: construction of Iran-Armenia gas pipeline, which will link Armenia with the new regional pipeline network, diversifying Armenia's energy roots, building of new power plant, which will contribute to development of economy in borderline regions, construction of mountainous tunnel improving the transportation etc. At the same time it is known that main directions of Iran's policy have provoked certain preoccupations at the United States and the careful approach of the international community because of it creates additional problems in the regional relationships.

Armenia's relationships with the remaining two regional neighbors are more than complicated. The extreme tension here is expressed by the transport blockade that those states have conducted towards Armenia.

There have not been established diplomatic relationships between Armenia and *Azerbaijan* because of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict[1]. To pressure Armenia in this sense Azerbaijan rejects any exploitation of common transportation links and offers by Armenia and international community to search possibilities of cooperation within the frameworks of regional programs. While trying to limit Armenia's possibilities of economic development and cooperation with the outer world Azerbaijan also creates obstacles for the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relationships.

Turkey and Armenia do not have diplomatic relationships today. The reasons are the preconditions presented by the Turkish side. Armenia calls upon establishing diplomatic relationships without preconditions and interested in Turkey's positive engagement in the South Caucasian region. The issue of the recognition of 1915 Armenian Genocide by the Ottoman Empire Armenia considers not as a precondition of normal relations' establishment, but as an important factor improving the atmosphere of mutual confidence, ensuring the regional security and any potential genocide prevention in the future. Opening of Armenian-Turkish border, re-exploitation of Kars-Gyumri railroad would significantly contribute to the broadening of the trade and economic exchange between two states, presently non-officially flowing via the third countries and would also create a favorable atmosphere for the peaceful resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Armenia attaches importance to the role and consistent efforts of the USA as a mediator in the task of improving relationships with Turkey and re-

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1   The basis of *Nagorno-Karabakh* conflict is the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh people's right to self-determination. The problem was frozen during the Soviet era and has still become actual during the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1988. The resolution negotiations are conducted within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group from 1994 onwards. From 1999 onwards direct negotiations between Armenian and Azeri presidents have begun. Armenia always acts upon the principle that any final agreement or document must be favored also by Nagorno-Karabakhi party, which must continue its participation to the processes within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group as a side of negotiations. In 2001 some progress towards the conflict resolution was indicated between the presidents in Paris and Key-West (Florida), which the Azeri party later denied to develop. Armenia favors the continuity of the negotiations process and will protect in future as well the mission of the OSCE Minsk Group in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution.

establishing the transportation roots. Armenia expects that the EU will include in the list of requirements for Turkey's possible EU membership the issues of the improvement of Armenian-Turkish relations and recognition of Armenian Genocide. We hope that the adoption of European values would significantly transform the Turkish society, which will lead to regional solutions congruent to European standards.

Although *Russia* does not have an immediate border with Armenia, it has been the regional superpower and as the former metropolis retains its significant presence in the region. The basis of Armenian-Russian relations consists of certain commonality of strategic interests. Russia's co-chairmanship (together with the US and France) in OSCE Minsk Group responsible for the peaceful resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict also cannot be ignored. Recently the relationship has become more pragmatic and mainly is based on the economic interest. Russian military presence in Armenia is the expression of regional realities. Under the light of complicated Turkish-Armenian situation this reality cannot be unexpected. Russian presence in the region can also be considered within the context of NATO's shift towards the East. This context creates a new reality for Armenia, because Turkey ends to exclusively represent the North-Atlantic Alliance in the region. The competing interests of Russia with West have been an explicit reality, but it does not have a confrontational character, because proceeds according to the 'soft sphere-of influence-model'.

Globalization Projects

Due to the complex character of South Caucasian geopolitical relations it is not obvious, that three South Caucasian states can act unified. At least, two historically known attempts to form a South Caucasian federation (1918, 1922-1927) failed. This requires a broader and more effective supra-regional perspective plan. Here we face a paradox – supra-regional integration seems to be more effective then a simply regional attempt. This contention can seem unexpected (as we know EU or NATO consider the ability of conflict resolution to be the necessary condition which indicates the maturity of society and makes possible a country's membership to those

organizations). On the other hand, we can witness the attempt to unify Cyprus under the light of an attractive vision: EU membership. Although this project failed, this is a promising methodology, which possibly will find its extension. It is not excluded that this road for the South Caucasus can be successful. Thus, let us consider the main existing globalization projects, aimed to encourage the further regional and supra-regional integration in South Caucasus.

All the three South Caucasian states have expressed their firmness to follow the root of European integration. EU membership is being spoken as the perspective goal. In the original EU project 'Wider Europe: New Neighborhood' however there have not been any mentioning of South Caucasus. The beginning of reconsideration of this first option of March, 2003 was put in Thessalonica by Xavier Solana in June, 2003, by a document presented to European Council. In November 2003 the European Parliament suggested to the European Commission and the European Council to work out a new policy for the South Caucasian states in the framework of 'New Neighborhood', putting special attention to the conflict prevention. During these days (June 2004) the decision about the involvement of South Caucasian states within the European neighborhood is reached. Of course, this does not guarantee that they will be invited to join the EU. Nevertheless the two aims are internally linked.

Unlike the careful approach by the European Union, the significance given to the South Caucasus in other projects receives a special emphasis. In *American* position two points of view can be distinguished. One is the perspective of Greater Middle East, to which the South Caucasus in fact does not belong but can play certain role as a neighboring region. The other is the broader special perception of *Europeanization*, which is being developed by Z. Brzezinski, B. Jackson, A. Cohen, S. Sestanovich and others. Those authors comment Europeanization to be not as much a further development of forming elite union worked out within the strict frames of the EU, but as a more flexible association involving actually all the European states, with NATO membership and common fight against the challenges threatening the democratic societies to be the basis for it.

Within this concept the EU itself appears as one of participants of a collective process and gives up the role of only unifying, controlling, implementing and supporting center of 'euro-crystallization'. For South Caucasian states and for Armenia in particular the American model can have certain appeal, because it offers a faster and 'easier' way of Europeanization. Evidently, this simpler way is not enough to learn in its completeness the political and social experience of Europe, which has been developed during centuries and which is presently being codified in EU institutions. On the other hand, the way the South Caucasus has to pass will be intermediated anyways. Hence the American concept of Europeanization must not be ignored, particularly because the similar idea of *Wider Europe* is also proposed by the EU.

In this context the concept of M. Emerson (SEPS, Brussels) seems to be interesting. It suggests to sharply distinguish two concepts within the framework of EU – *the New Neighborhood* and *Europeanization.* Europeanization is based on a democracy supporting ideology, liberalism with an emphasis on social sphere, multi-ethnical and integrative society. It refers to the countries – members of the Council of Europe and can be considered as the preparatory phase for the full membership to the EU. The 'New Neighborhood' is a wider idea which involves the Mediterranean states of Maghreb, Central Asia and other non-European states. The latter have not made the European choice and are not obliged to be directed by the European values. But their close cooperation with the EU is desired and possible. The certain homogeneity of 'New Neighborhood's state's political fields can be ensured by following the reform program suggested by the American *Greater Middle East* project. The EU 'New Neighborhood' and 'Greater Middle East' nearly coincide by their volume. It can't be suspected that the EU and the USA concepts are very much compatible with each other. The defining parallelism is seen more vividly when the question arises about the possible implementation of the political tools elaborated during the EU Barcelona Process within the framework of *GME* Project[2]. To those mechanisms belong the associative treaties with EU neighbor

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2   Perthes, Volker: Europa and Amerikas Greater Middle East.

states, working out of common strategy in Mediterranean, common positions Palestinian-Israeli conflict, consultations in the Gulf Cooperation Council, forming of principles of trade relationship, presenting of common position on the issue of military force application, involvement of new countries etc. Here it is apparently natural to speak on complementarity of the EU and the USA, not about competition. The agreement on Greater Middle East Initiative found on the recent days on G8 meeting witnesses about closeness of USA and EU (and also Russian) positions. The soul of the consensus reached can be expressed by the slogan 'cooperation versus missionary work'.

Two other integration projects worth mentioning with participation of South Caucasus states are linked with the CIS and BSEC.

The role that *CIS institutions* played while softening the aftermath of the USSR collapse and making the processes smoother is undeniable. Now, when the formation of independent states in the post-soviet territory has actually completed, the relationship between the CIS states are undergoing a smooth and dynamic reconstruction. Here a greater role has been recently playing the economic factor.

The Black See Economic Cooperation also has the advantage of being a formed and already experienced institution, which has a whole network of working mechanisms ranging from the secretariat to the common bank. Its geopolitical significance is that it mostly makes the South Caucasian states close to Central and East Europe and contributes to the common Europeanization processes. To the landlocked Armenia it provides with the advantage of immediate relations with an important European sea district. Moreover, the Istanbul office of BSEC is presently the only Armenian official mission in Turkey, which contributes to the frequency of Armenian-Turkish relationships. On the other hand, there are also lots of problems – the first of them to be the closeness of Armenian-Turkish border and absence of diplomatic relations. The obstacles for the organization's work are observable (conflicts during the high-ranking official's nomination, failures of visits because of regional tensions) and are often determined by the uneasy atmosphere between the participant states. Despite all of these

the BSEC has a big potential. That potential is not limited only by the possibilities of this concrete organization. The forming of Black Sea geopolitical region could be much more perspective and could play an important role for the europeanization processes of the member states. Armenia would greet a rise of such a regional alliance, because it could encourage our return to the political, economic and cultural region where Armenians used to be present for ages. To implement that kind of idea all the regional states must make a joint effort. Turkey's role will definitely be significant taking into account both its human and economic resources, and its European ambitions. For the success of the project it is necessary that Turkey's role is constructive – it must give away the discrimination policy against Armenia and open for Armenia the way to Europe, which was closed because of Genocide of 1915. The Black Sea Region could have a great future.

The Topos of the Dialogue

This brief outlook on the regional constellations shows the *virtual postmodern* character of emerging alliances. We can see that EU's 'New Neighborhood', the America's 'Greater Middle East' and 'Greater Europe', the forming Black See community and the other associations are not built upon the centrifugal principle but upon the principle of Wittgenstein's *language games* – relationships are regulated by numerous, mostly bilateral agreements, treaties or simply by agreed positions. The question put ahead of us is whether an analogous CSCE framework is possible, to regulate and to encourage dialogue and closest cooperation between Europe, Greater Middle East region and the United States of America. I have seen my humble contribution to answering to this major question in the insider's presentation of the possible place of South Caucasus – a district related to this large region – within the frame of developing global relationships. A few words about the idea itself, as an epilogue.

It possibly makes sense to mention that the Europe – Greater Middle East – USA dialogue on the first turn refers to the so called arrow of instability, which goes from Central Asia via Afghanistan to Northern Africa, involves

in itself the Arabic world and Trans Caucasus, and is over weighted with unresolved conflicts. It is rich not only with energy and other material resources, but also with human potential and is the part of the ancient oukumene, from which the Western world emerged. We will, thus, speak about an integration process, in which such elements will unify which originally were united. It refers not only the region; we speak about the future of our common civilization. So the institutionalization of the dialogue is a necessity. Which are the more obvious problems referring to its organization?

We remember the formation of CSCE in 1975. The aim then was not the *establishment* of a political order, but the re-confirmation of realities formed during the post-war developments, referring to mutual recognition, cooperative retaining and development. The CSCE-OSCE has fulfilled and is fulfilling this function successfully and here one must search for the secret of success. OSCE has faced with problems and lack of functioning mechanisms every time when a need to reform an established order and to qualitatively change it would arise. A classical example were the events in Balkans of nineties. The other example is the problem of resolution of Nagorno Karabakh conflict. We proceed to consider the OSCE Minsk Group to be the adequate format for the fair resolution of the problem, but at the same time the center of negotiations' weight has shifted during the recent years towards the immediate efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen countries, as well as of periodical meetings between Armenia's and Azerbaijan's presidents.

As former standing representative of Armenia to the OSCE (1995-1997) I am pleased to state that the OSCE fulfilled its mission with honor, but I am also obliged to say that OSCE succeeded up to the degree, to which the political tools under its disposal allowed.

Does this mean that OSCE or any similar organization will be unable to resolve problems referring to similar situations only because in the case of Europe's New Neighborhood, South Caucasus and the Middle East we deal with geopolitical reality that has just been undergoing a period of formation, and to which obviously Karl Schmitt's famous sentence refers: 'No

norm can be applied to chaos. An order must be established, so that the legal order makes sense'? And what were the coalition forces efforts in Iraq, if not an attempt to establish an order, referring to which only the *legal order makes sense.*

It is obvious that a blind adoption of this formula is unacceptable. It results in a schematic missionary work, which has already been rejected by many of the region's states. The problem is different: we will search common ways and agree on common goals while resolving the existing conflicts and complicated issues in the region. As a place for such a tolerant and aim-driven discussion, as a *topos for a dialogue* the role of a new regional organization can indeed be significant. If the creation of such kind of organization succeeds, this will be a win/win solution for all the parties involved – the USA, which is bearing the main burden of responsibility for providing the free and stable development in the postmodern world, the regional countries, which now face not only the challenges of contemporary development, but also the problems of retaining and further developing of their historical identities, and also the United Europe, whose program of unprecedented enlargement puts ahead new questions. At the same time I want to insist that the soul of the project discussed will be European so much, as much it is principally aimed to the political institutionalization of the European idea of *discourse ethics*. I believe that the states of South Caucasus, which have announced their European choice, will contribute actively to the establishment and effective activities of such an organization.

Amichai Magen

Building Democratic Peace in the Eastern Mediterranean: An Inevitably Ambitious Agenda

> "I know that it will be extremely hard to proceed with the structuring of a new Middle East as long as we shall not see new realities as a result of the bilateral negotiations. Yet the bilateral negotiations will not hold water unless we have a new Middle East."
>
> Shimon Peres, September 1st 1992

The conundrum is plain to anyone who wants to see it. On the one side, autocratic regimes in the Greater Middle East complain that without a "resolution" of the Arab-Israeli conflict they cannot accept calls for extensive political, social or even market reforms. The end of "Israeli occupation", we are told, is a *sine qua non* for domestic change and there could be no real progress without "justice" for the Palestinians.[1] Putting aside for the moment the logic of these claims, it is clear that crying foul and vilifying Israel is highly convenient for the region's authoritarians – serving at once to divert public anger, justify political oppression, excuse sclerotic economies and resist exogenous pressures to democratise.[2] Yet on the other side, the notion that ambitious strategies for Middle East democratisation can be effectively pursued in isolation from the Arab-Israeli conflict is erroneous, for two very different sets of reasons:

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1   See: Walter Russel Mead, *Why They Hate Us, Really,* Op-Ed, The New York Times, April 21 2004; Martin Indyk, *Back to the Bazaar*, vol. 81.1 Foreign Affairs (Jan-Feb 2002).
2   See: Barry Rubin, *The Real Roots of Arab Anti-Americanism,* Foreign Affairs (Nov-Dec 2002).

First, because whatever the logical merit of the Arab argument, the sense of grievance is real, deeply entrenched and cannot be ignored.[3] The linkage made in the Arab world between Western demands for democratic reforms and the "Palestinian issue" was perhaps best conceptualised by the 22 Arab authors of the Arab Human Development Report (2002). The conflict, the report found, is: "a contributing factor to the region's democratic deficit, providing both a cause and an excuse for distorting the development agenda."[4] An acknowledgement of the linkage was completely absent from early drafts of the Bush administration's new Greater Middle East Initiative, and only made it into the text of the 2004 G8 summit at the last minute.

These sentiments in the Moslem world are not merely rhetorical expressions. An analysis of the decade-long experience of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the OSCE Mediterranean Partners in Cooperation effort (MPC) poignantly show that Arab reference to lack of progress in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) has consistently served to thwart progress across all three baskets of existing regional initiatives – in economic, security and political reform.[5] If the linkage between democratic reforms and peace making is not openly recognized and adequately addressed in future policies, what will prevent the new plans from stumbling on the same issue?

Pursuing wholly distinct reform and peace agendas is also flawed for a second set of reasons. Namely, it ignores the fundamental relationship between comprehensive security and peace, on the one hand, and open, de-

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3   For example, the scrapping of the March 2004 Arab League Summit – which was supposed to discuss a proposal on political, social and economic reforms in the Arab world produced at an Alexandria conference two weeks earlier – was squarely blamed by the Tunisian hosts on: *"the deadlock of the Palestinian issue"*. Hesham Yussef, Director of the Secretary's Office of the Arab League, cited in Marina Ottaway and Thomas Carothers, *The Greater Middle East Initiative: Off to a False Start*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Policy Brief No. 29 (March 2004).

4   UNDP Arab Human Development Report (2002).

5   See: President of Malta, H.E. Professor Guido De Marco, *A Strategy for the Mediterranean,* Chatham House, London, October 25th 2000.

mocratic societies, on the other.[6] It is correct to link democratic transformation and efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East, not in the negative sense done by reform-recalcitrant Arab regimes, but through a positive recognition that democratic transformation in the region is ultimately the sole hope for achieving the conditions of true security and peace. [7] Separating the question of the Arab-Israeli conflict from the one about lack of human rights, good governance, democracy, the rule of law and market economies in the Middle East, therefore, misses the crucial interconnectedness of the two issues – democracy and peace – to the detriment of both peace-making and governance reform efforts. The chronic absence of the "normative dimension" from peace-making efforts in the Middle East has been a fundamental failure of past strategies, particularly (but not exclusively) in the Israeli-Palestinian arena. The old "land for peace" formula needs, in other words, to be complemented with a "reforms for peace" agenda.

The argument made in this article is essentially that in order to unpack the "No reform without peace. No peace without reforms" conundrum, the West needs to pursue peace in order to support democratisation, and to pursue democratisation in order to support peace.[8] Both goals can and must be advanced dialectically (not sequentially or in a simplistic "tit-for-tat" manner) through a robust strategy, led by a revitalized transatlantic partnership.

It is also submitted that, at least initially, the new strategy should focus on creating a better regional context for democratisation and peace on two interrelated levels – Israel-Palestinians and the Eastern Mediterranean.[9]

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6 In the scope provided, I cannot begin to adequately address the complex relationship between democratic norms and peace. For a brief overview see: Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Towards Consolidation* (1999), chapter 1.

7 See: Nathan Sharansky, *The Middle East Needs a Helsinki,* International Herald Tribune, March 30, 2004; Natan Sharansky, *From Helsinki to Oslo,* (2001) Issue 1, Journal of International Security Affairs.

8 I refer to the term "the West" as meaning those nation-states (and the edifice of supranational institutions they control), which are characterised by and committed to open societies, representative democracy, the rule of law and market economies.

9 I refer to the term "Eastern Mediterranean" in a similar way that the term "South East Europe" has been used to describe the Balkans – a sub-region on the EU's doorstep with multiple conflicts that need to be comprehensively addressed, through democratic region-building. Geographically, the term is not definitive, but includes,

This agenda, while still hugely ambitious, is more concrete than calls to transform the Greater Middle East – "from Marrakech to Bangladesh".[10] Its integrated emphasis on democratisation and peace making should make it attractive to both Americans and Europeans, which will enhance its credibility and legitimacy in the region. Focus on the Eastern Mediterranean also lends itself to extending existing pan-European structures (EU, NATO, OSCE, Council of Europe) and integration dynamics (notably Turkish EU candidacy) to implement the new strategy – rather than assume the costs inherent in trying to generate new indigenous institutions. A US-EU led "democratic peace" strategy for the Eastern Mediterranean, furthermore, could leverage their combined powers and build on the dependencies of Eastern Mediterranean countries on US security and EU trade/aid. A revamped MEPP coupled with a new "Eastern Mediterranean Peace and Democracy Pact" would also help shape an "arc of reform" to Iraq's north, west and south; aiding the country's post-war transition, and creating new opportunities for transatlantic rapprochement.

Beginning to translate this conceptualisation into policy would involve four main aspects – sketched out in the remainder of this article.

I. Reinventing the "indispensable partnership"

Close and sustained cooperation between the US and EU Member States is essential if an effective peace and reform strategy for Israel-Palestinians/Eastern Mediterranean is to materialize.[11] Sceptics might posit several arguments why such a strategy will falter on this ground alone. One claim is that the threats emanating from the Middle East are too amorphous to create the same "meeting of the minds" produced by the Cold War, and

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from north to south: Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, the Palestinians, Egypt (and possible Saudi Arabia).

10 Ronald Asmus and Kenneth Pollack, *The New Transatlantic Project,* Policy Review (October/November 2002) No. 115, pg. 3-19.

11 This does not mean that the strategy should be confined to US-EU cooperation, only that this relationship represents the core of the actors involved. The strategy should involved other transatlantic actors (such as Canada and non-EU members of the OSCE) and arrangements (such as NATO, Council of Europe and OSCE).

that there is no sufficient agreement on how to deal with them.[12] A second argument is that the rift opened between the US and some European states in the last three years is a sign of a deep strategic divergence, undermining prospects for future cooperation in a region that has historically divided the two.[13] Moreover, one could argue that the EU possesses leverage and credibility in the Middle East in large part by virtue of not being associated with the US, and that a common US-EU strategy would appear to Arab regimes as being an "imperialist" Western project.

These allegations have some headline appeal, but none are persuasive in the context of the strategy proposed here. The threats emanating from the Middle East may be less visible than the red flags and tanks of the Soviet Union, but they are understood to be very real and are sufficiently well defined for American and Europeans to coalesce around – even if this coalescence will happen over time and grow by accretion. It was less than three years ago, for instance, that the two (among others) adopted a UN Security Council Resolution 1373 that, for the first time, recognized acts of international terrorism as representing a threat to international peace and security within the meaning of the UN Charter. Today the US State Department is reportedly negotiating with its European counterparts a common statement of reform principles and a series of coordinating bodies to guide Western engagement with Arab governments in the economic, diplomatic and defence arenas.[14] In the intermittent period there has been a positive explosion in transatlantic dialogue over the common threats facing Europe and America, and a growing conversation about the need to reorient what Chris Patten recently called "the indispensable partnership" towards building a democratic peace in the Middle East.[15]

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12 See for example: The Economist, *Leader: 60 Years On* (June 5-11, 2004).
13 An argument exemplified by Robert Kagan, *Power and Weakness,* 113 Policy Review (June-July 2002).
14 Tamara Cofman Wittes, *The Promise of Arab Liberalism,* No. 125 Policy Review (June/July 2004).
15 Chris Patten, EU External Relations Commissioner, *Europe and America – has the transatlantic relationship run out of road?* Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, 13th February 2004.

Moreover, a combined peace-making and democratisation agenda for the Eastern Mediterranean would provide stronger "glue" than a democracy promotion strategy that is absent a conflict resolution component. Some European states may vehemently disagree with the current US administration on a variety of issues inside and outside the Middle East, but there is no broad rift among them on what an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal should look like. Both have strong interests in finding a stable solution to the conflict. Both are formally committed to the logic of a democratic peace among Arabs and Israelis – as exemplified in the Quartet's much-abused Middle East Road Map.[16] Both realise – perhaps more so after the Madrid and Istanbul bombings in Europe, and America's debacles in Iraq – that, at the very least, transatlantic cooperation is highly desirable because most of the goals each side wants to attain are more likely to be achieved if supported by the other.

Finally, what about the argument that when it comes to the Middle East the EU is better off disassociating itself from America? Apart from striking many Americans as being somewhat escapist and disloyal, this approach is unlikely to fly for a number of reasons: First, such a disassociation will not be confined to policy in the Middle East. An ongoing absence of a shared strategic vision will undoubtedly spill over to undermine cooperation in areas where Europe has important stakes – including the world trade system and the environment. Second, as Youngs asserts, "Where differences with the US are overstated genuine opportunities for joining forces may be lost, and the danger arises of Middle Eastern states being able to play the US and European states off against each other – to the benefit of neither the EU nor US. This has happened particularly with Syria, Iran and also Turkey"[17]. Further rifts would broaden the scope for spoilers to use "divide and rule" tactics, to the detriment of both Americans and Europeans. Third, to transform the dysfunctional politics of the Eastern Mediterranean through the use of "soft" and "sticky" power (which is both a European interest and

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16 A Performance-Based Road Map to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (April 30th 2003).

17 Richard Youngs, *European Policies for Middle East Reform: A Ten Point Action Plan*, The Civility Project, Working Paper No. 1, The Foreign Policy Centre (2004).

its philosophy) would necessitate close EU-US cooperation. As Pirouz and Leonard rightly observed: '[T]th EU's "constructive engagement" approach – hoping that economic liberalisation will bring about political change – is unlikely to disturb the sleep of the autocratic rulers.'[18] Just as America cannot go it alone with "hard power", in other words, Europe is unable to deal with the multiple threats emanating from its volatile eastern and southern peripheries by itself. This is especially true of Iran and Syria. More positively, Europe and America's joint dominance of a complex network of supranational institutions (including NATO, the OSCE and OECD) and their cumulative 40% of global GDP and trade, afford them unequalled "soft" and "sticky" power – provided they leverage it together.[19]

A reorientation of transatlantic relations to the gradual transformation of the Middle East is, therefore, both necessary and feasible – provided the task is approached collaboratively and with genuine, long-term commitment. Moving towards a EU-US plan for the Eastern Mediterranean would involve three main sets of changes:

- Both the EU and US need to conduct a thorough review of the way each currently approaches security, trade, aid and public diplomacy; and to substantially upgrade their individual capacities to build democratic states in the Eastern Mediterranean.[20]

- To avoid surprising each other the US and EU need to acquire new shared institutional "hardware", enabling continuous high-level coordination of policy initiation, development and implementation. This should not be confined to EU-US relations per se, but involve adapt-

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18 Rouzbeh Pirouz and Mark Leonard, *How to Change the Middle East*, Financial Times, 15 September 2003.

19 On "soft power" see: Joseph S. Nye, *Limits of American Power,* 117(4) Political Science Quarterly (Winter 2002-2003) 545-560. On the concept of "sticky power" see: Walter Russell Mead, *America's Sticky Power,* Foreign Policy (March/April 2004).

20 On this point see: Urban Ahlin, Ronald Asmus, Steven Everts, Jana Hybaskova, Mark Leonard, Michael McFaul, Michael Mertes, *A Transatlantic plan for democracy,* International Herald Tribune, March 15, 2004.

ing and leveraging existing international, Atlantic and pan-European structures.[21]

- New "software" is also required. In essence, Western nations need to have fundamentally different relations with countries that commit to a democratic peace agenda in the Eastern Mediterranean than with countries that don't; and they need to coordinate these relations among them to ensure optimal persuasive impact. Military and civil aid, access to markets, trade preferences, movement of persons, diplomatic privileges – all need to be coherently and credibly linked to the strategy, and new methods developed to support reformists.

II. A "Transitional Trusteeship" for the Palestinians

The imperative of a EU-US led strategy for democratic peace building is most starkly manifested in the Israeli-Palestinian context – where a legacy of displacement and occupation, a decade of Arafat's corrupt, authoritarian misrule and nearly four years of brutal conflict have combined to reduce Palestinian society to pathological chaos, traumatize Israeli democracy and empower extremists utterly opposed to co-existence. A committed drive to realizing the Quartet's vision of: "two-states, Israel and an independent, viable and democratic Palestine, living side by side in peace and security" should therefore be one of the two major aims of a new strategy for the Eastern Mediterranean.[22]

How to get there? Although the Quartet mechanism itself is currently in tatters, the common understandings reached by the members of the Quartet (the US, EU, UN and Russia) on what is required for a just and stable Israeli-Palestinian peace, represent an important meeting of the minds and provides a sound basis for a revamped US-EU strategy. The commitment made in the Quartet's July 2002 Join Statement that: "Implementation of an action plan, with appropriate benchmarks for progress on reform measures, should lead to the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state character-

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21 See also Richard Youngs, *Supra,* note 17.

ized by the rule of law, separation of powers, and a vibrant free economy that can best serve the interests of its people" appears to embody a shared recognition that a simple "land for peace" formula is inappropriate in the Israeli-Palestinian context, and that a fundamental democratic transformation in Palestinian controlled territories is essential if a stable peace is ever to emerge.[23]

This conceptualisation of the conflict marks an important departure from the Oslo-to-Camp David II paradigm – a paradigm that bet on Arafat's dictatorship to deliver security and peace with, as Yitzhak Rabin put it: "no Bagatz [petitions to a Supreme Court] and no Bet'zelem [an Israeli human rights watchdog]".[24]

Still, a breakthrough is prevented by continued attachment to another debunked assumption – namely that a peace settlement (while it may include a hefty dose of international cajoling) essentially depends on political negotiations between Israel and a Palestinian entity willing and able to negotiate and implement an agreement. However, not only is there no credible Palestinian regime today for Israel to negotiate with (as the road map and a host of unofficial 'citizen-driven' initiatives presuppose) but Israeli disengagement from Gaza and the West Bank would leave behind it a power vacuum far more likely to be filled by HAMAS and Islamic Jihad than by anything resembling responsible government. As Dennis Ross observed on March 24th this year: "every Palestinian I spoke with during a recent visit to the Middle East agreed, believing that Hamas would gain psychologically and practically from an Israeli withdrawal." And again, in the same piece: "only Hamas is so far making plans for the day after the Israeli military with-

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22 Joint Statement by the "Quartet" (US, EU, UN and Russia) following their New York meeting, 16 July 2002.

23 Joint Statement by the Quartet, *Supra,* note 22. See also The Bush Peace Plan speech (24th June 2002).

24 See: Natan Sharansky, *Supra,* note 7. The EU, by far the single largest donor of aid to the Palestinian Authority, was during the Oslo years fully supportive of this approach, believing that by strengthening Arafat's executive authority rather than what were thought to be potentially destabilizing civil society elements, it would promote the peace-process. See: Richard Youngs, *Democracy Promotion: The Case of the European Union Strategy,* (2001) CEPS Working Paper No. 167, pg. 16.

draws from Gaza and parts of the West Bank. In discussions with both Israelis and Palestinians I heard about Hamas efforts to take credit for the withdrawal, absorb Israeli settlements and shape Palestinian governance after the Israeli departure."[25]

If a Palestinian State was established tomorrow, in other words, it would be a failed state, a rogue state or both. At a time when the international community is investing huge efforts to prevent state collapse and to deal with the dangerous externalities of rogue states, allowing the birth of either would be a grave mistake.

The notion that Israelis and Palestinians will somehow extricate themselves from the trap of war, or that a radicalised, impoverished Palestinian society will be able to live in peace alongside Israel after an Israeli withdrawal, is folly. Palestinian Prime Minister, Ahmed Qurie, has made it clear that he has neither the capacity nor the inclination to confront militant groups, fearing a Palestinian civil war.[26] Nor is Egypt willing to assume security responsibilities for Gaza.

To build a Palestinian state that is normatively and institutionally (as well as territorially) viable; to allow Israel to withdraw from Gaza and parts of the West Bank without risking a HAMAS takeover and dangerous regional instability; to produce new opportunities for Israeli-Jordanian-Egyptian co-operation; to remove what the Moslem world claims is its primary grievance against America and its allies; to create a credible democratic reform agenda in the Eastern Mediterranean (no oil in Palestine); and to help generate a new, positive transatlantic agenda – the US and EU should promote a "Transitional Trusteeship", beginning with the Gaza Strip.

The Trusteeship will be "transitional" in two senses: firstly, it will prevent a dangerous power vacuum and facilitate an orderly Israeli withdrawal, in accordance with the Sharon plan; and, secondly, it will administer the territories and prepare the conditions for democratic Palestinian rule in Gaza –

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25 Dennis Ross, *Withdrawal Without Reward,* New York Times (March 24, 2004). See also: Mark Heinrich, *Anarchy in Nablus Evokes Disorder of Arafat's Rule,* Reuters, February 5, 2004.

which, if successful, would be extended to the West Bank in the context of an end-of-conflict peace settlement. In this sense, the Transitional Trusteeship complements the Quartet's vision.

A number of variations on the trusteeship theme were floated recently – notably by US Senator Richard Lugar and former Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk.[27] My intention here is not to critique or duplicate these suggestions, but merely to make several comments on what the goals and content of a Transitional Trusteeship should include, in the context of a broader democratic peace agenda for the Eastern Mediterranean. These comments need to be read in conjunction with the arguments for a "new deal" for Israel and the establishment of a Peace and Democracy Pact for the Eastern Mediterranean (see below).

Growing experience with a form of international governance described as "Neotrusteeship" (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, East Timor, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Iraq), demonstrates the importance of an international legal mandate (i.e. a UN Security Council Resolution) and robust implementation mechanisms to the legitimacy and effectiveness of the mission.[28]

Unlike the situation in Iraq – which was a after all a functioning sovereign state prior to the American invasion in March 2003 – the urgency of "returning sovereignty" to the Palestinians is low, since there has never been, de facto or de jure, Palestinian sovereignty over Gaza (or the West Bank for that matter).[29] This factor is important in reducing the pressures to find a quick fix and an early exit date. Accordingly – and in order to alleviate Israeli, Jordanian and Egyptian fears about instability in the event of a premature exit – the trusteeship will remain in force until it fulfils its mandated goals. Still, the preparation of the Trusteeship's mandate must be preceded

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26 Cited in: Daragesh, *Palestinian Security Nominee Refuses Oath,* Associated Press, 7th October 2003.

27 See: Richard G. Lugar, *A New Partnership for the Greater Middle East: Combating Terrorism, Building Peace,* Speech delivered at the Brookings Institute, Washington DC (March 29th 2004); Martin Indyk, *A Trusteeship for Palestine?,* 82(3) Foreign Affairs (May/June 2003).

28 See James Fearon and David Laitin, *Neotrusteeship and the Problem of Weak States,* 28(4) International Security (Spring 2004).

29 Legally, sovereignty over Gaza and the West Bank remains in the hands of the UN.

by extensive consultation with all the relevant stakeholders in the region who may become part of a peaceful and democratic solution. This will help bolster legitimacy and credibility, identify problem issues and spoilers, engage potential partners in peace and prepare the diplomatic scene for the Trusteeship.

The overarching goal of the trusteeship will be to build a Palestinian state to a point where full authority can be safely vested in a democratic Palestinian government, grounded in civil constitutional norms, able to provide public goods to the Palestinian people, live alongside Israel in peace and contribute to Eastern Mediterranean peace and stability. In broad terms, its aim would be to bring Israelis and Palestinians to the point envisaged in Phase III of the Road Map. This will involve four main dimensions:

Establishing security: A West Bank Palestinian who recently lost a family member to intra-Palestinian factional violence described the PA as a thousand competing authorities each with its own militia.[30] The primary task of the trusteeship must therefore be the establishment of a Weberian state monopoly on the means of violence in Palestinian territories. This will allow the IDF to remove the presence of troops and road blocks which make daily Palestinian lives so wretched. Without establishing conditions of security, as President Bush has said: "Israeli citizens will continue to be victimized by terrorists, and so Israel will continue to defend itself, and the situation of the Palestinian people will grow more and more miserable."[31] Achieving a monopoly on the means of violence will necessitate the deployment of a trusteeship security force capable of: securing the Gaza borders; preventing arms smuggling (notably through the Philadelphi route tunnels); facing down any spoiler; disarming, demobilizing and rehabilitating militant groups (including HAMAS, Islamic Jihad, the Fatah Tanzim and the Al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigades); training and gradually transferring security responsibilities to a unitary, well disciplined Palestinian security force. The idea of a NATO-led or other multilateral force transitioning Israeli withdrawal from Gaza is a challenging one, especially against the background

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30 Mark Heinrich, *Supra,* note 25.
31 The Bush Peace Plan, June 24, 2002.

of the Iraq experience. Certainly, such an operation will have to be carefully planned and could only go ahead with Israeli approval. It is nonetheless an idea that has gathered momentum over the past year.[32] The vacuum left behind by an Israeli withdrawal risks creating dangerous externalities not only for Israel, Egypt and Jordan, but also for Europe and the US's efforts in Iraq. A situation where Hizbollah and al-Qaeda elements infiltrate and find refuge in Gaza is not unthinkable. More positively, a US-EU led multilateral force – Indyk estimates that 10,000 troops will be sufficient – with an explicit peace mandate will send stabilizing signals around the region, demonstrate American commitment to the Palestinian issue, strengthen the credibility of European foreign and defence policy and strengthen the EU-US partnership in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Normative and economic reconstruction: Immediately upon taking control and establishing an adequate level of security, the Trusteeship must begin to create the social and economic conditions necessary for a free Palestinian society. The Faustian deal, by which extremists provide education, rough justice and social services in return for the minds and bodies of Palestinian youth, must be broken, and replaced with modern, normatively acceptable state structures. A robust post-conflict reconstruction plan is needed to disband refugee camps, create new housing and communal infrastructure, generate entrepreneurship and employment opportunities and transform an educational system that thoroughly indoctrinates Palestinian children to a life of violent struggle and genocidal hatred for Israel and America. Settlements evacuated by Israel should not be destroyed or allowed to fall into the hands of thugs, but administered by the trustees to alleviate Gaza's grave overcrowding problem. A special Donor Group (which ideally should include not only The World Bank and IMF, but Saudi Arabia, the Gulf countries and Israel) should help the trustees fund these projects. At the same time, the trustees, aided by the Donor Group should facilitate the establishment of economic structures aligned with modern Western standards. Here, the trustees could draw on the expertise

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32 See: Steven Everts, *Why NATO must keep the Mid East peace,* Financial Times (29 July, 2003).

and courage of indigenous reformists, such as Palestinian Finance Minister Salim Fayad, himself a former IMF official.

Building democratic institutions: Despite risking life and limb, a growing number of Palestinian legislators, academics, NGO leaders, journalists and human rights activists are voicing their resentment of the PA's lawlessness and corruption, and have called for genuine democratic reforms.[33] Still, after decades of mal-governance and trauma, considerable time and resources will have to be invested in institutional and normative state-building. Elections should be postponed until relatively late in the game. To prepare the ground for a meaningful democratic process, the trustees should focus on empowering civil forces (notably women's groups), nurture the establishment of constitutionalism, promote democratic education and encourage the sizeable and highly-educated Palestinian Diaspora in North America and Europe to participate in the creation of a rehabilitated Palestinian society. Only after a period of "detoxification" and renewal, could sound indigenous political institutions and gradual transfer of governmental powers emerge – possibly through transitional legislative, executive and judicial branches, guided by the Trusteeship.

Regional and cross-border cooperation: One of the major shortcomings of the Oslo-to-Camp David II paradigm has been the general failure of key actors in the region (especially Egypt and Saudi Arabia) to assume responsibility and play a constructive role in the peace process. As Senator Lugar recently put it: "the nations of the Greater Middle East must be brought into the process of resolving the conflict. They cannot continue to expect the U.S. to address these issues on their behalf, and then complain the U.S. is not doing it right."[34] Accordingly, the fourth dimension of the trusteeship must be to facilitate collaborative cross-border problem solving especially among Israel and Egypt. An often-ignored dimension, cross-border cooperation is practically a necessity for tiny, overcrowded Gaza – with its dire demographic, employment, water, energy, sanitation, drug smuggling and infrastructure problems. Certainly, as soon as conditions allow, Israel

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33 See: Dan Diker and Khaled Abu Tomameh, *What Happened to Reform of the Palestinian Authority?,* Jerusalem Issue Brief Volume 3 No. 20, March 3rd 2004.

34 Richard C. Lugar, *Supra,* note 27.

should consider increase the number of Palestinian workers allowed in. At the same time, Egypt should allow Palestinians from Gaza greater access into empty Sinai, to pursue legitimate economic activities, travel and even residence.

III. A New Vision for Israel

Western policy makers have grown accustomed to taking for granted Israel's strength and stability. Ironically both friends and foes of Israel have vested interests in perpetuating this image. Friends, in order to put on a brave face, help deter those who still seek Israel's annihilation, and to promote favourable comparisons between democratic Israel and the rest of the Middle East. Foes, in order to portray Israel as a potent aggressor, imperialist in its designs and reprehensible in its treatment of the Palestinian underdog. Yet, as only a few have so far dared to publicly admit, the truth of this image has over the past four years been compromised to a dangerous degree.[35]

The last four years have taken a terrible toll on Israeli society, leaving many Israelis feeling beleaguered at home and isolated abroad. The trauma of countless terrorist attacks which have taken the lives of over 1000 civilians, has been coupled with the worst economic down turn in the country's history – with 3 successive years of shrinking GDP – the departure of over 200,000 Israelis (many of them young, highly-educated and secular), and rising anti-Semitism in Europe and the Arab world. A growing number of Israelis are worried about the deteriorating state of their society, but are powerless to make positive changes in a public arena trapped in a narrow survivalist discourse.

An Israeli withdrawal that does not leave behind it a competent and responsible Palestinian entity, will almost certainly worsen Israel's security and economic situation, which will make Israel more jittery in its responses, which in turn would increase regional instability.

Moreover, unless an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the West Bank is accompanied by powerful security guarantees and endorsement of the international community, it risks being interpreted in the Arab world as a victory for terror – emboldening extremists from Gaza City to Damascus, from Jenin to Fallujah. Arab aggression against Israel did not begin with the 1967 occupation of land, and it is unlikely to cease with the evacuation of land alone.

Domestically, a worsened security and economic situation after withdrawal will empower illiberal elements in Israeli politics, silence the majority that is supportive of territorial concessions in return for genuine peace, paralyse the Israeli left and centre-left, and further strain relations between Israeli Jewish and Arab citizens.

To avoid this dangerous scenario, the US and EU need to reach out to the Israeli public, showing the way to a safe, controlled exist from Gaza and offering a tangible vision for a better future. The new vision should contain both hard and soft security components:

Ensuring security after an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza: To reassure Israelis, deter those who would wish to take advantage of a "Zionist retreat" from "Arab lands" and establish a new security context in the Eastern Mediterranean, an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza needs to be complemented with collective security guarantees. The June 28-29 NATO summit in Istanbul is expected to generate ideas for promoting deeper military and political relations with Israel and a number of Arab states. In the aftermath of the summit, the US and EU Member States should advance the role of NATO as a security safety net in the context of Eastern Mediterranean peace-making. Certainly this could include a concerted push to upgrade the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue (as was envisaged by the 2002 Prague summit) – encouraging in particular NATO-Egyptian-Israeli-Jordanian security cooperation.[36] A more advanced formula would extend the Partner-

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35 See: Former Speaker of the Knesset (1999-2003) and former chairman of the Jewish Agency, Avraham Burg, *A Failed Israeli Society Collapses While Its Leaders Remain Silent,* Forward (August 29, 2003).

36 The NATO Mediterranean Dialogue encompasses Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

ship for Peace (PfP) initiative, or its equivalent, to those Eastern Mediterranean countries that subscribe to the democratic peace agenda advanced by the US and EU. In the case of Israel, which eventually will be expected to relinquish control of the strategic depth provided by the West Bank, the PfP framework could serve as a "waiting room" for eventual NATO membership. This will create a phased integration mechanism that could be conditionally linked to progress in the peace process.

Israel in Wider Europe: A bold offer of greater political and economic inclusion needs to be extended by the EU to Israelis – a majority of whom wish for closer integration with Europe, but feel alienated by the EU mainly because of its perceived pro-Arab bias.[37] Rather than try to act as a "counterweight" to American policy or threaten to employ coercive measures against Israel (an approach which will almost certainly prove counterproductive) the EU would do well to utilize its new Wider Europe initiative to offer Israel a qualitatively enhanced relationship, in the context of a withdrawal from Gaza and eventual peace deal with the Palestinians.

Such an approach is gathering support in some European policy circles. Chatham House's Rosemary Hollis, for example, rightly argued that the EU can play a far more effective role in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, by recognizing the security risks that Israel will incur in the context of withdrawal and offering it a new European "strategic depth".[38] Some senior officials in Brussels are reportedly also contemplating a dramatic upgrade in EU-Israel relations, in this context.

The Wider Europe initiative launched by the Commission in March 2003 provides a sound basis for developing such a policy. Unlike the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the new initiative proposes country-specific

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37 See Poll: Israeli Attitudes Towards the EU, March 10th 2004 (available at: http://www.eu-del.org.il/english/DAHAF_SECOND_POLL_RESULTS_EDITED. doc).

38 Comments made in an interview to Ha'aretz. Reported by Sharon Sadeh, *Withdrawing from the Arabs to the embrace of the Europeans,* Ha'aretz 24th January 2004. Dr. Rosemary Hollis is the Head of the Middle East Department, Royal Institute for International Affairs (Chatham House).

"action plans" and contains ample scope for deep political and economic ties.

It is proposed that a two-phase plan be adopted by the EU: To alleviate Israeli suspicions and empower liberal elements, the first phase would be a package of "up front" incentives, designed to build trust and encourage a secure Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. The EU would reach out to Israel with a positive political and economic signal, offering full access to the Single Market, on a basis similar to that of Switzerland or the European Economic Area (EEA) countries. Israel would be invited to join EU programmes in areas like transportation and energy, Justice and Home Affairs cooperation, the environment, culture and education. In addition, the package could contain enhanced political dialogue, security cooperation and stronger European commitments to fight anti-Semitism.

To encourage sub-regional cooperation between Israel, the Palestinians, Jordan and Egypt, the EU should also contemplate measures such as granting the four cumulative rules of origin, and stating that Arab countries that make peace with Israel will also be able to join the cumulative rule of origin regime for purposes of export into the Single Market. The US could complement this policy, thus leveraging EU-US "sticky power".

A second phase of a EU policy towards Israel will involve a degree of ex ante conditionality and would coincide with a final status settlement with the Palestinians. At that stage EU-Israel relations should assume a qualitatively new character; forming a model of what a closely-integrated but non-member relationship will look like for a liberal democracy in the European neighbourhood. In this context, political ties with the EU could be further deepened with Israel invited to participate in core EU policies and some institutions. In addition, the EU should support full Israeli membership in pan-European organizations such as NATO, the OSCE, Council of Europe and OECD – consolidating a transformation from isolation to inclusion in a peaceful and prosperous regional matrix.

Many Europeans have a visceral contempt for Ariel Sharon and are reluctant to reach out to his coalition government. This attitude is misguided. In its foreign policy the EU has been most successful when it has held out the

prospect of inclusion to countries receptive to the allure of European integration. If the Sharon government – which already accepted the imperative of disengagement from the Palestinians – is prepared to go along with the new strategy, there is no reason for Europe to snub it on personal grounds. A right wing Israeli government that commits to a US-EU plan will benefit from the support of the centre and left. For more right-wing constituents the plan is far more likely to be palatable if followed by Ariel Sharon than by Shimon Peres. (It was after all, Likud's Menachem Begin who achieved the breakthrough peace deal with Egypt in 1979, evacuated the Sinai settlements and handed back the entire Sinai Peninsula). If, on the other hand, a European outstretched arm were to be rejected by the Sharon coalition, the Israeli public would, for the first time in four years, have an alternative agenda to pursue at the polls. Indeed, the Israeli public has for over a decade consistently elected governments committed to a peace settlement with the Palestinians when it has felt that peace was a realistic possibility, and it has punished governments it felt were too hesitant in pursuing peace – Rabin defeating Shamir in 1992, Barak defeating Netanyahu in 1999. The aim of the US-EU strategy, in this context, should be to create a positive alternative vision for Israelis, where none currently exists.

IV. A Peace and Democracy Pact for the Eastern Mediterranean

A growing body of research indicates that domestic democratisation processes are strongly influenced by external, especially regional conditions. To improve the regional conditions for Arab-Israeli peace and promote democratic reforms in the Middle East, the EU and US should complement the Israel-Palestine strategy outlined above with a Peace and Democracy Pact for the Eastern Mediterranean (PDPEM).

While a fully developed plan for a PDPEM is beyond the scope of this discussion, the following comments are offered to stimulate further thinking on this policy direction.

The PDPEM concept draws on the Balladur Stability Pact (1993-95) and the Stability Pact for the Balkans (1999) – both of which leveraged eco-

nomic and political power to address disputes over borders and minority populations, promote economic and democratic reforms, and establish commitment to pan-European norms such as the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris, the 1990 Copenhagen Document and other OSCE standards.

The text of the 1999 Pact asserts that: "Lasting peace and stability in South Eastern Europe will only become possible when democratic principles and values, which are already actively promoted by many countries in the region, have taken root throughout…International efforts must focus on consolidating and linking areas of stability in the region to lay a firm foundation for the transition of the region as a whole to a peaceful and democratic future."[39] The same basic logic needs to be applied to the Eastern Mediterranean, though the PDPEM's specific objectives, structure and instruments would of course be somewhat different.

Like the Balkans Pact, the purpose of the PDPEM would be to deliver comprehensive, systemic and normative-based solutions to the region's multiple conflicts. Similar also would be the PDPEM's reliance on joint American and European leadership, and the involvement of the OSCE, Council of Europe, the UN, NATO, the OECD and IFI's. In this context, EU-US "hardware" and "software" for democracy promotion and state-building should be brought to bear in the PDPEM, serving as a model for the Greater Middle East.

Rather than try to generate these conditions indigenously – as was imagined in the "New Middle East" visions of the early 1990s – the PDPEM framework would seek to extend areas of stability eastwards; leveraging existing pan-European institutions and integration dynamics, and linking them with reformists in the Eastern Mediterranean.

In this context, Turkey's progress towards eventual EU membership is an important piece of the puzzle. A Turkey that fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria and is firmly anchored in pan-European regional structures could well project positive "policy export" on, among others, Syria, Leba-

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39 Article 11, Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Cologne, June 10, 1999.

non, Iraq and Iran. Coupled with a robust PDPEM peace and reform agenda, Turkey's accession process could help form an "arc of democratisation" to Iraq's north, west and south – aiding the country's post-war transition.

In its mechanisms the PDPEM could be led by a US-EU appointed Special Coordinator, that will chair an Eastern Mediterranean Regional Table, which will be responsible for delivering a coherent common policy and reviewing progress under the Peace and Democracy Pact.

The Special Coordinator and Regional Table would supervise country-specific "Action Plans", linking all positive incentives and, where appropriate, coercive measures, to progress under the PDPEM. In addition, the Special Coordinator and Regional Table could advance five cross-regional Working Tables, combining a peace-making and reform agenda: 1) Democratisation, Human Rights and Women; 2) Conflict Resolution; 3) Security and Counter-Terrorism; 4) Economic Development and Cooperation; 4) Education, Norms and Culture.

In its peace-making dimension, the PDPEM would aim to create the best regional conditions in support of the Transitional Trusteeship in Gaza, and later the negotiation and implementation of a fair and viable peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians. One of the key lessons of the Camp David II experience has been the central importance of gaining Egyptian and Saudi backing for an end-of-conflict deal, prior to bringing the matter to a head. The PDPEM would, therefore, use its clout to gain regional support for a peace-settlement, including the revival of the so-called "Saudi Plan" for normalization of Arab relations with Israel.

Addressing cross-border networks of extremist groups (notably Hizbollah, HAMAS and Islamic Jihad) and the states that support them (notably Iran and Syria) also necessitates a determined, systemic, regional policy. The isolation of militant groups in Gaza and the West Bank, the advancement of Palestinian reforms and the establishment of adequate security conditions for a safe Israeli withdrawal, will all benefit from the containment of extremist groups and the creation of a viable democratic alternative to their ideology of hate. In this context, special attention must be focused on Syria

and Iran – both of which actively fund, equip and harbour terrorist groups. The PDPEM could help prevent existing anomalies such the fact that while the US has recently slapped terrorism-related sanctions on Syria, the EU is preparing to reward Syria with preferential trade relations.

Creating the right regional environment for an Israeli-Palestinian peace would also involve a comprehensive solution to the problem of Palestinian refugees and displaced persons in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.[40] Even if Palestinian refugee camps in Gaza and the West bank are disbanded and their population fully integrated into a new democratic Palestinian state, the preservation of refugee camps in these countries (12 in Lebanon, 10 in Syria and 10 in Jordan) and their denial of citizenship and other rights, would perpetuate the narrative of violent nationalist struggle, and would continue to feed extremist groups across the Middle East with a steady supply of recruits. The PDPEM would, therefore, need to implement a regional programme to deconstruct refugee camps, support full civic integration for those who choose to remain in their country of residence and help find alternative solutions (including compensation, immigration to Western countries and return to an independent Palestinian homeland) for the remainder.

In conclusion, a combined peace making and democratisation strategy that focuses on Israel-Palestinians and the surrounding Eastern Mediterranean, has the potential of uniting Americans and Europeans, as well as possessing credibility and legitimacy in the region itself. Rather than allow continued Arab-Israeli conflict to undermine yet again necessary democratic reforms in the Middle East, peace making and democratisation need to be brought together in a positive agenda of simultaneous change. The tasks inherent in such a strategy are formidable indeed, but the potential benefits

40 According to UNWRA figures from June 30th 2003, there are 10 official refugee camps in Jordan where 304,430 registered refugees live and a further 1,718,767 registered refugees not in camps. In Lebanon there are 12 camps, and out of a total of 391,679 refugees in the country 225,125 live in camps (mainly along the Israeli-Lebanese border). In Syria there are 10 camps, housing 119,766 refugees, out of a total number of 409,662 registered refugees in the country.

for the region and the rest of the world are too powerful to ignore, and the alternatives perhaps too costly to tolerate.

Walter Posch

What Preconditions for a CSCE-like Approach for the Region?

Much time and a lot of heated debates have been spent to discuss what the EU and the US can do to transform the Middle East towards more democracy in order to fight threats emanating from the region.[1] The region is clearly in crisis and needs change to overcome its apathy. Most of the debates understood the region as passive and in need of benevolent intervention, that may be economic aid, military intervention and – dialogue. This paper tries to focus on the crisis in the region in general; suggest new definition of the Middle East and divides it into five sub-regions based mainly on geography and ethnicity and finally tries to evaluate how far the CSCE-OSCE experience could serve as a model for confidence building in the region.

1. Social and Political Crisis

The social, economic and political underdevelopment of Arab countries or the Muslim world in general has been object of many debates and conferences. Yet this debate is not new but started in general in the 19th century or even earlier and several nationalistic and socialist reform attempts in the region have failed. Today, almost any observer Arab and non-Arab, Muslim and non-Muslim alike agrees that there is a tremendous need for reform in the region; the lack of democracy and good-governance are main obstacles for further development and pose a serious potential threat for the EU

and the West in general. One of the most important contributions to the debate was the UNDP's "Arab Human Development Report AHDP" first issued in 2002 the second in 2003.[2]

Arab and other governments admitted the importance for developing the human and social conditions even before the first AHDR was published. But their aim was rather to enhance their own legitimacy and to maintain domestic stability[3] than genuine political reform. But times change! Serious steps for reform have been undertaken in many countries, the most courageous in Iran and the most surprising in Saudi Arabia. There are however serious doubts whether the Muslim world in general and Arabic countries in peculiar can deliver.[4] The backlash after the last elections in Iran, which is still one of the more democratic countries of the region, is just one example.

1.1 Integrated West Asian Crisis

Powerful family clans and "mafia"-like political/economic networks hold their grip over many aspects of their societies and are in varying degrees able to extend their power into the circles of political decision making. Social structures like clan and tribal bindings, but also ethnic and sectarian strive, have contributed to what Fred Halliday calls the "integrated west Asian crisis", a serious weakening and even collapsing of the state as it happened in Lebanon and Afghanistan in the 1970 and 1980s or more recently Pakistan and Yemen (seriously weakened) and Somalia (almost non-existing), "where significant areas are free of government control or where

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1 The EU's Security Strategy cites terrorism, proliferation of WMD, regional conflicts, state failure and organised crime as key threats. EU-ISS: *A Secure Europe in a Better World. European Security Strategy,* Paris December 2003, p. 8f.

2 http://www.undp.org/rbas/ahdr/ UNDP*, Creating opportunities for future generations AHDR 2002, and Building a Knowledge Society AHDR 2003.*

3 SOLTAN, Gamal A. Gawad: "Security Perceptions in the Arab World and Euro-Med Relations," in: *The International Spectator,* p. 9.

4 Turkey's successful democratisation and her relative success towards liberalisation of her society and economy is another reason why she shall be excluded from the Middle East.

the government seeks to humour radical groups."[5] Typical regions out of government control would be the pashtun-speaking borderland between Pakistan and Afghanistan and Baluchistan (the triangle between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran), to mention only two of them. In most cases ethnicity (Baluchis and Pashtun) and/or tribal bindings mix with ultra-sunni fanaticism and drug production. In addition one may cite other state-failures like Palestine and as it seems to happen soon – Iraq. Another side of this crisis is the successful mingling of historically distinct conflicts like Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq and viewing them as one and the same struggle of the faithful Muslim against the infidel/imperialist invader – the war in Iraq was for many in the region (and even in Europe!) just the final proof of US-Israeli hostility towards Islam.

1.2 The Debate within Islam

But the real struggle is within Muslim societies themselves: in short it is about two interdependent conflicts, the struggle for participation on political power of an emerging islamist middle class in the big cities, which is mostly rural in origin and the question whether democracy and Islam are compatible or in clear contradiction (the radical tradition following the Egyptian thinker Sayyid Qutb d. 1966). Muslim fundamentalist movements embrace radicalism in their infancy, as soon as there is a real possibility to run for free and fair elections, they participate in the electoral process and become part of the political system and loose much of their radicalism. The Turkish experience is a point in case, but even the parliamentary system of a rather weak democracy like that of Lebanon was strong enough to have a moderating impact on the Lebanese Hizbullah; Algeria however is an important example to show what exactly not to do. Radicals and extremist remain nevertheless: Ultra-sunni Islamist groups (*jihâdî*), mostly extremists with *wahhabi* or *salafi* background like the "al-Qa'ida" are decided enemies of the Shiites, the West and their own governments, which are often described apostate (following the tradition of *takfir wa hijra*).

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5 See Chapter 1 at Halliday, Fred: *Two Hours That Shook The World: September 11 2001: Causes and Consequences,* London 2001. One may add Turkey's near-collapse during the 1970s and the insurgency in South-East Anatolia in the 1990s.

The inner-Muslim debate on Islam and democracy has started more than two decades ago in Iran and continues to this day. As a recent example one may mention the former general secretary of the "Organisation of the Islamic Conference – OIC", Abdelouahed Belkeziz, who has formulated Muslim self-criticism and the need for democratisation (a *shari'a*-based democratisation, to be precise) and mobilisation of the economic and intellectual potential of Islamic countries to challenge both extremism and terrorism that are falsely attributed to Islam on one side and underdevelopment and backwardness on the other.[6] Both tendencies: Islamist terrorism and serious attempts for democratisation exist among scholars, politicians and the faithful alike – it is solely up to the Muslims to solve this problem! EU and the US however are able to assist and to help in the fields of democratisation and good governance as well as in the economy; various programs for strengthening democracy including the delicate issue of supporting NGOs are conducted and shall be continued and even extended. But any western support makes only sense when democracy or at least parliamentarism are not viewed as un-Islamic interventions (*bid'da*) or imperialist concepts.

Acceptance of democratic and human right principles has to be the first precondition for any dialogue and even more for formal relations. This precondition is generally met, at least in theory, by all states the EU cooperates with. But a dialogue is based on reciprocity: no attempt however shall be made on behalf of the EU to define "moderate Islam".[7] This term should rather be strictly avoided since it is simply not up to non-Muslim observers to decide on religious matters and therefore arrogant to do so. It is also misleading, since strictly observant Muslims can be good democrats.

6　*Keynote Speech of H.E. Dr Abdelouahed Belkeziz Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to the International Symposium on "Enlightened Moderation",* Islamabad, 1-2 June 2004 (www.oic-oci.org /press/english/june%20 2004/moderation/htm and *Speech of H.E. Dr. Abdelouahed Belkeziz, the Secretary-General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, before the Thirty-first Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers,* İstanbul 14-16 June 2004 (www.oic-oci.org /press/english/june%202004//SG-istanbul.htm.

7　It should be mentioned that "Islam" as a religion and culture and Islamism as a political ideology are all too often confused.

The social and economic underdevelopment of the Muslim world and its interdependence with the deficit of democracy and state failure is nowadays unlike in earlier times not only widely accepted as a matter of fact, but also seen as a result of own shortcomings rather than of colonialism or neo-colonialist conspiracies. Nevertheless, governments may still be tempted to hide behind the Israel-Palestine conflict and the post-war fiasco in Iraq for missed opportunities and undone reform-work. Israel, on the other hand, seems to be less interested in a peace solution, which would include a viable Palestinian state, but is rather decided to impose any solution on its own conditions. Be this as it may, neither EU and US nor the region can escape dialogue; if so: who shall talk to whom and what region are we talking about.

2. Defining the Region

One of the most surprising facts in the debate on the "Greater or Broader Middle East" is how ill defined in geographical terms it is. What exactly is "greater" or "wider" or simply "other" than the traditional definition of Middle East that includes the Arab states,[8] with three non-Arabs: Turkey, Iran and Israel.[9] The problem of the definition lies in the fringes of the region; do Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Somalia belong to it? Is it the much-cited zone of insecurity between "Marrakech and Bangladesh" or even to the Philippines? Or should one just refer to CENTCOM's "area of responsibility", that is all countries between Egypt and Kenya in Africa and Kazakhstan in Asia? Or would the term "Islamic or Muslim World" more aptly apply thus open the way for a quasi-Huntingtonian (Islam against the West) and quasi-Islamist (the West against the *ummah islamiyyah)* approach and predicting conflict between these two entities.

8   The 17 are: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Kuwait and Iraq. Somalia and Mauritania are no Arab states in the strict sense of the world although they have long-standing and intensive connections with Arabian states and societies. Somalia is even a member of the Arab League!

9   Halliday, Fred: *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation,* London 1996 p. 27.

But even if the "Greater Middle East" should not include the Islamic world as a whole it is still big enough to define some sub-regions within the GME, each of them has its own crisis that may or may not be related with other zones of conflict. Some of the sub-regions described below have a more geographical character others are defined rather on the base of ethnicity.

2.1 North Africa and Eastern Mediterranean

A consensus has been reached, that Arab countries form the core of the (Greater) Middle East. The classic Arab division in eastern *mashraq*/Middle East or the old fashioned Levant and western *maghrab*/North African countries with Egypt as pivotal state forming the centre may offer some help. Maghrab i.e. North African countries are for example much more concerned with their internal security situation (Islamist radicalism etc.) than say Syria, where – like in most *mashraq*/Levantine countries of the Eastern Mediterranean (Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Iraq, the latter to be discussed) – the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is of much higher importance. It makes therefore sense to define an "*Eastern Mediterranean sub-region*" consisting of Israel/Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon i.e. the states, which are most affected by the conflict and which had to be engaged for any viable solution of the conflict in opposite to the "*North African sub-region*" (Morocco/Sahara, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya). Finally, one must not forget that the role of Iran must be taken into account, due to her staunch support of anti-israeli groups, her alliance with Syria and most important her intensive relations with the Lebanese Hizbullah and the Shiites in General.

2.2 Persian Gulf, Arabian Peninsula

Southeast of the Eastern Mediterranean we may define the "*Persian Gulf sub-region*" plus the Arabian Peninsula with its abundant oil and gas reserves and the USA's strategic interests. Given the specific character of Iraq's southern provinces, one has to add this country to the Gulf sub-region too. Arab states of the region have formed the Gulf Cooperation Council – GCC, which is by far the most, sophisticated of all intra-

governmental frameworks of Arab states. Yemen and Iraq however are not members of this framework. The Arab countries on the southern shores of the Gulf are monarchies ruled by Sunni autocrats. All of them, with the notable exception of Oman, have sizeable Shiite minorities or even majorities that are largely excluded from the circles of power. Iran tried on several occasions (mostly in the 1980s after the revolution) to incite unrest among her co-religionists in the Gulf-monarchies and in Iraq, but plays a more positive role in the last years (at least with regard to the Gulf monarchies). In general, Shiites of the Gulf seem to realize that they, given their numerical strength, would benefit most of democratisation in their countries. The Shiite population is therefore any longer a serious security concern for the Gulf countries what concerns are the activities of ultra fundamentalist Sunni *jihâdi*-groups like Al-Qa'ida. This is especially the case in Saudi Arabia where radicals openly threaten to bring down the house of the al-Sa'ud.

2.3 The Persian-speaking World

Iran has however made clear that it supposes herself to be the dominating power in the Persian Gulf (or rather to become so after the US have left) and has occupied a group of small islands, disputed between Iran and the UAE. Iran is with no doubt the most important country of a sub-region we may call the Persian-speaking world (Fragner: "*Persophonie*" or the "reign of the Persian language"[10]), which includes Afghanistan and Tajikistan but thanks to cultural and historical traditions may also be extended towards Pakistan. Tajikistan – though with no doubt a persophone country – should be excluded from being part of any Middle East conceptualisation, since its history and its elites have been shaped by the Soviet Union.[11] In this region, tensions between Shiites and Sunnites (some of them connected with groups supporting Al-Qa'ida or sharing their world view, like the Taliban)

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10 Fragner, Bert G.: *Die „Persophonie": Regionalität, Identität und Sprachkontakt in der Geschichte Asiens (ANOR 5)*, Halle Berlin 1999.
11 See Perthes, Volker: "Geopolitische Grundlinie im Nahen und Mittleren Osten," in: *Blätter für deutsche und Internationale Politik,* 6/2004 p. 687.

are extremely high and form a major security concern especially for Pakistan but also for Iran in her eastern Provinces.

2.4 Kurdistan

Iran is also entrenched in another sub-region: *Kurdistan*, which to our understanding is definitely part of the Middle East, although a caveat might be posed for the Kurdish regions of Turkey. The lack of a widely accepted geographical definition of Kurdistan is part of the problem. Secessionist movements among the Kurds have been a major security concern for all states involved, Iran, Syria, Iraq and Turkey alike. Unrest in Iraqi-Kurdistan however, seems to be very likely since the Kurdish population of Iraq is deeply estranged by what they see as the total ignorance of their legitimate claims for autonomy by the International community and the newly formed Iraqi government. One should not forget the importance of these claims, which have caused bloody unrest and civil war for more than two generations in Iraq.

The question of Kurdistan (and its ability to control the water flow for Syria and Iraq) brings Turkey definitely into the Middle East arena, but doesn't make her necessarily part of it given her various and deep-rooted connections with the West. NATO and the application for EU-membership delineate it clearly from the Middle East; although cultural, economic and historical ties remain valid. And Turkey has of course well known and outspoken security interests in Iraq: one is to prevent the dissolution of the country another one is secure that no independent state of Kurdistan may emerge.

2.5 Five Sub-Regions

Finally I suggest to amend the classic Middle East formula Arab states + 3 non-Arabs (Turkey, Iran, Israel) to the (Greater?) Middle East into Arab states, two persophones (Iran and Afghanistan) and Israel and to divide the Middle East to five regions, North Africa, Eastern Mediterranean, Persian Gulf-Arabian Peninsula, the Persophone world and Kurdistan. The EU has relations with each of these regions, as long as there are nation states, hence

the exception of Kurdistan. The Euro-Med Partnership includes most of the North African and Eastern Mediterranean states; relations with the GCC, Iran, Iraq and Yemen are on bilateral basis; relations with Afghanistan are in the framework of the 2001 Bonn agreement following the end of the Taliban.

As a first conclusion, several adjacent countries and regions have to be excluded from concept of Middle East: Turkey due to its European and the ex-Soviet countries because of their Soviet legacy.[12] Pakistan whose security dilemmas and conflict potential is perhaps most intensively connected with the Middle East, should nevertheless be dealt with in the context of India, given its nuclear capability, the Kashmir conflict and last but not least its history. Other regions like South-East Asia, Somalia and the Horn of Africa and all non-Arab Muslim states of Africa are to my understanding rather recipients of Middle East conflicts than active contributors and therefore only loosely connected. Such a conceptualisation does not deny the interdependence of conflicts in, say, Pakistan with Middle East countries like Iran or Afghanistan, but it helps to precise broader concepts like "Islamic World" or a supposed "Marrakech and Bangladesh"-region.

2.6 Role of Iran

Another conclusion concerns Iran: being involved in all sub-regions with the exception of North Africa is proof for her importance for the Middle East and resembles the historical role Persia had played for centuries or rather millennia. Relations with the EU are still friendly (but expected to worsen) and its Shiite denomination makes it a decided enemy of the al-Qa'ida-type Sunni Jihadists – in this case the West and Iran could even be natural allies! On first sight, Iran even seems to be in a relative strong position. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have ended the rule of old enemies like Saddam Hussein and the Taliban. But this geographical and cultural proximity is also an impediment: the mullahs simply cannot disengage from the Gulf region, notably Iraq or from Kurdistan and Afghanistan, even

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12 This does not say, that for example Uzbekistan may not become part of the Middle East one day. This depends to whether future elites will be educated in the Middle East or elsewhere.

if they would like to do so. Any crisis and conflict in its vicinity touches Iran's security interests – most notable the sensitive issue of ethnic and confessional minorities (Kurds, Baluch, Sunnites etc.)

Iran is clearly competing with the US for power and influence in Iraq and Afghanistan; US presence effectively bars Iran from playing a dominating role in the Gulf region and elsewhere. Hence both sides seem to be eager to avoid open confrontation. Tensions and distrust remain high, however and an escalation is still possible.[13] Iran's attempt to acquire nuclear technology and its alleged connections with international terrorism is one reason for US (and not only US) distrust, US-Iranian history (Islamic Revolution, hostage crisis) and Israel's security concerns, are other reasons. Given Iran's relative might[14] and influence in the region a further worsening of the status quo concerning the USA and Iran could have destabilizing effects and repercussions especially in regions with notable Shiite minorities (Lebanon, Iraq, Gulf). Better relations on the other hand may cause the opposite. If so, one has to keep Iran engaged, even when its nuclear program turns out to be more serious than expected. At least a viable *modus vivendi* between the USA and Iran, since a rapprochement between them seems extremely unlikely, is a further precondition for any CSCE like process.

3. Towards a "Conference on Security and Co-operation in the Middle East – CSCME"

The Middle East Region has been identified as a region of major concern for the EU, the threat posed by al-Qa'ida, the general poverty and further population pressure cannot be ignored. The Barcelona-process, the focus the new EU Security Strategy gives to the region, new neighbourhood policy, contacts with the GCC, Iran and Yemen and last but not least EU financial support for Afghanistan and its commitment to Iraq, are witness for the EU's awareness of its responsibility. But both sides have to prove their

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13 See Friedman, George: "U.S. and Iran: Beneath the Roiled Surface," in *Stratfor Weekly* 23. June 2004.

14 A discussion on Iran as a "winner" of the Iraq war see at Halliday, Fred: "America and Arabia after Saddam," www.openDemocracy.net 13 May 2004 p. 4f.

commitment for a successful dialogue in order to meet the basic requirements for a dialogue that may lead to a possible peace process. First, the EU should restrain in defining Islam of what kind of Islam it wants to deal with (style matters!), second Middle Eastern partners have to be sincere about their respect of Human Rights and basic democratic principles; third, a serious escalation between the USA and Iran must be avoided and ways for confidence-building measures between the USA, Israel and Iran have to be found. Complicated and difficult as this is, it will be almost impossible to be initiated with a nuclear Iran.

3.1 Can the CSCE Serve as a Model?

As it is well known, what later became the CSCE and now is the OSCE started with a Soviet initiative in the 1950s. After serious setbacks (i.e. crisis in Hungary and East-Germany) and some preliminary work in the 1960s, the first "Conference on Security and Co-operation" (1973-75) could take place. The now famous three "baskets" dealt with confidence building measures in military affairs, economic and humanitarian issues. Neither of these baskets seems to be suitable to be copied immediately on a one to one basis. The situation in the modern Middle East is simply too different from cold war-Europe. One difference is that in the 1970s the Europeans, who have taken the initiative to organise the conference, were eager to involve the main outside powers (USA), whereas now, the initiative would be brought from outside to the region and Middle Easterners would certainly add such an initiative just to the long list of western interventions starting with the Crusades (or Alexander the Macedonian, for the Iranians). The principals guiding the mutual relations according to the Act of Helsinki I, II and V (*I Sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty, II Refraining from the threat or use of force, V Peaceful settlement of disputes*) seem nowadays rather futile after regime change in Iraq – but almost anyone in the region would hurry to sign chapter VI (*Non-intervention in internal Affairs*).[15]

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15 Conference on Security and Co-Operation: *Final Act*, Helsinki 1975.

Some paragraphs of the "Document on confidence-building measures (…)" seem to be more promising at first sight: prior notifications of major and other military manoeuvres and military movements and the exchange of observers for example. But reality seems to be rather sobering; at last for the foreseeable future one shall not expect Israeli military observers invited for a special warfare exercise of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards (*Pâsdârân*) to give just an obvious bizarre example.

3.2 Regional Partnerships and Initiatives

League of Arab States

It has been often overseen, that regional experiences in international Organisations and confidence building measures exist. The most famous organisation is of course the "League of Arab States". Due to its pan-Arabic ideology and dedication to the Palestinian cause, its contribution to solutions for other conflicts in the Middle East Peace remains limited. It has however supported a discussion on the Arab Human Development Report and thus contributed to such important fields like the necessary reform of Arab societies and the democratisation in Arab states. The League's capabilities to force any of the Member States to reform are of course nonexistent. The Arab League seemed further seriously weakened after the postponement of their last summit in March 2004, which was a telling example for Arab disunity. As an Arab League it wouldn't have covered the Iranians anyway.

Organisation of the Islamic Conference

The "Organisation of the Islamic Conference" offers a much broader panel.[16] OIC enjoys wider respect among Muslim member states than the Arab League. Founded in 1969 it serves ever since as a financier of Islamic scholars and Muslim education. Engaging OIC may be promising; albeit not being a security or policy related Organisation per se it has substantial influence. Heads of state visit its annual conference and the organisation's secretary general has apparently access to all heads of Muslim states. Its various committees address main shortcomings of the Muslim world, like

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16 http://www.oic-oci.org/ and http://www.oicistanbul2004.org.tr/news2.asp?id=26.

the lack of inter-regional trade (Committee on Economic and Trade Cooperation) or social affairs. OIC even addresses marginalizing of women in a positive way. On behalf of an initiative of Pakistan's General Musharraf, it openly discusses religious extremism and fanaticism as an internal threat; and deals with it on muslim-theological base. It therefore tackles Islamist extremism of "al-Qa'ida" in a way no outsider could ever do. OIC is now in a phase of self-criticism and reshaping its agenda, major restructuring is to be expected. Much will depend on its new secretary general the Turkish Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, head of a scholarly foundation in İstanbul.[17] It is obvious that the Turkish model i.e. that Islam and democracy are not contradictory but rather complimentary is the last "fashion" in the Islamic discussion and outdates the Saudi model.[18]

The OIC may offer a promising additional framework that one-day (hopefully) may add valuable contributions to the fight against terrorism on the ideological front and win hearts and minds over to the principle of democracy. It also may be able to mend or ameliorate fences of distrust between Muslim states and facilitate economic cooperation. But it is too early to tell any success now.

Gulf Cooperation Council

The "Gulf Cooperation Council - GCC"[19] as mentioned above is the most sophisticated of all Arab inter-state cooperation frameworks. Its members have signed an agreement on economy[20] and cooperate in security, military and many other important matters.[21] It was originally founded as an uneven partnership between the powerful Saudis and their neighbours on the littoral shore of the Persian Gulf directed primarily against revolutionary Iran. Nowadays the Saudis have lost a lot of their influence and the Emirates and Kingdoms can show more profile. A Cooperation Agreement between EU (EC) and GCC was signed in 1988, annual joint meetings are held ever

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17 On him see and http://www.oicistanbul2004.org.tr/news2.asp?id=26.

18 Gent, Amalia von: "Saudischer Islam out, türkischer Islam in", *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 24. June 2004; OIC was originally a Saudi-run organisation, Turkey's new role seems a promising change.

19 Http://www.gcc-sg.org.

20 Http://www.gcc-sg.org/Economic.html.

21 Http://www.gcc-sg.org/cooperation.html#coop2.

since. The EU plays in spite of its relative longstanding relations with the Gulf countries a less important role than in North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. Geography is one reason, another reason is the wealth of the Gulf countries – they simply don't need economic aid; but the main reason is the fact that the Persian Gulf region is a zone of special interest for the USA.

Internal dissent in GCC countries on behalf of the Shiite population is definitely declining. This happen thanks to the rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia: either side has ceased inciting the religious minorities in the other country (Sunnis in Iran, Shiites in Saudi Arabia). By the end of the 1990s, both have given up their rivalry on the leadership in the Muslim world and focused more on their own internal relations.[22] This general rapprochement made other steps possible like the solution of Saudi Yemeni border conflicts.

The positive example of Saudi-Iran détente is just one side of the coin. Iran poses still a threat to smaller Gulf countries; for today it is not the fear of Iranian meddling among the Shiite minorities, but rather Iran's strength and the re-emergence of Iranian nationalism, which perceives the Persian Gulf sub-region also as his own "zone of special interest". The Iranian occupation of three Gulf Islands and Iran's unwillingness even to discuss this matter, gives a telling example for her nationalism. This could pose a chance also: Persian Gulf states are interested in security, Iran in international recognition. The CSCE's first basket (confidence-building measures in military affairs) may be a viable start for engaging Iran positively. Such a start is of course only possible with a nuke-free Iran.

"Iraq-6" Consultations

Iraq remains the most pressing issue for the time being. The possible brakedown of the country seems to have initiated a sober and constructive atmosphere and a viable consultation mechanism among Iraq's neighbours. There is rarely any information available about the topics discussed and the

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22 The bitter state sponsored rivalry between Sunnites and Shiites however continues to this day especially in Pakistan albeit privately financed.

conclusions drawn but it seems clear that the question of Kurdish autonomy is on the agenda. As much as is known, these talks are on ambassador level (civilians, military and security). Turkey and Iran have perhaps the longest experience of intervention in Iraq and divergent interests, they managed to this day to check their obvious differences and avoid open confrontation. Transforming the permanent consultations of the "Iraq-6" might form the nucleus of a CSCE-like process. Since its initiative comes from the region it may have a real chance of success. A positive effort of Iraq's neighbours may contribute to its stabilization and to the stabilization of the Kurdistan sub-region as a whole; whereas a breakdown of the security situation may provoke unrest in Iraqi Kurdistan with spill over effects to Kurdish populations elsewhere.

Although the suggestion of extending these talks to a 6 + 4 + 1 formula (neighbours, Quartet and Iraq) as suggested by Perthes,[23] sounds logical, there seems to be less sympathy for it on the side of Iraq's neighbours. It is obviously an attempt to talk seriously *entre nous* without foreign participation. On the other hand, the CSCE has begun also as series of conferences and one should hope that the "Iraq-6" consultation mechanism maybe somehow institutionalised. Keeping, say the OIC or the Arab League informed on Iraq, would create more transparency and offer an institutional framework for the Near East Quartet or others to learn about what the "Iraq-6" have decided, at least as long as they are unwilling to accept the 6+4+1 formula or a similar one.

4. Conclusion

I have named two preconditions for initiating a CSCE-like process (or even a CSCME): no more deteriorating of US-Iranian relations and the sincere will to begin with the implementation of democratic reforms. To many, it seems clear however, that without touching the Israeli-Palestine conflict a comprehensive CSCME shall never be possible. But it is also obvious that a solution, at least one satisfying the Palestinians and in due course the Ar-

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23 Perthes, p. 685.

abs and Muslims as a whole is far from being achieved. Here one should not be too enthusiastic and without any false hopes: the Israeli-Palestine conflict will simply continue for the foreseeable future, demanding its solution, as a precondition is therefore a no-starter. On the other side it is clear that the democratisation of states and societies in the Middle East will not happen overnight but be rather a long process. In both cases backlashes are to be expected.

OIC and Arab League may support the inner Islamic or Inner-Arab discussion on reform issues and may indeed offer a genuine structure for consultation and confidence building among the Arab and Muslim neighbour states, tangible results shall not be expected too soon however. But confidence-building measures can be started on a bi- and/or multilateral basis between the GCC and Iran immediately – and have to include the US in due course in order to achieve a viable peace structure. The same is true for Afghanistan, where Teheran's cooperation is as necessary as it is in the framework of the Iraq-6. In theory one could suggest the following (optimistic) model: existing dialogue – most notable Euro-Med but also GMEI continues of course; Afghanistan, Iraq and the Gulf local confidence-building measures pay off and a framework of consultations on sub-regional basis in which the USA and Iran are involved, emerges. This may lay the foundation for a more comprehensive structure in which finally, Israel and Palestine may also be included. In an ideal world, this mechanism could be what the European Security Strategy wants: "international organisations, regimes and treaties to be effective in confronting threats to international peace and security" but still there would be no possibility of sanctions when rules were broken.[24]

Having said this, the chances for such a structure seem rather meagre; if one takes Teheran's nuclear program into account and observes the mutual distrust between Iran the USA and Israel. A likely deterioration between Teheran and Washington could lead not only to a breakdown of the "Iraq-6" mechanism and contribute to further insecurity in Iraq, it certainly

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24 EU-ISS: *A Secure Europe in a Better World. European Security Strategy,* Paris December 2003, p. 15.

would lead Tehran to a more negative policy in Afghanistan and may ignite unrest among the Shiites in the Gulf region and lead to a confrontation between Hizbullah and Israel. It would be "a great tragedy where no one will win" to cite the Iranian parliamentarian and co-founder of Hizballah, Ali Akbar Mohtashemi-Pour. Bearing Teheran's nuclearization attempts in mind, one has to conclude that a deterioration of the strained US-Iranian "non"-relations will most certainly happen.

Nassif Hitti

The Fantasies of a Middle Eastern OSCE

David Easton used to say it is better to build an ugly model for a real world than a nice model of an imaginary world. I remember these words every time I hear about a new proposal to reshape the Middle East.

A prerequisite for the success of any architectural design lies not only in how imaginative or how attractive the design is, but in the quality or nature of the soil where the building is going to be erected. The same logic applies to the world of political architecture, mainly in the Middle East where we are witnessing a rush of different copied versions of designs to be implemented such as the design of the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe which started as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, better known as the Helsinki process. The sudden obsession about a new architecture for the Middle East came on the aftermath of the 11th of September earthquake that hit the US and the shockwaves that followed in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. The epicenter of this earthquake lies in the Middle East; a region whose frontiers are defined and redefined by the threat perception in Washington particularly but not exclusively. The region is perceived as the sick man of the world, as the Ottoman Empire was perceived a century earlier as the sick man of Europe. The Middle East is the region of new nontraditional sources of threats that necessitate non traditional, comprehensive responses; Sources to be found at the societal level in ideology, culture and education among other things. It is becoming a recurring theme in the discourse of the US strategic community to hear that the American extended homeland defenses reach into the heart of the Middle East, a region whose geographic parameters are elastic and constantly defined and redefined these days. It is the region of the world of Islam not taking into consideration the different specificities of the countries from

Morocco to Pakistan that necessitate different responses. A major international consensus has emerged around the rejection of the status quo as a source of radicalization, namely religious one with globalized means and international scope. A definition that, unfortunately, put in the same basket of problems fears, phobias and solutions, all expressions of Islamic revival and all Islamist movements. A major goal has been set, the imperatives of change, though there is no agreement on how to manage change in a region which is very attractive to all forms of interventions and interferences because of its weaknesses and richness at the same time. Thus the Middle East on the turn of the century is a disordered, vulnerable and highly penetrated regional Order. Regional policies are much less influential than international policies in the shaping of its agenda. Past lessons tell about the impossibility of restructuring or creating a new regional architecture, before addressing the key regional issues, or the all legitimizing issues. Unable to set its own agenda but very resistant to imposed agendas from external actors this is the first lesson of regional politics in the Middle East to reckon with, unless one is willing to engage in the futile policy of trying to put the cart in front of the horse. Twenty years after Helsinki, the Europeans tried but rapidly learned the lesson in the Middle East. When the Barcelona process was launched in 1995, in the wake of the optimism created by the Madrid Peace Conference, and reinforced by the Oslo Accord between the Palestinian and the Israelis making for a psychological breakthrough, the first basket of the Process aimed at creating A Charter of Peace and Stability in the Mediterranean region. Soon the Europeans understood to their great frustration that this is an impossible task as long as the Arab-Israeli-Conflict has not been settled, or that the settlement process has progressed substantially and solidly on all tracks. If the regional actors are weak and embattled, the regional issues are strong, resistant, and capable of frustrating external plans, initiatives, and policies. The Casablanca process or the multilateral track of the peace process, which started a year before, as part of the Madrid Conference, fumbled and reached also a dead end because it failed to acknowledge this reality. When the bilateral track in the Madrid process started to run out of steam, it was impossible to continue with the functional cooperative multilateral tracks.

The driving force in the regional Order lies in the identity based politics rather than in the interest based politics such as is the case in the West. Whether it is Arab nationalism or Islamism or a brand of the two, identity assures the dual function of legitimizing and de-legitimizing political action. The regional Order is a paradoxical Westphalian Order. While states stick to a definition of sovereignty that is becoming irrelevant in today's world, the same state is highly penetrated by processes of transstate solidarities emanating from the logic of the UMMA [the NATION], being Arab or Islamic or both. The same state is also constrained to pay a lip service to this UMMA and to define its discourse and explain its policies according to the symbols of that UMMA. Trans-state solidarities function following the model of communicating vases in physics, influencing perceptions by creating a homogenization of perception of priorities, of goals and of actors, across the Arab state system.

In the triangular relationship between the state, the society and the external actors pushing for ISLAH, the state tries to trade off its security, the security of the regime, against assuring the stability for these external actors. The state tries also to play on identity issue against interference to seek the support of the society against change called for from outside. Meanwhile lack of credibility is what characterizes the call for ISLAH, called for from the same outside, particularly the American one. In the eyes of the society, the problem is the messenger not the message. Lack of understanding is what characterizes the perception of the same external actors of the societal priorities in a complex regional Order where the logic of the state operates next to the logic of the UMMA but not always in a smooth fashion. Yet one fact remains to be underlined: the post-Saddam world of the Middle East forced the issue of reform and change on the national agenda and made the state constrained to talk about reform and make the latter a key element n the official discourse.

Many factors thus tend to indicate the failure of establishing parallels or analogies between the EASTERN EUROPE of the seventies and the MIDDLE EAST TODAY, in order to seek a CSCE and later on an OSCE in the region. In the former case, the process addressed directly the major political and security issues with the Soviet Union, issues of normalization, of rec-

ognition of the borders among other things, which of course cannot be the case in the MIDDLE EAST as long as the Arab-Israeli-conflict is not properly settled. Thus, there was no avoidance of addressing serious security issues in the European case. Also the configuration of power in the MIDDLE EAST does not bear any resemblance to the pyramidal shape of the Eastern European Order where it was enough to bring the Soviets on board to make the train leave the station. Equally important is the absence in the Eastern European Order of the specificities I referred to about the Arab Order such as the trans-state solidarities and the interpenetration of issues. Eastern Europe is a more normal State Order. This facilitates the processes of regional restructuring. In the Arab case also the Regimes were made to know bluntly that the aim is to change them which pushed them to fiercely resist, profiting from the triangular relationship referred to earlier. In the Eastern European case, it was known that the end result of the process will ultimately bring change but it was part of a more nuanced trade off with the Soviet Union. Equally important is the fact that the stateness is more developed in the Eastern European Order than it is in the Arab Order, which again renders the matter easier in the former case. Last but not least the societies in the Eastern European Order were looking to Washington as the savior, as the holder of the banner of democracy and freedom which were the key issues in that context, and not as the usurper or the strong and unconditional supporter of the enemy, of Israel, as is the case in the Middle East.

Thus dropping the OSCE approach will be a very wise decision. Such architecture will have to wait for better days when the aforementioned conditions are met. Nevertheless ISLAH whether it is reform, or perhaps modernization, good governance or development remains a must. The issue goes beyond the artificial dichotomy of home-grown versus externally imposed reform. Indeed a dual avoidance approach needs to be adopted; Avoid making reform hostage to the settlement of regional conflicts or using the latter as a pretext to circumvent the necessity of reforms, and avoid focusing on reforms as a prerequisite for just and comprehensive conflict settlement policies that are urgently needed. REFORM and CONFLICT SETTLEMENT issues should not be relegated to a secondary status by ei-

ther or of the actors concerned. They are indeed interrelated and the progress in one could reinforce the progress in the other process. Change is a goal, if not shared by everybody at least in terms of scope, frequency, and content, it remains a regional imperative and an international one. A prerequisite for change is to get rid of externally suggested grand designs and to liberate oneself in the region from fears and phobias of the OTHER.

What is needed is a comprehensive vision of change with an integrated approach that addresses all aspects of conflict settlement and reforms. A vision based on cooperation and coordination between the external and internal dynamics. What is needed is a US-EUROPE- and UN-initiative for an externally coordinated action and active engagement in the process of regional conflict settlement of the Arab Israeli conflict and state building in Iraq. What is needed is a comprehensive support for actors engaged in reforms and modernization in the Arab world. It might appear as a tall order, but thinking of the threats and dangers of a fragmented, chaotic, and conflict torn Middle East, there is no choice but to take that road.

Ian O. Lesser

Institutional Issues Surrounding a CSCE-like Approach to the Middle East

Introduction

The perceived success of CSCE in transforming societies in the East, and contributing to the end of the Cold War, has inspired attempts to apply the spirit and method of CSCE to troubled political and security environments outside Europe. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Italy and Spain led an effort to create a CSCM – a "Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean." The Madrid process spurred multilateral frameworks for negotiation and cooperation in the Middle East, REDWG in the economic arena, and ACRS in the security realm, both inspired by the CSCE experience. More recently, both EU and NATO approaches to political and security dialogue in the Mediterranean have relied on an implicit model of cooperation borrowed from CSCE. The OSCE itself has attempted to apply this approach to dialogue efforts on Europe's periphery. More broadly, much of the western discourse about new institutional approaches to reform and stability across the "greater Middle East", including North Africa and the Gulf, is inspired by ideas and experience drawn from Europe, and from the CSCE history in particular.

Viewed from an American perspective, and under current conditions in the Middle East, what are the organizational and institutional issues surrounding a new attempt to pursue CSCE-like processes in the region? This brief analysis identifies some of the key questions to be taken into account.

The Assumed Value of Institutions

Assumptions about the importance of institutions in promoting political change and security are deeply rooted in thinking on both sides of the Atlantic. The absence of effective institutions for cooperation contributed to conflict in Europe prior to 1945, and the creation of an elaborate architecture for political and security relations is widely seen as a factor for stability in modern Europe. Quips about "inter-blocking" institutions aside, European, Russian, and American leaderships have not been shy about creating new and elaborate institutions for the management of problems in the Atlantic area.

Key European and Atlantic institutions, including NATO, are in flux, and could take quite different forms over the next decade. But it is unlikely that any of the institutions operating today will disappear over the coming years, even if their composition, roles and missions change. Europe, and the Atlantic area, will still have a surfeit of architecture for security and cooperation. By contrast, the "south" – from North Africa to Pakistan (or even from West Africa to Indonesia) has very little, if any, functioning institutions along these lines. If the demand exists to put a cooperative architecture in place across the greater Middle East, this architecture will have to be created out of whole cloth, or formed as an extension of existing frameworks in the north.

What Stakes, What Preferences?

To what extent are European, American and, above all, southern interests in a new CSCE-like approach convergent? Europe has an interest in political reform, prosperity and stability in the south as an increasingly central part of its own approach to security on the continent. The new risks emanate from the south, and policies toward the Mediterranean and the Middle East can help to shape a troubled environment. But for Europe, and especially for southern Europe, a structure for this already exists in the form of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (the Barcelona Process), and the reinforced approach to security cooperation through CFSP and ESDP. Much

has been invested in the Barcelona process, and much of the content of a more effective European security policy will inevitably be focused southward. So how much energy and interest will be left over for the creation of a new institution(s)?

That said, Europe (a generalization, of course – in fact there are likely to be pronounced national differences) could see virtue in new CSCE-like processes, a new geometry, to repair dysfunctional dialogues, to circumvent the public relations baggage associated with EU and NATO initiatives, to engage publics and elites apart from regimes, and not least, to engage Washington in a more multilateral approach.

For the U.S., the stakes and interests are essentially the same, reinforced by a post-9/11 obsession with promoting political change and forestalling the growth of more active anti-American movements, with security spillovers – in short, extended homeland defense. In the security arena, the American preference might be to use NATO for new, multilateral efforts at cooperation. But the center of gravity for "change" across the south is not in the hard security realm, and much of it is not about security at all. NATO is not an appropriate vehicle for promoting the development of civil society, the rule of law and democratic norms. It is even more remote from the need for economic reform and institution-building. UN agencies are deeply unfashionable in the U.S., and the EU is the leading actor in economic development across most of the region. If the U.S. wishes to do more to promote change and engage new constituencies in the Middle East and the "south," new institutions may be needed. American efforts to promote variations on a "Greater Middle East Initiative" in the context of G-8 and NATO summits in the Spring of 2004 attest to this interest, as well as the difficulty of moving beyond a lowest common denominator approach. The question of resources is also relevant. The U.S. has a global stake in stability in the south, but the American side of the funding for the GME initiative is spoken of in the $125-150 million range. Hardly enough for a few education-related initiatives in one society, quite apart from needs across the entire southern periphery of Eurasia.

For the south, the dilemmas are acute. Outside governments there is keen and growing interest in new processes for regional cooperation and north-south dialogue. Regimes are less enthusiastic, for obvious reasons. At the level of states, there are some potential benefits, especially in the security realm. Some states may also see new architecture as a hedge in relations with Israel, the West, and regional competitors. But the transparency and reform objectives inherent in a CSCE-like approach, with real implications for the future of "strong states" vis-à-vis civil society, will be troubling. Indeed, some regional governments may begin to explore CSCE-like approaches without fully fathoming the implications for their own position. [1] At base, the CSCE experience was about promoting peaceful change and cooperation across ideological and strategic divides – surely relevant in the north-south context. Regimes in the south may need to be convinced that such an approach is preferable to cataclysmic change.

Regimes, elites and publics in the south will carefully scrutinize new initiatives with an eye to establishing their indigenous *bona fides*. The "made in America" or even "made in EU" label is unlikely to be helpful, as the recent experience of the G-8 summit demonstrates. In this context, the long-term, multi-sectoral, multilateral approach associated with CSCE may be useful.

Borrowed Security?

As noted, the lack of any effective political and security architecture in the south is an important asymmetry in north-south relations. If one was starting from scratch to construct a framework for security and cooperation across North Africa and the Middle East, how would one begin? From the public diplomacy and symmetry standpoint, there are benefits to centering a new initiative in the south, with external actors in supporting roles, if any.

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1   An experience during the ACRS negotiations in 1994 is instructive. At one point, several delegations from the Gulf and North Africa asked that the "mentor" states provide some information on CSCE, especially the "code of conduct," as a possible model for confidence-building in the region. The text of the code was duly supplied. The ensuing sense of distaste and disinterest was remarkable.

Indeed, this is one of the end-states envisioned from a comprehensive Arab-Israeli settlement. Under conditions of progress in the peace process, much can be done along these lines as the multilateral negotiations demonstrated in the mid-1990s. But the prevailing environment does not allow for this, and in the post-9/11 world, the north-south dimension is arguably as important as the south-south one.

An alternative arrangement would look northward from North Africa and the Middle East, and "borrow" security and stability from Euro-Atlantic institutions. This is essentially the approach taken by the EU after Barcelona, and by NATO in its Mediterranean Dialogue. It is also characteristic of the current, reinforced treatment of these initiatives by both institutions, and enlargement processes in general – projecting stability outward from a secure and prosperous north to an insecure and underdeveloped south (and east). There are advantages to this approach. It builds on existing, capable institutions with substantial resources, and it allows southern partners to circumvent intra-regional disputes, if they are interested in doing so. One important disadvantage is that the existing frameworks are less well-suited, and have been rather unsuccessful in reaching beyond governments in the south. As instruments for social and political change, they are relatively weak.

The Problem of Scope

The three broad-gauge stakeholders in this debate are likely to take different views of the proper geographic scope for a new CSCE-like initiative in the "region." There may also be pronounced sub-regional preferences. The U.S., although a longstanding Mediterranean power, has never been attracted to the Mediterranean as a frame for strategy or organization. American interests are global, and American strategists think increasingly in terms of trans-regional, functional issues. Bureaucratic momentum encourages a North Africa/Middle East/South Asia approach in Washington, but the general inclination is to think globally, and in terms of wider initiatives.

In strictly functional terms, a CSCE-like approach to the "greater Middle East" ought to stretch from Africa to Indonesia, and embrace Central and

South Asia, too. The problems of insecurity, dysfunctional societies and political *stasis* are similar. Or, if conditions within, and relations with the Muslim world are really the problem, why not say so and frame the initiative in terms of security and cooperation in and with Muslim states? In this case, the geographic scope would be similarly broad.

For Europe, and especially southern Europe, the Mediterranean is the center of gravity for interests in the south. Existing institutional approaches have been framed in a Mediterranean context, although from the beginning many proponents of Mediterranean cooperation have taken a more expansive view (e.g., the original proposal for a CSCM embraced the Gulf states). Regardless of the prospects for current American-led GME initiatives – and the prospects are not particularly bright – the interest in developing new approaches to reform and cooperation in the "south" is likely to endure, and the ideas floated in 2004 will surely be revisited on both sides of the Atlantic. Narrower, Mediterranean frameworks may well be overtaken and subsumed by future initiatives reaching to South and Central Asia, and the Gulf.

For governments in North Africa and the Middle East, in the current environment, the most attractive frameworks will be the least intrusive, the most diffuse, and the least accommodating of Israeli strategic interests (and ones in which Israel will be least interested). At the same time, there will be distinct sub-regional interests, with states in the Gulf and the Maghreb, for example, keen to assure themselves that new processes will not be captured by developments in the Levant.

The position of Turkey merits special mention. There is a tendency among Americans and some Europeans, to envision a special role for Turkey in new Middle Eastern initiatives (Turkey as "model," or "example", etc.). The briefest discussion with Turkish observers leaves no doubt that this view is incompatible with Turkish interests and preferences. Turks may see merit in new CSCE-like approaches to the "south", but they are clear that Turkey is on the northern side of the equation. With critical decisions regarding Turkey's EU accession pending, the last thing Ankara wishes is to see the country portrayed as a valuable "Middle Eastern" ally. In institu-

tional terms, Ankara is likely to take a highly conservative approach, looking to the extension of current EU and NATO initiatives to accomplish CSCE-like objectives *beyond* Turkey's borders.

Looking Ahead

Despite many competing interests and preferences, the emerging environment is likely to encourage a search for new institutions and initiatives inspired by CSCE. There is a strong desire for more comprehensive (in terms of substance and reach) approaches to change in the "south," and existing arrangements through the EU and NATO are not well-suited to this role – if the objectives are ambitious.

At a minimum, new approaches will have to satisfy three conditions that are not now being met. First, the concept will have to be capable of uniting somewhat (but not entirely) disparate transatlantic interests and instruments. A broad-based, multi-basket approach could offer plenty of scope for this. Second, if "change" is really the objective, the framework will need to engage and encourage non-state actors in the south in a vigorous way; and that is unlikely to happen unless Middle Eastern governments are convinced that new institutions are in their long-term interest. Without this, Europe and the U.S. will have to choose explicitly whether to back states or agents of change within societies across the Middle East. During the Cold War, CSCE was useful, in large measure, because it allowed the West to obscure this distinction. Finally, a new CSCE-like approach should offer a means of marshalling sufficient resources to make a difference. One of the shortcomings of Middle Eastern initiatives currently on the table is the striking gap between purpose and funding. Changing societies across a large region – in a time frame that has any sort of policy relevance – cannot be done "on the cheap." The idea of a Marshall Plan for the region, however defined, may be as important as the CSCE image in considering new approaches to troubled societies in the south.

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