

Arms Race in the Mediterranean

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The Mediterranean and its adjoining regions contain a sizable number of flashpoints and the security environment remains “Hobbesian.” Although the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the situation in the Lebanon (which led to a full scale war between Israel and the Hezbollah in the summer of 2006), the future of Iraq and the Iranian nuclear programme remain the most important unsettled issues, the wider Mediterranean security environment is predominantly characterized by multiple sources of insecurity, fluidity, instability, and continued change and evolution. Sectarian violence and religious rivalries are pieces of the regional security puzzle. There is increasing concern about a renewed multi-dimensional (conventional and Weapons of Mass Destruction [WMD]) arms race in the region, although it should be noted that indigenous explosive devices (INDs) probably remain the single most important cause of casualties in the Middle East. Since the late 1960s, partly as a consequence of the Arab-Israeli conflict but also regional and domestic instability, the countries in the Mediterranean and the Middle East have been spending a considerable percentage of their Gross National Product (GNP) for the procurement of sophisticated military equipment and for their security needs in general.

The Middle East has repeatedly had the dubious distinction of being the region with the world’s largest arms imports. In the early and mid-1990s the Middle East’s level of arms imports decreased, but in recent years most countries in the region have again pursued large arms acquisitions. Although according to the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS’) Military Balance 2007, defence expenditures have on the average de-

creased (1998: 7.73%, 2005: 5.53%, 2006: 5.26%), Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) estimates that, in the period 1997-2006, military spending in the Middle East increased by 57% in real terms (total expenditures in 2005-2006 reached \$72.5 billion plus 6.7 billion for North Africa). The discrepancy can be explained by the increasing financial resources (as a result of increasing oil prices) of certain countries which allowed them to increase the net amount of defence expenditures, while reducing the related percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Defence expenditures – as well as troop numbers in selected countries, such as Saudi Arabia – are expected to increase for 2007 and afterwards. It should also be noted that high military spending in the Middle East goes hand in hand with a lack of transparency and accountability in military budgets.

With the exception of Israel, Southern Mediterranean States do not have a power projection capability (very limited capabilities for force transportation by air and sea), and they lack “blue water” navies and sufficient long-range strike aircraft. With very few exceptions, they do not possess across the board advanced military technologies such as stealth capabilities, precision guided munitions, advanced electronics, sophisticated C⁴I systems, advanced air defence or space capabilities, etc. The main function of their armed forces is to safeguard internal stability and to protect the regimes against domestic challenges. Although the West remains the main arms supplier for the region, the armed forces of several states in the Mediterranean and the Middle East are equipped with weapon systems from the former Soviet Union/Eastern bloc.

Military Capabilities of Key Regional States

Among key countries in the Mediterranean and the wider Middle East, Iran is slowly building up its mili-

tary capabilities through acquisition of weaponry mainly from Russia, China and North Korea, and through domestic production. The Iranian military is considered capable of conducting limited, short-duration offensive operations beyond Iran's borders, but currently is incapable of sustaining large-scale offensive actions. Tehran would require tens of billions of dollars, which it does not have at this time, to become a major conventional military power.

There is general agreement that Libyan military capabilities continue to erode and are characterised by poor training, low morale, outmoded equipment and poor material readiness (partly as a result of the UN embargo). Although Egypt is one the major military powers in the region, its armed forces are in strong need for modernization. The Syrian Armed Forces cannot sustain prolonged offensive combat operations and do not have a very high fighting capability as a result of number of problems, most important of which is the inflexibility of its leadership, the lack of realistic training exercises, poor maintenance, a weak logistical system, an overtly centralised command and control system, and chronic shortage of technically proficient manpower. Since 2002 Saudi Arabia has maintained an increasing trend in military expenditure. As a result of perceived new threats – porous northern border with Iraq, domestic terrorism and the potential non-conventional warfare capabilities of Iran and Syria – Saudi Arabia is the biggest spender in the Middle East by far, with 40% of the region's total military spending in 2006, and at the same time it is also the world's largest oil exporter. Finally, Israel, arguably the most militarily powerful country of the region, has been re-organizing its armed forces and modernizing its equipment, in view of the perceived Iranian nuclear threat and its own failure to defeat Hezbollah during the Lebanon military campaign in the summer of 2006.

Arms Transfers

In the summer of 2007, the United States announced that it will sell military equipment worth \$20 billion to Saudi Arabia and neighbouring Gulf states: Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The deal reportedly includes Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs), electronic warfare equipment, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), fighter aircraft upgrades, missile defence systems and new naval vessels. Furthermore, the U.S. will provide to Israel \$24-30 billion in military assistance over the next 10 years, whereas U.S. aid to Egypt will reach \$13 billion over the same period.

Russia, now the world's second biggest arms seller to the developing world –and the most important supplier of conventional weapons to Iran – is also increasingly active in the Middle East. Moscow agreed to sell Iran \$700 million worth of surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems (likely the TOR M-1) last year, which would come in handy in defending Iran's nuclear-related sites against air attack. Moscow also plans to upgrade Tehran's Su-24 and MiG-29 aircraft (some flown to Iran during the 1991 Persian Gulf War by fleeing Iraqi pilots), and T-72 main battle tanks. Iran is rumoured to be interested in SA-10/S-300 SAMs, Su-30 fighters and Il-78 airborne tankers, too. Russia has also forgiven most of Syria's Cold War arms debt and the two sides are negotiating the transfer of air defence systems, possibly the Pantsyr-S1E. Moscow has also been negotiating with the UAE for air defence systems and armoured personnel carriers, as well as the launching of the DubaiSat-1 satellite and with Algeria for the sale of SU-30 fighter aircraft and T-90s main battle tanks. Notwithstanding allegations of corruption in an earlier Tornado jet deal, Saudi Arabia (now the developing world's third-largest arms buyer) has agreed to buy 72 Eurofighter Typhoon jets from Britain, worth almost \$9 billion. France is selling Milan anti-tank missiles and Tetra wireless communication systems produced by EADS to Libya (worth \$450 million), border protection systems to S. Arabia, FREMM frigates (co-designed with Italy) to Morocco and (with Britain) air-to-surface missiles Black Saheen to Saudi Arabia and UAE. Israel has announced the acquisition of two sophisticated Dolphin class attack submarines) from Germany.

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China, heavily reliant on the region's energy resources, is increasing its political, economic and security involvement in the Middle East. Beijing already provides Tehran with a number of systems,

including the highly-capable C-802 anti-ship cruise missiles. (Hezbollah, or the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, used this missile against an Israeli destroyer during the 2006 war.) In addition, in the late 1980s, China secretly sold Saudi Arabia the nuclear-capable, medium-range DF-3 (CSS-2) ballistic missile. Some analysts believe Beijing is involved in upgrading these 20-year-old missiles for deterring Iran.

WMD Proliferation

Although Iraq and Libya (each for different reasons) are no longer part of the WMD proliferation problem, there is concern about Iran's nuclear programme. According to a rather alarmist view, "Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons and long-range missile delivery system is likely to affect its behaviour in the region. Tehran's new military muscle would bolster its aspirations for regional leadership and influence over a number of issues – from resolving territorial disputes to determining energy policy and production limits to serving as a beacon of political enlightenment for Arabs and Muslims worldwide."

Although desalination and energy diversity are the primary motivations for a renewed interest in nuclear power in the region, building up a nuclear infrastructure can concurrently serve as part of a future hedging strategy

There should probably be little doubt about Iran's rationality and its understanding of the concept of deterrence (despite the persistent efforts of the country's current President to convince the world otherwise) and concerns about the range of Iranian missiles and the probability of nuclear strikes against Europe do not sound especially convincing. On the other hand, the probability of a nuclear "domino effect" has often been emphasized, whereby the presence of nuclear weapons in Iran may well motivate other countries in the region, such as Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, to try and develop their own nuclear weapons. Indeed, according to a senior official of the International Atomic Energy Agency

(IAEA), six Arab states (namely Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Syria – on 6th September 2007, Israel attacked an alleged nuclear-related construction site in Syria. North Korean involvement has been reported in relation with the site) have shown interest in developing nuclear power. This has deepened concerns that Iran's apparent pursuit of nuclear-weapon capabilities may be provoking some of its neighbours to think about their own nuclear futures. Although desalination and energy diversity are the primary motivations for a renewed interest in nuclear power in the region, building up a nuclear infrastructure, including a cadre of trained personnel, can concurrently serve as part of a future hedging strategy. The interest in nuclear energy in the Middle East, however, is not as recent as media reports suggested. Furthermore, it is far from clear whether these states have really made a decision to go nuclear. In any case, the open nuclearization of Iran could, in combination with other negative developments, deal a deadly blow to the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT) regime.

In the past few years there has been no increase in the number of new missile states. While several programmes are a cause for serious concern and could develop into potential international threats, in general the ballistic missile threat is confined, limited, and changing relatively slowly. However, both China and North Korea continue to play an important role in the proliferation of longer-range ballistic missiles and support the development of indigenous capacities for manufacture and modification.

Most missiles in the arsenals of proliferating countries will still be Frogs, Scuds or Scud derivatives for the next ten years. The Iraqi derivatives (Al-Abbas and Al-Husayn) compromised the payload and in-flight stability of the missile in the interest of an increased range. As for the capabilities of specific countries, in addition, to SCUD-Bs and SCUD-Cs, Iran now has an unknown number of Shahab-3 missiles, developed with North Korean assistance, with a range of up to 2,000 km. According to the IISS Military Balance, Syria has 18 FROG, 18 SS-21 and 30 SCUD B/C/D launchers and approximately 850 missiles. There is no evidence of Syria targeting ballistic missiles against NATO or EU countries. Israel has the most advanced missile capabilities in the region, with the Jericho systems that have a range of over 2,000 km and could probably develop a missile with a range of 5,000 km.

HUMAN RIGHTS & INTOLERANCE: AN OVERVIEW OF EUROMESCO'S ACTIVITIES IN 2007

In response to trends emerging within the Euro-Mediterranean area, EuroMeSCo's agenda of activities for 2007 was characterised by a concern for human rights. A domain with many facets, human rights seem to bind together all chapters of the Barcelona Process, and thus proved an ideal topic through which evaluate the state of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and of the countries that compose it. Held since 1996, the EuroMeSCo Annual Conference reflects the main thread of EuroMeSCo's programme for that particular year, which in turn is shaped by the issues currently engaging the EMP. Gathering network members, academics, and a range of political, economic and civil society actors from Europe and the Southern Mediterranean, the ultimate aim of this event is to foment a meaningful exchange that will fuel further progress towards the construction of a democratic, prosperous and peaceful shared Euro-Mediterranean territory. In 2007, the pursuit of this objective demanded sensitive consideration of the Partnership's human dimension, which had been left languishing as securitisation came to the fore of the developing European foreign policy agenda. Migration quickly emerged as the key issue, based on the output of past EuroMeSCo activities and in recognition of the heated debate surrounding the intensive migratory flows within the Euro-Mediterranean area.

In a space defined by diversity, the promotion of a dialogue that goes beyond mere tolerance, towards active respect and recognition, is crucial to stability. Yet to achieve this, diversity must be understood as an asset, not a liability, and partner countries should seek to nurture the accompanying process of cultural adaptation. In a bid to deconstruct, and hopefully also begin changing perceptions, the 2007 EuroMeSCo Annual Conference addressed the question of "A Common Agenda against Intolerance: Human Rights as a Shared Concern". In the run-up to this event, and as happens every year, three Preparatory Meetings were organised in collaboration with local partner institutes to begin outlining the conference programme through an exploration of the topic's various angles. These meetings took place in Tunis, followed by Alexandria, and finally Paris, successfully challenging dangerously-engrained stereotypes and reinforcing important lessons.

Migrants stand to offer a great deal as actors of development, in both their host and origin countries, yet they often lack the tools to contribute towards such progress due to a denial of their most basic rights. Human rights lie at the core of the somewhat problematic social changes affecting both sides of the Mediterranean, but that stem from quite distinct contexts. Europe is at present arguably afflicted by an identity crisis, aggravated by the growth of its migrant communities, who are bringing into question the very notion of what it is to be "European". The perceived threat of terrorism has only served to further complicate matters. Europe's structural move towards greater securitisation has enhanced the discriminatory nature of immigration policy, while at the more micro-level a suspicion of anything deemed different now pervades society, which would explain the noted rise in Islamophobia. Ultimately, it is human rights that have suffered the most detrimental brunt of these numerous developments.

For their part, some in the Southern Mediterranean claim to be committed to democracy and political reform; yet have these transition

processes of sorts also translated into the advancement of human rights in the region? As the 2nd Preparatory Meeting on "Civil Society, Human Rights and Democracy" highlighted, judicial systems in the Maghreb remain marred by unequal access, and a lack of independence and transparency, while the Mashreq appears to have suffered a decline in democracy over recent years, particularly as regards the freedoms granted civil society. Women's rights are a further issue where progress is wanting. The rules of the "game of democracy" may have been instituted to some extent, but in most countries reform remains only superficial, as was for instance seen in the negligible impact achieved by (managed) elections held in the region over this period. The Southern Mediterranean could be described as caught between the modern and the traditional. Actively engaged in the throes of modern living, yet still very much structured according to religious precepts and traditional values, these societies now also find themselves having to negotiate a new identity that manages to satisfy the demands of both camps, while also initiating a proper social contract that outlines the relation and mutual responsibility between the state and the citizen.

One of the main messages to have emerged from the activities organised by EuroMeSCo over 2007 is that stronger collective action directed towards the promotion of human rights is needed within the EMP, prioritising the rights of migrants and their invaluable role in Euromed relations. It is time to move away from the discriminatory security approach and to finally begin exploring the rich potential that immigrants represent. A true sense of belonging amongst minority communities is perhaps too much to ask for at this stage, yet the cultivation of an empowering sense of ownership is within grasp. The 2007 EuroMeSCo Annual Conference confirmed that the debate in this field is dynamic, creative, and well-informed, expressing a universal concern for the protection of fundamental rights. This shared morality should be capable, with the necessary political will and commitment, of rallying the consensus to effect real change. Albeit somewhat vague and weak, existing international conventions offer a potential springboard from which to develop a binding and more effective common policy that manages to respond to countries' desire for control over their territories, while simultaneously guaranteeing the right to freedom of movement.

Although an admittedly challenging process, deconstruction of the intolerance and prejudice so deeply rooted in the social psyche is crucial if we hope to achieve the multi-cultural community founded in respect for equality in diversity that is upheld by the EMP. Keeping in mind that "immigrants show us what we are", it is perhaps time to take a long hard look at what their present constrained experience says about our community and whether this is the image we want associated with the Euro-Mediterranean project.

Sarah Sousa e Sá
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Arms Control Efforts

When it comes to arms control efforts, and despite the considerable problems, the Mediterranean and

the Middle East is not a vacuum. Regional states are signatories of a number of arms control agreements. NATO member states have signed the CFE Treaty and the Wassenaar Arrangement (which

replaced COCOM), most states in the region have signed and ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention (some Arab states, such as Egypt, Syria and Libya have not signed, linking the issue with Israel's nuclear capability), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the Ottawa Treaty on landmines, and of course, the NPT. Some states are also participating to the UN Register for Conventional Arms. Unfortunately, regional arms control efforts (such as the arms control and regional security (ACRS) talks in the framework of the Arab-Israeli peace process, and discussions for a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone [NWFZ] in the Middle East) have not been successful so far.

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There will continue to be strategic uncertainty in the region for the foreseeable future and an escalation in arms procurement and defence expenditures cannot be excluded (especially as rising oil prices allow some regional countries to continue to spend more for security purposes). To prevent this, the EU and the U.S. should assist in the development of a new security system in the Gulf region which will take under consideration Iranian, but also Cooperation Council for Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) and Iraqi

security concerns. This, of course, practically presupposes an 'understanding' and the eventual normalisation of relations between the US and Iran. Urgent action is also necessary for the stabilization of Iraq and Lebanon and progress in the Palestinian problem.

Although the EU is becoming increasingly involved in the region, as its significant contribution to United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) or the important role of the EU-3 in the Iranian nuclear crisis demonstrate, the level and net impact of its involvement in security developments in its southern neighbourhood leaves much to be desired.

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