

**European Perceptions of
Southern Countries
Security and
Defence Issues**
A Reflection on the European Press

– Elvira Sánchez Mateos –

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*European Perceptions of Southern Countries Security and Defence Issues
A Reflection on the European Press*

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This survey aims to draw a general picture of European media perceptions of the security and defence issues in Southern countries, as well as to provide an indication of any links with CFSP, ESDP and the Euro-Mediterranean process.

The objective is to provide quantitative and qualitative information regarding the coverage of such issues by a few selected European newspapers. The purpose of the research was not to conduct an in-depth study of all European Union newspapers, but to provide some insight via the review of a representative sample.

The discussion about the cause-effect relationship between the press and decision makers, though relevant, is not part of this research; neither is the interaction between media and society in the creation of public opinion ¹, nor is the analysis of media political interests and constraints. As such, the results of this small survey are partial in nature and scope.

¹ Research has been based on information from newspapers; however, researchers are well aware that newspapers have a secondary role in public opinion forming in comparison with other media. In a survey published in November 2001, from a sample of 14,986 interviews in the 15 EU countries, 84.9% believed that national TV news is the most reliable information source, followed by national press (66.3%) and national radio (60.8%). See *Flash Eurobarometer 114, International Crisis*, conducted by EOS Gallup Europe at the request of the European Commission. Survey organised and managed by Directorate General External Relations.

Research Sources

Given the lack of free on-line access to newspaper archives, most of the research has been done through the Reuters Service. Detailed research has also been done via *The Economist*. Additionally, the Spanish Presidency news service has been fully reviewed.

The Reuters Service

The Reuters Service and newspapers with a free on-line archive have been extensively used over the period from June 2000 to June 2002. The need to process large amounts of information in quantitative terms led us to limit as much as possible the scope of the research.

A maximum of three newspapers per country was chosen. Language constraints obliged us to give preference to English and French language press, thus special attention was paid to the British and French press. Language availability allowed us to include the Spanish and Italian press. Germany was an exception, given that there is only one newspaper with an English edition, which we have examined in depth.

Selection was restricted to so-called influential newspapers, since there is a broad consensus that they are prestigious. By "prestigious newspapers", also known as the "elite press", we mean newspapers that are read both in their country of publication and abroad and which help form international public opinion. This type of press is directed at a relatively cohesive audience, consisting of a well-educated public with more interest in international issues than readers of the mass or popular press. Opinion formed also read this print medium, which is believed to express and influence government positions. The prestigious or elite press includes newspapers that exert influence and produce, in terms of a shared vision, quality and high level information².

Initially, research work started with an analysis of articles and opinions published in the European newspapers. This research has been done based on 18 newspapers, as shown in Table 1, using their either own archives or those of Reuters.

² Concepts from Pérez del Toro, L. (1984): *La prensa de prestigio en la Comunidad Europea*. Ed. Mitre. Barcelona

Table 1: Selected newspapers

France	
Le Figaro	http://www.lefigaro.com
Le Monde	http://www.lemonde.fr
Libération	http://www.liberation.fr
Germany	
Frankfurter Allgemeine	http://www.faz.de
Frankfurter Rundschau	http://www.fr-aktuell.de/
Süddeutsche Zeitung	http://www.sueddeutsche.de/
Italy	
Corriere della Sera	http://www.corriere.it
La Repubblica	http://www.repubblica.it
La Stampa	
Spain	
El Mundo	http://www.elmundo.es
El País	http://www.elpais.es
La Vanguardia	http://www.lavanguardia.es
United Kingdom	
The Daily Telegraph	http://www.telegraph.co.uk/
The Guardian	http://www.guardian.co.uk
The Independent	http://www.independent.co.uk
The Times	http://www.thetimes.co.uk
International	
The Financial Times	http://www.ft.com/
The International Herald Tribune	http://www.iht.com/

The methodology used in this research involved searching in the Reuters archives over a two-year span and within two different fields, in accordance with the opportunities offered by the Reuters Service. The first search was general and included "all topics", while the second one was more specific and involved "political and general news" topics and "international political and economic organisations".

A search was conducted up to the end of June 2002 using the Reuters archives, with the exception of three cases. One such case was the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, its English edition archives (on-line since 5 June 2002) were used, with specific searches conducted on "opinion and politics" topics. *La Repubblica's* own archives were also available and specific searches were conducted using "politics and foreign" topics. The third case involved the *International Herald Tribune*, for which advanced search facilities was not available; news items were collected from 2000, 2001 and 2002 without the possibility of using more criteria.

From the beginning, the search for information on security and defence issues concerning Southern Mediterranean countries could not be done by introducing the latter terms as search items (either in headlines or in text), since it produced irrelevant results, except in the case of the Middle East conflict.

As such, and as a means of processing information, the focus was changed and some focal points were established. Thus, we focussed on European media coverage of issues involving Southern Mediterranean countries (see Table 2), at times involving events related to the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue, European Union initiatives regarding the Mediterranean, and major international and regional events. These events included: the European Council meeting at Feira in June 2000, the emergence of the second intifada in September 2000, the Marseille Conference in December 2000, the European Council meeting at Göteborg in June 2001, the September 11, 2001 attacks, the Arab League Summit in Beirut in March 2002, and the Valencia Conference in April 2002.

Table 2: First step – countries and topics

English	French	German	Spanish	Italian
Algeria	Algérie	Algerien	Argelia	Algeria
Egypt	Egypte	Ägypten	Egipto	Egitto
Israel	Israël	Israel	Israel	Israele
Jordan	Jordanie	Jordanien	Jordania	Giordania
Lebanon	Liban	Libanon	Líbano	Libano
Libya	Libye	Libyen	Libia	Libia
Morocco	Maroc	Marokko	Marruecos	Marocco
Palestine	Palestine	Palästina	Palestina	Palestina
Syria	Syrie	Syrien	Siria	Siria
Tunisia	Tunisie	Tunis	Túnez	Tunisia
Turkey	Turquie	Türkei	Turquía	Turchia
Defense	Défense		Defensa	Difesa
Security	Sécurité		Seguridad	Sicurezza
Foreign Affairs	Politique extérieure		Política exterior	Politica esterna

The results of this search illustrated that information on Southern Mediterranean countries had not dramatically changed before, during or after such events and as such, they could not be used as chronological references.

Given these results, the second step involved introducing specific concepts as search elements to complement and improve the research. Table 3 includes all topics and terms used in this phase for the five working languages.

Table 3: Second step – Additional topics

English	French	German	Spanish	Italian
Euromed	Euromed	Euromed	Euromed	Euromed
ESDP	PESD	ESVP	PESD	PESD
CFSP	PESC	GASP	PESC	PESC
Middle East	Moyen-Orient	Nahen Osten/Nahost	Oriente Medio	Medio Oriente
North Africa	Afrique du Nord	Nordafrika	África del Norte	Nord Africa
Near East	Proche-Orient		Oriente Próximo	
Maghrib	Maghreb	Maghreb	Magreb	Maghreb
Mashrick	Machrak	Machrak	Mashrek	Mashreq
Levant	Levant		Levante	Levante
Black Sea	Mer Noire	Schwarzes Meer	Mar Negro	Mar Nero
Euro-Mediterranean Partnership	Partenariat Euro-Méditerranéen	Partnerschaft Europa-Mittlemeer	Partenariado Euro-Mediterráneo	Partenariato Euro-Mediterráneo
Barcelona Process	Processus de Barcelone	Barcelona Prozess	Proceso de Barcelona	Processo di Barcellona
Barcelona Declaration	Déclaration de Barcelone	Erklärung von Barcelona	Declaración de Barcelona	Dichiarazione di Barcellona

It is important to note that the use of these terms is extremely ambiguous because of national differences. German and Italian newspapers, for instance, do not appear to use the term "Near East" (in the German case "Near East" has been substituted by "Nahost"). In Italian and Spanish newspapers "Levant" is a geographical term used in an internal context and is not used when referring to foreign countries. With the exception of the British press, "Black Sea" references generally include Turkey and are usually related to issues involving the countries of the former Soviet Union. The "Barcelona Declaration" is also used in a domestic context and associated with Spanish domestic developments, as such, its occurrence in the press is minimised for the purposes of the research.

Thus, in the second phase, less extensive but more elaborate research was conducted in attempt to identify important issues and, whenever possible, national differences in relation to defence and security issues of

Southern Mediterranean countries or, at least, identify which items focussed on by the press could be labelled "security and defence issues".

The quantitative results of this research are shown in Tables 7 and 8 and in Graphics 1 and 2. The qualitative aspects will be discussed in the analytical section of the paper.

The Service of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

While conducting our research we were able to benefit from the Spanish Presidency of the EU Council news service. Distributed via e-mail on a weekly basis, from January 17 to July 1, 2002, it consisted of a selection of "elite press" headlines and information from most of the European Union countries.

This service covered all types of political, economic, and social news considered relevant – according to topic and source – to Spanish decision-makers and consequently, given the Spanish responsibility during the half-year period, assumed to be of interest to European Union decision-makers as well.

The total number of headlines and information items provided by this service was 926, of which only 123 were considered relevant for the purposes of the research. Because the vast majority of them were related to the Middle East conflict, the latter was considered to be the main "general topic," while other "specific topics" consisted of information related to other countries and issues. This classification is shown in Table 4, which also provides information on which issues were focussed on by the press. Table 5 provide quantitative information about this particular part of the research, while other aspects are included in the analytical part of the paper. The selected headlines (general and specific) are listed in Annex 1.

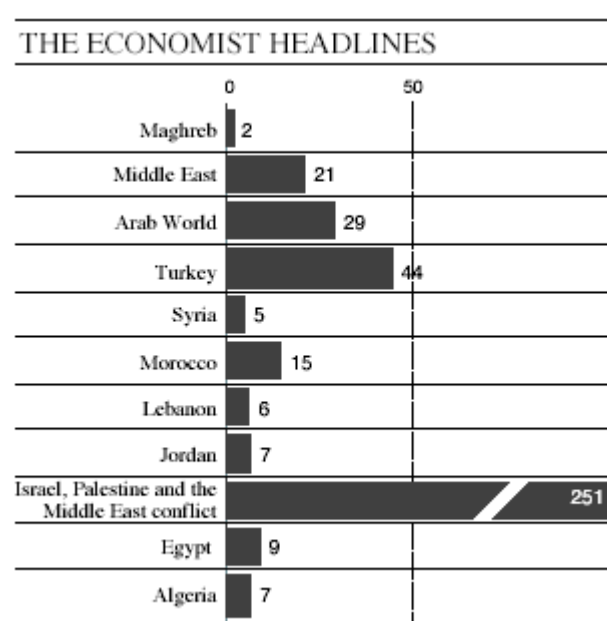
Table 4. Spanish Presidency selected news items: Topics

	Number	Topics
General		
Israel, Palestine and the Middle East Peace Process	97	Violence United States role EU policy Peace initiatives Terrorism Palestinian state Israel's policy Palestinian leadership
Specific		
Algeria	2	Policy towards EU Elections
Arab World	1	Clash of civilizations
Middle East	2	United States policy Terrorism
Morocco	4	Spanish policy Migration Crisis with Spain
Turkey	1	EU
Tunisia	3	Terrorism
Other Specific Topics		
Cyprus	2	Negotiations
ESDP	3	Development US attitude
France	1	Anti-Semitism
Gibraltar	4	Relations UK-Spain
NATO	1	Enlargement
United Kingdom	2	Migration

Table 5. Press service during the Spanish Presidency – Distribution of topics by newspaper

	General	Specific	Total
<i>ABC</i>	17	6	23
Cinco Días	1	0	1
Corriere della Sera	4	0	4
Die Spiegel	1	1	2
El Mundo	4	2	6
El País	12	5	17
El Periódico	3	0	3
Financial Times	3	0	3
Frankfurter Allgemeine	0	3	3
International Herald Tribune	9	2	11
La Libre Belgique	2	1	3
La Repubblica	5	0	5
La Stampa	3	0	3
La Vanguardia	2	0	2
Le Figaro	9	2	11
Le Monde	10	3	13
Le Soir	3	0	3
Libération	6	1	7
The Guardian	2	0	2
The Times	1	0	1
Total	97	26	123

News in *The Economist*



To further complement the research, we selected another publication, *The Economist*, a weekly magazine considered one of the most influential sources on policy-making in European countries. We searched in *The Economist* archives on a country basis over a period from January 1, 2001 to August 31, 2002.

Three hundred ninety-six news items were then selected that covered issues broadly related to security and defence. It should be noted, however, that as with the Reuters Service, very little information could be found that focused strictly on security and defence issues.

The selected news items were classified on a country basis, with the exception of Israel and Palestine. Because most news items concerning these countries were related to the Middle East conflict, all have been grouped under the item "Israel, Palestine and the Middle East". Some other relevant news items that did not fit into

the country classification were grouped under other items, such as "Arab World", "Middle East" and "Maghrib." Graphic 4 shows the quantitative result of this research. Our major comments on the research and reflections on the research are included in the analytical section and final part of the paper. The full list of selected news items is presented in Annex 2, while Table 6 provides information on the issues highlighted by the press.

Table 6. News in *The Economist*

Countries/Regions	Number	Topics
Algeria	7	Civil War Berber riots Protests
Egypt	9	Domestic economic situation Relations with the United States Political system and reform
Israel, Palestine and the Middle East conflict	251	War Palestinian leadership United States' role Palestinian Authority need for reform Internationalisation of the conflict Relations between war and terrorism Israeli politics Arab reactions to conflict Palestinian intifada Camp David negotiations Escalation Israel's policy of assassination Mitchell's report Israeli settlements Israel's elections
Jordan	7	Palestinians Hashemites Regional politics Reform of political system
Lebanon	6	Reconstruction Hizbullah Syrian armed presence
Morocco	15	Spain Western Sahara Migration Reform of political system
Syria	5	Axis of evil Reform of political system Armed presence in Lebanon
Turkey	44	Economic crisis Reform of political system Corruption Cyprus Relations with Israel NATO European Union Kurds Islamism Role of the military
Arab World	29	September 11 and restriction of reforms Islam and Liberalism. Political Islam Iraq Terrorism Nepotism
Middle East	21	Kurds Iraq Oil September 11 effects Nepotism
Maghreb	2	Reform of political system

Table 7: Number of news by country in selected newspapers (1)

NEWS BY COUNTRY (1)

		Algeria		Egypt		Israel		Jordan		Lebanon		Libya		Morocco		Palestine		Syria		Tunisia		Turkey	
FRANCE	Le Figaro	4	355	2	142	17	810	8	145	3	239	2	55	6	337	6	272	8	89	2	226	16	297
	Le Monde	18	959	11	314	40	1,624	11	518	18	518	7	152	21	730	15	567	14	339	9	433	29	707
	Liberation	11	609	7	163	43	788	25	231	15	231	8	51	18	362	6	230	25	169	9	254	36	350
GERMANY	F. Allgemeine (3)	6	38	27	130	98	430	30	152	19	52	19	80	6	61	15	79	16	62	3	39	66	405
	F. Rundschau	90	129	245	303	672	863	48	54	51	58	39	44	125	237	143	148	75	83	22	24	154	164
	Süddeutsche Z.	117	169	304	391	946	1,289	60	80	90	109	81	104	184	379	187	224	81	97	37	42	573	945
ITALY	Corriere della Sera	2	243	10	502	79	1,711	8	225	13	339	5	298	12	534	28	614	10	212	7	792	43	820
	La Repubblica (2)	48	121	209	326	889	1,084	88	107	139	158	34	61	35	88	248	313	117	142	37	89	105	393
	La Stampa	123	138	225	242	1,191	1,250	148	152	212	216	130	154	233	279	415	430	188	196	143	186	541	843
SPAIN	El Mundo	306	425	272	856	585	791	91	114	116	133	50	78	1,338	1,769	358	429	106	126	149	225	216	360
	El País	498	711	535	712	1,484	2,510	175	276	158	270	100	196	2,732	3,714	954	1,427	210	364	216	375	473	997
	La Vanguardia	299	424	459	1,368	815	1,358	104	168	131	228	70	103	1,043	1,523	497	716	133	206	331	483	421	887
UNITED KINGDOM	The Daily Telegraph	91	126	383	551	1,217	1,482	399	629	184	211	148	173	231	317	249	327	210	236	78	148	685	963
	The Guardian	255	330	1,083	1,368	3,189	3,978	987	1,627	511	562	312	340	349	490	946	1,046	507	540	146	299	1,232	2,127
	The Independent	131	194	495	647	1,841	2,134	563	830	332	362	176	202	235	355	440	520	269	308	104	212	776	1,124
INTERNATIONAL	The Times	136	196	737	930	1,609	1,897	707	1,375	287	323	206	242	321	484	329	413	290	316	123	204	998	1,420
	Financial Times (4)	126	177	504	671	1,731	2,102	427	538	266	314	187	245	156	224	252	270	303	334	85	129	875	1,381
	I. Herald Tribune (5)		8		12	133		18		6		3		3		5		8		7		19	
TOTAL		2,261	5,352	5,508	9,628	16,446	26,234	3,879	7,230	2,545	4,329	1,574	2,581	7,045	11,886	5,088	8,030	2,562	3,927	1,501	4,167	7,239	14,202

(1) Reuters Archives, June 2000-June 2002. First column: political news + international politico-economic organisations; Second column: general news; (2) Data from La Repubblica archives, 2000-2002. First column: politics and foreign policy; Second column: general news; (3) Frankfurter Allgemeine. English edition archives (on line since June 2000). First column: politics and opinion; Second column: general news; (4) Printed edition in Reuters; (5) Advanced search is not available. News correspond to the period 2000-2002

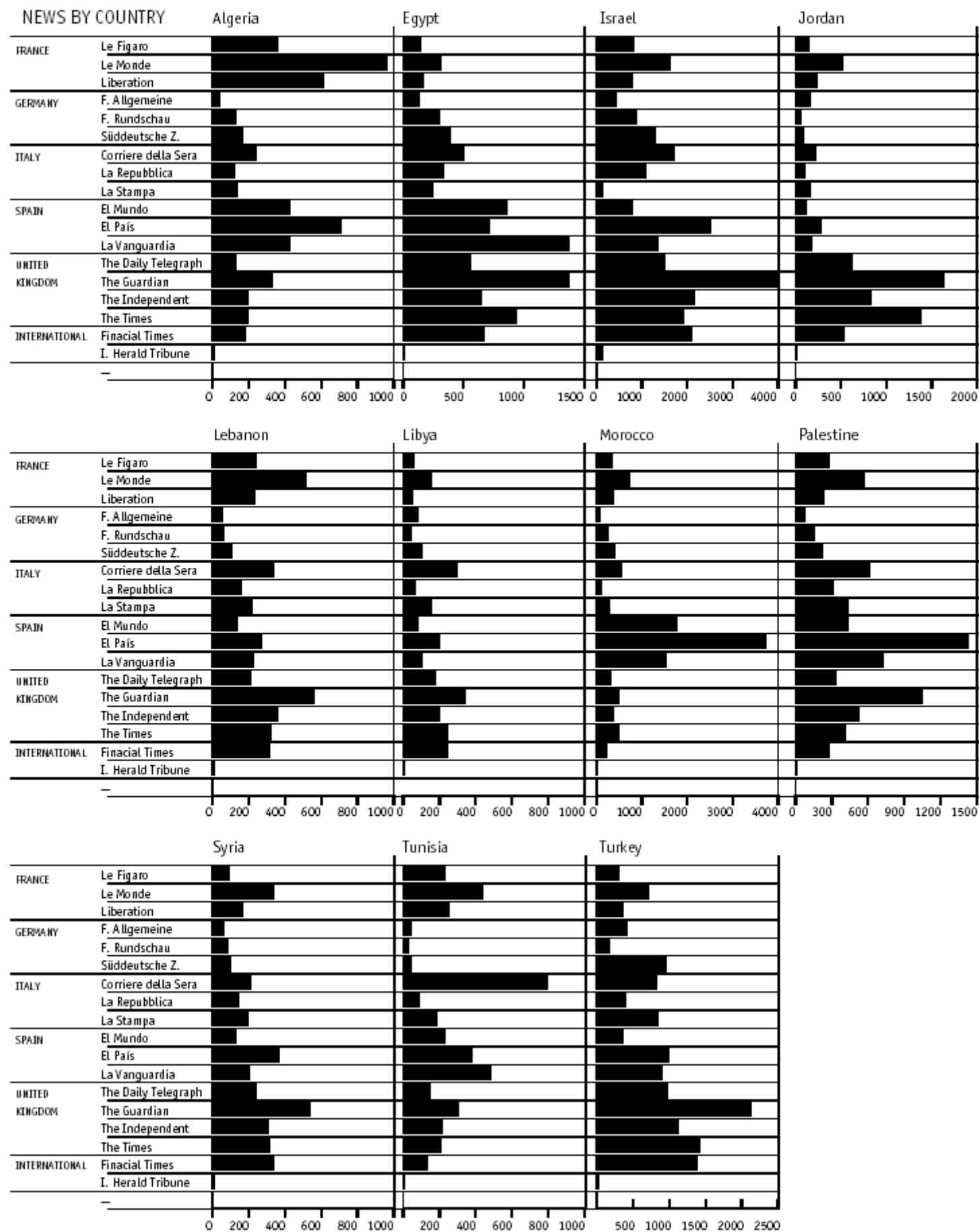
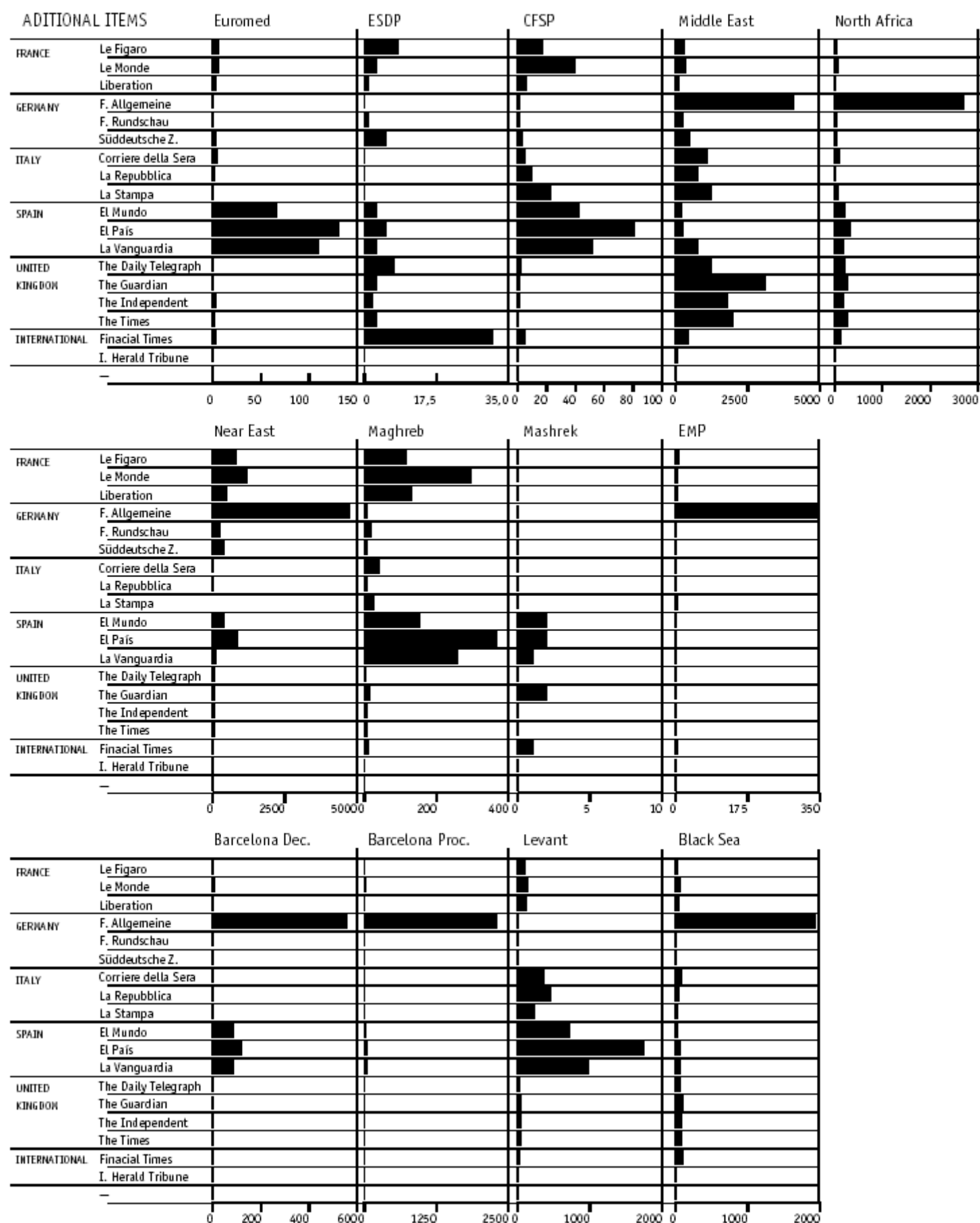


Table 8: Additional items introduced in the research by selected newspaper (1)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS (1)		Euromed		ESDP		CFSP		Middle East		North Africa		Near East		Maghreb		Mashrek		EMP		Barcelona Dec.		Barcelona Proc.		Levant		Black Sea		
FRANCE	Le Figaro	5	5	8	8	15	17	208	262	20	29	734	775	102	117	0	0	6	6	1	1	4	4	76	98	15	23	
	Le Monde	5	5	3	3	38	39	283	338	47	58	1,073	1,158	269	297	0	0	3	3	2	3	8	8	120	136	56	66	
	Liberation	3	3	1	1	6	6	90	102	22	24	451	463	121	129	0	0	2	3	0	0	2	2	92	109	33	34	
GERMANY	F. Allgemeine (3)	0	0	0	0	0	1	630	4,076	401	2,679	636	4,719	1	6	0	0	67	346	86	554	419	2,301	0	1	210	1,931	
	F. Rundschau	0	0	1	1	1	1	216	243	44	54	232	253	16	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
	Süddeutsche Z.	0	2	5	5	3	3	351	462	34	48	280	362	6	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
ITALY	Corriere della Sera	4	4	0	0	5	5	966	1,074	75	85	—	—	36	30	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	3	242	357	65	75	
	La Repubblica (2)	1	1	0	0	7	9	595	748	0	10	—	—	3	7	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	157	444	16	34
	La Stampa	0	0	0	0	12	22	1,172	1,237	63	69	—	—	22	24	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	2	171	226	18	21	
SPAIN	El Mundo	46	66	3	3	40	42	123	171	141	206	304	363	124	153	2	2	1	1	4	86	22	24	435	706	19	27	
	El País	92	130	5	5	57	81	174	251	245	336	545	858	276	368	2	2	1	1	8	117	33	38	835	1,739	29	64	
	La Vanguardia	68	109	3	3	27	52	502	768	137	191	53	78	175	257	1	1	1	1	7	85	28	29	519	970	26	60	
UNITED KINGDOM	The Daily Telegraph	0	0	7	7	2	2	936	1,204	121	203	41	53	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	21	48	59
	The Guardian	0	0	3	3	1	1	2,752	3,119	199	253	42	49	11	12	2	2	0	0	0	0	4	4	37	40	79	93	
	The Independent	2	3	2	2	1	1	1,506	1,789	121	178	38	44	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	25	30	50	67	
	The Times	1	1	2	3	0	0	1,458	1,994	173	261	19	27	5	7	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	34	40	68	78	
INTERNATIONAL	Financial Times (4)	2	2	30	31	4	5	3,943	4,170	92	139	16	17	8	9	1	1	4	4	1	1	3	3	10	12	72	102	
	I. Herald Tribune (5)	0	0	0	0	0	0	64	—	0	0	—	—	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
TOTAL		229	331	73	75	219	287	15,905	22,072	1,935	4,823	4,464	9,220	1,182	1,457	8	8	89	369	110	848	531	2,422	2,732	4,929	805	2,736	

(1) Reuters Archives, June 2000-June 2002. First column: political news + international politico-economic organisations; Second column: general news; (2) Data from La Repubblica archives, 2000-2002. First column: politics and foreign policy; Second column: general news; (3) Frankfurter Allgemeine. English edition archives (on line since June 2000). First column: politics and opinion; Second column: general news; (4) Printed edition in Reuters; (5) Advanced search is not available. News correspond to the period 2000-2002



Topics: empirical evidence

Content analysis produced a set of topics and issues that have been grouped by country: first, European views – France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom – followed by news and perceptions on Southern countries. The final part of this section is devoted to a case study considered relevant to the research: the “Perejil-Leila” issue.

European views according to country

France

The French press pays a great deal of attention to Southern Mediterranean countries, especially Algeria, but a significant part of this information is processed from the point of view of French domestic politics and society.

Accordingly, the integration of the population of Algerian origin in France is the most important issue related to Algeria, other than Algerian domestic politics and the country's situation. An interview with Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the army's internal disputes, and Moroccan-Algerian relations were also topics covered in French newspapers.³

Morocco is also one of the main interests of the French press. Issues highlighted are mostly related to the domestic situation (described as “unstable”) and Berber and Western Sahara issues. The third Maghrib country, Tunisia, also appeared in the press. Issues highlighted include terrorism (the Djerba attack), the regime's policy of repression and a critical view of French-Tunisian policy.⁴

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict serves as the basis for news on Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, along with the two principal participants Israel and Palestine. Other issues include Libya's activity on the international stage, its relations with Sub-Saharan countries and the Lockerbie issue.

The Turkish role in the international coalition against terrorism and its attitude in the Afghan crisis is also another topic in the press, along with Turkish-US relations and the domestic effects of increasing turmoil in the Middle East in relation to the Kurdish question.⁵ Turkey's expectations regarding EU membership are also an important issue for French newspapers.

Finally, the French press paid special attention to the Euro-Mediterranean Process during the Marseille Summit (but not during the meeting in Valencia). French newspapers commented on the necessity to invigorate the Barcelona Process and its link with the Middle East conflict.⁶ Differences within the European Union related to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership are also noted.⁷

Germany

In general, the German press pays attention to the Southern Mediterranean countries from a domestic point of view, as other European Union newspapers do; for example, German newspapers report on Morocco and Turkey in terms of German domestic politics. As such, the media pays special attention to Third Mediterranean Countries immigrants in Germany and their integration.

Occasionally, the German press also paid attention to Tunisia, essentially because four German nationals died in the Djerba attack. This attack was used as an opportunity to criticize Arab regimes, described as

³ Bouteflika interviewed in *Le Monde*, 11 February 2002. Mohammed VI interviewed in *Le Figaro*, 4 September 2001. About the Algerian Army, see *Le Monde*, 6 July 2002.

⁴ The article about Ben Brik, a journalist on hunger strike, was an example: “J'accuse Jacques Chirac d'avoir été, si longtemps, le plus fidèle soutien du régime ignominieux de Ben Ali [le président tunisien]. Depuis l'ascension de Ben Ali au pouvoir, le président français n'a pas hésité à maquiller la face hideuse du régime tunisien, écrit Taoufik Ben Brik,” *Le Monde*, 3 May 2000.

⁵ Thus an interesting article notes that the US could obtain Turkish support for its intention to bomb Iraq, but Turkey fears that this kind of action would increase tension in the region and could affect Kurdish separatist aspirations. “Principal allié des États-Unis dans la région, le pays est déjà largement débiteur des Américains après l'octroi d'un important prêt du FMI sans lequel la Turquie risquait la banqueroute.” “Turquie et Jordanie en première ligne”, *Le Figaro*, 14 February 2002.

⁶ “Mais le rendez-vous de Marseille, censé donner ‘un nouvel élan’ à ce processus de Barcelone, tombe à un moment particulièrement catastrophique : en plein retour de l'Intifada, l'objectif de créer ‘une zone de paix et de prospérité’ dans la région a rarement paru aussi éloigné.” “Cinq ans de coopération virtuelle”, *Libération*, 16 November 2000.

⁷ “Au sein des Quinze, le clan anglo-scandinave continue de traîner les pieds [...]” *Ibiem*.

"repressive," and their incapacity to assure security.⁸ A similar discussion surrounded the Moroccan and Algerian cases. In the latter case, Algerian instability was linked to its economic crisis.⁹

German newspapers also focused on Libya from a German perspective. Whether due to interest in the Libyan market or Gaddafi's mediation in the liberation of three Germans kidnapped in the Philippines in September 2000, the German press paid special attention to the country and its leader. Along with information on the role of Libya in inter-Arab and Arab-Israeli relations, there were also references to Libyan participation in international terrorist activities, such as the Lockerbie affair or the West Berlin attempt in 1988 and 1986.

As in the other European countries, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the major issue in the German press, although with important differences compared with other European newspapers: the German press is especially sensitive to German-Israeli relations and to the language used in relation to Israel. In that sense, some opinions drew attention to the fact that German difficulties in talking freely about Israeli issues could be overcome by the current and future generations that have grown up in the post-Second-World-War era.¹⁰

As a result of this domestic slant to the news, Turkey is also an important focus for the German press: the uncertainties and debate about Turkish integration in the EU; the Cyprus issue; the role of Turkey in Euro-Atlantic relations and, the most relevant issue, the presence of Turkish communities in Germany.

The German press paid attention to CFSP and ESDP developments and to relations with the United States and NATO, admitting that, in order to shorten the distances between the European Union's political and economic spheres, EU countries should increase their efforts to build a common foreign and defence policy.¹¹ The European role in the Middle East conflict and the Arab world's view of that role as being more comprehensive and less biased than that of the United States were also topics of some interest for the German press.

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine* also included news on lesser known issues related to the defence and security policies of Southern Mediterranean countries: Egypt and its refusal to recognise Somaliland in order to contain Ethiopia (in September 2001); Copt minority rights in Egypt; Jordanian relations with Iraq; complex inter-confessional relations in Syria and Lebanon (Christians, Muslims and Druse).

Italy

As with all other European newspapers, Italian newspapers focused mainly on news about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Arab League Meeting in Beirut (March 2002) and related issues, such as the Saudi Arabia peace initiative and Arafat's forced absence, along with news on tension between Israel and Syria and internal instability in Egypt, were also important issues for the press. *La Repubblica* devoted some attention to water issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and in the Middle East region in general (Turkey – Syria/Iraq and Egypt – Sudan/Ethiopia).

There are, however, national specificities, such as Italian interest in the Kurdish question, probably raised by Turkey's extradition demand for Abdullah Öcalan or debates surrounding Italian involvement in the Ben Ali *coup d'état* in Tunisia. Another important topic analysed by the Italian press as a domestic political issue was the debate on Prime Minister Berlusconi's declaration of "Western supremacy."

La Stampa has the greatest number of articles on Southern Mediterranean countries. Immigration as a problem in Italy was a recurrent topic and some contributors linked the issue of immigration to weak or non-existing democratic systems and institutions.¹² Islamic and state-sponsored terrorism and the roles of Syria and Iraq were important issues as well, especially after the September 11, 2001 events.¹³

⁸ "But the price of the Tunisian peace has been a police state whose repressive methods are a cause of concern for more and more non-Islamic, democratically minded Tunisians." "The need to investigate", *FAZ*, 15 April 2002.

⁹ "The vast numbers of unemployed men were easy pickings for Islamic fundamentalists, who sought to recruit the young rebels [...]." "By its own bootstraps," *FAZ*, 29 June 2000.

¹⁰ "Until May 2002, it went without saying in German politics that policies pursued by Israel were not to be criticized in public [...]. This taboo, inevitable and salutary though it might have been, had a downside, however. Upon closer scrutiny, it was seen to have failed to comply with the rules of the game of a free society." "Breaking an old taboo," *FAZ*, 22 May 2002. Similarly, "Der antisemitische Komplex," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 26 June 2002.

¹¹ "A successful EU common foreign and security policy does not have to weaken NATO, although it might one day constitute a challenge to Washington's undisputed leadership within the alliance." "In praise of a separate EU Defence identity," *FAZ*, 14 February 2001.

¹² "[...] la graduale abitudine all'imperio della legge, alla legittimità politica e democratica dei governi, alla certezza del diritto, alla protezione delle minoranze. Solo a queste condizioni diminuiranno le fughe, altrimenti ingovernabili, verso l'Eldorado occidentale." "Europa, patria di immigranti", *La Stampa*, 23 June 2002.

¹³ In this sense, an opinion article from the Israeli Ambassador in Italy related to Syria, describes this country as "[...] un grande esportatore di terrorismo, un campione della violazione dei diritti umani e un produttore incallito di antisemitismo." Furthermore, in an interview, an Italian general, though he admits that there is no evidence, fears "la collaborazione [of Red Brigades] con alcuni stati laici come l'Iraq e la Siria", "Temo legami tra brigatisti, Iraq e Siria", *La Stampa*, 29 March 2002.

Finally, some articles noted the European Union's need to build a common foreign and security policy.¹⁴

Spain

The Spanish press, along with the French press, has a specific geographic focus. For the Spanish press, the Maghrib countries, mainly Morocco, are the most important in the Southern Mediterranean basin. Immigration, trade relations, Ceuta and Melilla, the Western Sahara issue and the crisis in bilateral relations are the main topics related to Morocco, all of them analysed by the Spanish press as issues that have an impact on domestic politics. Doubts about the degree of participation in the Tunisian and Algerian elections were also discussed in the press.

The events of September 11, 2001 drew the attention of the Spanish press to other issues related to Southern Mediterranean countries. Some of the topics published in the Spanish press included Libyan condemnation of the attacks an introduction to a debate about Libya's international re-integration; Turkey's role in the Afghan turmoil; Tunisian ability to lead moderate Arab countries in favour of the international coalition against terrorism¹⁵; fear of Arab reaction to the US attacks in Afghanistan or difficulties in inter-confessional relations.

News about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is also a top priority for the press and serves as link for reporting on such Middle Eastern countries as Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon.

The Spanish press, however, is sensitive to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, although references to Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in the Spanish media are mainly related to the Valencia Meeting (April 2002). The lack of results of the Barcelona process and deficiencies in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation are also noted. Contributors generally view this as an important problem.¹⁶

United Kingdom

British newspapers include a considerable amount of references to Southern Mediterranean countries, but special attention is paid to the Middle Eastern region. British newspapers are especially interested in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as in Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Jordan, Egypt and Turkey. In general, the British press shows a high level of interest in those Southern Mediterranean regions that are historically linked to the United Kingdom. Turkey and Egypt are priorities in the British press coverage, as well as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

News on Maghrib countries in the British press concentrates on Algerian internal instability and violence, along with Moroccan immigration to the European Union. Tunisia is the Southern Mediterranean country with the fewest number of references in the British press, usually related to tourism and cultural activities. The Djerba attack partially changed this.

Radical Islamism, weapons proliferation and terrorism are sensitive issues in British newspapers. They also included articles about Libya and Syria's slow movement toward international openness and Libya's natural resources. *The Independent* published articles criticising Israel's security concept and what it called "despotic" regimes in Middle Eastern Arab countries. Topics related to Turkey, such as immigration, the Cyprus issue, and the Turkish role in the Afghanistan turmoil, were also in the news.

Special attention is paid to Libya and its reintegration into the international community with particular reference to the country's link to the Lockerbie affair.¹⁷

Although the September 11, 2001 attacks were a major point for all European Union newspapers, the British papers paid special attention to the effects of those events on the Arab world.¹⁸ Other issues covered included the Israeli-American relationship, Syrian attempts to integrate into the international community, Libyan condemnation of the attacks and the role of the Jewish community in Britain.

¹⁴ "[...] l'Europa sarà più utile sul piano globale non solo se si rafforzerà militarmente, il che è indispensabile [...]. Costruire una politica estera e di difesa comune, quindi, non è una visione idealistica; è l'unica visione realistica possibile." "Come superare l'inferiority complex verso l'America. Europa potenza civile," *La Stampa*, 28 March 2002.

¹⁵ "El presidente del Gobierno, José María Aznar, hará hoy gestiones, en nombre de la Unión Europea, ante el presidente tunecino Zine Al-Bidine ben Alí, para que intente aglutinar a los países árabes moderados del Mediterráneo a favor de la coalición antiterrorista liderada por Estados Unidos [...]." *El Mundo*, 24 September 2001.

¹⁶ "De lo contrario, no pasará mucho más tiempo sin que se extienda y asiente la teoría de aquellos que opinan que el Mediterráneo no es un centro naturalmente destinado a generar solidaridad, sino, más bien, una frontera que separa mundos cultural, económica y políticamente muy lejanos entre sí", "Fallos en la cooperación euromediterránea," Emilio Menéndez del Valle, *El País*, 17 March 2001.

¹⁷ "Having finally handed over the two Lockerbie bombing suspects for trial, his [Gaddafi] subscribing to the principles of the 27-member Euro-Mediterranean forum – the so-called Barcelona process – is now all that stands between him and international respectability." "Gaddafi set to come in from the cold," *The Guardian*, 1 April 2000.

¹⁸ "The end of a special relationship?" *Independent*, 6 November 2001. "Blair's mission to woo Syria is key to Arab support," *Independent*, 31 October 2001. "Turkey asked to lead Islamic peace troops," *The Guardian*, 18 October 2001. "On the brink of war – Arab world divided on fight against terror," *The Guardian*, 24 September 2001.

Finally, British press comments regarding CFSP and ESDP differed from its European neighbours due to British emphasis on ESDP relations with NATO.¹⁹ United Kingdom independent actions in the Middle East region and the need to improve European Union diplomatic capabilities in order to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were also analysed.²⁰ Finally, some newspapers pointed out how the importance of the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue depends on its ability to become a key factor for regional development and pacification of the Eastern Mediterranean region.²¹

News and perception of the issues of Southern countries

Algeria

Most of the news on Algeria is related to internal instability and violence. In this respect, some newspapers remarked how the fight against international terrorism waged by the Algerian government was being used as a justification or excuse to repress fundamentalism and internal opposition. This critical view of the government extends to other issues, such as the electoral process held in May 2002. The European media emphasised the lack of representation in this process and low participation in the Kabylie region.

Other specific issues were underlined by the press, such as the situation of minorities, namely the Berber demonstrations, or the regional scenario, such as the Algerian position in the Western Sahara conflict. The European press also noted European interest in Algerian natural resources (mainly natural gas) and its relevance to creating a Free Trade Area in the Mediterranean.

The Algerian presence in the European media is relatively large in comparison with other countries, especially in French newspapers, probably because of historical links, geographic proximity and the existence of Algerian communities in France.

Egypt

The European press, especially the British press, devotes special attention to the Egyptian attitude towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and Egypt's relations with Israel. The Egyptian role in fighting international terrorism is also of some interest. In the domestic sphere, some newspapers pay attention to human and minority rights in Egypt (Copt minorities and political opposition).

Israel

Information and opinion about Israel is almost always linked to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This dominant issue influences the remaining topics covered by the press. They are essentially viewed as branches of the same tree: Israeli nuclear capability, conflictual relations with Syria and Lebanon, and increasing tension with Egypt. The European press also emphasises that Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is the only international forum that includes Israel, Syria and Lebanon. Other issues focused on by the press include the political distance between "democratic" Israel and the "feudal" Arab states, as well as some debate about the nature and concept of Israel's national security. The Southern European press is usually critical of Israeli policies.

Jordan

As far as Jordan is concerned, European media mainly focus on the Jordanian position in relation to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Jordan's special relation with the United States and its participation in the "international coalition against terrorism" are also considered issues of interest. Finally, some news items highlighted the fact that Jordan is the only Arab country to have ratified the International Criminal Court in April 2002.

Lebanon

As with Jordan, the Lebanese position in relation to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and tensions with Israel are the major issues covered as regards Lebanon. Other main topics include Syria's role in the country,

¹⁹ "European leaders should reflect carefully on the true motivation behind ESDP, which many see as a means for Europe to check American power and influence within NATO. [...] Such links are vital if we are to ensure that ESDP reinforces the alliance, rather than generating conflicting interests that will necessarily weaken NATO and undermine transatlantic co-operation." "Letter to the Editor", *Daily Telegraph*, 28 December 2000.

²⁰ For example, an article from *The Independent* states that "the British, always self-regarding in respect of their own role in this part of the world, tend to regard any attempt by Brussels to form a common stance as at best futile and at worst positively malign." "Europe does have influence over Israel and should use it now", *Independent*, 5 April 2002.

²¹ "If Israel wishes to be part of this [peaceable economic development of the whole region], then it must seek to integrate itself into the Arab world. If it doesn't, then it has no place in the Barcelona process, nor a right to its association agreement with Europe." *Ibidem*.

terrorism, and Hizbullah activities. Finally, brief references are made to the Association Agreement signed by Lebanon and the European Union in January 2002 and immigration to Italy.

Libya

Libya's international isolation (the "pariah state" according to several newspapers) and its relations with the international community are the dominant topics. Libyan implication in terrorist activities is also underlined in reference to the Lockerbie and West Berlin incidents. Additionally, the European press, specially the German press, pays particular attention to recent Libyan efforts to reintegrate into the international community and the opening of its internal market. Other newsworthy topics include oil, Gaddafi's leadership, Libyan missile capability and the Libyan attitude towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Morocco

The most important topics related to Morocco covered in the European press include the absence of significant social and political change in Morocco, along with its democratic shortcomings – despite expectations raised by the new king –, immigration to Spain and France, and the Western Sahara issue. Bilateral relations with Algeria and integration of Moroccan immigrants in European countries are other important topics. The Spanish press tends to pay particular attention to Morocco.

Palestine

The subject of Palestine usually appears linked with that of Israel. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the major issue covered by European newspapers, especially since the second intifada broke out. Other topics include the questioning of the current Palestinian leadership and criticism of mismanagement directed at the Palestinian National Authority. The Southern European press is generally perceived to be very sensitive towards the Palestinian issue.

Syria

The top issues involving Syria are its position in relation to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, its relations with Israel and its role in Lebanon. Other topics included immigration flows into Italy and debates in the European media on the perception of Syria as a sponsor of terrorism.

Tunisia

Tunisia had the lowest number of references in European newspapers. Interest in Tunisia slightly increased with the general elections held in May 2002. The European press pays attention to Tunisian agricultural products in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership framework and the domestic situation (referred to as "internal instability") in relation to the Tunisian policy of confronting radical Islam and terrorism. The Italian press pays particular attention to Tunisia.

Turkey

The Turkish role in the Afghan conflict and its eventual role as a bridge between the Euro-Mediterranean region, together with turmoil in Central Asia and Afghanistan, has increased European media attention on this country. Other topics included domestic situation – "political instability," human rights "violations" and the Kurdish question. Other relevant issues include the unsolved Cyprus conflict, relations with Greece, and Turkish attempts at EU membership.

Case Study – The treatment of the "Perejil/Leila" issue in the European press

Introducing the "Perejil/Leila" islet

In July 2002, the "Parsley" (Perejil in Spanish) issue became newsworthy. It has been included in the research²² because it combines several interesting elements related to the Euro-Mediterranean region. Firstly, it was an issue with national sovereignty implications for the countries involved (Spain and Morocco), involving two national participants from both sides of the Mediterranean basin with strong bilateral interests and relations, both having participated in the Barcelona process. Secondly, conflict over a small islet developed into a test of wills affecting Spanish and Moroccan security and defence perceptions, and

²² Specific searches were conducted up until 29 September 2002 in the Reuters archives regarding news items published in the last three months.

ultimately affecting their defence and security policy formulation. Lastly, the Perejil islet issue was a lost opportunity for the European Union to speak, via CFSP and ESDP, to one of its Southern neighbours with one voice and avoid an external participant, the United States, becoming the mediator in a conflict affecting one of the European Union's member states and two partners of the Barcelona process.

The islet (known as Perejil in Spain and Leila in Morocco) is an uninhabited rock 13-hectare in area located less than 200 metres off the Moroccan coast. Used in the past as a military base, Spanish troops withdrew from it in the early 1960's during the decolonisation process. Up until July 2002, it had been used as a shelter for fishing or smuggling activities. The legal status of the islet is unclear. Spain has considered the Perejil islet to be part of its territory, but, in fact, it is not mentioned in the various treaties signed by France, Morocco and Spain. The exclusion of Perejil from specific agreements implies, for most historians, that it was part of the Spanish Protectorate created in 1912 and, as such, returned to Morocco in 1956, when the North African country became independent. In fact, the Spanish government's position on Perejil, made public on July 17, stated that Spain has exerted continued acts of sovereignty, but does not refer to it as part of Spanish territory.²³

The facts

On July 11, 2002, a dozen Moroccan gendarmes planted two tents and two flags on the islet. The Moroccan government declared that it based its decision on the strategic position of Leila and that the islet was useful for observation and control of terrorist and irregular immigration activities. That night, the Moroccan government stated that Leila was part of the Moroccan territory and that it had no intention of leaving the islet. The Spanish government responded by asking for restoration of the *status quo ante*, and an exchange of official statements was initiated. On July 13, the European Commission asked Morocco to leave the islet. The following day, the Danish Presidency of the EU Council issued a declaration stating that Morocco was responsible for the situation, urging it to withdraw its forces.²⁴ France vetoed a second declaration, in an attempt to avoid transforming the issue into a dispute between Morocco and the European Union.

With no changes in the position of either country in succeeding days, the Spanish government decided to send troops to the islet to expel the Moroccan gendarmes on July 17. Special operations forces supported by helicopters, warships and fighter aircraft, put an end to the Moroccan "occupation" without any casualties. Six Moroccan soldiers were arrested and later delivered to Morocco. A dozen or so soldiers from the Spanish Legion were deployed on to Perejil.

After US mediation on July 20, the Spanish troops left the island and the *status quo ante* was re-established.

The crisis in the European press

In theory, this crisis could have been viewed as an indication of how the media in EU countries perceives defence and security issues affecting Southern Mediterranean countries. However, with the exception of Spain, the European press did not pay special attention to those issues, perhaps because of the perception that Morocco – and its decision – was not a threat. The European press criticised the unusual actions of the Moroccan government, but, above all, it stressed Spanish "overreaction." In fact, the crisis was merely treated as a bilateral issue. No analysis was made of relevant aspects such as Moroccan security concerns, their relationship with European security, the need for the EU to have a single voice in external affairs, the relationship with Southern Mediterranean neighbours and adequate means to resolve disputes among Mediterranean partners.

European newspapers considered the crisis to be an irrelevant event. The interest grew with the Spanish and Moroccan reactions, since the unexpected situation could have evolved into an international crisis. However, even when force was used, little time was devoted to discussing the issue. As a British article put it, "the drama of Parsley Island may have started off as a comedy".²⁵

In contrast, the Spanish press considered the Perejil issue to be linked to national sovereignty. The press did not unanimously agree on the adequacy of the response (the use of military force), but generally speaking, the press and the government's reactions coincided in appreciating that the crisis was linked to Moroccan aspirations regarding Ceuta and Melilla, and thus part of Morocco's domestic situation and foreign and security policies.

²³ "[...] la isla de Perejil, sobre la que España ha venido ejerciendo actos continuados de soberanía con carácter secular." See *Posición española sobre Perejil*, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, in www.mae.es

²⁴ "The Presidency of the European Union is very concerned over the situation created by Morocco on the Island of Perejil. The European Union expresses its full solidarity with Spain and urges Morocco to immediately withdraw its forces." *Declaration by the Presidency of the European Union on the Island of Perejil*, 13 July 2002.

²⁵ *The Guardian*, 19 July 2002, "What Spain could teach us about island grabbing."

Several information and opinion articles published in the Spanish press did indeed attempt to discuss the "Spanish nature" (*españolidad*) of Perejil, with the press in general rating the government's attitude as positive. News related to the Perejil crisis provoked a high level of interest in this national sovereignty issue, but links were made between the crisis and the broader context of worsening bilateral relations, including disputes over fishing, drug trafficking, irregular immigration flows, the Western Sahara issue and Ceuta and Melilla. This perception was consistent with an opinion poll of July 2002 in which 75.5% of the people interviewed expressed their agreement with the government's military action to "expel" Moroccan gendarmes and linked the situation to Moroccan attitudes towards Spain in the previous year and a half.²⁶

The Italian press did not pay special attention to the Perejil issue: the story was reported on in the early days of the crisis, but not subsequently. In general, the Italian press focused on Spanish overreaction to a non-strategic island, referring to it as "Operacion Reconquista" and "gigantesco dispositivo militare".²⁷ The decision to favour military action over diplomacy was highly criticised. "Più che la diplomazia, in questo caso, occorrerebbe il buonsenso".²⁸ The Italian press also referred to the Perejil islet as a post-colonial situation that had similarities with other European possessions likely to foster nationalism. "Ma è evidentemente che ciascuno di questi lontani possedimenti aveva per la metropolis un forte valore simbolico."²⁹ Gibraltar was also another recurrent issue when discussing Spanish actions during the Perejil islet crisis because Spain, in Italian eyes, acted radically different in relation to each "rock".

The *Financial Times* published an especially interesting article providing an Anglo-Saxon point of view concerning the Perejil islet. The article stated that Spain practice a double standard and, comparing the Perejil issue with the Gibraltar situation, qualified Spain's action as shameful because it preferred a military response to a diplomatic solution and because it created difficulties for European-Arab relations. "Sending in Special Forces to storm an island of no strategic interest may have saved the Prime Minister's Castilian pride but it cannot serve Spain – or Europe's – long-term interests".³⁰ In fact, this viewpoint seemed more focused on discrediting Spanish action than making a serious reflection on foreign and security issues.

Indeed, the British press was without any doubt the most ironical. To describe Spanish action in Perejil, the British press used comments such as "Parsley warriors vow to fight on"³¹; "Morocco's comic-opera 'invasion' of Perejil"³²; "Spanish reconquista"³³; "Spain is proud to have repulsed what it gravely pronounced to be the first invasion of Western Europe since the Second World War"; "Moroccans seize Parsley Island and leave a bitter taste in Spanish mouths"³⁴; or "Those who have been exciting themselves since 11 September at the prospect of a great 'clash of civilisations' may have anticipated something on a grander scale than the Battle of Parsley Island."³⁵

References to European stereotypes – Spanish pride and similar topics – were used to describe Spanish actions. Gibraltar is also a recurrent issue and was mentioned to discuss Spanish double standards not only in the Perejil islet case, but in the Ceuta and Melilla case as well. "Morocco has been seeking the return of these anachronistic 'colonial' conquests, in terms almost identical to Spain's demands on Gibraltar."³⁶ The British press paid special attention to the development of the Perejil crisis, although from the start of the crisis it considered the situation to be a curiosity: "but its farcical nature meant it was unlikely to spark anything more than a war of words."³⁷ References to Spanish pride were a constant in the British press: "It should remember that jingoism is supposed to be a British, not a Spanish quality [...]"³⁸ and "Spain's Defence Minister, Federico Trillo, exults at Spain's great 'military power'.³⁹

The French press analysed the Perejil crisis more in terms of the Spanish-Moroccan relationship. Battered relations between the two countries because of issues such as immigration, drug smuggling and fishing were cited as factors to be considered in understanding the small islet controversy. The French press also paid attention to the US role in the resolution of the crisis and the lack of one voice from the European Union. "C'est une médiation américaine qui a permis de résoudre la crise entre le Maroc et l'Espagne à propos de l'îlot de Persil."⁴⁰ During and after the crisis, attention was directed at and particular remarks made concerning France's privileged relationship with Morocco and French opposition to a European Union

²⁶ CIS 2002: "Conflicto del islote Perejil." Estudio nº 2.465 Julio 2002, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.

²⁷ *La Stampa*, 18 July 2002, "Massiccia operazione aeronavale all'alba."

²⁸ *Corriere della Sera*, 18 July 2002.

²⁹ *Corriere della Sera*, 18 July 2002.

³⁰ *The Financial Times*, 18 July 2002, "Parsley sauce."

³¹ *The Guardian*, 16 July 2002, "Parsley warriors vow to fight on."

³² *The Independent*, 18 July 2002, "Spain sends in troops to recapture disputed islet."

³³ *The Independent*, 18 July 2002, "Between a rock and a hard place."

³⁴ *The Guardian*, 13 July 2002, "Moroccans seize Parsley Island and leave a bitter taste in Spanish mouths."

³⁵ *The Independent*, 18 July 2002, "Between a rock and a hard place."

³⁶ *The Times*, 19 July 2002, "Herculean folly – Spain waves aloft its double standard."

³⁷ *The Guardian*, 13 July 2002, "Moroccans seize Parsley Island and leave a bitter taste in Spanish mouths."

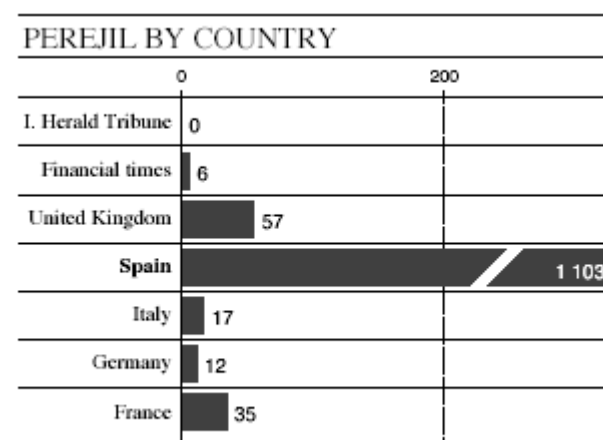
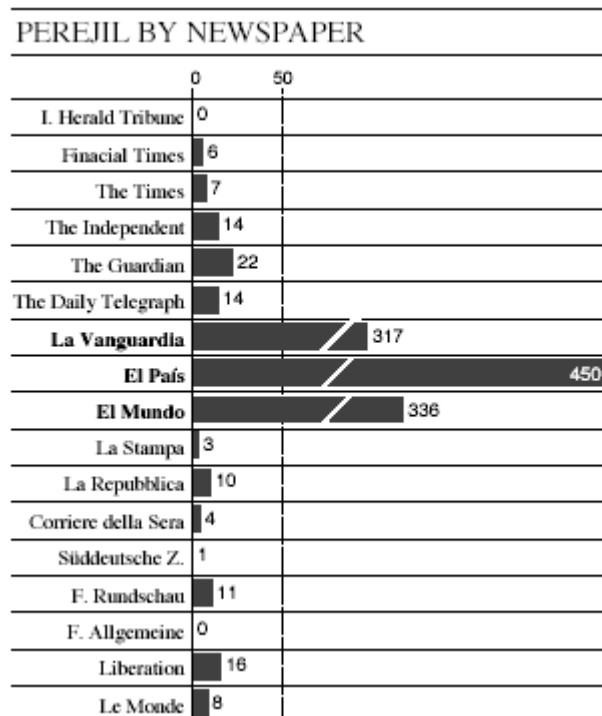
³⁸ *The Times*, 19 July 2002, "Herculean folly – Spain waves aloft its double standard."

³⁹ *The Times*, 19 July 2002, "Herculean folly – Spain waves aloft its double standard."

⁴⁰ *Le Figaro*, 22 July 2002, "Powell obtient un retrait espagnol de Persil."

communiqué. "La France invite l'UE à ne pas prendre parti et à retrouver son rôle de 'modération' et d'encouragement".⁴¹

The French press defined the conflict as "quelque chose de surréaliste"⁴² and "conflit-confetti,"⁴³ but strong comments were made because "le différend autour de l'île du Persil pourrait être pris à la légère s'il n'opposait deux pays voisins en conflit ouvert sur d'autres dossiers."⁴⁴ The Leila issue was also perceived to be linked to Moroccan nationalism and related to the king's figure and role: "Pour défendre l'intégrité du territoire [...]."⁴⁵ The French press also voiced Moroccan opinions surrounding the conflict and, in general, when mentioning the islet, respected the names of the island – Perejil in Spain and Leila in Morocco. French news items on Perejil were also tinged with humour: "Une invasion en pédalo", explains a British journalist, "invasion" of a Balearic island, and "Les victimes sont les chèvres", adding another dimension to the crisis.⁴⁶



Some considerations

1. Nationalism in the press. The Spanish press took a nationalist stance when discussing the Parsley islet. Confrontation with Morocco over other issues, such as irregular immigration, fishing, and drugs were especially targeted.
2. Divergences within the European Union: How do we speak with a single voice? How do we build a working ESDP? French opposition to another EU Presidency declaration because it could damage its relations with Morocco illustrates the difficulties of creating a common foreign and security policy. Although EU institutions generally supported the Spanish position and action, the perceptions of most EU countries – not just France – differed from those of Spain.
3. Along the same lines, US participation in a dispute affecting a European Union member was a situation from which lessons could be drawn from regards the ESDP process. US mediation also showed the incapacity or lack of will on the part of the EU to resolve the incident with a single voice.
4. The Parsley incident was an example of important national sovereignty issues and how they relate closely with defence and security policies, both in Morocco and Spain. Both countries' actions involved military responses; however, this fact was not highlighted in the European press, nor was it deemed to be relevant.

⁴¹ *Le Monde*, 20 July 2002, "Ilot du Persil – tensions entre la France et l'Espagne."

⁴² *Libération*, 22 July 2002, "Leila et Persil sauvent la face."

⁴³ *Libération*, 18 July 2002, "L'armada espagnole débarque sur Persil."

⁴⁴ *Le Figaro*, 15 July 2002, "Madrid déploie son Armada près de l'île du Persil."

⁴⁵ *Le Figaro*, 19 July 2002, "Les Marocains unis derrière leur roi."

⁴⁶ *Libération*, 23 July 2002 and *Le Monde*, 23 July 2002.

Final considerations

1. Last year's research (see Working Group III report ⁴⁷) underlined the lack of information on ESDP in the press of Southern Mediterranean countries. The results of the 2002 research are complementary, in the sense that European newspapers, for different reasons, show little interest in reporting on security and defence issues in Southern Mediterranean countries. This is probably related to Southern countries' complaints about lack of attention paid by Europeans to their concerns, thus opening up the debate over Southern perceptions of being marginalized regarding decision-making in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership framework.
2. Certainly, this is a point to be jointly addressed by both North and South if the European Union and Southern Mediterranean countries really want existing relations to develop into a real partnership. However, the emphasis on the lack of attention from the European side to Southern countries' security and defence issues should not be overestimated, at least in terms of media and press coverage.
3. A debate on the relation between public opinion and media on those issues would probably provide some insights. In the meantime, studies have been published regarding European public opinion perception of European security and defence issues, providing relevant data. A recently published survey asserts that there is a lack of public attention paid to security and defence policy-making, pointing out that "the lack of interest in public opinion" among EU decision-makers finds its counterpart in a general "lack of knowledge about and interest in ESDP" among the people. [...] The mainstream media seems largely unaware of and uninterested in this policy field, as well. This will likely remain the case, as long as no 'hot issues' or scandals come up, thus leaving this domain to a small group of specialist journals and a small number of defence policy journalists".⁴⁸
4. This is not to say that "European" news does not constitute an important part of the agendas of national newspapers. However, it is European and economic questions in general that are the most interesting news items for the press, even for the British press, more critical and sceptical than the rest. News on European security and defence can be found in the press, while debates about CFSP and ESDP exist and are important, but not frequent. Moreover, coverage differs among countries. The German press, for instance, pays special attention to European news; and the Italian media could be considered as the least "Europeanised" in quantitative terms. Prestigious Anglo-Saxon newspapers do not seem the best choice to analyse European Union issues. The *International Herald Tribune* and the *Financial Times* demonstrate neither a special interest in security and defence policies, nor in ESDP development. Their approach could be considered biased by the lack of interest in a deeper security and defence "communitarization". The Kosovo crisis and the Middle East conflict have produced interesting debates on European security and foreign policies, but the underlined tendency still persists. Indeed, when evaluating the presence of the European Union and EU issues in the newspapers it is important to note that although a "European public sphere" is emerging in social and cultural terms,⁴⁹ it is difficult to find a similar "common ground" in security and defence issues.
5. From this point of view, the poor level of awareness of CFSP and ESDP and the pre-eminence of national (and different) perceptions could be discussed, as well as how, if possible, clear objectives (a mental map) could be determined on issues related to Mediterranean security and Euro-Mediterranean non-economic relations. In addition to data, content analysis shows that, in relation to the Euro-Mediterranean Process, European media concentrated their attention on economic questions, such as the creation of a Free Trade Area. Surely, this situation is not a Mediterranean specificity in the sense that the only European interest in the Mediterranean is economic, but an "internal distortion," given the fact that, as stated above, the European integration process is, in general, examined through the eyes of economic relations. With the aim of developing a more comprehensive understanding, Chris Patten's articles published in several European newspapers in recent months should be considered positive contributions to the creation of a common and shared press/public opinion view on European security and foreign policies related to the Mediterranean.
6. All of these factors likely explain the absence in the press of specific information on the security and defence policies of Third Mediterranean Countries. The media reviewed in this research have different views and interests depending on each country. However, all the media have a point in common: poor information and a significant absence of analysis, exhibiting a lack of interest in the defence and security policies of Southern Mediterranean countries.

⁴⁷ See EuroMeSCo Paper n°16, *European Defence – Perceptions vs. Realities*, First Year Report of the Working Group on *ESDP: Impact on the EMP*, June 2002.

⁴⁸ Franz Kernic, Jean Callaghan and Philippe Manigart, *Public Opinion on European Security and Defense. A Survey of European Trends and Public Attitudes towards CFSP and ESDP*. Peter Lang & George Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Frankfurt, 2002, p. 19

⁴⁹ From Kevin, D. "Research relating to national media coverage of European political and cultural affairs," *The Bulletin*, 16 (4), The European Institute for the Media (www.eim.org), December 1999.

7. There is little difference in the quantity of information on Southern Mediterranean countries before and after September 11, 2001. However, on a qualitative level, after September 11 events, there was a special interest in news items reporting on the positions of all the Southern Mediterranean countries in relation to the "international coalition against terrorism". One example of this fact is the emergence of articles about Libya's intentions to influence the international perception of the country, increasing US interest in Morocco, or news on Syria and state-sponsored terrorism. Despite this attention, articles mentioned Southern countries' positions in relation to the international coalition against terrorism and global international security issues. More specifically, the focus is on how Southern countries redefine and adjust their security and defence policies, even in the domestic sphere, to serve this major goal, disregarding or not mentioning their own security concerns.
8. Thus, after the September 11, 2001 events, the insistence in the Southern countries' approach and attitude toward such topics was likely to be related to a reevaluation of the rigid EU security concept. In terms of the South, this could evolve into eventual European support for the *status quo* as a means of avoiding radicalisation and assuring the stability of the Southern regimes, and could relegate news on other topics to a non-relevant position, such as criticism of corruption or resistance to democratisation, issues which appeared more frequently before September 11.
9. The insistence on linking the Arab World to terrorism contributes to the negative image of the South⁵⁰ and is the expression of an understanding of security in "Eurocentric" terms, as seen in the media. The creation of an area of peace and stability in the Mediterranean region is desirable for European security and related issues such as "illegal" immigration, drug trafficking, Islamic radicalism and international terrorism, perceived as affecting European security. These are the issues highlighted by the European press that link security to Southern countries.
10. This approach to the South in terms of European security concerns is likely the result of a security and defence concept that is much broader than the traditional concept of military and weapons issues. New ideas on security in the post-Cold War era do not put the emphasis on external military threats and, thus, security is no longer limited to the absence of military threats. Whether this vision applies and whether it coincides with Southern concerns leads to more discussion, but, in fact, it is the filter through which European press views the South.
11. Accordingly, it should be of no surprise that, in the European press, information and news on Islamic radicalism emerges as a security concern in the South, since it is related to other European domestic phenomena, such as the presence of immigrant communities of Muslim origin on European Union territory. Here, the political dimension of this phenomenon, when complemented by social and economic implications, transforms the immigration issue in the European context into a security concern. This view explains the link established by European newspapers between immigration and the issues of Southern countries, as the empirical evidence shows in all cases, but particularly with regard to Germany (Turkish immigrants), France (Maghribi, mostly Algerian) and Spain (mostly from Morocco).
12. Although important, immigration and Islam are not the only issues focused on by the press. A mixture of topics, spanning from the Western Sahara conflict, the demands of the Berber population and the situation of ethnic or religious minorities to political reform and economic development, appear in the press without more criteria. It seems clear, however, that they are treated as purely domestic issues, only slightly pertinent to security. Furthermore, there is little discussion on the implications of such problems for the Southern Mediterranean regional scenarios or bilateral South-South relations. Information is lacking or poor on such issues as Cyprus, the Kurdish situation, Western Sahara, the Algerian conflict, Moroccan-Algerian relations, Egypt and Sudan, weapons proliferation, water scarcity, South-South tensions in general, or the role of such regional organisations as the Arab League.
13. Notwithstanding this, the issues the media pays attention to differ from one country to another, due to relations that date back to the colonial era: Algerian issues in French media; information on Tunisia and Libya in the Italian press; attention paid by the German press to Turkey and Israel; Moroccan issues in Spanish newspapers and the interest of the British media in Middle East countries. Additionally, due to a set of factors, which include geography, history, politics and the economy, Spain, France and Italy show interest in the Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue, with a particular focus on the Maghrib region. Germany and the United Kingdom are interested in the Eastern Mediterranean

⁵⁰ The Survey on International Crisis conducted by EOS Gallup after the September 11 events provides some relevant results. When Europeans were asked if they feared imminent terrorist acts, 46.5% answered "maybe" and 18.2% answered "certainly." When asked whether EU actions should encourage EU-Arab cultural and political relations, 46.6% answered that such actions were "necessary" and 27.4% responded that they were "essential" to the question of whether the Muslim community on the whole has sufficiently condemned the terrorist attack of Sept. 11, 41.80% answered that they agreed and 15.50 % answered they totally agreed. Finally, when asked whether as a result of the September attacks one can understand some distrust towards the Muslim community in Europe, 46.9% agreed and 21.6% totally agreed. *Flash Eurobarometer 114. International Crisis*, Opus citat.

and its connection with the Middle East region, although Germany is expanding its interest to the whole basin. These differences in interest among European Union countries are also evident in each language when referring to the Southern Mediterranean countries; for example, the term "Mashrick" is seldom used, and "Levant" is not used by the Southern European countries. European newspapers also assign issues of interest to specific countries, or at least it appears that European media coverage is determined by preconditions and specific issues, which may bias information on other topics. Take Morocco for instance: trade relations constitute the most important issue in the news, while Turkey is linked to the Cyprus conflict, internal politics and its participation in the "global coalition against terrorism" after the events of September 11, 2001. Tunisia, with the exception of the Italian press, is the country that is least reported on by European media.

14. The above considerations do not apply to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, a major topic in all European newspapers, considering the quantity of information and the fact that references related to Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and, to a lesser extent, Jordan and Egypt, derive from the conflict. The issue is increasingly being linked to the Middle East situation, and specifically to the debate on international and state-sponsored terrorism, along with the eventual military intervention of the United States in Iraq. The Middle East conflict is different from other issues for at least two reasons: firstly, the priority given by the media does not correspond to the role of the conflict in European countries or EU agendas; secondly, it is the only instance in which security and defence issues are clearly formulated in traditional clearly-defined security terms.
15. This interest is surely related to the fact that European public opinion has proven to be very sensitive to the issue. However, one should also stress that the violent aspects of this and other conflicts are usually emphasised by newspapers because violence "helps to sell the product." Notwithstanding other core explanations, one may wonder, however, whether the journalist and media logic of "bad news is good news" may be one of the underlying reasons for interest in the Middle East conflict.
16. Nevertheless, the manner in which news on the Middle East conflict is presented by newspapers reinforces the negative image of the South. This final point being made, a serious reflection should be undertaken regarding the role of the media in forming public opinion and decision-makers' perceptions, as well as in identifying coincidences or gaps between media interests (and sources of information) and national and European Union policies.

Annex 1 - Spanish presidency selected headlines and media

January 17-July 1, 2002

Total number of headlines during the Presidency: 926

Number of headlines related to Mediterranean and Middle East: 123

Corriere de la Sera (Italy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Violence in Palestine (April 3) - High level EU Delegation travels to the Middle East (April 4) - Sharon criticises Arafat-Powell meeting (April 10) - Arafat is free (May 2)
The Times (United Kingdom)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Israel warns EU not to impose sanctions (April 15)
El País (Spain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Josep Piqué, Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, visits Arafat in Ramallah, stressing Palestinian efforts in the fight against terrorism (January 18) - According to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hubert Védrine, the European Union is determined to support the Palestinian Authority and does not agree with Ariel Sharon's policy. He also stated that France has no interest in favouring tensions between Spain and Morocco (February 5) - The EU considers that it is time to put into practice ESDP. It is foreseen that units of the Rapid Reaction Force intervene in Bosnia and Macedonia during the year (February 6) - Iran proposes to the EU the creation of a joint cell to combat terrorism (February 7) - European Union Foreign Ministers, those of the candidate countries and of the Organization of the Islamic Conference meet in Istanbul to fight against the threat of the clash of civilisations (February 13) - Shimon Peres allies with European diplomacy to force the declaration of the Palestinian state, as a way to put an end to violence (February 21) - Aznar's government invented the interviews between Yussouffi, the Prime Minister of Morocco, King Mohammed VI and former Spanish Prime Minister Felipe González (February 27) - The EU deliberates whether declaring the Palestinian party Fatah a terrorist organization (March 7) - Pique says that fighting terrorism can not be an alibi to destroy Palestine (April 3) - Interview with Saeb Erekat (April 8) - Israel occupies Palestinian territories (April 9) - The Spanish government changes attitude towards Morocco (April 10) - Powell meets again Arafat (April 17) - Differences between the White House and the State Department on the Middle East (April 18) - Israeli Army reoccupies Yenin (May 17) - Solana reacts to Bush plan and says the EU supports democratically elected leaders (June 26) - Sceptical reaction of G8 to the Bush Plan (June 27)
El Mundo (Spain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Federico Trillo, Spanish Minister of Defence, states that the Spanish Presidency will give a new impetus to the European Rapid Deployment Force (January 17) - The European Union does not support US policy on Iraq, Iran and Korea (February 1) - Sharon rejects the Saudi peace plan. Israeli military operation in Palestinian cities and refugee camps continues (March 4) - Piqué and Solana travel to the Middle East (April 4)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Quartet search common position on Middle East conflict (April 10) - Israel will accept a ceasefire if the Palestinian accept Zinni's conditions (April 17)
Financial Times (United Kingdom)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defiant Sharon vows Israel will "finish the job" (April 11) - Humanitarian emergency in Yenin (April 16) - Powell visit fails to win concessions (April 18)
Le Soir (France)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ariel Sharon rejects Arafat's statement on his vision of peace (February 4) - 10 Israeli soldiers killed at the Gaza strip (March 6) - EU delegation to Middle East (April 4)
ABC (Spain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Prime Minister of Morocco says that having an interview with the Spanish Socialist Party Secretary general is meant to underline his differences with Aznar's government (January 30) - The EU searches for new initiatives to break the present stalemate in the Middle East (February 1) - UK and Spain take further steps to solve their disagreement on Gibraltar (February 4) - Searching for a solution on Gibraltar (February 5) - UK and Spain are preparing the future implementation of the self-governing statute which will be offered to Gibraltar (February 6) - The EU and the Arab world are concerned with the US foreign policy change, illustrated by the rise in both defence spending and unilateral decisions (February 15) - The EU countries, unable to find a common strategy, only agree on sending Javier Solana to a tour in the Middle East (February 19) - The UN Security Council passes a resolution supporting the concept of a Palestinian state (March 13) - Sharon continues military operations in Gaza and the West Bank despite Zinni's visit, the US envoy (March 14) - The Middle East is at war and neither the EU nor the US show the will to do anything (April 1) - EU Foreign Ministers meet to discuss Middle East situation (April 3) - Piqué and Solana do not meet with Sharon, since they were not allowed to meet Arafat (April 5) - US role in Middle East peace (April 8) - The EU will support Powell's mission (April 10) - The Quartet demands Israel to withdraw from Palestine (April 11) - Arafat reaffirms there will be no ceasefire before Israeli withdrawal (April 15) - Failure of Powell's policy (April 18) - The EU starts applying Seville Council conclusions on migration in its relation with Morocco (June 28) - Horror in Yenin (April 19) - Arab countries leave Mediterranean Summit when Israel takes the floor (April 23) - End of Arafat's siege (May 2) - Arafat says Israel has destroyed Palestinian security services (June 6) - The Spanish Presidency of the EU Council welcomes Bush's plan (June 26)
La Stampa (Italy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arafat feels abandoned by the international community (January 21) - The world welcomes Saudi Arabia peace proposal (February 27) - Israel has started to build a wall to separate from the West Bank (June 12)

International Herald Tribune	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lone Palestinian sniper killed 10 Israeli (March 4) - Sharon announces a pullback but tanks still roam Ramallah (March 15) - The Black Sea, new focus for NATO expansion (Romania and Bulgaria) (March 26) - Middle East options for the US: Bush has some options if he chooses to act (April 1) - Inaction of international community in Middle East situation (April 5) - European legislators (European Parliament) target Israel (April 11) - At the end of mission, Powell has no ceasefire agreement (April 18) - Israel accepts plan to lift Arafat siege (April 29) - Hailed as hero, Arafat emerges from siege and tours Ramallah (May 3) - A unified Cyprus is essential for European unity (May 21) - Middle East Peace Plan is outlined by Mubarak (June 4)
Le Monde (France)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Terrorist attack in Jerusalem. Responsibility for the Al Aqsa brigades, linked to Fatah, the movement of Arafat (January 23) - The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the European Union have reaffirmed the positions stated at Laeken on the Middle East: Israel needs Arafat as a partner for negotiation (January 30) - The British government will ask immigrants to learn English (February 8) - A Palestinian kills three Israeli; at the same time, the Palestinian Authority increases efforts to find support for a political solution to the conflict (February 11) - Yasir Arafat is still confined in Ramallah (February 25) - Another round of talks on the situation of Cyprus. Turkey's relations with the EU depend on the Cypriot question (March 5) - The majority of Turks support Turkey's integration in the EU (March 27) - Israeli offensive and occupation of Hebron (April 5) - Prodi demands an urgent meeting of the Israel-EU Association Council (April 10) - Powell travels to Israel (April 12) - Sharon accepts to lift Arafat's siege (April 30) - Bush foresees a Palestinian state without Arafat (June 25) - Bush sees the departure of Arafat as a precondition for peace (June 26)
Frankfurter Allgemeine (Germany)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The US government is concerned about European allies military capabilities. Existence of technological gap (January 24) - Signs indicate Tunisian blast was deliberate (April 15) - German government denies advance knowledge of Djerba explosion (April 18)
The Guardian Unlimited (United Kingdom)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Despite Israel's turmoil and US troops fighting in Afghanistan, the Arab world remains silent. Interview with Gadafy (March 21) - Bush acts on the Middle East (April 5)
La Vanguardia (Spain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Israeli government designs a plan to guarantee security in Jerusalem and put an end to terrorist activities (January 30) - EU Mission fails in meeting Arafat (April 5)
La Libre (Belgium)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The British government will ask immigrants to learn English (February 8) - Israel build an anti-kamikaze wall (June 17) - Suicide attack in Jerusalem (June 18)
El Periódico (Spain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Israeli Prime Minister regrets for not eliminating Arafat in 1982 (February 1) - UN, EU and Russia mediators keep on trying to meet Arafat, confined in Ramallah (April 2) - Sharon proposes a peace conference without Arafat (15 April)

La Repubblica (Italy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A woman, responsible for suicide attack in Jerusalem (January 28) - Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, presents to his European colleagues, his Marshall Plan for the Middle East (March 15) - Prodi offers EU mediation in the Middle East and the Muslim countries support Intifada (April 2) - Israeli offensive continues (April 4) - Sharon excludes negotiating peace with Arafat (May 15)
Liberation (France)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Algeria refuses to give visas to a European Union official delegation, only days after signing the association agreement with the EU (February 1) - Aznar will attend the Arab League summit in Beirut to support the Saudi initiative for the Middle East (March 27) - EU, UN and Russia support US mediation in Middle East (April 11) - Palestinians announce agreement in Bethlehem (May 7) - Israel multiplies incursions in the West Bank (May 30) - Terrorist attack in Northern Israel (June 5) - Suicide attack in Jerusalem undermines Bush plan (June 19)
Cinco Días (Spain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shimon Peres demands help from Aznar to design a peace plan which would include the creation of a Palestinian state (February 22)
Le Figaro (France)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Despite their disagreement with US policy on Iraq and the Palestinian conflict, the European Union countries are unable to present a common position (February 14) - Israeli forces have killed 17 Palestinians. Israel intensifies military operation after bloody week-end in which 22 Israeli were killed (March 5) - Sharon announces that Arafat has been authorised to move freely in the autonomous territories (March 12) - The UN Security Council passes a resolution calling for the end of violence and mentioning the idea of a region where two states would live with secure and recognised borders (March 13) - Rise of anti-semitism in France (April 2) - Ariel Sharon proposes Arafat to live the country (April 3) - US and European reactions to Israeli occupation of Palestinian cities (April 9) - The Israeli Army reoccupies Hebron (April 30) - Algeria: a contested scrutiny (May 30) - Israeli response to terrorist attack in Jerusalem (June 19) - Bush sees the departure of Arafat as a precondition for a Palestinian state (June 26)
Die Spiegel online (Germany)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharon continues military operations in Gaza and the West Bank despite Zinni's visit, the US envoy (March 14) - Bomb explodes in a synagogue in Tunisia (April 15)

ANNEX 2 - The Economist Headlines

The Economist Headlines January 2001-August 2002

Algeria

The horrors of war aren't over yet An independence-day bomb recalls Algeria's unfinished civil war
Jul 11th 2002

Algeria's floods The floods have killed hundreds of people, and Algerians are blaming their rulers
Nov 15th 2001

Algeria's history Tales of torment, past and present
Aug 30th 2001

Swelling protest in Algeria Algerian protest has spread beyond Kabylia. But is it being manipulated?
Jun 21st 2001

Algeria: Protests mount
Jun 1st 2001

Berber riots in Algeria An eruption of anger in Algeria's Berber heartland
May 3rd 2001

A disappointing president in Algeria Algeria's president has not lived up to expectations, and the press, the public and the army are all losing patience
Feb 15th 2001

Egypt

The red lines Cross them and, however softly you speak, you are in jail
Aug 1st 2002

The revolution and its legacy Egypt's government tries to get an unwilling people to celebrate 50 years of less than glorious revolution
Jul 27th 2002

Egypt's economy Misfortunes, miseries and mistakes
Jan 3rd 2002

The law v the state in Egypt Egypt's courts are showing up the sham that is Egyptian democracy
Oct 22nd 2001

Egypt and America Egypt will support the American-led coalition, but not happily
Oct 4th 2001

Egyptian unemployment Egypt's growing pile of woes risks spontaneous combustion
Jul 19th 2001

Egyptian security Egypt jails an outspoken civil-rights campaigner
May 24th 2001

Happy hookahs Globalisation and Egypt's rising pipe exports
May 3rd 2001

Egypt's political snarl-up Egypt's politics are moving in a new direction—almost as slowly as its traffic
Jan 25th 2001

Israel, Palestine and the Middle East Conflict

Cutting out the cancer How Israel's army commander sees the Palestinian threat
Aug 31st 2002

Is it doomed? A plan to ease conditions in Gaza and Bethlehem stumbles into force
Aug 24th 2002

Where causing pain is an end in itself Two years of violence, two lousy strategies, and still no end in sight
Aug 17th 2002

Towards a war of attrition A plan for ending the violence is in the air, but many believe it to be dead on arrival
Aug 10th 2002

Rules of war There was no massacre in Jenin. But let the joy be confined

Aug 8th 2002

Israel and the Palestinians Wars of attrition
Aug 6th 2002

The Palestinians' buried ceasefire The half-peace offering before the latest bloody cycle
Aug 1st 2002

Israel and the Palestinians The ceasefire that wasn't
Jul 30th 2002

New theatre on the Middle East Two plays about Israel and Palestine
Jul 25th 2002

Israel's bomb on Gaza Has Israel blown up more than a Hamas leader, his family and neighbours?
Jul 25th 2002

The Middle East The blow to peace
Jul 25th 2002

The Middle East Anger and assassination
Jul 23rd 2002

Israelis and Palestinians Death and deportation
Jul 19th 2002

Middle East endgame A way of winning, with a solution proposed by the International Crisis Group
Jul 18th 2002

Israelis and Palestinians The killings begin again
Jul 18th 2002

The Middle East America's isolation over Yasser Arafat
Jul 17th 2002

The Middle East Murder before the peace meeting
Jul 16th 2002

Israelis and Palestinians Looking to the US
Jul 15th 2002

The Palestinian leadership Yasser Arafat may be reforming but he is also seeing young rivals off the field
Jul 11th 2002

The Middle East Challenging Arafat
Jul 4th 2002

The Middle East Curfews eased; fences raised
Jul 3rd 2002

The Middle East Fencing in Yasser Arafat
Jul 1st 2002

George Bush's plan for peace Without repairs, America's one-sided peace "vision" will do little to bring peace to the Middle East
Jun 27th 2002

George Bush's words Mr Bush's conditions for progress towards peace
Jun 27th 2002

Israel's response A jubilant government, and a sad little clutch of peaceniks
Jun 27th 2002

West Bank under occupation Living with Israel's soldiers, again
Jun 27th 2002

European and Arab reactions Public welcome, private distress
Jun 27th 2002

Changing the Palestinian regime Told to go, Mr Arafat is calling an election that will probably tell him to stay
Jun 27th 2002

The Middle East Bush says Arafat must go
Jun 26th 2002

Israel and the Palestinians Reoccupation, for how long?
Jun 24th 2002

Israel and the Palestinians Peace postponed again
Jun 21st 2002

New fiction from the Middle East 1,400 years ago Jerusalem was a peaceful city. A new novel describes how
Jun 20th 2002

Palestine's suicide bombers If the Palestinians want a state, they will have at some point to disarm Hamas
Jun 20th 2002

Israel and the Palestinians Many Israelis, traumatised by terrorist attacks, yearn to separate themselves from the Palestinians. But the right wing sees separation as betrayal
Jun 20th 2002

The fenced-in West Bank From a Palestinian point of view, the fence is yet more whittling away of land
Jun 20th 2002

Israel and the Palestinians Another bombing; renewed occupation
Jun 19th 2002

Israel and the Palestinians The horror continues
Jun 18th 2002

Israel and the Palestinians Fencing them in
Jun 17th 2002

American-Israeli good relations Israel's prime minister is feted in Washington
Jun 13th 2002

The Palestinians under siege Crushed and impoverished, the Palestinians still extol armed struggle
Jun 13th 2002

The six-day war It needn't have happened
Jun 13th 2002

America, Israel and the Palestinians The dangers will grow if George Bush accepts Ariel Sharon's reasons for putting off talks
Jun 13th 2002

Israelis and Palestinians The battle for American opinion
Jun 10th 2002

The Middle East Can the Palestinian Authority change?
Jun 7th 2002

After the carnage at Megiddo Can reform stop Palestine's suicide bombers?
Jun 6th 2002

Take the plunge Time to push for a final peace in the Middle East
May 30th 2002

The Middle East Flaring up again
May 21st 2002

Israel and the Palestinians Suicide bombings dent peace hopes
May 20th 2002

The sniper is now sniped at A bid to do down Ariel Sharon from the right may have boomeranged
May 18th 2002

The rocky road from war to talking A reformed Palestinian regime is an Israeli condition for negotiation. The Palestinians want this too, but are sceptical
May 18th 2002

The Middle East conflict Reforming the Palestinian Authority
May 17th 2002

Israel's squabbling Likud party But a bid to do down Ariel Sharon from the right may have boomeranged
May 16th 2002

<i>The Israeli-Palestinian conflict</i> Sharon and Arafat face their own rebellions May 15th 2002	<i>Palestinians welcome internationalisation</i> Yearning for foreigners to come and protect them May 2nd 2002	<i>Bethlehem under siege</i> The Palestinians' last stand in the Church of the Nativity Apr 18th 2002
<i>Middle East</i> Another set back to peace May 13th 2002	<i>Why one group of American Jews feels impelled to visit Israel</i> Present events in Israel are reviving a passionate bond May 2nd 2002	<i>What happened at Jenin</i> Picking through fact and fiction after Israel's assault on Jenin Apr 18th 2002
<i>Terrorism's body-blow at peace</i> But even before the latest suicide bomb, diplomacy between George Bush and Ariel Sharon was making only glacial progress towards it May 11th 2002	<i>The Middle East conflict</i> Israel resists internationalisation May 2nd 2002	<i>The Middle East</i> Powell makes little progress Apr 17th 2002
<i>Wanted: a plan</i> George Bush must decide whether to park or drive May 11th 2002	<i>The Middle East</i> One step forward.. Apr 30th 2002.	<i>From here to Palestine</i> By accident, Ariel Sharon may have created an opportunity for peace Apr 13th 2002
<i>Middle East</i> One stand-off ends, only for another to begin May 10th 2002	<i>Vacuum at the Palestinians' centre</i> Israel's assault has left the Palestinian Authority powerless Apr 25th 2002	<i>After the war is over</i> If political talks can eventually be relaunched, the Taba negotiations would be a good starting-point Apr 13th 2002
<i>Israel, Palestine and George Bush</i> George Bush must decide whether to park or drive May 9th 2002	<i>The Palestinians after Israel's assault</i> The dust settles and Palestinians survey the destruction Apr 25th 2002	<i>No end to the desolation</i> Israel's invasion of cities and camps, and the likely consequence Apr 13th 2002
<i>Arabs, America and Palestine</i> In the gloom and scepticism, only radicals prosper May 9th 2002	<i>The Arab response to the war on the West Bank</i> Will Arab leaders be able to continue to resist their people's feelings? Apr 25th 2002	<i>Powell's road to Jerusalem</i> America's secretary of state has been feeling the full force of Arab anger Apr 13th 2002
<i>The Middle East</i> A bomb destroys the latest peace hopes May 8th 2002	<i>Jews in the Arab world</i> The few who remain face new uneasiness, perhaps danger Apr 25th 2002	<i>Slouching towards Bethlehem</i> The secretary of state's mission to the Middle East is a last-ditch attempt at American engagement in the region. Apr 13th 2002
<i>The Middle East conflict</i> Yasser Arafat's future role May 6th 2002	<i>The Palestinian territories</i> After the assault Apr 25th 2002	<i>The Middle East</i> Powell's mission impossible Apr 12th 2002
<i>The Middle East conflict</i> Israel resists internationalisation May 3rd 2002	<i>The West Bank</i> Palestinians sift the rubble Apr 23rd 2002	<i>The bumpy route to a Middle Eastern peace</i> If political talks can eventually be relaunched, the Taba negotiations would be a good starting-point Apr 11th 2002
<i>Israel and the outside world</i> Although the government remains resolutely opposed to outside intervention, some Israelis are beginning to feel differently May 2nd 2002	<i>Did Israel follow the rules?</i> War is terrible—but there are rules. Did Israel observe them? Apr 18th 2002	
	<i>The war against terrorism</i> Why Palestine divides Europe and America	

From here to Palestine By accident, Ariel Sharon may have created an opportunity for peace
Apr 11th 2002

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