

Transnational Islam and Regional Security

Cooperation and Diversity between Europe and North Africa

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Talking Tough or Talking Together? European Security Discourses towards the Mediterranean

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After 9/11 (2001), 3/11 (2004), and 7/7 (2005), what is the relationship between Europe and Islam, and more particularly towards groups representing radical Islam? Since the end of the 1990s, the 'western' part of the world has been a privileged (though definitely not unique) target for terrorist attacks justified with a radical interpretation of Islam.

The military response of the USA in Afghanistan and in Iraq, carried out with the support of some European countries, has further sharpened the perception that there is an opening chasm between 'the West' and 'Islam'. This article will engage critically with this debate by looking at a specific case of relations between 'western' and 'Muslim' countries. It will focus on the approaches to this relationship adopted by the UK, the EU and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) in the area of security. The recent history of the UK shows how a country that for long did not have any specific perspective on political Islam has come to securitize the matter as a consequence of consecutive terrorist attacks. In the case of the EU, discourses

about Islam reveal the extent to which the EU strives to maintain parallel though diverging approaches to a similar range of issues and people. The EMP is the place in which to look for the potential convergence of security discourses mentioned by Volpi in his introduction to this collection.

Reference to Islam can be taken to group together several issues, which tend to intermingle in any analysis of the subject. There is the issue of Islam as a religion shared by millions of people across the world. At the national level, religious Islam (as distinct from its political manifestation) impacts public discourse in terms of social and cultural mores. In the case of the EU, religious dialogue is a component often called for, but not exactly at the centre of its daily politics. The EMP, for its part, addresses the aspect in a largely apolitical manner. A second issue is connected with Muslim communities in Europe and thus with migration. Here, member states have managed through the EU to press on their southern neighbours their concerns for migration (and illegal migration in particular), as the increasing number of readmission agreements shows. The issue within the EMP discourse, however, is much more related to the economics of migration and to the readmission of illegal migrants than to the integration of Muslim migrants. Furthermore, reference to Islam is linked to the role that Islam can potentially play in the politics of Muslim countries. While the EU and the EMP have been vocal in advocating for democracy promotion, they have made virtually no reference to Islam.

Yet another aspect refers to Islam as a (distorted) ideology justifying violence and terrorism. In the UK, the linkage between religious ideology and violence, and the politicization of radical Islam has dominated public attention culminating in legislation currently before Parliament. The EU also has shown a substantial capacity for action (Den Boer and Monar, 2002), whereas agreement in the EMP has recently crumbled, with the adoption of a lukewarm code of conduct against terrorism, as this article will discuss. Therefore, we will explore here how various actors have or have not devoted attention to some of these aspects, with the intention to capture the overall dynamics of relations between Europe and radical Islamist groups. But we remain aware that the levels of our analysis are irredeemably shifting and unstable, and the very juxtaposition of Europe and Islam requires a stretch of conventional analytical categories.

In tackling this complex mix of topics we rely on the contributions offered by the 'Copenhagen school' that security issues do not exist as such, but they have to be 'securitized', that is, they need to be presented by public authorities as 'an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure' (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 24). We will examine securitization processes, by looking at security discourse, that is, what is said in official texts and what is practised in relation to security (Fairclough, 1989; Habermas, 1996).

As the Copenhagen school put it, the utterance of the term is constitutive of security, as it presents a claim to use special rights to counter the threat (Wæver, 1995; Buzan *et al.*, 1998). Therefore, an issue is securitized (that is, becomes a security issue) when an argument is formulated about it in the name of which not

only are rules broken, but the audience of citizens tolerates such action. Moreover, as argued by Huysmans (2006), securitization can occur as security 'experts' or bureaucrats with administrative responsibilities enact a security discourse without that discourse having been discussed in the public arena. Therefore, we will also look at authoritative decisions which translate an explicit or implicit security discourse in the form of new laws, directives or administrative measures.

The thesis that we will put forward suggests that there is a securitization process involving Islam, but it is predominantly at the national level. The coherence, and with it the intensity of the securitization process, gets lost as we shift from the national to the EU level and to the EMP level. The UK shows a clear process of securitization of its relations with radical Islamist groups, a process which has intensified since the London bombings of July 2005, by means of new legislation and security measures which frame radical Islam as the existential threat facing national survival. The EU, on the contrary, displays a securitization process in relation to its internal strategy and to some parts of its external security strategy. At the same time, it has traditionally had some long-standing problems in deciding the role of Islamist activists in democratization processes. While preaching for more participation of civil societies, the EU has shied away from engaging with more moderate elements of Islamist participative forms. Within the EMP, 9/11 has upset the fragile balance about terrorism that was captured by the Barcelona Declaration of 1995. After an initial moment of deep convergence in the aftermath of 9/11, profound splits are beginning to emerge between the Europeans and all of its Mediterranean partners. The impossibility to find an agreed definition and prescription on terrorism ten years after the Barcelona Declaration underlines how a commonality of views is increasingly out of the question, despite substantial cooperation on the ground.

The article analyses the three levels in turn. It starts off by examining the UK as an example of a member state within the EU where national discourse, by dint of events on the ground, presents a strong case of securitization of political Islam. It continues by focusing on the EU and its diverse and fragmented discourses about Islam. It then moves on to the EMP, with a special attention to the fiasco of the Code of Conduct against terrorism.

National Security Discourse in the UK: An Amber State of Alert

National discourses form an important part of the European response to the threat of international terrorism. The EU counter-terrorism strategy emphasizes the principle that the prime responsibility for combating terrorism lies with member states (European Commission, 2004a; European Union, 2005a). Given the importance of the counter-terrorism initiatives at national level to European responses this section examines the security discourse in the UK in the aftermath of the Madrid and London bombs to gauge the influence and impact of Islam. We conduct this examination through the following aspects of discourse: policy responses in the shape of anti-terror legislation and executive initiatives, in particular the 2005 Terrorism Bill; the policing response; and military preparedness. These genres of

discourse have been chosen because they represent the key areas of practice and public policy in combating the perceived terrorist threat, while they also echo the principal themes of the counter-terrorism strategy as articulated at EU level, defined as *prevent, protect, pursue and respond* (European Union, 2005a), and as such represent an identifiable link between the national and supranational European security discourse.

What emerges from the national discourse is a wariness in official texts in pinpointing Islam, particularly Muslim culture, as a security challenge. This restraint is ascribed in part to the concern that community relations should not suffer by over-emphatic articulation of the Islamic nature of terrorism and reflects the reaction of civil society, particularly community and faith groups and civil liberties activists to proposed counter-terrorism measures and their impact on Muslim communities. Events since the July 2005 bombings, such as the global row over cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed and the conviction of a radical cleric Abu Hamza on charges of incitement to murder have hardened public attitudes towards radical Islam, and served to increase support for more repressive government measures towards militants. This has been accompanied by criticism of the government's previous handling of Islamic militants as too tolerant, and a popular questioning of the discourse of multiculturalism, tolerance and identity-less politics (Jones and Smith, 2005).¹

However it was the London bombs of 7 July and the second failed attempt two weeks later which served to rethink official reticence and sharpen the targeting of radical Islam as a security threat. The 2005 UK Prevention of Terrorism Bill shows clearly how the role of faith had become progressively articulated in counter-terrorism legislation in the last five years. The bill was described by the UK government as 'not a direct response' to 7 July, but intended to reflect law enforcement and intelligence advice arising from the London bombings.² New offences such as the glorification of terrorism and increased powers of detention, are intended to supplement the Terrorism Act of 2000 which itself replaced temporary legislation, largely targeted at Northern Ireland terrorism. In contrast to the 2000 Act, the new legislation emphasized terms such as 'extremism' and 'radicalization' to justify its additional powers, and the deployment of a rhetoric of difference in which terrorism is contrasted with the security threat posed in the past by the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

The 12-point plan set out by Prime Minister Tony Blair on 5 August 2005, one month after the London bombs, offered further evidence of how violent Islam provided a framework for the new security discourse. Declaring that 'the rules of the game are changing', Blair spoke of public acceptance of the need to tighten legislative powers, beyond the levels agreed after 9/11.

This is not in any way whatever aimed at the decent law-abiding Muslim community of Great Britain... We know British Muslims, in general, abhor the actions of the extremists... Those... that try to incite hatred or engage in violence against our country and its people have no place here (Blair, 2005).

Among the measures which reflect this new 'security game', were the proscription of two Islamist organizations, Hizb-ut-Tahir and Al Mujahiroun (its successor). The home secretary admitted that the government's decision to single out the two Islamist organizations represented a complete reversal of its position a year previously when it had warned against such an initiative, and attributed this change to public opinion as a result of the July bombings. In his words: 'the events of 7 July illuminated a certain set of issues about the kind of threat that we were under and the kinds of people who might bring those threats to pass' (House of Commons, 2005: question 32). Other initiatives included the closures of places of worship suspected of fomenting extremism, refining immigration and citizenship rules to improve integration of Muslims, and new grounds for deportation and exclusion.

With public opinion mobilized in favour of combating terrorists after 7 July, the government has used the attacks to develop a tougher and more explicit approach to counter-terrorism, drawing on measures which had been used previously in other European countries, notably the French ban on Islamic organizations after the 1995 bombing of the Paris metro. Indicative of this trend has been a change in the balance between security, civil liberties and compliance with international obligations, such as the European Convention on Human Rights. The home secretary, questioned about this shift, replied that any doubters of the new policy should consider the human rights of individuals charged with offences alongside the human rights of those who have been blown up on tube trains (House of Commons, 2005: question 36). Civil society groups opposed to the government's initiatives on detention without trial, deportation and control orders, have attacked the provisions on the basis that they are religiously and racially discriminatory and evidence of a policy which is overtly ideological and designed to fit within the US-led global War on Terror. While the government has tried to reject the invasion of Iraq as a cause of the terrorist attacks, civil society discourse in the media particularly has associated the surge in religious fundamentalism with the security threat via the concept of 'bleedback' as those trained in or inspired by the Iraqi insurgency, and in Afghanistan pose new danger within the UK (Burnett, 2005).³

In addition to internal security measures (and as a by-product of them) the new approach to Islamist threats has generated a foreign policy dialogue with North African states over individual terror suspects. Notwithstanding the existence of the EMP and the role of the EU as a framework for UK external relations with the Middle East and North Africa, the July attacks led the UK government to propose bilateral agreements with these states in order to facilitate the deportation of foreign terrorist suspects. The first of what is envisaged as a series of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) was signed between the UK and Jordan in August 2005 to ensure that tighter legislative controls on terrorist suspects would be backed up by the willingness of the country concerned to accept deportees.⁴ The Jordan MOU was followed by a similar agreement with Libya in October and with Lebanon at the end of December. The Foreign Secretary has also propelled Algeria to the top of his foreign policy agenda in an attempt to sign an MOU which would enable the UK to deport ten detainees described as a 'credible threat' to British security, but who cannot be detained further in the UK without trial, which the government has

insufficient evidence to pursue.⁵ Caught between the appeals of civil liberties groups against prolonged detention on the one hand and the lack of guarantees against ill-treatment of deportees by their home state on the other, the government has sought a way out via the MOUs, describing the bilateral agreements with Middle Eastern and North African states as 'a truly effective international response' towards dealing with 'foreign nationals who threaten national security' (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2005).

The police response to the London bombs, reveals different terms of discourse: while the threat is defined as coming from Islamist 'extremism' and 'radicalization', the demands of multiculturalism are more evident. Although the police assume a dual threat from both externally based terrorists and domestic cells, the shock effect of the July bombs was to concentrate attention on the possibility of home-grown violence, requiring a counter-terrorism strategy which would prevent as well as detect terror groups, while still preserving community relations in migrant areas.

Yet, the connection to Islamization is evident in terms of the operational rules of engagement such as the controversial 'shoot to kill' policy, designed to foil 'suicide bombers' and 'jihadis', in stop and search powers which could potentially single out Asian suspects.⁶ It is also evident in prevention measures such as tackling radicalization within prisons as well as places of worship.⁷

Despite the well-publicized remarks of assistant commissioner Brian Paddick in the aftermath of 7 July that 'Islam and terrorism don't go together', police practice has concentrated on the threat from radicalization of predominantly Pakistani groups, influenced by the alienation and poverty associated with migrant communities, and by the potential for ideological incitement from both the local mosque and links with Pakistan.⁸ Thus to the police, terrorism is seen in a broad social context, which emphasizes the particularly British nature of radical Islam, and this has become the predominant characterization of the threat after 7/7 as compared to the niche activity involving North African jihadis.

Counter-terrorism is the responsibility of the Metropolitan Police which covers the London area, although plans to regionalize the operations have also been given fresh impetus by the discovery of the Leeds cell behind the 7 July attacks. 'The Met' was given £60m of additional funding to meet the costs of investigating the July bombings, while at the same time there has been a 33 per cent increase in the number of officers working on counter-terrorism, and an internal reorganization of how terrorism is investigated. The additional resources reflect the demands of a complex murder investigation, and also the requirement for resources to detect the emergence of extremists while still maintaining a 'community partnership' with immigrant communities.

This delicate balancing act produces an ambiguous effect on the police's security discourse in relation to Islam, which highlights the religious element as a security threat, while also seeking not to overemphasize it in ways which demonize Muslims as a cultural community. While far from being culturally neutral (in contrast to what we shall show below in the case of the EMP dialogue), it seeks to downplay the ideological/religious component in the security challenge: the 7 July and 21 July investigations are, in this context, treated as large scale murder investigations.⁹

The third area we have examined for evidence of the securitization of Islam in UK discourse is the military, and its treatment of radical Islam as a defence issue. Here the picture is less clear-cut in presenting Islam as a military threat/challenge, yet it appears that a combination of threat assessment generated by the rise in transnational terrorism and the influence of US military thinking towards Islamist terrorism are influencing this aspect of the national discourse.

UK military preparedness in counter-terrorism arises from a long-term planning cycle which began with the Strategic Defence Review (SDR) of 1997, which was updated with an additional chapter added after the 9/11 attacks. The SDR approach recognizes global terrorism as a 'new' security threat requiring a comprehensive response covering prevention, armed response overseas and assistance to civilian authorities domestically. The new chapter of July 2002 outlines strategies to cover so-called 'trouble spots' which are defined as the Middle East, south-east Asia and Afghanistan without specifying an Islamist focus (Ministry of Defence, 2002). Current thinking as articulated in the Joint Doctrine Concepts Centre's *Strategic Trends* is more specific in defining Islamic terrorism as a growing 'threat to international peace and stability', although it notes that attacks on western targets will reflect the fact that the Islamic movement is not widespread and unified (Joint Doctrine Concepts Centre, 2002).

One Ministry of Defence planner describes radical Islam as 'the elephant in the room' in counter-terrorism strategy: it is a dominating presence, but one which official discourse declines to talk about. Public discourse generalizes risk assessments and avoids targeting Muslim communities either abroad or at home as a specific threat. Partly, this reflects the long shelf-life of official planning documents which are designed to situate military capabilities in a timeframe stretching out to the middle of the century, and which will outlive short-term political dramas. Partly, it is 'because ways of dealing with the elephant are outside our remit', in contrast to the approach adopted towards Irish terrorism which entailed a more limited range of political, cultural and religious sensitivities.

In practice and in private, however, the focus on Islamization of the military contribution to counter-terrorism is more entrenched than this would suggest with the greatest influence stemming from the traditional proximity of the UK armed forces to the US defence community and its intense focus on Muslims as part of the 'War on Terror'. The American agendas of retaliation for the 9/11 attacks and democratization of the Middle East have contributed to pressure on the UK armed forces, both independently and within NATO, to direct their capabilities and defence doctrine towards the security threat posed by religious radicalism. The US influence has not only been a factor in the way the UK military perceives global and domestic security threats, it has also led to the creation of joint structures and staff appointments to counter security threats with the aim of unifying the global counter-terrorism strategy.¹⁰ An example of this kind of common approach with the USA is the participation of US officials in EU counter-terrorism discussions, and increased intelligence sharing involving not only the UK but other EU member states, which has institutionalized the US influence on counter-terrorism initiatives across a broad range of activities from internal security to military intelligence (Bunyan, 2002).¹¹

The European Union and Islam: Parallel Voices, not Singing the Same Tune

At the EU level, there is no unity of discourse towards political Islam. On the one hand, the EU internal strategy to fight against terrorism, as well as the European Security Strategy (ESS) approved in December 2003, point in the direction of securitizing relations with political Islam. On the other hand, other trends pull the EU in opposite directions. Most notably, the EU's call for more democracy and human rights in the Arab world clashes with the EU's attempt to avoid any position in relation to parties and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) proposing an agenda construed in Islamic terms. This contradiction goes back to the early days of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and it has not been particularly affected by the events of 9/11. As we shall see, activities aimed at democracy and human rights in the Mediterranean have not included representatives of political Islam, whose presence would have been highly problematic for Brussels. But time for this strategy of avoidance seems to be running out. Legislative elections in January 2006 in Palestine, which brought a victory for Hamas, are making the internal contradictions of the EU approach to political Islam untenable, to the point that a reversal of the policy might be in sight. Whereas the EU 'domestic' debate and its general security discourse thus tend to depict political Islam as a problem, some components of its foreign policy discourse have ignored the issue, while others are now forced to face it. The overall picture is thus of confusion and parallel voices. We will first analyse the securitizing part of it. We will then move on to the exclusion of representatives of political Islam from democracy promotion activities, concluding the section with a comment about the situation created by Palestinian legislative elections.

A main component of the EU internal strategy to fight against terrorism has been the adoption of a list of terrorist organizations and of terrorists, which has displayed a tendency to expand. The list is regularly updated, and it leads to a series of possible common action. In its original version of December 2001, the list included the 'terrorist wing' of Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, as well as a number of individuals of Arab origin, some of whom were connected with the Hizballah (Official Journal of the European Communities, 2001). Since then, the number of terrorist organizations connected to Islam and the Middle East has increased. In its October 2002 version, the list came to encompass Gama'a al-Islamiyya, from Egypt, and the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, based in the USA (Official Journal of the European Communities, 2002). Most importantly, in September 2003, the EU finally gave in to US pressures and included the whole of Hamas in the list (Official Journal of the European Communities, 2003). Bit by bit, the interpretation of who is a terrorist according to the EU thus has come to include organizations which are regarded by some outside western countries as resistance movements, or doing forms of social and political work rather than simply focusing on violence and terror. The report by the EU's counter-terrorism co-ordinator Gijs van de Vries to the Council on implementation of the counter-terrorism Action Plan also specifically mentioned Islamist terrorism, highlighting Europol's contribution in 'supporting 21 national investigations into Islamist [sic] terrorism', in addition to emphasizing the role of a strategy against 'radicalisation and recruitment into

terrorism' as part of key counter terrorist initiatives taken by the EU (European Union, 2005b: paragraph 18).

Similarly, on the external front, the European Security Strategy explicitly named Islamic fundamentalist groups as among the key threats to the European Union: 'The most recent wave of terrorism is global in its scope and is linked to violent religious extremism... European countries are targets and have been attacked. Logistical bases for Al-Qa'ida cells have been uncovered in the UK, Italy, Germany, Spain and Belgium' (European Union, 2003: 3). It thus introduced a substantial religious element, indirectly linked to Islam, in the debate about European security. Other key concepts which feature in the succession of EU strategy papers on counter-terrorism are the distortion of moderate Islam and the recruitment of terrorists. One recurrent phrase is 'violent radicalisation' and the need to disrupt 'the conditions facilitating the recruitment of terrorists' and both themes feature in communications among the EU's institutions after the Madrid bombs of 2003 (European Commission, 2004a: paragraph 2.1). The Presidency's report to the Council shortly before the Barcelona summit in November 2005, set out clearly that, although religious extremism was a generic issue, the current challenge to security lay in the actions of Islamic fundamentalists: 'The terrorism perpetrated by Al-Qa'ida and extremists inspired by Al-Qa'ida has become the main terrorist threat to the Union' (European Union, 2005b: paragraph 3).

At the same time, there is uneasiness across the EU for a straightforward securitization of political Islam. The October 2004 Commission proposal on the prevention, preparedness and response to terrorism which prepared the ground for the subsequent 2005 EU action plan and strategy, expressed the wish for the EU's external activities to develop a cultural dialogue with the Islamic world 'addressing the underlying factors of terrorism' (European Commission, 2004a: paragraph 3.2). Similarly, the European Parliament's resolution on the Barcelona Process counted among its conclusions the need for a religious dialogue, and research into the reasons for radicalization:

The Euro-Mediterranean partnership should promote religious dialogue... as part of the fight against terrorism. [The Parliament] recommends joint implementation of academic activities by experts and technicians into the role of Islam in democratic and open societies and consideration of the reasons that can sometimes induce members of a... religious community to take violent action (European Parliament, 2005).

While these indications point in the direction of a potential securitization of the EU's relations with Islam, the picture is further complicated by the EU's approach to democracy promotion. A fundamental component in discordance with the securitization trend is represented by the decade of the EU's efforts at democratizing the Mediterranean non-member countries, which have never managed to engage positively Islamic-minded actors. There have been no attempts to exclude officially Islamic-leaning organizations from activities promoted by the EU, but at the same time funds deriving from Brussels have not reached them. The rhetorics on

democratization and civil society have come to permeate every discourse about the Mediterranean, especially since the Commission's Communication in 2003 but the practice remains the opposite. Islamist NGOs have been left out in the cold, as we will show in the case of Morocco (European Commission, 2003).

The legislative framework for EU aid is complex and tends to take its cue from the European Commission. Most of the funds disbursed by the EU to Mediterranean non-members are conveyed through the bilateral channel of MEDA, until the end of 2006.¹² As foreseen in MEDA II, priorities for the allocation of funds are decided in Brussels and expressed through Country Strategy Papers (valid for four years), National Indicative Programmes (valid for two years) and Annual Financial Plans. In the drafting process, Mediterranean partners are consulted, though their opinion is not binding. The power of member states too, with the MEDA II regulation, are curtailed once the Annual Financial Plan has been prepared by the Commission. These documents thus reflect very much the approach of the Commission and are implemented mostly by the Commission's Delegations in Mediterranean partner countries.

MEDA is heavily biased in favour of public actors and most notably in favour of governments of Mediterranean partners, in spite of attempts to broaden the range of actors involved (Philippart, 2001). The legislative basis for bilateral funds, which make up 90 per cent of the overall MEDA amount, consists of a Financing Framework Convention signed up between the Commission (EuropeAid) and the relevant Ministry(ies) in Mediterranean partners. Therefore, the inclusion of NGOs within the scope of EU aid is filtered through the preferences of national governments of Mediterranean non-members, thus leaving to them the choice between inclusion and exclusion.

For instance, in the case of Morocco, the National Indicative Programme for 2005–06 has an opening for NGOs, but the basis for the relationship is still the government. Human rights and democratization are among the priorities set and are allocated €5m (or 1.8 per cent) out of €275m that compose the MEDA budget for Morocco for 2005–06. They are split into two activities. The first activity is in support of the national plan for democracy and human rights. It is granted €2million and it aims at establishing a national programme on the matter, as called for by the Commission's Communication in 2003. The beneficiary is the Centre for Documentation, Information and Training on Human Rights (CDIFDH), a national institution established by Morocco and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, to which the United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) also contributes. Although the Delegation in Morocco has insisted on a wide inclusion of Moroccan NGOs, the final decision remains with Moroccan public authorities. The second activity, funded with €3m, is more vaguely defined in the National Indicative Programme for 2005–6 ('Strengthening of Moroccan civil society organisations working for democracy and human rights') and misleadingly indicates Moroccan NGOs as among the beneficiary institutions. The truth is, however, that the 'parallel' beneficiary institution, the Ministry for Employment and Social Affairs, is in charge of selecting and funding activities. Once again, the choice for participation or exclusion of Islamic-leaning NGOs is left with the Moroccan monarchy.

If we draw the lesson from the experience of Morocco, the bilateral channel of MEDA is thus designed and managed by the Commission in such a way as to privilege the established regime, rather than to reach out for representatives of political Islam, who might express opposition to the regime. Through MEDA, the EU has left the selection of NGOs to central public authorities, which in most cases well before 9/11 have made a choice against forms of Islamist participation.

The EU also disburses money directly to NGOs, but there too Islamic-leaning NGOs are de facto not included, if not outrightly excluded. The main channel for this form of decentralized co-operation was, for the period 1996–2000, MEDA Democracy, under the umbrella of European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). Since 2001, geographical distinctions of the EIDHR have been abolished and Mediterranean countries receive funds allocated according to sectoral priorities. The rationale for establishing this direct form of support for NGOs is grounded in the idea that NGOs offer a crucial contribution to the 'development of a democracy that upholds political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights' (European Commission, 2004b). In practice, however, while it is specified that these actors should not be effectively controlled by the state or by governmental institutions, the allocation of funds once again is stacked against Islamic-minded NGOs, as we are going to show for the case of Morocco.

MEDA Democracy, marred by a host of EU internal problems, was not in a position to make an impact (Youngs, 2001, 2004). Moreover, it tended to privilege partnerships between European NGOs and local NGOs, the idea being to encourage the exchange of experience of NGOs in the participating countries. This however in practice entailed that European NGOs created 'chapters' on the ground or organized activities to address human rights and democracy in Morocco, and by doing so received the biggest share of funds.

Until recently, Morocco was not considered a 'focus country' under the EIDHR and thus received a limited amount of funds.¹³ In 2001, Morocco received c. €550,000 for a project on 'Strengthening Civil Society in Rural Zones', although it is not clear who administered the funds.¹⁴ It also participated in a project about the safety of journalists and a Masters programme organized by the University of Malta (European Parliament, 2002). Between June 2002 and May 2003, no specific project took place, although the EU sent monitors for elections (Council of the European Union, 2003; European Union, 2003). Between June 2003 and May 2004, Morocco benefited from a regional project on the role of women targeted to the Maghreb countries, on top of the well-established Masters programme in Malta.

In 2004, for the first time the Commission opened up the possibility of funds targeted to local NGOs, thus excluding external actors who would generally be favoured in the allocation of resources. It specified that €1m was earmarked to Moroccan NGOs, for microprojects targeted at strengthening the capacities of NGOs working on human rights, freedom of expression and advocacy for rights of women, children and prisoners. As a consequence of this expression of interest, the Delegation issued a call in 2005 for microprojects, which selected 11 Moroccan NGOs.¹⁵ None of them was linked to pro-Islamic movements. A similar call has been issued in early 2006.

The meaning of this string of figures is that, despite a lot of talk about civil society, the case of Morocco shows the way in which the EU tends not to include pro-Islamic representatives in the activities it funds for human rights and democracy promotion. In Brussels, officials do admit to a problem existing in the implicit tension between a call for more inclusion, but a desire to limit participation on the ground. As one of them candidly said, 'the problem with allocating aid to local NGOs is that some of them are linked to Islamist movements'.¹⁶ The Delegation in Morocco, while cautious in its doings, emphasizes the practical limitations that all local NGOs encounter when preparing an application for macroprojects or more generally for managing projects according to complex EU criteria. All local NGOs need support and also a degree of prodding by the Delegation's officials to draft an application, and Islamist NGOs have never applied for funds in Morocco. At the same time, officials in the Delegation are aware that Islamist NGOs are well rooted on the ground and carry out a broad variety of tasks, thus qualifying for any possible definition of civil society. According to one official, 'it is a matter of time' before the EU has to engage with pro-Islamic NGOs.¹⁷ The kernel of the matter is the fact that the EU—in its democracy promotion profile—has not yet decided how to address pro-Islamic representatives of civil society, and is trying to avoid the issue for as long as possible (Grünert, 2004; Stetter, 2004).

Time might be running out, though, and putting the first securitizing trend in direct collision with this second trend towards avoidance. The election in January 2006 of a Hamas-dominated 'Parliament' in the Palestinian Authority represents a true test for the Europeans. On the one hand, according to the EU terrorist list, Hamas is a terrorist organization. On the other hand, it has been elected in a relatively free and fair process, as rarely seen in the region. The US position has been to reject outright the possibility to negotiate with Hamas as long as it does not recognize Israel and renounce violence. The EU position, while echoing the US and Israeli concerns, has been more nuanced. As the main donor of the Palestinian Authority, the EU is well aware of the consequences of an interruption of funds. Therefore, its first answer has been to put pressure on Hamas to recognize Israel and renounce terrorism, but without any specific deadline attached to it (Council of the European Union, 2006). Once again, the EU is buying time to avoid reconciling its different voices into a single framework.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Convergence of Views across the Mediterranean or Opening Chasm?

There have been three main stages in Euro-Mediterranean relations regarding how to address terrorism and, in particular, terrorist expressions of radical Islam. The first, which underpinned the Barcelona Declaration in 1995, marked a difficult but real convergence on a set of common views. The second, which came as a reaction to 9/11, expressed a unanimity of concerns. But deep differences have come to the fore and the third and current stage shows instead an opening chasm between EU member states, Israel and the Arab Mediterranean countries. This trend was highlighted by

the poor result of negotiations on the Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism, 'adopted' at the Barcelona summit in November 2005.

The issue of terrorism was present at the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and it held the success of the Barcelona Declaration on a knife-edge until the eleventh hour. The key issue consisted in finding a formula that would reconcile the opposite views of the Syrians and of the Israelis. As background information suggests and draft documents portray,¹⁸ the Syrians were adamant in inserting in the relevant paragraph the formula: 'without prejudice to the legitimate right of people to resist foreign occupation', while the Israelis were equally determined to resist any definition, and thus limitation, of the concept of terrorism (Barbé, 1996). Moreover, the Israelis advanced the proposal to insert the text: 'The partners urge the Syrian government to desist from providing support and shelter to an array of terrorist groups operating within its national territory in accordance with its national law.' The proposal was flatly rejected. The agreement was reached as the Spanish presidency forced the Syrians to drop their formula in favour of a more general 'right to fully exercise sovereignty by legitimate means', thus paving the way also to the Israeli acceptance of other points, among which reference to 'relevant' UN resolutions and regional 'and/or' international arrangements, 'such as' the Non Proliferation Treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

As in 1995 the main source of tension came from diverging Arab and Israeli interpretations of these thorny issues, while the big success was the fact that the Europeans were able to act as honest brokers, thus reaching a satisfactory compromise for all participants. After 9/11, the Europeans became, on the contrary, fully part of the 'interpreting game' in the EMP about who is a terrorist and why.

At first this brought an unprecedented degree of apparent cohesion among Euro-Mediterranean partners. Grand (but vague) declarations about shared security concerns were made in the wake of 9/11. EMP declarations in November 2001 'attach special emphasis... on co-operation in the fight against terrorism' and promised to refine the Barcelona Process in order to combat the terrorist threat and to address 'the structural causes of extremism' (European Union, 2001). Moreover, the agenda of the EMP shifted towards what in EU parlance is defined as 'justice and home affairs', thus abandoning the previous 'hard security' approach of the EU, represented by negotiations on the Charter for Peace and Stability. The impetus given by 9/11 to a more 'soft security' approach seemed instead to represent a more profitable ground for discussions. EMP partners chose to address the fight against terrorism mainly as a matter of judicial cooperation, and a fight against money laundering, and so on. In Valencia, in April 2002, EMP partners approved a Framework Document which codified the shift to a more 'soft' interpretation of security challenges.¹⁹

The negotiations prior to the Barcelona summit of November 2005 seemed to point to a similar degree of cooperation. The mere perspective of a meeting at the level of heads of state and government was extremely positive. The idea had been around for a very long time, the French presidency in 2000 having been particularly keen on organizing such an event. However, the darkest moment of the second

intifada had put a brake on any progress in that direction. Thanks to the concerted attempt to create new momentum in the EMP and the symbolic occurrence of ten years of EMP cooperation, it was eventually possible to plan the summit during the British presidency and with the active involvement of the Spanish government. Thus the meeting seemed the right answer to criticisms the EMP had drawn for its lack of real achievement (Johansson-Nagues, 2002; Holden, 2005).

It was in this context, that the idea for a joint initiative codifying an anti-terrorism position within the EMP arose a year before the Barcelona summit and was proposed by Tunisia. At the Hague meeting of EMP foreign ministers in November 2004, which agreed an agenda to prepare for the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process (including a comprehensive review of activities), Egypt and Tunisia had both proposed initiatives to raise the profile of anti-terrorism cooperation within the EMP. The move followed increasing dialogue between the EU and a group of Arab states, comprising Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia about cooperation against terrorism, within the framework of the Justice, Freedom and Security agenda. The proposal for a more comprehensive approach and more concrete forms of cooperation focused on attacking the financing of terrorism and a dialogue about the factors relating to the recruitment of terrorists. It was followed by a meeting in which ministers acknowledged that despite terrorist attacks affecting both sides of the Mediterranean, 'regional dialogue is too often beset by disagreements on definitions' and urging consensus on a text for a 'comprehensive Convention on Combating Terrorism' (European Union, 2004).

Whereas these prior signs were positive, the actual meeting in Barcelona, in November 2005, was a fiasco on a scale unprecedented in the EMP. Of the Mediterranean partners, only the Palestinian Leader Mahmud Abbas and the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan attended, whereas all heads of state and government of the 25 EU member states were present, albeit briefly.²⁰ Moreover, the discussion on the Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism displayed the usual differences between Israel and the Arab states. The key difference was that the Europeans, this time, did not effectively mediate between the two, and tried instead to force their own agenda onto their partners. As a consequence, the final outcome was a Presidency Declaration, instead of a common statement, and a 'Euro-Mediterranean Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism' that was notable for the little it said. The Code, which stretches to barely two pages, pledges the EMP to exchange information, cooperate in disrupting terrorist networks and pursuing terrorists, and work to combat the factors which contribute to the terrorist threat. It affirms the principles of respect for human rights and international law as set out in the UN Counter-Terrorism Conventions and UN Security Council Resolutions. However, it fails to address a common definition of terrorism. Moreover, it expressly avoids any mention of the role of radical Islam within the Arab EuroMed states as constituting a terrorist threat to EMP members.

The reasons for the public split in Barcelona among Euro-Mediterranean participants are several. Years of renewed Arab-Israeli tensions have taken a toll, with both sides radicalizing their views. Moreover, the war in Iraq has further soured relations between western and Muslim countries. Most important of all, the

successive waves of terrorist attacks in the USA, Spain and the UK which at first prompted the Europeans to converge on their southern neighbours' views, have also radicalized the Europeans into a more intransigent approach to terrorism. A bone of contention in Barcelona was that Arab countries wanted (as usual) to differentiate between terrorism and what they call the 'right to resistance to occupation'. Contrary to 1995, not only Israel, but also European member states opposed the move, afraid that it would have consequences in Iraq.²¹ The Code thus declares that 'terrorism is never justified'.²² More generally, European countries, Israel and Arab states diverge about how to address terrorism. While Arab countries would opt for a mix of authoritarian responses and economic development, the Europeans would rather promote transgovernmental cooperation and reforms within Arab countries. Thus, one of the prevailing interpretations for the absence of the Arab heads of state and government was that they were disinclined to listen to European lectures on democracy backed by some extra funds to support reforms.²³ Therefore (and paradoxically), the Europeans faced a situation in which disenchanted Arab representatives let Israel obstruct a deal on the common declaration, as it rejected reference to the peace process.²⁴

At the Barcelona summit, it became clear that as a result of terrorist attacks in the USA, Spain and the UK, it is now possible that southern Mediterranean partners (both Arab countries and Israel) unite in opposing the EU. While progress was achieved on illegal immigration, the opening gap that came to the light in Barcelona suggests little hope for a common future understanding on how to deal with radical Islam and with terrorism.

Thus the failure both to define the terrorist threat and devise measures to combat it, which the Code was meant to represent, masks quite separate discourses about the nature of the problem which has produced it. For the EU member states, despite their concern to avoid blaming or inciting a cultural clash, religious extremism and the subversion of moderate Islam to radicalism represent the pre-eminent threat to security around the Mediterranean. For the Arab states, the cornerstone of the security problem remains the unresolved conflict in the Middle East and the need for economic development. Meanwhile, Israel remains disinclined to compromises. While all sides acknowledge the importance and relevance of the others' concern, the Barcelona summit showed that the fear of privileging one 'cause' over another strangled the dialogue. If the Code was intended to put flesh on the bones of a regional security analysis and presage a security community across the Mediterranean, the flaws at its centre suggest this is a fraught, possibly even doomed, enterprise.

Conclusion

Discourses and practices within Europe and in the Euro-Mediterranean area have thus shown that there is no unified approach to radical Islamist groups, or even towards the concept of contemporary transnational terrorism. The impact of 9/11 has not been the straight forward securitization of relations between European and Islamist actors. There are several processes taking place at the same time.

At the national level, as shown in the case of the UK, there has indeed been a process of securitization of Islam. The discourse has increasingly stressed the need for emergency measures and powers to counter the threat from religious radicals, even at the risk of civil liberties, especially so after 7/7. However the security discourse is split between foreign based security threats such as North African or wider Arab imported terrorism and the perceived threat from radicalized indigenous populations, stemming largely from a Pakistani dominated local migrant community.

Within the EU, there is a plurality of discourses. The internal EU strategy for countering terrorism has indeed shown signs of securitization. The lists of terrorist organizations have progressively included not only a number of 'jihadists', but also a few Islamist organizations that not everybody in the world regards as just terrorist. Hamas is a case in point. The European Security Strategy has also mentioned religious fundamentalism as a key threat. At the same time, trends towards a securitization of the relationship between the EU and radical Islamist organizations are to be cast against the EU approach to democracy promotion in the Mediterranean. The rhetoric of democratization has permeated the EU political agenda, but at the same time the practice of fund allocation through MEDA and through the EIDHR shows a clear reluctance of the EU in deciding what to do with Islamic-leaning NGOs. The EU seems unable to choose where to draw the line whenever reference to Islam is made, and thus hesitates between its desire for new powers to fight radical Islamist groups and the reluctance to acknowledge the social and political role that Islamist parties play in Muslim societies.

The situation within the EMP is equally complex, and increasingly fraught with problems. The initial fragile compromise embodied by the Barcelona Declaration has not withstood the test of the terrorist attacks in the USA, Spain and the UK. The EU's role as an honest broker has become untenable. After a period of apparent convergence of understandings about how to fight terrorism, this has produced the fiasco of the Barcelona summit in 2005. The de facto boycott of Arab and Israeli governments has underscored the diminished authority that the EU now commands in the area. While the trend might be reversed in the future, it would take a substantial investment of resources on the part of the EU to do so. More generally, the time might have come for the EU to choose among conflicting discourses, as the result of Palestinian legislative elections has emphasized.

The overall picture is thus of a lack of convergence on a securitizing agenda between Europe and its Mediterranean partners if only because of the variety of EU discourses about Islam, radical Islam and 'jihadism'. While there are several indications that point in the direction of a community of understanding based on securitization, at the same time the plurality of discourses and practices depict a necessarily more complex picture. This situation highlights not merely the evident fragmentation of pro-Islamic movements, and the nature of the terrorist threat facing western countries, but crucially, the deep seated problems that the EU has in finding a single voice in its external relations, even when faced with an overwhelming issue of concern. At the same time this weakness may become a source of strength, as

it leaves the road open to a very wide array of potential outcomes in Euro-Mediterranean relations.

Notes

- ¹ The passage of the 'glorification of terrorism' clause in the Terrorism Bill in February 2006, despite a threatened challenge to it, is one example of this new harder line.
- ² See the UK's Home Office website, available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/security/terrorism-and-the-law
- ³ See F. Gardner, evidence to Foreign Affairs Select Committee, 2 November 2005. Available at www.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cm/affaff.htm#.
- ⁴ A programme of 'deportation with assurances' was undertaken in 2005 before the London bombs, but following Madrid, as part of the strengthening of the 2001 Terrorism Act. This led in August 2005 to the first of the MOUs with Arab states. See C. Clarke, statement to House of Commons, *Hansard*, 26 January 2005, column 305.
- ⁵ J. Doward, 'Race to prevent Algerian terror suspect release', *The Observer*, 19 February 2006.
- ⁶ The Metropolitan Police has issued guidance to officers to avoid targeting any particular ethnic group, although the British Transport Police suggested the powers would affect Asian suspects. See N. Morris, 'Hundreds of British terror suspects are under surveillance', *The Independent*, 13 September 2005.
- ⁷ Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair and Assistant Commissioner Andy Hayman (House of Commons, 2005).
- ⁸ C. Moore, 'Where is the Gandhi of Islam?', *Daily Telegraph*, 9 July 2005.
- ⁹ Telephone interview, Metropolitan Police, 10 January 2005.
- ¹⁰ See, for example, Evidence of Joint Chiefs of Staff to House of Commons Defence Select committee, 20 April 2004, particularly General Sir Michael Walker (Q256) on command structures and strategic and tactical cooperation with US counter-terrorism operations in Iraq. Also Martin Howard, Director General Operational Policy, Ministry of Defence on the relationship of UK and US military structures within NATO operations in Afghanistan. Uncorrected evidence to Defence Select Committee (HC558), 17 January 2006. Available at www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cm/defence.htm
- ¹¹ See The emergence of a global infrastructure for registration and surveillance, *International Campaign against Mass Surveillance*, 20 April 2005. Available at www.statewatch.org.uk/news/2005
- ¹² MEDA is an acronym of 'MESures D'Accompagnement financières et techniques à la réforme des structures économiques et sociales dans le cadre du partenariat euro-méditerranéen'. The regulation in place until 2006 is the so-called MEDA II, approved in 2000 (Council Regulation (EC) n.2698/2000), amending the MEDA Council Regulation (EC) 1488/96. After 2006, the financial instrument connected to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) will enter into force.
- ¹³ 'Focus countries' in the Mediterranean and the Middle East were Algeria, Gaza and the West Bank, Iraq and Tunisia.
- ¹⁴ Given the emphasis put on the participation of women in local politics, it is unlikely to have included pro-Islamic NGOs, though. General Secretariat, Council of the European Union, *Annual Report on Human Rights*, Brussels, 2002.
- ¹⁵ They are Amicale Marocaine des Handicapés, Association Atlas-Sais, Association démocratique des Femmes du Maroc, Association Horizon de Femme et Enfant, Association Tanmia Maroc, Fondation Zakora, Forum DES ONG du Nord du Maroc, Organisation Marocaine des Droits Humains, Réseau des association de la réserve de Biosphère Arganaeraie, Union de l'Action Féminine Tétouan, Union des associations et des amicale humanitaires de Fès Médina.
- ¹⁶ Telephone interviews, DG Relex, January–February 2006.
- ¹⁷ Telephone interview, Delegation of the European Commission, Rabat, February 2006.
- ¹⁸ The following quotations have been taken from unofficial drafts of the Barcelona Declaration, as amended by national delegations.
- ¹⁹ See the Presidency Conclusions, Valence, 23 April 2002, about the 'Regional co-operation programme in the field of justice, in combating drugs, organised crime and terrorism as well as co-operation in the treatment of issues relating to the social integration of migrants, migration and movement of people.'

- ²⁰ The EU did not encourage the participation of the Syrian and Lebanese presidents, though, because of the tension with Syria. See Ewen MacAskill, 'Leaders put brave face on summit absentees', *The Guardian*, 28 November 2005; Euromed: les dirigeants arabes absents, les Européens pessimistes, *Le Monde*, 27 November 2005.
- ²¹ *Agence France Press*, 28 November 2005.
- ²² Euro-Mediterranean Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism, 27–28 November 2005, p. 3.
- ²³ *Agence France Press*, 29 November 2005.
- ²⁴ Sommet Euromed: accord sur un 'code de conduite' contre le terrorisme, *Le Monde*, 28 November 2005; Barcelona summit fails to agree on 'shared vision', *European Report*, 30 November 2005.

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