

International Interdoc Conference
SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN
Grand Hotel, Rimini, Italy
16, 17, 18 October, 1970

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EXAMINATION OF THE SITUATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

by Manuel Thomas de Carranza

The situation in the Mediterranean Basin is characterized by the prevalent confusion. Confusion and preoccupation.

The Mediterranean, a weak region, the soft underbelly of Europe, as Churchill put it, has become at the present time a zone of confrontation between the USA and the USSR, where a strategic battle is being waged at the level of the two great world powers and around the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This situation, due to its military importance and its political tension, lies outside the control of the shore countries. Of every ten ships crossing our seas, eight are Russian or American and the Mediterranean is one of the neuralgic points of their world duel. Many factors are at play besides the war between Israel and the Arabs. Russia has turned a regional conflict into a battle of the "anti-imperialist world struggle". On this Middle East platform is being decided, on the one hand, the destiny of North Africa and the southern flank of Europe and, on the other, the oilfields and the route of penetration to India.

Furthermore, this new theatre of battle is characterized by its structural weakness. Throughout the tensions evident in continental Europe there was always a clear and vigorous will to defend, but in the Mediterranean such a cohesion does not exist between the shore countries; rather there exists a masked division, rendered more acute by the war being waged. Day by day the Arabs are becoming increasingly committed to Russia.

Therefore, there is confusion, since possible solutions are not within the reach of the shore countries. The essential difficulty lies not in evolving compromise solutions, but in imposing them in the face of the distrust, rancour and misery in which the East is bathed, and every day we become more dependent on the two contending powers who

in turn see no easy way out of this Mediterranean hornet's nest, where the problems are so involved that Western diplomacy is at a loss. For example: the problem of the desperate Palestinian refugees, whose terrorism threatens the safety of continental air communications.

Another example has been the Rogers peace plan attempt, which has given rise to such internal reactions, that today the most immediate problem is to patch up the disruption provoked by this peace mediation.

This situation of confusion with its visible dangers and serious threats must seriously worry all Europeans, and very especially those of us along the Mediterranean who see the events being played out and linked together and do not see reasonable or immediate solutions.

The real tension lies between North America and Russia and, if in these last weeks they have prevented the escalation of the war, it is due to complex reasons: be it the Chinese threat; be it the policy in Vietnam; be it the fear of direct confrontation and the desire not to allow themselves to be drawn by their allies.

But it is doubtful whether Russia desires a definitive peace. What Russia wants without doubt is to maintain the conflict in conditions of "optimum exploitation". To begin with, the Soviets have been able to break the barrier of defence which the Americans had built in this region, and the continuing deterioration in the situation is bringing the Arab regimes nearer to the brink of revolutionary action.

The Military Threat and the Danger of Subversion

The struggle between the USA and USSR in the Mediterranean Basin is undisguised. One of the four American fleets, 40-50 units, permanently sails the inland sea, its naval power accentuated by an important air force and nuclear submarines.

On the other hand, since the spring of 1968 a Russian fleet, with 50 to 70 units at its disposal, has been sailing all over the Mediterranean - a fleet which has an enormous fire power in surface ships, with aerial accompaniment and nuclear submarines and which in addition counts on 200 merchant ships equipped for signal interception and pursuit.

This naval force, numerically superior to the American one, is inferior in air power and nuclear armaments, but not to be overlooked is the importance of the new Soviet naval shipyards, apparently capable of launching 20 nuclear submarines a year, which is above the present American construction capability for this class of ship.

Raymond Blackman, English publisher of Jane's "Fighting Ships" defines the Soviet fleet as a "serious threat to US naval superiority". "The total Soviet force of 319 diesel and 75 nuclear submarines now outnumbers its US counterpart, by more than two to one. And at the present rate of construction, the Soviet fleet of 'Yankee' missile-bearing subs - which currently stands at thirteen vessels - could surpass the US fleet of 41 Polaris subs by 1974. In addition, the Soviets have two new cruiser helicopter-carriers, the Leningrad and the Moskva. And some naval experts have predicted that with the experience gained in the construction of these mobile-mini-flattops, the Russians will soon begin production of their first conventional aircraft carrier".

Similarly, Blackman adds that "calibre for calibre, the Russian naval guns are of a superior range to the American and their ships faster and more modern. None is older than 15 years". All of this shows that Russia is making an enormous military effort, that the space race has been moved to a war level, and that the Soviets have set about the acquisition of naval supremacy.

The part of its fleet which Russia keeps in the Mediterranean is subject to important increases, above all since this is a theatre of operations close to the national bases and very much undermined by communist subversive action.

In the forefront the USA has its Sixth Fleet and there is also the important NATO presence but lying all around is a string of shore countries with no political or military cohesion.

Included within NATO proper there are only Italy, Greece and Turkey (France, as we know, is a special case); the remainder of the Mediterranean countries have no defence obligations and the links between North Africa and the Soviets are growing daily.

Great events do not occur overnight; they are prepared in advance and only the blind do not see them coming. Before our eyes a strategic action of great importance is being launched against Europe and, if the American defence disposition and that of her allies is reduced in relation to the Soviet growth, there is the suspicion that the shore countries, in view of their weakness, will come closer to Russia, starting from a doubtful neutrality.

From the NATO point of view - as far as the straits are concerned - the closing of the Dardanelles would rest with Turkey, a NATO member country. But as regards the closing of Gibraltar, neither Spain nor Morocco form a part of this organization. Admittedly Spain is linked to Portugal by the Iberian Pact and to France by a recent agreement on co-operation and agreements have recently been signed with the USA for conjoint utilization of the Spanish bases of Rota, Torrejón, Zaragoza and Morón. But there is no other link binding Spain to the dispositions of the defence of the Mediterranean and the position of Morocco is even more remote.

From the Soviet point of view the choice between forcing the Dardanelles corridor (64 km. long and 1 to 6 km. wide) and forcing Gibraltar (51 km. long and 13 km. wide at its narrowest point) is a foregone conclusion. All this only goes to show that the Western strategic dispositions are very incomplete and that there is a wide margin for conflict.

Finally, one must not forget the growing importance of the Russian dispositions already installed in North Africa - together with the controllable bases, launching platforms, aerodromes, military aircraft, landing forces of the Soviet fleet and the potential support of the Communist Parties of the European shore countries.

All of this is very grave, but even more dangerous is the subversive Soviet penetration. Even if we accepted that the Russian naval presence does not for the moment constitute a decisive force, it is without doubt a powerful force of strategic and political significance.

The Soviets have intensified their "anti-imperialist" propaganda efforts vis-à-vis the so-called socialist republics and national liberation armies, which are already typical of the countries of the

Middle East and North Africa, and into whose commands the Communist Party is infiltrating.

The Soviets, by their pro-Arab acts, are enjoying a growing prestige in all the countries of North Africa, thus opening the way for ideological penetration and the emplacement of command dispositions.

Men from Moscow have introduced themselves into the elites of these countries, whose regimes are being radicalized accordingly.

While the importance of this penetration may be open to discussion, it cannot be minimized, above all in the armed forces, the trade union organizations and the revolutionary committees. This Soviet military action is also a diplomatic conquest. It must not be forgotten that the Arab leaders have got into the habit of looking to Moscow for solutions to their crises.

Under such conditions and in spite of official resistance, the countries of North Africa may be under the threat of communist subversion. There are already commands trained in Marxism-Leninism, and this has been made possible because the North African countries are receiving the Russians as friends, and they know that the former are maintaining a balance in the struggle against Israel and that all assistance is coming from Russia. In addition, there is the opposition to the United States, which in spite of being the great promotor of decolonization, has been alienating the trust of the Arabs.

Of course all of this does not have to be definitive, and no doubt a reaction is possible, but it is necessary in the first place to end the Arab-Israeli war. Unless there is an end to the war, it will be very difficult for any serious step to be taken. If the struggle ended, the restoration of peace would also require the promotion of real Mediterranean understanding, an order of progress and development especially in the East Basin, which is the poorest and most underdeveloped.

The Idea of the Mediterranean Pact

In view of the prevailing confusion and preoccupation the shore countries should, one would imagine, be stimulated to come to an

understanding, in order to avoid a further deterioration of the situation.

It must be pointed out that the points of view of the neutral countries are very close, and that even the European shore countries also maintain cordial relations of solidarity with the Arabs, of friendship with the Americans, and in many cases with the Soviets, and at the same time they are not manifestly against the Israelis. The shore countries desire understanding between the two warring semitic peoples, but nobody is unaware that the major difficulty lies in US-Soviet tension.

If we were to assume that the two great powers would be willing in theory to abandon the Mediterranean, there can be no doubt that the shore countries would, among themselves, be able to come up with some formula establishing a balance. However, it is not realistic to think of a Mediterranean pact excluding the two great powers. No chancellery has seriously decided to propose a text or call a conference.

A Mediterranean regional pact would presuppose the adoption of a common policy of full neutrality vis-à-vis the two great world powers i.e. the shore countries would assume the responsibility of establishing the defence and guaranteeing the international security of the inland sea.

This would, in addition presuppose the constitution of a real defence organization for the Mediterranean countries and, of course, an understanding of a political nature, enabling them to undertake this mission.

A profound analysis is not necessary in order to see the material impossibility of attaining these objectives, which in reality would only further attempts to oust the Americans, without being able to turn the Russians away. One must remember the conferences of "the progressive and anti-imperialist forces of the Mediterranean countries" and their united campaigns in this regard.

In view of the foregoing, a general Mediterranean pact, however desirable, is inconceivable at the present time since, in addition to the prior Arab-Israeli peace, it would require the abandonment of the predominant positions occupied by the two great world powers and,

in view of the structural weakness of the zone, a political and military vacuum would be created for lack of a third power, - a united Europe, which as yet does not exist.

To sum up, the general underdevelopment of the Mediterranean, the diversity of its regimes, the superior interests at play and the existing tensions do not admit of this solution.

If the situation were to be aggravated further, the result could be not one, but two Mediterranean pacts: one for the countries committed to Moscow and one for the countries committed to Washington, in other words the negation of Mediterranean unity. Let us hope that this will never happen.

The Indivisible Peace

We should remember the indivisible character of peace in Europe. Preparations are under way for a European conference on East-West security, which would attempt to dispel tensions in continental Europe. The new relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Soviet Union are an important step. A European conference may be able to consolidate this policy, but we should not be hoodwinked by, or fall victim to, a strategy which would seek to reduce tension in a strong zone, for the purpose of eventually heightening tension in a weak zone like the Mediterranean. This would be an enormous mistake, as it would favour the envelopment of Europe from the south. A European Security Conference cannot afford to exclude or forget the problem of the Mediterranean in any discussion of peace on our continent.

The Possible Pacts

Given the understanding and goodwill of the two world powers, the possibility of arriving at a solution of the armed conflict which divides Arabs and Jews, could provide, in turn, for the resulting peace treaty to be guaranteed by the totality of the shore countries. A committee of ministers of the Mediterranean countries could be responsible for promoting general understanding and guaranteeing the peace agreements. In effect, it would be desirable that the peace

should be guaranteed by all the Mediterranean countries conjointly with the two great world powers.

In other words, a Mediterranean pact without the great powers is neither feasible, realistic nor desirable.

A different thing would be a Mediterranean pact in agreement with the two great powers as a framework for collaboration between the shore countries, which would guarantee the general status quo and would set up special committees to deal with the development and promotion of the Basin.

However, it is doubtful that the Soviets desire an end to the Middle East tension, from which they are deriving so much profit. At least the West must play in such a manner that the Soviets have to act with clarity. For all that, this Pact unfortunately does not appear feasible for the time being either.

Another possibility would be a Mediterranean Pact restricted to the countries of the Western Basin as a first step in the "reconstruction" of the Mediterranean order. This would certainly be feasible and, in principle, should not be excluded, although one must not play down the difficulties to be encountered in giving an objective content to this "entente". The effect would be to bring together the most developed countries (Spain, France, Italy, Algeria and Tunisia).

At the same time, however, these are countries, the majority of which have extra-Mediterranean interests and there is no doubt that more flexible formulas for collaboration between them could be arrived at.

Mediterranean Collaboration

While it is clear that the Mediterranean Pact in its diverse variations is embryonic and not feasible in the immediately foreseeable future, it would be totally wrong to remain passive in view of the reality of the existing situation, which is grave not only for the shore countries but also for all the countries of the West.

If we limit ourselves to the strategic significance of the Basin, we have to recognize that no strategy is possible without economic bases, and that what facilitates Soviet penetration in the Mediterranean

is precisely the economic weakness which makes it an easy prey to subversion.

It is essential for European security globally to associate the Mediterranean to its destiny and its defence. This presupposes a group effort, a lively socio-economic atmosphere, a concerted policy of collaboration; to strengthen the position of the shore countries is an essential guarantee for all of them.

Another important fact is that the shore countries are becoming aware of the gravity of their situation and, for the first time in many decades, they feel the solidarity of their common destiny.

Today a static position is no longer possible. Today peace requires an order of progress, a process of economic, social and political development. Until not too long ago and with few exceptions the Mediterranean peoples found themselves in a state of underdevelopment. During the last few years conditions have improved, not only in the Western Basin, but also in the Eastern Basin proper. On the one hand the colonial regimes have disappeared; on the other industrialization has begun.

Among the most important efforts is the action taken by the European Economic Community, which has been entering into agreements with the various Mediterranean countries. If construction continues, then this is a fundamental first step; but, if it is stopped, it could even have contradictory consequences, since the preferences established in the different agreements could unbalance the Mediterranean economy even more, consolidating abnormal situations, marginal production and ruinous competition.

As always, it is by means of a political initiative that the way must be opened. In the Mediterranean "agora", the declarations of its most representative men are showing a community of opinion, which prepares the basis for real collaboration towards a common policy and an understanding of the common problems.

These testimonies are arousing popular reaction in the countries of the Basin, but anxiety alone is not enough, unless it gives way to concerted action and collaboration.

It is necessary to revitalize the Mediterranean and reanimate the forces of resistance to subversion, i.e. to intensify economic

development, raise the level of welfare of the people, organize a network of live relations between the shore countries in all sectors. If political pacts are not possible, consultation in specific fields is feasible and necessary.

The solution is to "rethink the Mediterranean as a great homogeneous economic region in a federal conception of a continent balanced in great zones of development". It is necessary to bring together what has been dispersed and reanimate what has been devitalized. The Mediterranean Basin is not yet in a position to constitute a common market or a communal zone, but a dialogue should be opened between these countries covering the main areas of activity, in order to be able to conclude agreements on basic co-operation in the production and marketing of agricultural products, mineral exploitation and raw materials, harmonizing structures, orienting industrial planning, co-ordinating a company policy, a policy of communications and transport, tourism, labour etc., and above all the promotion of technical training. The investment of such intellectual capital in the Mediterranean peoples would certainly yield excellent returns.

At the root of the struggle and the present tensions are the problems of underdevelopment, the solution of which must be sought elsewhere. It is wrong to attempt to improve the structures of misery; it is necessary to overcome this situation, to change it. When one speaks of economic development, all countries are important, all contribute something which is essential. To reanimate the Mediterranean Basin it is necessary to lay a network of interests uniting one country with the other. We are dealing here not with cold planning, but with the co-ordination of possibilities and, certainly, given efficient assistance from the richest countries on behalf of the least favoured ones, investments which will be truly profitable and which, in any case, incur far less expense than the risks of conflicts and war.

Today, we must attempt to harmonize the conditions of production, to orient the processes of modernization and to promote economic activity within a competitive system. This realistic economic policy must permit us to intensify our collaboration which is aimed, at the same time, at linking the Mediterranean peoples to the destiny of Europe.

The Mediterranean may rapidly become a live region again with high human levels of attainment, because it cherishes deep values, because the capability of its peoples permits the rapid assimilation of modern techniques, because the sources of energy liberate them from a subordination to coal-scarce in the Basin - and, above all, because the colonial era has ended and the national conscience of these countries has been reawakened.

In this context it is expected that the visit of President Nixon to the Mediterranean may be the starting point of a new American policy.

Integration

All of us believe that European unity is the sole key to survival.

Integration is the magic word which sums up the preoccupations of us all. Without integration there is no possible policy, and the resolving of our problems requires an internationally involved European policy, capable of understanding the diversity of our great regions.

It is necessary to attempt to define this integration and establish European criteria. We need to open the way to constructive ideas.

The people of the continental countries speak of Europe because they have set to work on its construction. They are interested in Europe and the extent to which Europe will become a viable reality, but the Mediterranean peoples, by and large, stand apart from this effort and cannot feel solidarity with something that is alien to them. Time, indeed, is running out.

A federal conception must be introduced creating a balanced, structured Europe, resting on great axes of promotion and animation.

It is necessary to rethink Europe within the framework of its natural regions. This regionalization would take place on a national level - more correctly, a European level.

In addition, any effort towards integration needs to be based first and foremost on a political principle and an economic principle.

The Political Principle

We need an open principle, acceptable to everybody, which will create incentives to consolidate the southern region with the rest of Europe - in a federal conception of a continent balanced by great zones of development and welfare.

In order to create Europe, it is necessary to take all its free peoples into account. The incorporation of the Mediterranean requires a conjoint examination of its problems, its aspirations and its role as a zone of contact with Africa and Asia.

The prerequisites for a European policy in the Mediterranean should be: the renunciation of all interventionist action or pressure and the abandonment of any colonialist or neo-colonialist enterprise, economic or political.

It must be mentioned that unilateral assistance above all in the less developed countries, provokes anti-colonial reactions. For this reason investments in development plans must be made either voluntarily by individuals, or collectively by the communal institutions.

Similarly, political collaboration requires that respect be shown towards the legal codes of each country.

The Economic Principle

a) Conjoint economic promotion is necessary to open a communal dialogue with all the shore countries and, the only way to get them interested as of now in the work of general construction. The promotion policies of some nations such as France, Spain or Italy are solitary efforts, limited in their national scope. What is urgently required is a European policy, above all in the Eastern Mediterranean, which is the poorest and least developed region.

b) Common Market association for all the Mediterranean countries, complementing the national associations and having a general organizational structure linked to the Common Market.

c) Search for solutions appropriate to the specific problems, so as to restore a climate of confidence and collaboration.

These proposals would promote the establishment of a situation of progressive understanding and give each national community the

opportunity of participating in the work of common construction.

The policy of the Community of importing men instead of decentralizing industries and investments is an economic and political mistake. It is absurd to saturate the central zone and abandon other extensive regions. Economically the countries of the Community are forfeiting the multiplying effect which the Mediterranean markets with a higher level of consumption would provide, but above all it is dangerous to have on our doorstep a whole region existing in conditions of underdevelopment. Laying down basic guide-lines is just as important as making investments, respecting the independence of those countries and facilitating their development.

The Mediterranean should be an axis of economic development, complementary to the Common Market. This requires organization and institutions and a dynamic global policy. Only in this manner will the Mediterranean be able to achieve genuine incorporation in the continent, in a harmonious edification of Europe.

The Common Market and the international agencies will better serve the Mediterranean countries by projecting and planning a general economic policy, which in turn will provoke, at a higher level of consumption, a greater demand for the Common Market, revitalizing peripheral regions of the Community proper.

An Ordered System of European Construction

It would be advisable not to complicate the present Community, but to consolidate it in its present limits. The greater the number of participating countries and the greater the disparities of their regimes, the less desirable the supra-national process would prove.

Therefore, rather than speak of the extension of the Common Market - an insufficient system - an attempt must be made to bring together the interests of the Mediterranean economic region, associating it globally with the Common Market and at the same time establishing criteria of development different from those of the Community and having the appropriate institutions.

An ideological revision is required in order to establish new European criteria, starting from a realistic and federal awareness

of Mediterranean problems, with a consequent reassessment of the position of NATO, the Common Market and the European Parliament.

In the face of a situation of confusion and preoccupation, it is necessary to start preparing for possible collaboration by putting forward ideas. This is one such occasion for doing so. Accordingly, I take the liberty of pointing out the action being accomplished by the Mediterranean Council of Regional Economies, which has been examining, with the participation of several countries of the Basin, the possibilities of common development.

Similarly this Rimini conference, in virtue of its participants and its location, provides an ideal platform, from which to examine Mediterranean problems and set out an analysis of solutions.

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ARAB ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE NEW
SOVIET STRATEGY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN
AND THE MIDDLE EAST

by Jebran Chamieh

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Introduction

There is a set of conditions, beliefs, attitudes and prejudices common to the Arab peoples in the Near East and North Africa which influence their political thought and the policies of their rulers towards foreign powers. Some of these conditions and beliefs are common to most under-developed peoples, and others are more pronounced among Arabs. An examination of these factors helps to explain the reasons for the recent expansion of Soviet influence and Western decline, and to evaluate the degree and true strength of this influence. The second part of the paper reviews briefly Soviet influence in each of the fourteen Arab countries separately.

Definition of terms

Before proceeding, it is necessary to explain a few terms used repeatedly in this paper to obviate any confusion. These terms are: socialists, revolutionaries and progressives; Western and American policy; the pro-Western Arabs; power groups; and Arab nationalism.

1. Socialists, revolutionaries and progressives

It is not my purpose to go into a theoretical discussion of the advantages or shortcomings of socialism, but to discover the meaning of these terms from the conditions prevailing in the socialist Arab countries, and the institutions they developed.

Seven Arab countries: Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Algeria, Syria, Iraq, and South Yemen claim to be socialist, revolutionary and progressive. However, they all share the following characteristics which cannot be considered "progressive" except in the communist sense.

They have dispensed with the "rule of law" in their countries, depriving the individual of his basic human rights consecrated by civilized society and the Charter of the United Nations. The Arab individual, who enjoyed these rights to some extent before the "socialists, revolutionaries and progressives" seized power through military coups, became completely subject to the whims of the ruling group. He can be detained indefinitely without a charge or trial, and since the constitution stands abrogated or replaced by "revolutionary" constitutions or regulations, there is no limit to

the extent of the abuse of authority by the rulers. Political activity is forbidden except for the ruling clique and authority is concentrated in the hands of a small group. In the event of elections, candidates are chosen or nominated by the rulers and the opposition, if any, is put down with a heavy hand.

In the economic field there is general confiscation of property without compensation for whole classes of people. The usually economically active, enterprising, well educated, and actively or potentially pro-Western middle classes are the particular targets of this victimization. Many of them are driven to emigration, and the "nationalized" farms, industries and businesses are handed over to the incompetent bureaucracy which is the curse of every underdeveloped country.

The dispossessed classes are replaced by new classes of civilians and officers who are in most cases more greedy and corrupt than their predecessors.

The much vaunted agrarian reforms which were allegedly the prime reasons behind the Nasserite and Ba'athi military coups in Egypt, Syria and Iraq have been largely conceived according to the communist pattern. A small portion only of the expropriated agricultural lands was given in ownership to the peasants. In most cases the peasant remained a tenant and the landowner was replaced by the state. In many other cases, the expropriated land was turned into state farms and communes according to the best communist tradition.

It is in this sense that the terms "socialists, revolutionaries and progressives" is used.

Are these regimes communist?

This is a question often asked by politicians and publicists in the West who, for various reasons, feel well disposed towards the "revolutionaries", and they often answer the question negatively.

To the pro-Western Arabs the question has only academic interest because the fact as explained above is that the "socialists, revolutionaries and progressives" apply the principles and methods of totalitarian terror be it nazi or communist, and the principles of communism such as expropriation of property without compensation, nationalization of the means of production and the systematic destruction of the middle classes. In addition, the

present regimes of Syria and South Yemen announce that they are Marxist-Leninist, and all the seven regimes stand on all occasions and without exception, with the communist countries against the West and particularly the United States on every international issue. To the pro-Western Arabs these rulers need not hold communist party cards to prove their identity. Their acts related above, all taken from communist principles and methods, count more.

Western apologists for the "socialists, revolutionaries and progressives" make a great point of some instances where one of the "socialist" governments exiles or imprisons some of its communist citizens. They take this as an irrefutable proof that the said regime is anti-communist. Nothing can be farther from the truth. In every case when a revolutionary regime repressed the local communists it was because the local communist party constituted a threat to the ruling group and wanted a share of the power, and not because the rulers were against communist ideology and practice. President Nasser suppressed the communists a few years ago but admitted them freely into his party. He was against them as a power group and not against their beliefs which concurred with those of his Arab Socialist Union to which they were admitted.

Here a word must be said about the double moral standards which some Western politicians and publicists apply in their dealing with other countries. For while they attack the Greek military regime, which is resolutely anti-communist, because it suspended parliamentary democracy, these same circles are silent about, or even favourable to the pro-communist military totalitarian regimes in the Arab countries as if democracy is a necessity for the Europeans while other peoples should be content with oppression and military dictatorship.

2. Western and American policy

In this paper, the term means Western and American policy as it appears to the pro-Western Arabs and is understood by them. The paper does not pretend to explain the policies officially enunciated by the United States and other Western governments, for we are more concerned with what these policies actually achieve, their

repercussions on the Arab countries and the conclusions that the Arabs draw from their implementation, than with the proclaimed aims and objectives.

The Western policy-makers may claim that the conclusions the Arabs draw are contrary to their intentions and to the policies followed. But it may be granted that the Arabs who bear the consequences of these policies are in a better position to evaluate their nature from the results they achieve. It is often perceived that the results are contradictory to the intentions proclaimed.

3. The pro-Western Arabs

To put it simply the term means those Arabs who, for various reasons, share the values of Western civilization: belief in individual freedom, in political rule by consent, in the rule of law, in private property and private initiative in economic matters. The term does not mean adherence to the policies of any Western government. On the contrary, conflicts and differences are bound to arise but the pro-Western Arabs would want to solve these conflicts by negotiation and in a friendly spirit rather than through threats, blackmail and expropriation. In international matters, the pro-Western Arabs would be on the side of the West in its conflict with communist powers.

The pro-Western Arabs include the seven governments which are not "revolutionary, socialist or progressive" in addition to a majority, in my opinion, of the educated, politically conscious people in all Arab countries. These groups are either active or potential pro-Westerners. The active pro-Western elements are found in the non-revolutionary countries and wherever there is a degree of political liberty. The potential elements abound in the revolutionary countries but severe repression keeps them politically inactive.

4. Power groups

Illiteracy in the Arab countries varies from 45-90 per cent. This means that the masses of the people are not politically conscious or active although they are motivated by their basic beliefs and prejudices. The general ignorance is reflected in the political sphere by popular apathy toward the type of government in power. There seems

to be a marked reluctance to oppose the unconstitutional usurpation of authority by any power group.

On the other hand, the Arab masses have been always swayed by any organized and activist group which knows how to exploit their emotions and prejudices. Public opinion in the Western democratic sense is replaced in Arab countries with the influence of power groups constituted among the politically conscious and educated minority. Such power groups have, in the past 25 years, exercised effective political power and are still determining the destiny of the region.

It stands to reason that influence in the Arab countries can only be effectively exercised through the established governments or through one or more power groups which can act on the local governments and bring them to the desired position in competition with opposed power groups. Consequently, any Western country which does not work actively to win the goodwill and active sympathy of local power groups with whom it has a common outlook and interest, but expends its efforts in presenting a good "image" to the Arab masses, or which is satisfied with reaching accommodation with "socialist and revolutionary" governments, will leave the door wide open to Soviet influence.

5. Arab nationalism

This is a term which is causing a great deal of confusion in the minds of those who deal with Arab affairs. It is naturally taken to mean what the Western peoples understand by the term, viz. a cohesive force which, in a people having a distinctive national character, binds the different elements together in pursuance of common interests distinct from the interests of foreign groups and countries.

Adhering to this meaning, let us see what countries believe in Arab nationalism. In most of the Arabian Peninsula the term "Arab" means the nomads. The internal group differentiation is between sedentaries and Bedouins, or between one tribe or religious sect and another. The external group differentiation is between Moslems and non-Moslems, not between Arabs and non-Arabs.

In Egypt there is a developed Egyptian national feeling in spite of the regime's Arabizing efforts over the past years. An Arab

in Egypt is a nomad or the member of a settled tribe. He is on the periphery of Egyptian society. The external group differentiation is between Egyptian Moslems and foreigners. The Arabs have become "brothers" occupying an intermediate place between the Egyptians and the foreigners, but they are not of the same "nation" as the Egyptians.

In North Africa from Tunisia westwards, Arab nationalism is anathema for fear of splitting the population into conflicting Arabs and Berbers. The group differentiation is strictly Moslem versus non-Moslem.

Finally, we come to the cradle of Arab nationalism, the countries of the Fertile Crescent: Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Iraq. These are the countries which produced the Arab national awakening against the Turks in 1916 and the recent movements of the Ba'ath and the Arab Nationalists in the late Forties. Yet, the ephemeral quality of this "nationalism" should not escape our attention. Arab nationalism was strongly advocated during the years 1956-62. Then the emphasis of the Nasserites, Ba'athis and Arab Nationalists began to shift to socialism and revolution. Increasingly after 1962, the speeches and declarations of President Nasser and the leaders of these movements omitted references to Arab nationalism and concentrated on the new issues. The reason behind this shift in ideology may have been the realization by President Nasser, the Ba'athis and others that Arab nationalism instead of being a cohesive and unifying force has been a disruptive factor within each country dividing Arab and Kurd; Moslem and Christian, Sunnis, Shi'a, Druzes and Alawites etc.

Furthermore, the emergence of the Palestinian commando organizations since 1967, their popularity and their insistence on their Palestinian identity and separate nationalism, has encouraged the local patriotic movements latent in each Arab country.

Geographically speaking, Arab nationalism, even in its heyday between 1956-1962, never had a hold outside the region of the Fertile Crescent. How do we explain then the influence of President Nasser on the Arab masses attributed to Arab nationalism?

In my opinion, President Nasser acquired his prestige and influence with the Arab peoples in the Middle East and North Africa, who still largely look at the world in terms of Christian-Moslem rivalry,

because he was the first leader in recent times to stand up to the West successfully. This achievement excuses all his shortcomings and failures in other fields. An understanding of this fact is essential for a useful discussion of Arab affairs. Religious emotion and not "nationalism" in the Western sense is at the basis of President Nasser's hold on the masses. Furthermore, I would say that we are now witnessing the eclipse of the concept of Arab nationalism and entering in the Arab world on an era of confrontation between the forces of local patriotism and of revolutionary Marxism.

Factors in Arab society favourable or hostile to the expansion of Soviet influence

1. Some factors favourable to the expansion of Soviet influence

A - Latent hostility to the West felt by the Arab masses due to:

- 1 - The Moslem masses still look at the West largely in terms of Christian-Moslem religious rivalry. This attitude has generated a feeling of bitterness, suspicion and negativeness toward the values represented by modern Western civilization. Russia being atheist has exploited this latent antagonism to its advantage by using the labels of anti-imperialism, non-alignment, neutralism, socialism, and progress versus (Western) "imperialism", "reaction" and "capitalism".
- 2 - Western colonization of Arab countries in the 19th and 20th centuries has left traces of hostility among the Arab masses.
- 3 - The creation of Israel attributed by the Arabs to the aid of Britain and the United States is an important factor in the present hostility toward the West fanned by the clever propaganda of the pro-Soviet power groups. The West was unable to expose the similar role played by the Soviet Union and the other communist countries in creating Israel in 1948-49.

- B - Arab intellectuals who want to escape Moslem religious conformity and the rigidity of traditional society often jump to the other extreme and embrace communism which affords them another comprehensive system of thought.
- C - Arab tradition, like many other eastern cultures, disdains physical and manual work of any kind. This has largely influenced educational programmes in schools and colleges which stress the theoretical aspect more than the technological. Consequently, tens of thousands of high school and university graduates qualified only for white-collar jobs find no employment and become frustrated and embittered, ready to embrace the Marxist dogma or support a Soviet-type society which claims that it has solved the problem of employment.
- D - The same disdain for physical work and labour coupled with aspirations for a better way of life attract the common people to an imaginary Utopia, a Soviet-type state where they are promised by the Marxist power groups that the government will provide everything with very little effort on the part of the people.
- E - The hostility of the residents of the neglected countryside to the relatively better off city dwellers goes a long way to give those who want to overthrow the established order and to constitute a "socialist" pro-Soviet regime a large base of silent consent unless it is countered with information about conditions of peasants in the "socialist" Arab countries.
- F - The presence of small underground unauthorized communist parties in practically every Arab country acts as a focus for all pro-Soviet elements.

2. Some factors in Arab society hostile to Soviet expansion

- A - Industrialization in the Arab countries is still in its initial stages and no proletariat class in the Marxist sense has yet emerged. This constitutes a basic obstacle to the spread of Communism and therefore of a stable Soviet influence.

- B - Tribal, clan and sectarian religious loyalty is much stronger in every section of the Arab population than class loyalty.
- C - The firm grip of Islam and its values deeply ingrained in the minds of the people works against communism and the Soviet Union which is known to be an atheist state. For that reason also the pro-Soviet power groups in the Arab countries have been forced to accommodate Marxism with local conditions. No revolutionary socialist Arab regime or group has yet had the courage to separate the state from Islam or to declare its opposition to religion.
- D - Traditionalism and conservatism are the characteristics of most Arabs and especially the peasants who constitute the great majority. They would constitute a formidable obstacle to communist and Soviet ideology and influence if they were made conscious of the fundamentals and implications of Soviet policy and principles.
- E - Nationalism and patriotism, in so far as they are felt, work against any foreign influence.
- F - Basic distrust of all foreigners whether Western or communist, is an impediment to any foreign influence.
- G - The Arab countries in general are a mosaic of religious sects and ethnic groups, where no single community enjoys an overwhelming majority. This is especially true in the countries of the Fertile Crescent.

Furthermore, each religious and ethnic community is subdivided into tribes, clans and families. Moreover, most regimes since independence have used their governmental powers to establish the preponderance of one religious sect and/or one ethnic group over the others instead of sharing power equitably among all the components. The net result is that no true feeling of a unifying patriotism and nationalism has so far evolved in most countries so that the primary loyalty of the citizen is to his family, clan, tribe, religious sect, ethnic group, or region, in spite of all the slogans of Arab nationalism shouted to the contrary.

This fragmentation of Arab society makes it easier for a foreign power to win the favour of a sect, a tribe or a region but makes it

much harder to win over the country as a whole because a rapprochement with one group automatically antagonizes a rival sect, tribe or region.

The same fragmentation and divisiveness is equally manifest in the Arab "revolutionary" Marxist, and socialist movements causing them to break up into numerous warring splinters each claiming to represent the true faith and ideology thereby discrediting themselves and facilitating the task of any opposing movement.

- H - There is a growing realization that some pro-Soviet "socialist" governments represent only a sectarian minority and impose their will on the majority through Soviet political support and arms, and by measures employed only by the most backward totalitarian and reactionary regimes. The hostility felt against them is transferred to the Soviet Union which offers them help and support.
- I - The failure of most "socialist" pro-Soviet Arab regimes to fulfil their promises and to improve the social and economic conditions of the ordinary citizen and especially of the peasants has become evident to all classes of the people and it reflects adversely on the Soviets.
- J - The humiliating defeat of the "socialist" and "revolutionary" regimes of Egypt and Syria in the June 1967 war with Israel (although these two countries have been preparing for war since 1949) was a strong blow to their patrons, the Soviets. But the West neglected to exploit the situation to its benefit and the Soviets succeeded in turning the defeat to their advantage.
- K - There is a growing disenchantment in the pro-Soviet Arab countries with the nature and quality of Soviet and East European technical and economic aid. The way the communist "experts" isolate themselves from the local population depriving them of commercial advantages to which they were widely accustomed in their dealing with Western foreigners, does not in any way help to ameliorate the situation.

- L - There is a growing realization in some Arab and Palestinian quarters of the ineffectiveness of Soviet aid against Israel and a strong feeling is gaining ground that only the United States can bring Israel to an acceptable settlement. This disillusion with the Soviets had led the extremists to look to China, and may lead the moderates to compromise and adjust themselves to a peaceful settlement.
- M - Economically the Arab world has been linked with the West in trade for centuries. It is not easy to disrupt a pattern which is the product of geography. Yet this is exactly what the Soviets are trying to do with the help of the Arab "socialist" regimes. Soviet economic and military aid and trade are on the increase. The Soviets are buying Arab industrial products in exchange for capital goods thereby encouraging industrialization and providing steady markets. They are offering aid at a low interest which is not matched by the West. Their designs on Arab oil are the subject matter of another paper presented to the Conference which analyses Soviet policy towards the Mediterranean.

On the other hand, there is a growing dissatisfaction with the kind and quality of Soviet and East European capital and consumer goods. Soviet economic penetration would probably decrease if Soviet goods were offered in free competition with similar Western products. However, for the "socialist" Arab governments which have nationalized foreign trade, commerce is determined by political considerations as much as, if not more than, by economic interest. Soviet economic influence is likely to grow as long as such Arab regimes are in power.

- N - In the cultural field the Soviets have failed to match their success in the economic sphere. English and French are still the two predominant foreign languages in the Arab world. Books in French and English are the main cultural link between the Arabs and the world around them. Even the Marxists study communist ideology in French and English. Arab students from "socialist revolutionary" countries who study in Western colleges outnumber greatly the students studying in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

3. Comparing the pro-Soviet and the anti-Soviet factors

Balancing the pros and cons of the situation, it would seem that the factors in Arab society working against Soviet influence are overwhelmingly strong and there should be no cause for worry, especially as there are no formal or legally binding military pacts between the Soviet Union and any Arab country as yet.

Still, we meet here to discuss the expanding Soviet influence in the Mediterranean and particularly in the Arab countries.

Influence is defined in the dictionary as "the power or process of producing an effect upon a person by imperceptible or intangible means arising from social, financial, moral, cultural, or similar authority". Such authority in the Arab world was and still largely is, the prerogative of the West. Why and how then is the West losing its influence to the Soviets?

I am positive in my own mind that expanding Soviet influence is mainly, even now, the result of the West's negligence, indifference, weak nerve and even connivance rather than of Soviet strength per se. But while the Soviets have been clever enough to exploit their relatively weak position to the utmost, the West has willingly allowed its position of strength to erode. The following is an explanation of this statement:

A - Soviet actions which further Soviet influence

It was mentioned previously that the Arabs have ^a set of common beliefs, attitudes and prejudices which can be acted upon and exploited but that informed public opinion in the Western sense plays a role only in a few Arab countries where education is more widespread.

Working on these premises and on the fragmentation of Arab society the Soviets followed three main systems of action:

- 1 - Establishing Power Groups - The Soviet Union acted since the early Fifties patiently and for many years to form power groups in each Arab country sympathetic to its views or at least opposed to the West. Its task was hard because it was acting in a hostile, pro-Western environment. Nevertheless, it persevered diligently among student groups and the youth, not preaching communism but exploiting the popular resentment

against the West and encouraging all types of anti-Western national movements by a well-planned, well-financed and well-executed propaganda campaign extending over a number of years. Activist power groups were thereby formed and they activated, among others, young army officers, using the slogans of Arab unity, liberty, socialism, anti-imperialism and anti-Zionism. As a result, the military coups d'état succeeded each other since 1949. The USSR did not require that they be pro-Soviet to begin with. It was enough that they were "anti-imperialist" and claimed to be "socialist" and "revolutionary". It was inevitable in Soviet eyes that the "revolutionary socialists" would end in the Soviet camp, and they were right.

Once a "revolutionary" regime seized power it received unlimited moral and political support from communist parties, organizations and states all over the world. Internally, it imposed its will on the people without regard to their wishes and undertook publicly what the Soviets were doing covertly. Communist front organizations proliferated, party links were established with communist parties abroad, rallies and visiting communist delegations of all types swamped the country, the information media were all censored and mobilized to advocate the official line. And above all the new revolutionary regime devoted part of the country's resources to help establish similar power groups and undertake military coups in other Arab countries, alongside the funds allotted by the Soviet Union. In this way pro-Soviet "socialist" revolutions are marching from victory to victory in one Arab country after another.

In winning to its side local power groups which are not communist but are aligned with it and supported by it morally and financially, the Soviet Union accords itself some insurance in case the regime changes its attitude. These pro-Soviet power groups, in addition to the regular communists, are entrusted with the task of acting upon the government, whatever its disposition, to the benefit of Soviet policy.

- 2 - Dealing with each country as a separate entity - The second cardinal point in Soviet policy is that it deals with each Arab country as a separate entity.

Knowing the fragmentation of Arab society, the Soviet Union never committed the deadly mistake of trying to deal with a whole area through one overlord as the United States seems to have been doing since 1956. In this way the Soviet Union can tailor its policy to suit the circumstances of each particular country while respecting the susceptibilities of the local rulers and people. The Soviet Union has never succumbed to the myth of Arab nationalism so dear to some Western governments and political circles, claiming that the Arabs are one people with a single outlook and common interests who act as one homogeneous group.

- 3 - Selling arms to the Arabs - More than anything else, the sale of arms to the Arabs advanced Russian prestige and influence and was at the same time a profitable business proposition.

Arabic culture places a heavy emphasis on the element of conquest, strength and power. And since modern arms are the symbol of such power and the Arabs do not produce them, any party which provides them becomes a friendly country regardless of whether the arms could be usefully employed or not.

B - Western actions which further the expansion of Soviet influence

If it is natural for the Soviet Union to further its influence by all means, it is very strange indeed for the West to act in a way which helps Soviet expansion whether intentionally or not.

- 1 - The Suez Canal Crisis - There is no doubt that American policy in the Suez crisis of 1956 was largely responsible for expelling British and French influence from the Middle East. Unfortunately the United States could not fill the vacuum, and Russia was gratuitously, given the first real chance of entering the region. Regarding the Egyptian-Israeli conflict, the type of solution imposed by the United States in 1956 and its subsequent close

relations with Egypt contributed directly to the 1967 war. The Arabs were perplexed to notice that the United States did not seem concerned at Egypt's behaviour when it gave all the credit for ousting the Israelis to the Soviet Union and prevented the Egyptian and Arab masses from learning of the pro-Arab role played by the Eisenhower Administration against Israel's interests.

2 - The United States complacent toward Egyptian abuse 1956-65 -

Thereafter followed that curious relationship between the United States and Egypt which is, in my opinion, the main cause of all the West's difficulties in the Arab world. In this relationship, abuse of the United States by Egypt in public declarations and speeches became standard practice to obtain in exchange huge amounts of grants and loans thereby discrediting the American government in the eyes of all the Arabs who despise weakness and indecision and whose culture glorifies force and power. They know that there is no example in history where a great power was subjected to such continuous humiliation and in addition was made to pay for it. The Arabs made unflattering comparisons between the way the Egyptian government addressed the United States, and how circumspect it was when addressing the Soviets or even France's de Gaulle. The whole resulting atmosphere eroded the prestige of the strongest Western power to the advantage of the Soviet Union.

3 - America's obsession with President Nasser - At that time also began what appeared to pro-Western Arabs and American obsession, probably weaker but still continuing, which wanted to deal with the whole Middle East through the overlordship of President Nasser. In other words, the United States seemed to have accepted the theory of Arab nationalism and acted on the principle that the Arabs can be governed or managed from one capital, Cairo, forgetting the lessons of Arab history and the visible fragmentation of Arab society.

In following this policy and in relying on President Nasser as its "man" in the Middle East, the pro-Western Arabs feel

that the United States neglected to make friends or help organize power groups in the Arab countries as the Soviets were doing. On the contrary, it acquired the enmity of Nasser's foes and did not win his friends.

- 4 - The disastrous Syro-Egyptian Union - The Suez episode was followed in 1958 by the disastrous Syro-Egyptian Union which could not have surmounted the combined opposition of Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel without the pressure exerted by the United States in its favour. Yet it seemed natural to the American Administration that this new Union should immediately begin plotting for the overthrow of America's ally in the Baghdad Pact, the pro-Western Iraqi regime, and for subverting America's other friends in the region: Lebanon, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.
- 5 - The Iraqi coup - The Iraqi coup occurred on July 14, 1958 when the Baghdad Pact Council was meeting in Istanbul. It is reliably reported that Turkey and Iran wanted to implement the Baghdad Pact provisions and intervene to reestablish the situation in Baghdad but both the USA and Britain opposed the move. When King Hussein, as the heir to the throne of the Iraqi-Jordanian Federation, wanted to recapture Baghdad with the Jordanian army, he was dissuaded by the two Western states. The outcome was a succession of radical anti-Western regimes.
- 6 - Establishing Nasser's overlordship in Lebanon - In that same fateful year of 1958 American troops landed in Lebanon and the USA used its influence to elect a military president publicly selected by Nasser. For twelve years Lebanon remained a virtual vassal of Egypt in its Arab, and to a lesser degree, in its foreign policy. Furthermore, the military clique which exercised real power until the presidential elections of August 1970, deliberately weakened the pro-Western elements and encouraged various leftist pro-Soviet groups as will be explained more fully in the following pages.

- 7 - Colonial war in Yemen - In 1962 President Nasser began his colonial conquest of Yemen as a spring-board for conquering the oilfields of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. The role of the United States in this new Nasserite scheme is not clear, but the continuous flow of large scale financial aid to Egypt during the first three years of this war did not denote displeasure with this new adventure, although it was aimed at Saudi Arabia, a friend of the United States, and at British interests in the Gulf and in Aden.
- 8 - British withdrawal from South Yemen - In November 1967 Britain recognized the independence of South Yemen after handing over the country to the most extreme Marxist group aligned now with communist China. What Nasser failed to do from Yemen, the communists are trying to do now from Aden, opening it to the Soviet fleet and threatening the whole of the Arabian Peninsula, the Gulf and the oil interests.
- 9 - Britain's announced withdrawal from the Gulf - Then followed Britain's announcement of withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971 before establishing a sound basis for a viable local rule, thereby preparing the ground for a possible repetition of the Aden episode.
- 10 - A repetition of 1956? - Lastly, and most disastrously, the West seems headed towards a repetition, in a modified form, of the 1956 policy aimed at saving President Nasser from the consequences of his 1967 war, thereby perpetrating the illusion among the Arabs that they can go on losing wars and recuperating their losses by political means. This will certainly be the best preparation for a fourth Arab-Israeli war in a few years time and for a further expansion of Soviet influence and prestige.

4 - Questions put to the West

This short historical survey is not narrated for the sake of recrimination but only to explain that in pro-Western Arab eyes Soviet

influence spread in the Arab world not only by its own power, but by active Western support for those revolutionary power groups and regimes, especially the Egyptian regime, which are by their very nature anti-Western and pro-Soviet. And what is grave above all is that this trend still seems to be the policy of some Western powers.

The least that can be said in this respect is that Western policy looks ambivalent and confused and it becomes pertinent to put to the West the following questions:

A - Does the West really believe that the subversion by communism of the countries lying on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean constitutes a danger to the West's safety, and if so what does the West intend to do about it?

B - Does the West believe that in its own pure and selfish interest it is preferable to have friendly governments in these countries, and if so how can we explain some Western governments' support of pro-Soviet regimes?

C - Does the West believe in having friends among the Arabs, and power groups sharing common interests, or is the West satisfied with manipulating governments of whatever colour they are? If the former is true, why has the West not done anything about it yet? Some of my friends would go so far as to say that the West, and especially the United States, is not only opposed to the formation of friendly power groups in the Arab socialist and revolutionary countries but that it shuns and avoids those elements among the Syrians, Iraqis, Egyptians and Algerians who are disposed to be friendly towards the West.

E - Why is Europe in general, as governments and private organizations, so politically disinterested in the Arab world in spite of the proximity of the Soviet danger spreading in it? Does Europe truly believe that it is doing what it can to fight this danger before it is enveloped by it?

F - What is amazing in this situation is that United States policy towards the Arabs seems to be in complete contradiction to its policy in Europe, Latin America, Africa and the Far East. In each of these regions the United States befriends, aids and supports, militarily and economically, anti-revolutionary and anti-communist forces and

governments openly and without reserve. In the Far East, US policy is urging the various countries to rely on themselves, with full American support, and to organize regionally for defence against communist influence. Only in the Arab world does the United States seem to follow a policy of appeasement, even of support, towards its opponents, and of neglect and unconcern toward potentially friendly groups, relying solely on external power represented by NATO and the Sixth Fleet. The question foremost in Arab minds is : what are the reasons underlying this policy?

G - What should be the role of the Arabs in halting Soviet expansion?

There is a great deal of discussion about what NATO, the United States and the European governments should do to halt Soviet expansion in the Mediterranean. Nobody has asked what role the Arabs should play in that process, although the danger is enveloping Europe through the Arab countries. It would seem to me that one of the first logical steps in trying to contain the spread of Soviet influence in the Mediterranean basin, is to study what the pro-Western Arab groups and governments should do, what is the best method to use and what aid the West should provide.

Here the West may ask a legitimate question: why don't the Arabs themselves fight a danger which threatens them as much as the West? Why should the West contribute financially and materially to this struggle?

There are several obvious answers:

A - The Arab power groups working for the expansion of Soviet influence are financed, politically supported, guided, protected and advised in their strategy and tactics by the Soviet Union. They cannot be opposed by groups relying solely on local resources and skills with no political backing or protection.

B - The military and economic aid granted by the West to its Arab friends is in no way comparable to the aid received from the USSR by the revolutionary regimes.

C - The struggle for the Mediterranean basin involves the two super powers. But while the USSR puts all its weight behind its friends in the Arab world, the West seems hesitant in the Near East and looks on occasions as if it is supporting Russia's friends.

D - Pure self-interest and the need to protect Western interests and investments should lead the West to help the Arabs help themselves.

E - The present situation in which the Arabs find themselves, regarding expanding Soviet influence is partly the work of some Western governments. The least that these governments can do is to try to rectify their past errors for their own and the Arabs' sake.

F - In the final analysis, it is much easier and cheaper for the West to halt Soviet expansion and reverse it through the action of friendly Arab governments and power groups, thereby avoiding direct confrontation with the Soviet Union, than through any other means at the disposal of the Western powers.

The role of the Arab-Israeli conflict in Soviet expansion

The Arab-Israeli war of 1967 has contributed greatly to the popularity of the Soviet Union. But Moscow does not rely on such an unstable element as "popularity" as a basis for its influence. It relies, as we have seen, on active power groups which have been operating long before the 1967 war. The war was simply an incident which gave them a further opportunity. That is why I mention this conflict only briefly. It is a symptom of the West's inefficacy and not a source of strength to the Soviet Union in the long run, for the attitudes of both the West and the USSR towards Israel are essentially the same.

But the Soviet Union was clever to exploit the situation to its advantage through its power groups in most Arab countries, picturing the USSR as the only true friend of the Arabs while the West, which seems to have no similar active power groups disposing of propaganda media, was unable to show the Arabs that the Soviet's position is essentially similar. The difference between the two camps is that the West expends its efforts in trying to manipulate hostile governments, while active organized groups exploit popular emotions to the fullest extent to the advantage of the Soviet Union.

Many Western writers tend to dismiss the whole problem of the West's relations with the Arabs by asserting flatly that there is no way for the West to regain a measure of influence as long as the Arab-Israeli conflict is not settled. This seems to me a generalization intended to cover Western inadequacy for it rests on two false premises. The first is that the one hundred million Arabs are one lump of humanity who act in unison. The second premise is that all Arab countries place the Palestinian cause above their particular national interests. Both premises are wrong. The Arabs have never acted as a unified group even regarding Palestine except verbally, and, secondly, not a single Arab state has ever given precedence to the Palestinian cause over its own interests, notwithstanding all proclamations to the contrary. Such a situation offers numerous encouraging prospects to the West if it chooses to pursue an active policy to regain its lost influence.

A peaceful settlement would certainly enhance Western influence. Egypt, being the strongest Arab power will have to play the leading role as it did in 1949. But President Nasser, because of his pretensions to Arab leadership, is in my opinion the last Egyptian leader able to effect such a settlement. He feels bound to take into consideration the attitudes of the Syrians, Iraqis, Algerians, Palestinian commandos and others who are all outbidding him in extremism. Purely Egyptian national interest is of secondary importance to him. Therefore, I do not expect him to go through with a true and lasting peace settlement, no matter how favourable the conditions may be to Egypt.

My contention that President Nasser is a prisoner of his Arab role received confirmation when on September 25 he turned against King Hussein, his only ally in accepting the Rogers Plan, in order to keep his standing among the Palestinian guerillas.

Making President Nasser the cornerstone of the American peace plan seems to rest on the assumption that he would be able to carry with him at least the revolutionary Arab regimes and the majority of the Palestinians. This assumption proved to be completely mistaken. Of the "revolutionary" parties to the conflict, who should have been amenable to Nasser's influence, Iraq and the Palestinians immediately branded him as a traitor to the Palestinian cause, while the Syrians are daily attacking the Rogers Plan. Further away, South Yemen and Algeria are publicly denouncing Nasser's Palestinian policy.

The non-revolutionary countries bordering Israel, that is Jordan and Lebanon, did not need a prod from President Nasser to accept a just settlement, and if there was any illusion about Nasser's desire and capacity to "protect" the Jordanian regime it was dispelled when King Hussein had to go it alone and fight the Palestinian commandos to establish his authority in his own country. Not only did he receive no support from Egypt, but the Egyptian propaganda machinery was turned full blast against him.

The Rogers Plan, addressed to Egypt as the strongest Arab country involved might have fared better had there been a truly patriotic and nationalist Egyptian leader at the helm who only had Egypt's interests at heart and who was unfettered by considerations of Arab prestige. The Egyptian people are overwhelmingly in favour of a just and speedy settlement and would have offered wholehearted support to any leader who realized such a solution, irrespective of Arab and Palestinian considerations. When President Nasser declared that he will not accept a settlement unless it also satisfied Syria and Jordan he was cultivating his Arab position of leadership at the expense of Egypt's interests and against popular Egyptian opinion.

Looking at the problem from another angle, it is now generally recognized that President Nasser has become the cornerstone of Soviet influence in the Middle East. It seems therefore anomalous that the West should still consider him the pivot of its peaceful efforts. Should these efforts succeed through him, highly improbable as it may seem, his added prestige would only have the effect of throwing the region back into the turmoil, plots and subversion perpetrated by his regime during the decade preceding the 1967 war against the West's remaining friends and interests to the advantage of the Soviet Union.

To sum up the situation my conclusion regarding whether the Soviet expansion in the Arab countries will continue unabated or be halted and reversed, will depend on which side, the West or the Soviets, will be more successful in co-operation with power groups in each Arab country able to influence the local governments one way or the other.

At the moment the balance is heavily tipped in favour of the Soviets, and unless the West, and especially the United States, brings

about a radical change in its Arab policy and acts quickly and effectively in new ways to win over such elements in the Arab population as are favourably disposed toward the West by adopting methods somewhat similar to those employed by the Soviets, more Arab countries will go over to the Soviet camp and the danger to Europe and Western interests in the Arab world will increase.

Soviet influence with Arab governments

1. The socialist and revolutionary countries

Of the fourteen Arab countries forming the League of Arab States, seven claim to be "revolutionary and socialist" hence open to Soviet influence in varying degrees. They are: Iraq, South Yemen and Syria in the east, and Algeria, Egypt, Libya and the Sudan in the Maghreb.

Among these seven states "revolution" and "socialism" are practised differently according to the interpretation which serves the interests of the local ruling group and consolidates its power.

The fact that four of the seven regimes which have gone "socialist" have built practically no new industries in their countries since they seized power and have not allowed any private enterprise to operate, demonstrates the true character of their "progressiveness".

Nevertheless, because they claim to be "revolutionary" and "socialists" and rhetorically anti-imperialist (i.e. anti-West) these regimes, even those originally supported by a Western power, find themselves naturally in the socialist camp and amenable to Soviet influence. The degree of Soviet influence in these seven "revolutionary" and "socialist" regimes is explained briefly as follows:

A - South Yemen - Starting with the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, the South Yemen rulers proclaim officially that they are Marxist-Leninists but they seem to be more influenced by Communist China than by the Soviet Union. This of course is no comfort to the West which is greatly responsible for the present state of affairs and for the danger spreading from South Yemen to Saudi Arabia and to the Gulf countries through Dhofar. But if the West acts wisely in support of the present North Yemeni

regime, the South Yemeni situation may still be saved. Meanwhile the Soviet fleet will always be welcome to use Aden as a base for its expansion in the Red Sea, the Gulf and the Indian Ocean.

B - Iraq - Moving north to Iraq where the National Command of the Arab socialist Ba'ath Party holds power, we find another nuance of "socialism" accommodating itself with the Ba'athi type of Arab nationalism. This is in fact the rule of a minority of Sunni Arabs over a dissatisfied Shi'a majority and a Kurdish population which has achieved self-rule by force of arms. This unnatural situation is compounded by the fact that among the minority of Sunni Arabs, political power is concentrated in the hands of a single clan whose members come from a small town (Takrit) in northern Iraq.

The Iraqi government includes a communist member. But that does not prevent it from jailing Iraqi communists while maintaining friendly relations with the Soviet Union. This seemingly paradoxical practice, as previously explained, does not mean that the Iraqi regime is anti-communist. It is only protecting itself against a local power group striving to share or seize power. The Soviet Union understands this power politics play and abstains from supporting the local communists. However, a large section of Western official and popular opinion deludes itself by drawing conclusions about the anti-communist character of the Ba'ath which are completely baseless.

The present Iraqi opposition to Egypt's acceptance of the Rogers' proposals although supported by the Soviet Union demonstrates Russia's tenuous influence even on the so-called "revolutionary and socialist" Arab regimes. But Soviet policy appears to be flexible enough to accommodate itself with both Egypt and Iraq even while they engage in a verbal warfare, although Russia's interest and sympathies at present lie more on the Egyptian side.

C - Syria - Syria is often referred to as the most "militant" and "radical" of the Arab revolutionary regimes in comparison with the "moderate" and "reasonable" Egyptian attitude.

The truth is that Syria's militance is only verbal as proven by the following facts: The number of military clashes on the

Syrian-Israeli fronts since June 1967 is much smaller than along the Egyptian, Jordanian and even Lebanese fronts. Similarly, the activities of the Palestinian commandos from Syria into Israel are much less than their activities from Jordan and Lebanon. Furthermore, the Palestinians in Syria are under strict government control and observation and are not allowed the freedom of movement and organization which they enjoy in Jordan and Lebanon. Lately, Syria closed all Palestinian guerrilla offices in Syrian towns and told the guerrillas to use the Ba'ath offices in order to exercise more effective control over them.

The only Syrian "militancy" resides in the fact that the regime has rejected the UN resolution of Nov. 22, 1967, for a Middle East settlement. But when the Rogers proposals were accepted by Egypt and Jordan, Syria's opposition, unlike that of Iraq, was muted.

Even internally, the present Syrian regime which has appointed a communist member in the government, did not initiate any new important "socialist" legislation. It is applying the main legislation enacted by the Ba'athi faction which is now ruling in Iraq.

The set-up in Syria, as in Iraq, is that of a religious minority, the "Alawites", oppressed for more than a thousand years, gaining the upper hand and assuming power by infiltrating the army over a period of years. The Alawites continued the destruction of the economic and political power base of the Sunnite majority begun in 1963 by the former Ba'ath and brought it to a final conclusion. Their primary aim, it appears to me, is to maintain themselves in power against both the present Iraqi Ba'athis who are mostly Sunnis, and against the Syrian Sunnis, either of whom would certainly end the Alawite ascendancy and probably reduce them to their former status through severe repression. "Socialism and revolution" are convenient media for the Alawites to suppress their enemies and maintain themselves in power. Since this accords with the interests of a major power like the Soviet Union, the two countries become natural allies.

The Soviets have provided Syria with arms but the regime, against all appearances to the contrary, is not eager to fight Israel because it fears the unforeseen consequences of war on its position.

There are even those who go so far as to claim that the Alawite rule, being a regime of a religious minority, finds solace in the presence of the Israeli religious state in the midst of a Moslem sea.

Syrian relations with the Soviet Union became strained in March 1969 when a faction of the Ba'ath party led by the Minister of Defence removed the more Marxist civilian elements from the government contrary to the wishes expressed by the Soviet Ambassador in Damascus. But Syria had the last word in the argument. Like the Iraqi Ba'ath, the Syrian Ba'ath also resisted the communist demand for a popular front government in which all the "progressive" forces would be represented, meaning the communists, Nasserites, Ba'athists and others.

There are wide-ranging cultural and economic ties between Syria and the countries of the Eastern bloc especially the Soviet Union. The Syrian schools and news media indoctrinate Syrian youth in the precepts of the Ba'ath and "socialism", whatever that may mean. On the other hand, there are many restrictions on Syrian students wishing to study in the Soviet Union and other Eastern countries. The number which is allowed to go is relatively small.

One may conclude that the extent of Soviet influence in Syria as in Iraq is determined by the degree to which the local regimes feel they need Soviet support to stay in power.

D - Egypt - Nasser's Egypt has been the sponsor of almost all the revolutionary coups in the Arab countries. For a long time it directly instigated the upheavals and military takeovers which shattered the stability of the region and opened it to Soviet influence.

In Egypt, it is too late to speak of Soviet influence. One must now speak of Soviet military presence and takeover of large sections of the defence establishment. Egypt is the only Arab country where Soviet influence is not dependent on the whim of a military clique as in Syria and Iraq; it is based on the presence of actual armed units on Egyptian soil. And because President Nasser has come to acquire such a stature in the Arab East, thanks to Western efforts over a period of 15 years, this foreign Soviet

military presence did not arouse the national opprobrium which it deserved. In this important way, Western policy played into the hands of the Soviets and made Soviet military occupation in Egypt palatable to the Arab masses.

The economic field is another sector where the Soviets are dominant. In return for the industrial plants, the costs of the Aswan Dam and arms, the USSR receives most of Egypt's industrial and agricultural produce. The indebtedness of the Nasser regime has reached such staggering proportions that it may take generations of Egyptians to repay the loans.

E - Sudan - The new Sudanese revolutionary regime which seized power in May 1967 through the army walks in the footsteps of President Nasser and imitates him in regard to internal and external policy. The Communist Party plays an important political role and participates in the government but its secretary-general has been expelled to Egypt.

As in Iraq and Syria, the regime strikes a balance between the interests of the ruling group and its need for internal communist support and for Soviet political and economic aid.

The war between the north and the south which is similar in some respects to the Iraqi-Kurdish war, strains the political composition and the resources of the new regime. The rulers cover up their inability to achieve stability, especially after the massacre of the Mahdi and the Ansars, by greater verbal militancy and involvement in Arab affairs especially the Palestinian problem.

The Sudanese regime is aligned with Egypt in its Arab and foreign policy. It is likely to be even more pro-Soviet because of the strength of the Communist Party inside as well as outside the government. However, the close alignment with Egypt runs counter to popular feeling, which dislikes the Egyptians and is extremely suspicious of them and their designs to solve their population problem at the expense of the Sudan. How far can the present regime reconcile this popular animosity with a pro-Egyptian policy is an open question. In such an unstable situation a new coup may be either pro-communist and anti-Nasserite or anti-communist and anti-Nasserite at the same time.

F - Libya - Libya is the newest member of the socialist revolutionary club and it is unique in the character of its "revolution". The new military leaders are imbued with a mixture of excessive religious fanaticism, emotional belief in a pre-destined pan-Arab unity, "Moslem socialism", whatever that may mean, and idolization of President Nasser. In addition, the young rulers are completely lacking in political and administrative experience. At the present stage it may be premature to speak of the regime's "leftist" tendencies. It may be more accurate to speak of a backward regression of several decades.

Like the Sudanese rulers, the new Libyan officers follow in the footsteps of the Egyptian President. On the other hand, the Libyan people, even more than the Sudanese, are actively suspicious of other Arabs and especially of the Egyptians. Already this popular feeling is being manifested to the officers and it is doubtful that they can lead their people far along the road of political alignment and economic integration with Egypt. Some differences regarding recent Egyptian policy toward the Palestinian commandos have appeared and the Libyan rulers seem to be in a quandary as to the American peace proposal accepted by Egypt.

Moreover, the Libyans are under pressure from the Maghreb states, especially Algeria, to resume their role within the Maghreb community instead of turning toward Egypt and the problems of the Arab East.

Unprepared to cope with their internal responsibilities, the new officers are striving to distract their people by playing a prominent role in Arab politics. For that reason, and to show their defiance toward their former allies, they concluded the Mirage deal with France and another arms deal with the Soviet Union. But in view of their small population and army, the Libyans are not taken very seriously by the others nor do they fulfill popular Libyan aspirations. Therefore it is difficult to see how such a regime can maintain itself for long if it continues with these policies.

There is no active Communist Party in Libya or "socialist" parties similar to those of the eastern Arab countries to lead the regime to a more leftist position. At present, the problem in Libya is not one of a strong Soviet influence but of the West's

loss of a strong position with the probability that the situation will degenerate further because experience has shown that such revolutionary regimes become invariably more radical and more amenable to Soviet influence.

The pro-Western Arabs find it difficult to believe that the Libyan coup, which replaced a strongly pro-Western and parliamentary regime, could have taken place and succeeded without the active or tacit consent of the two Western powers which had military bases there, especially when one of these bases was only seven kilometres outside the capital. It is also claimed by some Libyans that the treaty with Britain included a clause providing protection against such contingencies, although Britain contested this interpretation after the coup.

G - Algeria - Algeria is the last of the "socialist and revolutionary" Arab countries and it enjoys a special prestige in Arab hearts for the sacrifices it offered in gaining its independence. In the scramble for power after independence the military gained the upper hand and Algeria is now governed by a military group supported by a not very active single party system according to the "socialist" example.

Algeria has strong economic and cultural links with France and has developed similar strong economic ties with the Soviet Union. It is one of the few "socialist" Arab countries which has undertaken extensive industrialization projects.

But revolutionary Algeria, unlike the revolutionaries of Egypt and the Arab East, is not expansionist. It has not tried to subvert its neighbours Libya, Tunisia and Morocco. On the contrary, it has composed its differences with both Morocco and Tunisia, concluded with them bilateral treaties and is co-operating within the Maghreb framework for closer cultural economic and political links. When Libya abandoned the Maghreb scheme after its coup, and aligned itself with Egypt, it brought out more sharply the latent rivalry between Algeria and Egypt for the leadership of the "socialist" countries especially in North Africa.

Algeria takes a militant stand on the Palestinian problem and opposes the Rogers plan supported by the Soviet Union. It also

calls for the removal of both the American and Soviet fleets from the Mediterranean. It is active among the non-aligned and anti-imperialist Afro-Asian group of nations but it is at present a pragmatist looking for its own interests while maintaining its "socialist and revolutionary" image.

The fact that the Algerian regime is not dominated by the Soviet Union like Egypt is no consolation to the West because in any case it remains closer to Moscow than to any Western capital.

In concluding this review of the "socialist and revolutionary" Arab countries and in view of the West's apparent unconcern, I am bound to feel pessimistic in a long term view because I believe that it is almost impossible for these regimes to resist the internal and external pressures which drive them even closer to communism and to Soviet domination.

2 -Soviet influence in the traditional and democratic Arab countries

The remaining seven Arab countries, with the Gulf Emirates, have disparate systems of government which do not fall under one nomenclature. They are: Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait the Gulf countries, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia and Morocco. Some of them have an essentially tribal system, others follow the precepts of the Koran in lieu of a constitution, a separate group adopt the parliamentary system of government, while one country applies "constitutional socialism" with a one-party system. The common denominator among them all is their pro-Western attitude.

A -Yemen - Yemen is a border case which I would place with the pro-Western countries. The lessons of the 1962 Sallal revolution and the Egyptian war and occupation cured most Yemenis of their "revolutionary" illusions. In 1969, the country settled down quietly to heal its wounds. The Marxist extremists in the army were dealt a severe blow in January 1969 which eliminated their power. A constitutional assembly convened and a moderate republican government was established. It succeeded, with Saudi help, in accomplishing a conciliation with the moderate royalist elements whose representatives were given government posts. The new government was recognized by Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and others.

The Yemenis are now concerned with reconstructing their country regardless of "socialist" dogma. They have received help and economic aid from Communist China, the USSR and the West. On the whole, the present regime is pro-Western. It is also under constant propaganda attack from its neighbour, the militant Marxist South Yemen regime, which want to unify north and south Yemen along Marxist lines.

Yemen, much stronger in resources and more populous than South Yemen, may play a leading role in changing the character of the South Yemeni regime once it puts its house in order, especially as it harbours most of the South Yemeni leaders opposed to the regime in Aden.

B - Saudi Arabia - Saudi Arabia is the largest and wealthiest state in the Arabian peninsula. It is destined to dominate the whole region once it decides to emerge from its self-imposed state of restraint and isolationism.

Saudi Arabia is a constitutional country in the sense that its rulers and citizens are subject in the same degree to the precepts of the Koran which govern in detail the daily activities and responsibilities of the citizens. No Saudi ruler dares transgress, abuse, or alter and amend these teachings. The freedom of the individual in the areas covered by these rules is thereby guaranteed.

Saudi Arabia has played a stabilizing and moderating role in Arab politics since the days of its founder King Abdel Aziz. Although the moderates in the Arab world would have liked it to follow a more dynamic policy in Arab affairs as a bastion against the revolutionary trend, the Saudi government has not yet elected to play that role.

Saudi Arabia, as the guardian of the Moslem Holy Places, is strongly religious, anti-atheist and therefore anti-communist. The government, since King Faisal assumed power, is devoting all its resources and energies toward building the infrastructure: roads, schools, hospitals, means of communication, electricity and water supply networks etc. which are the prerequisites of economic and social development. Unfortunately, these projects do not show immediate results and do not reflect directly on the conditions of the common people who have to be constantly reminded of what is being done.

King Faisal is also moving cautiously toward modernizing Saudi society. He is subject to two contradictory influences which he has to conciliate: the influence of the traditionalists, the Wahhabis, the 'Olema, who oppose modernization on the one hand, and the increasing number of high school and university graduates who are impatient with the slow social progress, who want a greater share of political power, or who simply want to destroy the existing order through revolution on the other hand.

The regime could do more to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Saudis by a more rapid social and political reform programme. A very advanced labour law has been enacted and a Ministry of Justice has been recently established for the first time, bringing the Sharia'a (religious) courts under government control. A system for sharing political power with the new educated élite of the kingdom through consultative and elected assemblies may be envisaged thereby isolating and discrediting the revolutionaries. There is no doubt that the kingdom is headed in that direction, but a quicker pace seems to be advisable.

Meanwhile, the impatient and frustrated youth is being subjected to the propaganda and indoctrination of the Nasserites, Ba'athists, communists and others. The internal information machinery of the regime is, for no apparent reason, inadequate so that the youth is being led astray and the constructive achievements of the government do not register with the people. This internal situation explains in turn the cautious policy of the kingdom, which is likely to play in the future a more determining role, especially in the Arabian peninsula as evidenced by its successful conciliation policy in Yemen. The West must therefore do all it can to encourage Saudi Arabia to continue the liberalization of its society, and to pursue more actively its Arab policy of stabilization and moderation.

C - Kuwait - Kuwait, a small city constituting a state, has the trappings of a parliamentary system inculcated on a tribal society similar to that of Saudi Arabia or the other Gulf Emirates. The only difference is that Kuwait's oil development preceded the others by about twenty years and that its problems seem small because of its area in comparison to those of Saudi Arabia. Kuwait may be an image of what the Gulf countries may become, given the chance to develop peacefully.

The Kuwaitis enjoy a good measure of individual freedom and political liberty expressed in a relatively free press and political activity. In its foreign policy Kuwait is officially a non-aligned country although it can be considered pro-Western in general.

In the Arab field Kuwait follows a policy of appeasement towards all those states or movements which take advantage of it and threaten it with political blackmail. This appeasement takes the form of pretending to be more "progressive" than the others, of siding with the "socialist and revolutionary" regimes in their conflicts with other Arab regimes, of advancing loans and grants to the "socialist" countries and worst of all, in allowing Kuwait to become a base of operations and propaganda for the leftist groups in the Arabian peninsula.

While being essentially pro-West, Kuwait, in this way, plays the game of the Marxists and indirectly serves the interests of the Soviet Union in that region.

D - The gulf countries - These are a group of nine small countries whose total population is less than half a million. Their importance lies in their oil resources and the West's investments. They are non-viable entities separately and even as a group.

The British government is trying to organize them into a federation but it is difficult to see how these primitive countries can succeed in operating such a complex form of constitutional organization. And if the British effectively leave the region in 1971, the probability is that each of these nine countries will go its own way separately and become a client of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait or any other foreign power. Another possibility is that the Marxist movement of Dhofar may extend its activities to subvert one Gulf country after another.

A healthy development is the new regime in Oman. Oman has claims over most of the seven Trucial States and it may play a stabilizing role if the new ruler pursues his modernizing policy. An understanding between Saudi Arabia and Oman, with the consent of Iran, may be the cornerstone of a new and stable Gulf set-up.

E - Jordan - Jordan, like Saudi Arabia, is a staunchly pro-Western state. It has a parliamentary government, relative political freedom and parliamentary elections though no political parties, but real

political power lies in the King's hands. Before the 1967 war, Jordan, in spite of its poor natural resources, achieved a 12% annual increase in its G.N.P., the highest rate in the region because of private initiative and wise government policies.

All this was changed by the 1967 war, the loss of the West Bank, and about half a million new Palestinian refugees. Nevertheless, the King felt strong enough to accept the Rogers Plan contrary to the wishes of the Palestinian commandos who use Jordan as their main base of operations. The King's ability to continue this policy has been tested in the bloody clashes between the Jordanian army and the Palestinians in September, and the King was partly able to assert his authority. However, the Cairo summit meeting of September 26 and the resulting agreement signed by King Hussein and Mr Yasser Arafat deprived the King of whatever military advantage he had gained, put him under an unfriendly Arab tutelage and turned the commando military set-back into a political victory. It is doubtful that the settlement would last long. The army officers who upheld the King's authority would perhaps hesitate to repeat their performance when they see the fruits of their efforts lost at the negotiating table.

The revolutionary and anti-Western elements in Jordan can only be heartened by the outcome of the September struggle as the King's position is further eroded. This may not be a bad thing if it leads to the formation of a Palestinian state assuming the responsibility for the solution of the Palestinian problem and liberating the other Arab countries of this burden.

F - Lebanon - I have said that the Arab countries and especially the Fertile Crescent is a mosaic of ethnic and religious groups. Nowhere is this grouping more finely balanced than in Lebanon between the different sects of Christians and Moslems. Up till 1958 the Christians had the edge in political power and Lebanon was firmly pro-Western.

The Syro-Egyptian union of 1958 accomplished under the banner of Arab nationalism, signified, among other things, a resurgence of Moslem Sunni power in the region. The Lebanese Sunnis, supported by the Egyptians and Syrians, attacked Lebanon's pro-Western policy, and under the guise of demanding alignment with Egypt's brand of neutralism, sought in effect to dislodge the power of the Maronites and to achieve

political supremacy. A sort of civil war broke out. The army commander, General Fuad Chehab (a Maronite) seeking personal interest and casting his eyes on the presidency of the republic, refused to impose law and order and let the situation deteriorate. In fact, he was on excellent terms with the leaders of the civil disturbances, who in turn received arms and funds from Syria and Egypt.

The Iraqi coup against the royal family occurred on July 14 and was followed by the American landing in Lebanon. I have already mentioned that the election of General Fuad Chehab, President Nasser's candidate, as President of the Lebanese republic was a direct outcome of the landing.

In early 1959 Presidents Nasser and Chehab met at the Syro-Lebanese frontier and reached an understanding. Essentially it provided that Lebanon would follow and support the Arab policy decided by Egypt. In its foreign relations, it would shift its pro-Western policy, as much as the internal situation allowed it, to become more aligned with that of Egypt. In return, Egypt would guarantee to Chehab's regime the continued support of the largely Nasserite Moslem Lebanese population.

This agreement remained the basis of Chehab's policy from 1958 to the end of his term in 1964, and was maintained during the term of his successor, President Charles Helou, through the influence of a group of Chehabist army officers in what is called the 2nd Bureau (the army intelligence service) who were the real power behind the scenes from 1958 to the election of President Solaiman Franjeh in August 1970.

However, the officers' corruption and abuse of authority, as well as President Chehab's unsuccessful attempts to amend the constitution in 1964 so that he could be reelected for a second term alienated important Sunni, Shi'a and Druze leaders. The army officers who wielded power under President Charles Helou were thus confronted by opposition from a large majority of the Christians as well as from important segments of the Moslems who were not amenable in these internal matters even to President Nasser's pressure.

To offset this overwhelming unpopularity, the 2nd Bureau officers sought to gain support from two different sources: the leftists and the Palestinian commandos.

All leftist groups, including those dissolved by Lebanese law, such as the communists, Ba'athists, Arab nationalists, etc. were encouraged to hold public meetings, propagate their ideas, issue pamphlets, bulletins, newspapers and magazines, organize popular rallies, establish "popular fronts" and participate actively in the political life of the country.

Realizing that the armed Palestinian commandos could become a power which would have a political significance and would please at the same time a section of the population, the commandos were allowed to establish bases in southern Lebanon and to bring arms into the refugee camps in the main Lebanese cities.

How far did Lebanon turn anti-Western under the Chehabist pro-Nasserite rule? Perhaps the best measure of this self-defeating Western diplomacy is the fact that in the past four years the Sixth Fleet has been unable to pay a courtesy visit to this most pro-Western Arab country!

But the officer's calculations misfig^ured badly in the presidential campaign of August 1970. The officers presented a public employee as the Chehabist candidate for the presidency against a practically unanimous Christian front supported by some of the most influential Sunni, Shi'a and Druze leaders. And although the present Parliament was packed by Chehabists elected in the rigged elections of 1968, the Chehabist candidate lost by one vote. The leftist groups on whom the officers relied proved ineffective, and the Palestinian commandos did not influence the election one way or another.

The new Lebanese regime under President Franjeh owes nothing to the leftists or Nasserites. As a first step, it removed the politically meddling army officers from office so that Lebanon could revert to complete civilian rule.

The election of President Franjeh can be considered a reassertion of the influence of the pro-Western elements and a reversal in many respects of the Chehabist policies of the past twelve years.

I have devoted all this space to Lebanese affairs because due to its liberal institutions, Lebanon, although a small country, plays a most important role in Arab politics. It is the intellectual centre of the Arab world both for the moderates and the leftists. Its

newspapers, magazines and books exert a great influence on the Arab peoples. Lebanon is also one of the world's most important information centres on Arab developments and it is the propaganda battleground of conflicting Arab ideologies and policies. What happens in Lebanon reacts on all the Arab political movements which are, without exception, represented on its soil.

G - Tunisia - Tunisia is the only Arab country which claims to follow constitutional socialism but with a one-party system. Present Tunisia bears the imprint of its President's personality. President Bourguiba is the most rational of Arab statesmen, not given to inflammatory rhetoric and enjoying the confidence of his people. Because of this he does not feel the need to follow the emotional stream of Arab nationalism dictated from Cairo. He is conscious of his country's interests and ties with the West and follows a pro-Western policy without refusing Soviet economic aid.

The Ahmad ben Saleh affair has shown that there are elements in his Destour Socialist Party who want a more extreme form of socialism to be imposed on the country. The President is in bad health and his successor may not be able to resist the internal pressures and the pull of Tunisia's more "revolutionary" neighbours, Algeria and Libya.

However, Algeria's revolution, as was said before, is not activist in the sense that it does not try to spread its brand of ideology outside its borders. As for Libya, its attention, is now turned eastwards and its leaders do not have the stature to play a leading Maghreb role. Furthermore, the slowly integrating Maghreb community may preclude an abrupt change or a new alignment with a power bloc. The farthest that Tunisia can perhaps go is to adopt a neutralist policy similar to that of Algeria. Meanwhile, it remains one of the few Arab countries proclaiming publicly its friendship with the West.

H - Morocco - Morocco is a rare example of a king's personal rule. The country is pro-Western and entertains at the same time good economic relations with the Soviet Union. Recently the King promulgated a constitution providing for popular elections on several levels but retaining a good measure of authority in his own hands.

This system of gradual democracy may be what the country needs if it is allowed to proceed smoothly. But the ultra-conservatives represented by the Istiqlal party and the leftists of every colour joined forces to oppose the constitutional reforms demanding immediate parliamentary elections on the European model. The King is likely to prevail, at least for a certain time, and no change in foreign policy is expected.

Role of the Palestinian resistance movement

No review of the political forces operating in the Near East for or against Soviet influence can be complete without discussing the Palestinian resistance movements referred to sometimes as the "guerrillas", "commandos" or "fedayeen".

These organizations became prominent after the 1967 war and asserted the following principles:

- 1 - The Arab governments without exception have betrayed the Palestinian cause and it is now time for the Palestinians to take their cause into their own hands.
- 2 - The Palestinians are the masters of their own destiny. No Arab government or leader has the right to speak in their name or dictate to them how they can regain their land.
- 3 - Military force is the only way to regain Palestine and to establish in it a democratic, secular, multi-religious state comprising Moslems, Christians and Jews, thereby eliminating the State of Israel.
- 4 - While no Arab government or people has the right to interfere in commando activities, these same governments and peoples are under the obligation to arm and finance the Palestinians and to allow their countries to become operational bases for the commandos, regardless of Israeli retaliation and without having any control over these operations.
- 5 - The Palestinian commandos have no interest in seizing power or interfering in the internal affairs of any host country.

- 6 - The United States is the main supporter of Israel providing it with military and economic aid, therefore the commandos are violently anti-American and they crystallize popular Arab sentiment against the USA.

The emergence of the Palestinian commandos after the 1967 war was a big boost to the sagging Arab morale after the military defeat. The commando movement represented a new hope of revenge and became the symbol of a new Arab effort to defeat Israel. It won the enthusiastic support of almost all the Arab peoples, especially those who were previously Nasser's followers but were cruelly disillusioned by the mediocrity of his war performance.

As for the Arab governments, those far from the Israeli borders which did not fear retaliation, were all out for the commandos, while the countries bordering Israel acted in different ways:

- 1 - Egypt realizing early on the dangers of independent armed groups and their challenge to President Nasser's prestige firmly muzzled any Palestinian commando activity on its lands pretending that it has its own "Sinai Commandos". In return it gave the Palestinians propaganda facilities from its radio stations and supported their actions in the other Arab countries.
- 2 - Syria organized its own Palestinian commando group called al Sa'eqa, integrated it into its army and forbade the Palestinians to establish commando offices of their own outside the capital. However, it granted some organizations, like Fateh, training facilities and bases on Syrian soil but controlled their movements. It permitted them to cross into Lebanon and Jordan to operate against Israel, but did not allow them to attack Israel from Syrian territory except when it suited its purposes.

Syria also did not hesitate to ban some commando organizations from its territory and to imprison their leaders like Dr George Habash. In short Syria, like Egypt, effectively controls Palestinian commando activities on its territory and does not allow them any freedom similar to what they enjoy in Jordan or Lebanon.

- 3 - Iraq which has 12,000 soldiers in Jordan as its contribution to the Eastern Front against Israel, imitates Egypt and Syria. The ruling Ba'ath party organized its own commando groups under the names of "The Action Organization for the Liberation of Palestine" led by a Palestinian, Dr. Esam Sartawi and another less active group "The Front of Arab Liberation."

A few months ago it removed all Palestinian commandos from Iraqi cities and villages and stationed them in Rotba, a small town on the desert border with Jordan to cut them off from any intercourse with the Iraqi population. But like Egypt and Syria, Iraq gives the Palestinian commandos training and propaganda facilities as well as arms and munitions to be used in Jordan and Lebanon.

- 4 - Jordan claims to be the country of the Palestinians. The King and his government proclaim that Jordan (i.e. the country east of the river Jordan, formerly known as the Emirate of Transjordan) and Palestine (i.e. the West Bank now occupied by Israel) are one country. Taking his word, the Palestinians contend that they constitute the majority in this kingdom, and since the commandos represent the Palestinians, the Jordanian government is asked to bend to their wishes.

The commandos have no taste for the responsibilities of government. They do not want to burden themselves with the task of running a country and feeding its people. They are content with raiding Israeli settlements along the border and letting the Jordanian government take the consequences.

The raids have had little military value during 1969 and 1970. The daily bulletins issued by the various commando organizations about their military activities are being read with mounting scepticism by increasing numbers of Arabs everywhere. The bulletins have even become the object of criticism from certain commando groups which deplore their exaggerated claims.

If their military activities are not very effective, the implantation of the commandos in the Jordanian cities and towns has become strong. The recent clashes between the Jordanian army and the Palestinian commandos (Sept. 17-26) have demonstrated how well they are dug in in their bases among the civilian population. This belies their allegation that they do not interfere in the internal affairs and the government of the country. On the contrary, they seem to want all the advantages of running a government without any of its responsibilities.

This is especially true of the Marxist-Leninist commando organizations such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine led by Dr George Habash, the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine led by Mr Nayef Hawatmeh and others which announce publicly that they should first "liberate" the "reactionary" Arab regimes before attempting to liberate Palestine. It is also true of the Syrian- and Iraqi-sponsored commando groups which in effect fulfil the designs and interests of Syria and Iraq through the manipulation of the Palestinian issue. Fateh, the largest commando organization remains committed to a purely Palestinian aim. But it is questionable how long it can withstand the extremism of, or the subversion of its members by, the Marxist-Leninist organizations.

The commando organizations have not yet given a valid answer to the question: Why do they have armed bases and camps in the cities and towns and how can this be related to their fight with Israel? The fact is that through this presence in Jordan, they are exerting a radicalizing and pro-Soviet influence on the country as a whole.

- 5 - Lebanon the situation of the Palestinian commandos in Lebanon is similar in many respects to that in Jordan. There is however, a very important difference. While in Jordan the commandos operate within a largely favourable Palestinian population, at least half the population of Lebanon is actively hostile to them and ready to resist them with arms in case they try to

impose their will on the government. The other half of the population is generally sympathetic to them on ideological grounds and for reasons connected with the internal balance of power between Christians and Moslems.

It is unlikely that the Palestinian commandos can play a determining role in Lebanese politics, or that they can impose their will on the government as they have done in Jordan. But they remain an unstabilizing factor which has to be managed wisely by the authorities. The leftist organizations among them can become the tools of one revolutionary Arab government or another which is in turn pro-Soviet but I do not feel that they will be able to influence Lebanon in that direction especially as Fateh, the largest organization, is not interested in the internal policies of the country.

Furthermore, the new regime of President Franjeh is expected to be better able to implement the Cairo Agreement concluded in early 1970 to regulate commando activities from Lebanon.

What Political Role Do the Commandos Play in the Arab World?

After about three years of activity and of interaction with the Arab host governments and peoples, it is possible to evaluate the true significance and influence of the Palestinian resistance movement, and to answer the question: What political role does it play in the Arab world?

1 - In geographical terms the movement is rigidly controlled and contained in all the "socialist revolutionary" countries bordering Israel or in direct conflict with Israel, namely, Egypt, Syria and Iraq. There the Palestinian movement has to accommodate itself to the policies of the government in power or see its activities suppressed. The Palestinians are not allowed to develop wide contacts with the local population, yet in spite of these severe restrictions the Palestinians never dared criticize publicly the revolutionary governments of Syria and Iraq.

The only countries bordering Israel where the Palestinian guerrillas can interact freely with the local population and try to influence the

governments and public opinion, are the democratic pro-Western countries of Jordan and Lebanon because of their relatively free and democratic institutions. However, it is precisely these countries that the commando organizations attack and subvert.

In the Arab countries far from Israel's borders, the Palestinian commandos have a romantic appeal and fulfil religious and national aspirations calling for the recapture of Palestine and Jerusalem. They enjoy popular and governmental support reflected in money grants, arms and propaganda campaigns in their favour. There are no points of friction with the local governments, as long as they do not try to preach a Marxist ideology or work against the local rule.

2 - Palestinians insist that their movement is purely Palestinian; that they will not submerge it in any Arab cause; that they will allow no Arab consideration to supersede it; that no Arab government, ruler or leader can take the Palestinian cause out of their hands and try to find a solution; that the Palestinians alone have the right to speak for Palestine; that the Arab governments should refuse what the Palestinians refuse and accept only what the Palestinians accept; that Palestinian nationalism is **supreme** and has to achieve its aims even at the detriment of other Arab states. These principles advocated stridently and loudly by the Palestinians have led to the following consequences:

A - In the Arab countries where the Palestinians enjoy a good deal of freedom, namely in Lebanon and Jordan, their insistence on the Palestinian cause has generated a corresponding fierce local nationalism. The Jordanians and Lebanese say: since the Palestinians put their cause above any other and do not care if our country is destroyed in the process of saving theirs, it is our duty to tell them that our country comes first and that Palestine is of secondary importance to us. In effect, this is what the Jordanians have told the Palestinians in the recent clashes between the army and the guerrillas, and what a majority of the Lebanese are telling them in the press and in private. In fact, contrary to the allegation that the Palestinian guerrillas are a unifying national and revolutionary force, they are generating a healthy local patriotism and a realistic national feeling opposed to their claims.

Egyptians do not need Palestinian pretensions to feel Egyptian patriotism. The population at large never believed seriously in President Nasser's Arabism. As for Syria and Iraq, it is most likely that there would have been a similar local patriotic reaction as in Jordan and Lebanon had the people been subjected to the same Palestinian provocations and given the opportunity to express their views.

B - The non-Palestinian patriots everywhere have been showing for some time past the contradictions of the Palestinian resistance movement:

- 1 - The Palestinians admit that they will not be able alone to defeat Israel in order to establish their "secular and democratic state for Moslems, Christians and Jews". They say that they need the support and active participation of the Arab armies. Yet they are unwilling to co-ordinate their activities with the local armies.
- 2 - The Palestinians admit that the Arab armies at present are unable to confront the Israelis. Nevertheless, their actions result in retaliation which further weakens these armies and damages the economy of the country.
- 3 - The Palestinian organizations claim that they do not interfere in the internal affairs of the host countries. However, in Jordan their conditions specify what kind of government they want and what officials should be dismissed. They would do the same in Lebanon, if they had the power.
- 4 - They say that their only aim is to fight Israel, yet a large proportion of the armed commandos are mostly found in the large cities of Jordan and Lebanon far away from the front lines.
- 5 - They have been training for three years but their military activities are not of a nature to destroy Israel.
- 6 - The commando organizations claim that theirs is a national Palestinian revolution. But the inhabitants of the West Bank who constitute the majority of Palestinians have not responded to their call and do not believe in the possibility of defeating Israel by commando action.

- 7 - The commando organizations claim to speak in the name of all the Palestinians, but they do not speak in one voice because of their diverging interests and ideologies. The fragmentation of Arab society is as evident among the Palestinians as among any other Arab people. No sooner had they started their commando activities than they split into at least ten major organizations, sometimes warring with each other and competing for support and funds from the Arab governments and peoples. The daily exaggerated bulletins and sometimes imaginary stories about their military activities, which have discredited them in Arab eyes, are explained by their need to remain in the limelight, because the amount of funds received is proportionate to the activities claimed. On the other hand, there is no indication that these ten or more commando organizations speak in the name of the Palestinians of the West Bank under Israeli occupation.
- 8 - Perhaps a proof of this is their inability to transform their commando raids into a popular uprising in the West Bank. In fact, the quietude of the Palestinians there is remarkable.

All these reflections about the achievements or shortcomings of the Palestinian commandos are only natural if we remember that the Palestinians are a part of the Arab people having the virtues and defects of the Syrians, Iraqis, Lebanese, Jordanians, etc. The fact that they carry arms and are organized in guerrilla group does not add to their qualities or make them a superior people immune from the defects, stated previously, which afflict the Arabs. Western leftist propaganda has misled the world when it put the commandos on a pedestal and led the world to expect from them feats of which they are incapable, and attributed to them a capacity for unifying the Arabs or starting a national awakening which is beyond them.

Events in Jordan and Lebanon have shown that the longer the Palestinians operate from other Arab countries, the louder will become popular antagonism and resistance to them. The value of the Palestinian resistance movement will not be in its military capacity which will never match Israel's, nor in its impractical slogan of a "democratic",

secular Palestinian state", nor in its ability to play an Arab role which it cannot do, nor even in radicalizing Arab regimes which are not already radical; but simply in the fact that it has conveyed to Arabs and non-Arabs that the Palestinian personality cannot be submerged in the pan-Arab ambiguity, and that it is in the interest of world peace and the Arab countries that the Palestinians (not necessarily the commandos alone) should be the party to reach agreement on a Palestinian solution. It is both unrealistic and unsafe to have President Nasser or King Hussein negotiate a Palestinian solution from which the Palestinians are excluded, unless King Hussein is given the capacity to put the Palestinians down more heavily than he did recently, and to rule them for an indefinite period with a military hand. This is a prospect he may not relish or be able to accomplish.

The obvious alternative is making the Palestinians valid negotiators by creating the conditions which will transform them into a responsible people having a country, a state and a government. Their natural homeland is the West Bank and there is no reason why they should not be encouraged to fulfil in it their national aspirations. King Hussein's claims that he represents the Palestinians and speaks in their name is not convincing. When the Palestinians become responsible for administering a country and feeding its people they can choose between war or negotiation to solve their problem. In either case they will have to bear the consequences of their decision and it would be more difficult for them to blame or embroil other Arab governments in their affairs. Consequently the whole region may become more stable.

Such a solution presupposes the strengthening of local patriotism in the countries surrounding Palestine, and an accompanying disengagement from the Palestinian issue. Local patriotism does not mean being anti-Arab but it does mean a realization of the obvious fact that within an "Arab family" each country has certain characteristics and interests which should be safeguarded and defended. And in case of a conflict of interest the local supersedes the Arab as it has always done, although it was often camouflaged by expressions of Arab unity and nationalism. This is a false situation and it is in the true interest of the Arabs to expose it publicly and put an end to it. It is a course of action diametrically opposed to the present Western trend of thinking

of the Arabs as one group and of trying to find a Palestinian solution acceptable to them all. It also embodies a repudiation of the pan-Arab trend represented by the Nasserite, Ba'athist, Arab Nationalist and similar movements.

Does a patriotic trend of this type have a chance? It is regrettable that the propaganda machinery of the Arabists whether Nasserites, Ba'athists or others has obscured and submerged the basic popular trends in the Arab countries. Local patriotism is not only strong, as has been demonstrated in Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon, but it is the only cohesive force bringing the different religious and ethnic elements of the population in one country together. Arabism on the other hand, is a divisive force since it is popularly taken to mean, and has proved to be in practice, the unity of Arab groups of a certain faith and their domination over the others who are of a different faith or nationality. The Palestinians' insistence on their particular national identity has given the other local patriotisms a new impetus for self-assertion. This may be to the West's advantage since all the pan-Arab movements have turned radical and pro-Soviet.

Conclusion

In my opinion the preceding discussion brings out the following main points:

1 - The Arabs are a composite group of peoples with diverging and often conflicting national interests. It confuses rational discussion to refer to them as one body acting in unity and following one path. Similarly, in view of the flagrant animosities and divisions in the Arab world, a more sober and realistic view should govern Western attitudes towards the much publicized phenomenon of "Arab nationalism" exemplified by President Nasser, the Ba'ath party and similar movements.

2 - Soviet influence in the Arab countries is a function of power groups which have seized the government by military coups and enjoy little popular support. Soviet influence cannot outlive a change of regime by other power groups, because it has no popular roots and because the factors in Arab society hostile to it are preponderant.

3 - If the West is really concerned with the expansion of Soviet influence in the eastern and southern Mediterranean, the wisest policy would be to induce the peoples of these countries themselves to end that influence. This requires a more dynamic Western policy dealing with each Arab country separately and co-operating with those Arabs who are against foreign influence.

4 - An important factor in this anti-Soviet struggle is the emergence of local patriotisms in the various Arab countries. The West will have to readjust its sights and move from the era of a confused pan-Arab conception to an era of less grandiose but more solid and realistic local patriotisms forming the bases of modern Arab states.

5 - The Palestinian resistance movement has revived Palestinian nationalism and established the Palestinian identity. The Palestinians must have a homeland and a government to decide their fate and be responsible for their actions allowing the other Arab governments to disengage. In this way, the exploitation of the Palestinian cause by the Soviet Union may be circumscribed.

6 - Regarding the political role which the Palestinian commandos can play in the Arab world we should remember, first, that the Palestinians suffer from the same divisive forces as the other Arab peoples. Secondly, the Palestinian phenomenon is strictly controlled in Egypt, Syria and Iraq and the other revolutionary countries further removed from Israel's borders. The other non-revolutionary countries, aside from Lebanon and Jordan, also control the commandos on their territory and supervise all their activities and contacts.

Under these circumstances, while the commandos play an important political role in Jordan and a much smaller one in Lebanon, it is wise not to exaggerate their importance as an Arab political force.

Addendum - The Death of President Nasser

The death of President Nasser was announced while this paper was in print. This unexpected event does not alter the conclusions reached, on the contrary it hastens the recommended options.

In a few months, Egypt is likely to become more self-centred. The superficial and deceptive Arab unity which President Nasser was able to

command will be further weakened. Each country will feel more free to pursue its national interests

In time, Egypt may repeat its 1949 performance starting thereby the process for ending the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Nasserites in the Arab countries losing their patron, deprived of funds and protection and oppressed in Syria and Iraq, will have to look for a new future. A majority will probably turn to more moderate ways.

The Sudanese and Libyan rulers who have been moving in Nasser's orbit will have to stand on their own feet and tackle their grave internal problems. Libya may go back into the Maghreb fold.

The revolutionary trend in the Arab world has lost its leading champion and will, to that extent, be weaker. It is unlikely that the Syrian or Iraqi Ba'ath or any other movement can fill Nasser's place.

Considerations of Arab prestige obliged President Nasser to help the Palestinian resistance in its conflicts with Arab governments. With his demise the various regimes may feel more free to deal severely with it.

The Soviets have lost an irreplaceable friend. If he is succeeded by a Soviet puppet, Russia's imperialism will become more flagrant and can be attacked on that score. If he is succeeded by an Egyptian nationalist, Russia's influence will suffer.

The Western countries have been put to the test earlier than expected. They will have now to rethink their positions and modify their policies. Egypt's overlordship has ended and the West is afforded the chance to move in and establish relations with each friendly national power group and regime separately. These can then exert their efforts to end Soviet foreign influence in their countries.

4

International Interdoc Conference
Rimini, Italy
16, 17, 18 October, 1970

SOVIET PENETRATION OF NORTHERN AFRICA

by Brian Crozier

The general theme of this Conference is "Soviet activities in the Mediterranean". The main aspects of this complex and important problem are being dealt with by other speakers. But I thought it might be useful to the Conference to offer a subsidiary paper dealing with Soviet penetration of Northern Africa. As the term "Northern Africa" might be confusing, I add that I use it in its simple geographical connotation: the countries I am concerned with start with Morocco in the extreme west and end with the United Arab Republic (which I shall call Egypt) at the eastern end. I am afraid some overlapping with other papers is inevitable, and I apologize in advance if I inadvertently cover ground already covered by some other speaker. My purpose is to look at the situation as it now is, to describe some of the things the Russians are doing or have tried to do, and the obstacles they are meeting. I shall then attempt to draw up some kind of a "political balance sheet".

Egypt is of course the area of maximum Soviet penetration in the Arab world, and in the whole of Northern Africa. But to see what the Russians have accomplished in Egypt in its proper perspective, one has to look at their efforts elsewhere. There is relatively little to be said about Morocco and Tunisia, at either end of the French-speaking Maghreb, but they should be considered together, for the accidents of recent history have made them moderate oases in an otherwise continuous revolutionary desert; while the permanent accident of geography leaves them far apart, separated by militant Algeria.

In Morocco, in particular, there is really very little foundation on which the Russians might build. The Communist Party has been banned since 1962, and in any case the party is insignificant in numbers and influence. Under its intelligent

monarch, Morocco has a relatively liberal political climate, and the Communist leader, Ali Yata, has at times been allowed to publish a newspaper. Two years ago, he was even permitted to form a "front" party, the Parti de la Libération et du Socialisme. Ideologically, it was a perfect front, since it proclaimed loyalty to the monarchy and to Islam as well as belief in scientific socialism. Last year, however, Yata was arrested on his return from Moscow, where he had attended the World Communist Conference, and Rumania. Charged with "reviving the banned Moroccan Communist Party", he was gaoled for ten months, and has only lately been freed. The Russians were, of course, suitably indignant about the gaoling of Ali Yata, but seemed to be more interested in making their mark with the non-Communist left, especially with the Union Nationale des Forces Populaires. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union gives aid on a modest scale to the Moroccan government, for instance in dam building and land reclamation. Morocco also buys some arms and military equipment from Russia, in exchange for Moroccan exports of citrus fruits and other agricultural produce.

In Tunisia, the Russians find the going even harder than in Morocco. The Tunisian Communist Party is tiny and banned (in common with all political parties except the neo-Destour). When the young of Tunisia revolt, as they did in 1968, the slogans they shout have nothing to do with the Soviet example, but are inspired by Maoism, Ba'athism, Guevarism and other left-wing heresies. Tunisia is, in fact, a constant target for hostile broadcasts from Moscow's "Radio Peace and Progress", and the Tunisian press in turn is consistently anti-Soviet. Although the Russians held no brief for the disgraced Tunisian Minister of Economics, Ben Salah, they used his recent trial as a pretext to berate the Tunisian regime for its alleged further drift to the right. Indeed, the Russians appear to consider President Bourguiba's regime to be completely and irrevocably committed to the West, and especially to the United States. They do not, however, neglect such opportunities as present themselves. There have been Soviet contacts with the Tunisian trade union movement over the past year, and Mme Furtseva, the Soviet Minister of Culture, visited Tunisia in January 1968.

Now let us turn to the militant regimes of Northern Africa. One of the most curiously revisionist things Mr Khrushchev did shortly before his downfall in 1964 was to open "fraternal relations" between the ruling parties of Algeria and Egypt on the one hand, and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the other. For good measure, he bestowed the unprecedented honour of "Hero of the Soviet Union" on both Ben Bella and President Nasser. Since at the time, both the Algerian and the Egyptian Communist Parties were banned, these eccentricities did not endear the Soviet leader to his colleagues; indeed, they probably contributed to his downfall in October that year. A few months later, the Algerian leader was himself overthrown, in the military coup d'état of June 19, 1965. The new Algerian President, Colonel Boumedienne, who is still in power five years later, is a very different kind of man from Ben Bella. His predecessor was flamboyant and impulsive, much as Khrushchev himself was. Boumedienne is quiet, cautious and introspective. Through his French education, Ben Bella was wide open to outside influences, including communism. Boumedienne has had an Islamic education, first at the Zitouna Mosque in Tunis, and later at Al-Azhar University in Cairo and at an Egyptian military academy. Although a revolutionary, and very left-wing - and even Marxist in his own way - Boumedienne is deeply suspicious of foreign imperialisms, including the Russian. His favourite reading, apart from the Koran, is said to be the works of the French West Indian doctor and writer, Frantz Fanon, who settled in Algeria and was one of the principal inspirers of the Algerian revolution in its later stages. He seems, in particular, to have accepted Fanon's teaching that the real struggle in the world today is between the rich nations, including Russia, and the poor, mainly coloured nations of the Third World.

This attitude at the top is reflected throughout the Algerian administration, and in particular in the Foreign Ministry. The Foreign Minister, Mr Bouteflika, was a protégé of Boumedienne's during the period of the struggle for power between him and Ben Bella. To summarize Algerian foreign policy in a few words: it is fiercely nationalistic and independent - and also deeply

suspicious of all foreign influences. It is, for instance, suspicious of foreign aid, including Soviet foreign aid. The Algerians have deeply resented Soviet readiness to export natural gas to Western Europe, which it regards as unfair competition. It should not be forgotten that the Algerians - or rather the Algerian extremist group now in power in Algiers - won their independence from France as the result of a long, violent and peculiarly nasty campaign of terrorism and guerrilla war, masterfully supplemented by a very clever diplomatic campaign abroad. These circumstances have conditioned them to opt for extremist and violent solutions wherever possible. This helps to explain, although hardly to justify in rational terms, the extraordinary Algerian attitude towards the Arab-Israeli problem. Distance, of course, has something to do with it, and it is relatively easy for a country far from the scene of battle, such as Algeria, to strike up the most extreme of extremist attitudes. Just how extreme could be seen, or rather heard, at the press conference given by the Algerian Information Minister, Ben Yahia, after the Six-Day War, when he made the astonishing suggestion that there should be a further war, in which Israel should be encouraged to occupy Cairo and Damascus. This, he argued, would weaken the Israeli position, and enable the Arab states to begin a long guerrilla war against the Israelis. Against this background, it is hardly surprising to find the Algerian government wholeheartedly committed to the Palestine guerrillas and out of sympathy with the Soviet attempt to bring the Arabs to a peace conference with the Israelis. (This attitude does not, incidentally, bring any benefit to the Americans, for Algeria broke off relations with the United States at the time of the Six-Day War.)

If one attempts to draw up a balance sheet of the massive Soviet effort to penetrate and influence Algeria, one has to take account of both the favourable and the unfavourable factors. Thus:

1. Favourable Factors

- (1) Algeria's general hostility to "imperialism".
- (2) The rupture of diplomatic relations with the United States.

(3) Attitudes towards Palestine. True, the Algerians stand well to the left of the Russians on the Palestine-Israel question. But the Algerians know that the Russians have a pro-Arab policy, even if for their own opportunistic reasons; whereas they are convinced that whatever happens in the area, the Americans, and indeed the Western powers as a whole (despite the change in France's policy towards Israel under de Gaulle) are irrevocably committed to Israel.

(4) The fact that the Boumedienne regime inherited the extensive agreements covering military, economic and industrial aid, trade and cultural relations, forged by Ben Bella's government with the communist countries.

(5) The important circumstance that the Algerian system of government is in many respects strikingly similar to that of the Soviet Union, in that Algeria is a one-party state, claiming allegiance to scientific socialism based upon Marxism, the ruling Front de Libération Nationale transmitting orders from above to official bodies such as trade unions, youth movements and women's organizations. In one respect, that of the "worker-management" system of organizations in agriculture and industry known as Autogestion, Algeria is closer to the Yugoslav model than to the Soviet.

2. Unfavourable Factors

(1) The view that the Soviet Union belongs to the essentially hostile bloc of industrially developed countries.

(2) The serious political differences over Palestine.

(3) The ideological differences, which in some respects transcend the similarity of the systems. The Algerians consider themselves progressive, Arab and revolutionary, and take pride in their assistance to such revolutionary groups as the Palestine guerrillas, FRELIMO (the guerrilla group from Mozambique), and so forth.

(4) Suspicion of Soviet economic policies, in particular the sale of natural gas.

(5) Algeria's "special relationship" with France, which has undergone various rough passages, but continues to

flourish and to constitute a barrier to Soviet penetration. (6) The banning of the Algerian Communist Party (now merged with the former opposition movement, Parti de l'Avant-Garde Socialiste).

Looking back over the past eight years, it would be fair to say that Moscow's time of maximum influence in Algeria was just before the fall of Ben Bella in 1965. But technical and economic penetration continues on a very high scale. Trade, for instance, increased tenfold between 1966 and 1969, reaching a value of \$120 million last year - an increase of 150 per cent over 1968. This year, it is expected to rise to \$140 million as a result of the agreement signed in January. On the technical side, there are some 2,000 to 3,000 Soviet experts in Algeria. These include teachers, oil experts, agronomists and geologists among other categories. Here again, however, a sense of proportion is necessary. In October 1969, for example, there were 174 Soviet teachers in Algerian schools, but at that time there were 6,103 teachers from France, 135 from Belgium and 3,761 from other Middle East countries. Long term contracts between the Algerian oil company SONATRACH and the Soviet firm Teknoeksport, signed in May this year, provide for a considerable increase in technical co-operation. It is undoubtedly, however, in the armed forces that Soviet influence is the most significant. The Algerian armed forces, which are the second largest among member states of the Organization for African Unity, after those of Egypt, are almost entirely equipped and trained by Russia and the East European countries.

The most serious change for the worse in Algerian-Soviet relations over the past year or so has been the reversal of Algerian views on the Mediterranean. For some years, the Algerians welcomed the presence of the Soviet fleet, to the extent of

calling for the withdrawal of the American Sixth Fleet only. Last year, however, Algerian spokesmen repeatedly called for the withdrawal of all foreign fleets from the area. What all this amounts to is a fairly rapid return of Algeria to the concept of non-alignment - a fact which is underlined by Algeria's continued willingness to have economic relations with the United States. It may even be that the Algerians are now entering a phase of greater maturity in foreign policy. Certainly this is suggested by the signing of treaties of friendship with Morocco in January last year, and with Tunisia in January this year. The recent concentration in the Algerian press on the concept of a united Maghreb may well be a sign of greater moderation.

I now come to Libya, which must be the most baffling of the new revolutionary regimes from the Soviet standpoint. Clearly, last year's revolution has opened up opportunities that did not previously exist. On the other hand, the ruling Revolution Command Council of Colonel Mu'ammur Al-Gadaffi must be, in many respects, a disappointment to Moscow. The Soviet Union was in fact one of the first foreign governments to recognize the new regime, and Gadaffi's early statements were very encouraging. He told "Pravda", for instance, that the Libyan people considered the Soviet Union as "the best friend of the Arabs". But the extreme Islamic and xenophobic climate of the youthful regime is naturally hostile to Soviet communism (as indeed to all things Western). In fact, Gadaffi has consistently rejected communism for Libya. In February 1970 he rejected all political parties under his revolution, and specifically mentioned the Communist Party.

In April this year he repeated that the Arab nation, in his view, had no need of Marxism-Leninism or imported ideologies. Nevertheless, whatever the political and diplomatic disappointments of the Soviet Union, the balance sheet of the first year of the regime is distinctly favourable to the Russians. Militarily, they have made great and disturbing headway. True, the Libyans have ordered 100 French Mirage fighters (a by-product of the anti-Israel switch in French policy) but the Libyans this year have also bought 25 MiG-21 trainers and in late July some 200 Soviet tanks (including T-55s), 75 field guns and anti-aircraft artillery, together with at least 36 amphibious vehicles, were delivered in Libya. There are also strong reports that Russian military advisers have been flown secretly into the country. The oil industry offers another field for Soviet penetration. In March this year, the Libyan Oil Minister, Izz Ad-Din Mabruk, had discussions on oil co-operation with the Russians on a visit to Moscow. Soviet experts are now surveying the Libyan oil reserves, which Mabruk has accused the West of misrepresenting. All these developments are of course unfavourable to the West, and the Russians - with their well-known patience - may be hoping that in time Gadaffi will be replaced by some other leader less extreme in his Islamic views, and that they will then reap the benefit of their military and technical co-operation with the revolutionary regime.

This brings me, geographically at least, to Egypt. This is of course the most serious example of Soviet political, military and economic penetration in the whole area. It is indeed no exaggeration to say that Egypt is now virtually a colony of the Soviet Union. It is not my purpose to analyse the causes of this situation, which began in 1955 with the Czech-Soviet arms deal with Egypt. The situation itself, however, is extremely alarming, whatever one's approach to it. The trend towards Soviet colonization of Egypt, which was already strong before 1967, has been greatly accelerated since the Six-Day War, during the past three years. Despite Egyptian denials, the Soviet Mediterranean fleet, comprising about 65 ships, enjoys full base facilities in Egyptian harbours. Under the agreement of June 6, 1970, Alexandria

shipyard is to be expanded at a cost of £12 million, and several ships are to be built there, for the Russians.

In military supplies, the Soviet Union continues to have an absolute monopoly. Not all these supplies are to the taste of the Egyptians. Too many of the weapons are of a defensive character, whereas the Egyptians would like more offensive ones. In April 1970 it was reported that Egypt had received from the Soviet Union 650 aircraft, including 400 combat planes, 71 warships and 1,000 tanks. Not only do these massive arms deliveries make Egypt totally dependent upon Soviet military aid in the confrontation with Israel, but they have reduced Egypt to an economic dependency on the Soviet Union. On his visit to Libya in June this year, Nasser declared that after Egypt's defeat in 1967, the Soviet Union had promised to rearm Egypt free of charge. But from 1971, payment was to be made in instalments at a low interest rate over ten years ("Al-Ahram", June 23, 1970). And on July 27 the London "Daily Telegraph" reported that Egypt had concluded a secret agreement with the Soviet Union recognizing an arms debt of £2,000 million, in effect mortgaging the Egyptian foreign trade to the USSR over the next quarter of a century. The value of Soviet weapons delivered to Egypt must of course be astronomical, if one bears in mind the installation of the SAM III missile system, in addition to all the deliveries of less expensive weaponry over the last fifteen years.

More alarming possibly even than Egypt's military and economic dependence upon the Soviet Union is the almost blanket penetration of the Egyptian administration. Even though the number of Soviet experts employed on the great Aswan Dam project has declined from its record of about 2,000 to less than 100, the installation of the SAM missiles has brought greater numbers of Russians into Egypt. By the end of the year, there may well be 20,000 civil and military advisers from the Soviet Union. In addition, the Russians have set up more than 40 training institutes in the United Arab Republic, and thousands of trainees and students from Egypt are in the Soviet Union. The Soviet presence has, as one would expect, paid political dividends, though not yet perhaps in proportion to the money and effort expended. The most revealing example was probably the

Egyptian reaction to the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia. In an obviously inspired article by Hassanein Heikal, editor-in-chief of "Al-Ahram", broadcast by Cairo Radio on August 30, 1968, the tortuous arguments used betrayed Nasser's profound embarrassment. Here is a sample:

"I would say that I am not in favour of supporting the military intervention in Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact member states, but neither am I in favour of condemning it. I am not in favour of supporting it on the grounds of principle, and I am not in favour of condemning it on the grounds of circumstances".

In this dismal situation, there are some, but not many, redeeming features. One is that, on the personal level, relations between the Russians and the Egyptians are frequently bad - bad enough for the Russians to keep out of sight as far as possible. Another point is the disenchantment of Egypt over Soviet and East European resales of Egyptian cotton at prices as much as 10 to 14 per cent below world market rates. A more important point has been Nasser's surprising capacity to resist Soviet ideological pressure. This is due not only to Islam, and to the relative insignificance of Egyptian communism, but also, paradoxically, to Nasser's own lack of a definite ideology. Not much seems to have come of the "fraternal relations" between the Arab Socialist Union and the Soviet Communist Party, and the Russians have kept up their pressure on the ASU and on Nasser himself to transform the ASU into a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party in the Soviet sense. Certainly Soviet influence has served to reduce restrictions on the Egyptian Communist Party, which the Russians have always been willing to sacrifice for the benefit of Soviet great power expansionism. But as defined in Egypt's National Charter, promulgated by Nasser in May 1962, Egyptian socialism remains obstinately vague and non-Marxist.

When all is said and done, however, the Soviet presence in Egypt is a fact of power. Soviet control over the Egyptian armed forces, at all levels from top to bottom, is clearly almost complete;

and if Nasser should ever be overthrown in a military coup*, the Russians would undoubtedly be in a position to take over the country completely. More alarming still, from a strategic point of view, is the prospect that any future settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute that obliged Israel to give up territory on Egyptian soil, would merely have the effect that a Soviet military base in Egypt would move forward in the direction of the Middle East.

If I may, then, sum up briefly the balance sheet of Soviet penetration in Northern Africa in the most recent period, it would read roughly as follows:-

Morocco and Tunisia: situation virtually unchanged. Both countries more or less firmly in the Western camp.

Algeria: Soviet presence and influence still strong, but there has been a decline over the past year. Apart from France, however, this decline does not favour the West as a whole.

Libya: The Soviet economic and military penetration continues. Political and diplomatic dividends so far negligible. But Western influence continues to decline drastically.

Egypt: Soviet influence stronger than ever, and Egypt has become a dependency of the USSR.

*This paper was written before the sudden death of President Nasser on September 28, 1970 (Ed.)

International Interdoc Conference
Rimini, Italy
16, 17, 18 October, 1970

SOVIET GEO-STRATEGY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN
AND ALONG EUROPE'S NORTHERN FLANK

by Dr Wolfgang Höpker

The treaty between Bonn and Moscow, signed on August 12, 1970, and widely represented in the West as the "beginning of a new order in Europe", shows the Soviet Union as an apparently static power, whose first pre-occupation is the consolidation of her ownership rights in Central Europe. Seen in this light, the treaty is doubtless of great value to the Kremlin. In affirming the "inviolability" of the frontier between the Federal Republic and the SED state, it formally endorses the division of Germany. From Moscow's point of view this consolidates Soviet hegemony not only over East Germany from the Elbe to the Oder, but at the same time over the whole of Eastern Central Europe. The Soviet Union sees the treaty as the legalization of Stalin's spoils of war and the international law endorsement of his direct and indirect annexations, into the bargain. According to the Soviet interpretation of the treaty the conquests of World War II are now regarded as more "untouchable" than ever; the irrevocable fact has been established that half of Europe takes its orders from the Kremlin.

Merging simultaneously with this picture of a power become static, which, in its territorially satiated state, is now busying itself with an "all-European peace system", there are of course new dynamic elements. The notion that, as a result of the change-over to a persevering force consolidating its rights of ownership, there has been a fundamental change in Soviet foreign policy rests on a profound misunderstanding. For the Kremlin, embodied above all in the person of Party Leader Brezhnev, the German-Soviet treaty is the first of a number of levers, whereby the Americans, as an "alien power", shall be driven out of Europe. The next lever would be the "European

Security Conference", in which the Kremlin will still be compelled to accept US participation in the first stage; whereas in the second stage, of course, the Soviet Union as a European power, but not America, will participate.

Seen through Moscow eyes, the concept of détente is in marked contrast to the hopeful optimism of the Western partners. The Soviet conception envisages a Europe gradually relinquishing the US-guaranteed balance of power, whereupon the continued existence of NATO will become a question of secondary importance. This plan has been described as the "Finlandization" of Western Europe. The ominous formula serves to highlight the fact that, taking as its model the Eastern-oriented neutrality of Finland, the Soviet concept of Western Europe envisages a cordon of neutral states which, deprived of US backing support, will no longer be able to resist Kremlin hegemony.

Yet this too reveals only a partial aspect, a mere segment of the overall circle of imperial power interests. Consolidation along the Western flank, guaranteeing Soviet imperial possessions to the banks of the Elbe and gradually throwing the remainder of Europe open to the dictates of Kremlin domination, is seen as the backing support necessary for the secular confrontation with the great Chinese rival. At the same time, however, an easing of the situation in Central Europe will provide Moscow with the opportunity to concentrate all the more vigorously on the Mediterranean as a field of operations and expansion.

There are no signs here, in any event, of a static Soviet power, content to accept a guaranteed status quo. The Mediterranean is the scene of feverish activity by the Soviets, aiming at the encirclement of Europe from the south, the severing of political, economic and commercial lines of communication between Europe and the other side of the Mediterranean and the simultaneous acquisition of control over the great mineral oil reserves of the Arab world, from which Europe is supplied. In bypassing and outflanking the Atlantic Alliance position in Central Europe, the intention is to achieve a decisive break-through along the line of least resistance in the south.

The area of acute tension has shifted from the middle sector of NATO to the southern flank - the scene today of world political

Storm centres, with Kremlin hopes of greater freedom of action stemming directly from the treaty with Bonn. A view of the situation firmly fixed on Central Europe and only occasionally taking account of the bordering territories is hopelessly antiquated. Anyone claiming to pursue European policies must be following with tense vigilance the events now being played out in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and North Africa - the "soft underbelly of Europe" - with the lines of thrust directed towards the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean. In the framework of Soviet global strategy the compulsive urge to become the leading power in the Mediterranean forms a nucleus for all the Kremlin's expansionist plans. Détente today, in terms of Soviet policy, means that the West must not only accept as legitimate the Soviet annexation of Central Europe, but must also be prepared to stomach the "new realities" ensuing from all the shifts in the balance of forces which Soviet expansion in the Mediterranean and Middle East entails.

While great military decisions are seldom dictated by front-line operations, they can, however, be frequently traced back to activities along the flanks - a factor equally applicable in the case of a hot war or a cold war. Hence the Soviet Union's increasingly tenacious endeavours to turn the Western position upside down by a far-reaching attempt at encirclement. Despite all signs of weakness on the part of NATO, the defences of Central Europe are still relatively strong. Any attempt to concentrate expansionist pressure on this area contains inherent and incalculable risks. Along the flanks, however, Moscow believes that tender spots can be found, which can easily be rolled up in limited military operations, if not merely by indirect strategy methods. As long as the status quo in Central Europe remains guaranteed, in that the aggressor faces the prospect of nuclear war, then the Mediterranean will be seen as the ideal area of operations, from where the NATO land defences along the southern flank of Europe can also be broken.

Moscow's penetration into the Mediterranean Basin - demonstrated most strikingly by the formation of a special Soviet Mediterranean Fleet known as the "Eskadra" - remains a patchwork, unless we see

this scheme within the context of Soviet activities on the northern flank, in the Baltic and in the northern seas. The interdependence is unmistakable; in the view of the Soviet General Staff a "mutual relationship" exists between these two areas of activity. They form the pincers of the nutcracker encircling Western Europe. Idealistically the aim underlying this concept is the simultaneous encirclement of Europe from north and south and the closing of the pincers' jaws around the entire continent. From the geographical point of view this concept has a special fascination for Moscow. All of us must have seen atlases of the Soviet Union, where the huge Eurasian land mass occupies the central position, with Europe, and above all Western Europe, tagged on as a mere adjunct, the encirclement of which, via the two wet flanks, appears only too enticing.

This vigorous and unconcealed activity by the Soviets in the Mediterranean has resulted in the West taking only occasional notice of the equally persevering, but more muted activity of the red military power in the Scandinavian north. The Baltic, in addition to possessing the most highly concentrated warship production capacity in the Soviet empire, serves as a training and exercise centre for the entire Soviet fleet. The strategic ratio of naval forces in the Baltic, if we compare the Warsaw Pact fleets with the adjacent German and Danish NATO naval forces, is estimated at four to one. In reality, however, if we compare the standard of the ships, particularly in regard to their rocket equipment, then the ratio becomes substantially more unfavourable.

Anxieties over the northern flank apply not only to the Baltic and the defence of its outlets, the Danish straits, but also, on a much broader scale, to the whole of Scandinavia, particularly the Far North, where the world political interests of East and West coincide in all their harsh reality. Of the four, or if we include the Mediterranean Eskadra, the five fleets of the red navy, the most powerful today in terms of size and equipment is the Northern Fleet, concentrated in the Murmansk Fjord on the Kola Peninsula. At this point, in contrast to the Baltic and the Black Sea, the Russian leviathan has an outlet to the open sea and so too a much

coveted access route to the Atlantic.

NATO's middle sector is much more closely involved with the defence of northern and southern Europe than the West Germans and Central Europeans have hitherto realized. A text-book example of this was provided by the events of late summer 1968, now largely dismissed from Western minds. The Red Army invasion of Czechoslovakia was part and parcel of the Brezhnev Doctrine, according to which no country which has once been drawn into the "socialist camp" can ever again shake off the latter's embrace. As a result of the Brezhnev Doctrine the attack on Prague was followed by clear indications to a recalcitrant Rumania that she too might have to reckon with punitive measures from Moscow. In addition, however, communist-controlled Yugoslavia - although non-aligned and not a member of the Warsaw Pact - was given to understand that, in accordance with the thesis of limited sovereignty in the "socialist camp", she might be the next target of Soviet intervention. Similar warnings went out to the anti-Moscow line communists of Albania.

Rumania lies on the Black Sea, Yugoslavia and Albania on the Adriatic (from where, at the same time, Italy can be threatened from the "rear"). Thus, with the Soviets assuming the right to intervene on an ever-growing scale, the area of crisis has spread from Bohemia and Moravia in the heart of Central Europe to the shores of the Mediterranean. Were it not for a strong Western counterbalance in the Mediterranean, in the form of the American Sixth Fleet, restraining the Eskadra from a planned landing operation, then perhaps Moscow pressure on the communist regimes in Yugoslavia and Albania might already have become overpowering.

At first NATO reaction to the shock of the Czech crisis had been relatively sharp. In answer to the Brezhnev Doctrine the 1968 November conference in Brussels sketched out a NATO Doctrine in the shape of a warning to the Soviet Union that "any Soviet intervention in Europe or the Mediterranean would lead to an international crisis with grave consequences". Thus NATO made it clear that she had taken on responsibility, beyond her partners' boundaries, for the strategic perimeter, for the "grey zones" in the border area of

neutral states. Whereupon the NATO political bodies in Brussels - shrinking back in fear, as it were, of their own courage - failed to pursue this idea, placed the document in cold storage and after only brief consideration of the realities redirected their attention to "détente policy", in other words Central Europe.

This refusal to make a penetrative analysis of the overall Soviet policy, which sees Central Europe within the constant and close-knit framework of the southern and northern flanks, led back to the kind of misguided wishful thinking about possibilities for East-West détente, which threatens to melt down and cripple the Atlantic Alliance. It can scarcely be the purpose of a defence alliance to concentrate its energies on disarmament or to see as its crucial role the thinning out of troops or the creation of nuclear-free zones. Standing in marked contrast to previously implemented NATO decisions such as curtailments in the Western defence budget or troop reductions in the Alliance is the continuous expansion of the Warsaw Pact's military potential, one of the most alarming expressions of which is Soviet naval mobilization and its global strategic aspirations.

By encircling Western Europe via the marginal seas - which, while not lying on the Soviet Union's "doorstep", are nevertheless within reach - Moscow's aim is to gain access to the oceans, above all the Atlantic and thus the great supply route of the Atlantic Alliance. Both the Black Sea and the Baltic are inland seas, whose exits - the Turkish and Danish straits respectively - are under the control of the NATO allies. Arising out of this calamity there emerged the Kremlin's marginal sea policy, aimed at the establishment of complete control over the marginal seas which front the inland seas: the Mediterranean in the south with Gibraltar bearing the brunt, and Kattegat, Skagerrak and the North Sea in the north as the gateway to the Atlantic. In north and south alike the object is not merely to cut Europe off from the sea, but at the same time to ensure the Red Fleet's exit into the Atlantic.

For a long time the Soviet advance on the oceans has not been taken seriously in the NATO capitals. Even today the thinking of most military policy-makers in the West still revolves solely round the

comparative figures for divisions, tanks and aircraft. At best the Soviet Mediterranean Fleet has caused some raised eyebrows. Prompted by grave doubts, however, one cannot but wonder how far NATO reaction - half-hearted and hesitant - will suffice to keep within bounds the continued presence of Soviet military power in the Mediterranean Basin.

The "Eskadra" ("squadron") idea represents a military-political conception in the grand manner. By building up her own Mediterranean fleet - evident since 1964 - the Soviet Union is attempting to paralyse existing US maritime supremacy between southern Europe and North Africa. The Eskadra was strengthened in proportion as Soviet engagement in the Middle East increased. What was at first a small formation has grown to between 40 and 60 units, constantly cruising the Mediterranean in varying combinations. The Eskadra is made up essentially of 1 or 2 heavy rocket cruisers, 8 destroyers of the latest type, 1 or 2 nuclear submarines, 6 to 8 conventional submarines and several rocket speedboats (with ship-to-ship rockets not yet developed in the West). In addition there are approximately 4 assault ships and 12 to 15 supply ships and other auxiliary vessels. At intervals they are joined by one of the two helicopter carriers so far built in the Soviet Union and specially designed for submarine pursuit operations.

Exact information on the number of Soviet warships constantly operating in the Mediterranean is difficult to obtain, despite the modern practice of virtual round-the-clock air reconnaissance by the West. Marked fluctuations occur not only between the Mediterranean and Soviet Black Sea bases, but also between the Mediterranean, Baltic and Northern fleets. This too confirms that the division of the red navy into five fleets can be regarded as having been largely abandoned in favour of a flexible deployment of Soviet naval forces between the cold and warm waters, and vice versa.

The Eskadra has no avowed extra-territorial bases at its disposal. Yet the presence of Soviet warships in Egyptian ports has become so firmly established that at least Alexandria and Port Said, as well as Al Ladhiqiyah in Syria, can be described as de facto bases of the red navy. In addition there has been the recent development of the West Egyptian port of Marsa Matruh, roughly equidistant from Alexandria

and Tobruk in Libya, into a Soviet military base. In the Western Mediterranean the principal target of Soviet desires to set up a base is Mers-el-Kébir, the naval port in the Bay of Oran, precipitately evacuated by the French early in 1968 and not far from the Strait of Gibraltar. Algerian denials cannot obscure the fact that what is clearly a considerable number of Soviet technicians have established themselves in the Mers-el-Kébir bunker complex. The lack of adequate air cover - which, together with the shortage of bases - constitutes one of the Eskadra's principal weaknesses - is gradually being offset by the construction of airfields, under Soviet management and with Soviet pilots, not only in Egypt but also in other Arab countries flanking the Mediterranean.

The primary function of the red Mediterranean Fleet is to put on a show of strength. In the true spirit of "gunboat diplomacy" the aim is to show the flag, influence the Arab countries and, last but not least, to confront the European Mediterranean countries with the realities of Soviet military power (and thus keep up the spirits of the communist and other left-wing forces in those countries). At the same time there is the double motive of contending with NATO and the Sixth Fleet for military control and thus denying to the former security and freedom of movement in the Mediterranean. If only in terms of nuisance value the Eskadra is a considerable imposition on the Western naval forces, compelling them to indulge in time-consuming and costly replanning to the detriment of their true military mission.

For all that, there is a tendency in the West to play down the military significance of the Eskadra. It is argued that the Eskadra's naval potential is far inferior to that of the West, that the Mediterranean (which can be sealed off, where necessary, at Gibraltar and the Bosphorus) is a "mousetrap" and that in the event of war, therefore, the Soviet fleet's chances of survival would be practically nil. Such an argument is self-defeating; in the event of conflict the decisive question is this: Who will fire the first shot, who will carry out the first strike? With rigorous consistency NATO maintains its role as a defensive alliance - consequently a pre-emptive strike is out of the question. Since zero hour would

be determined by the Soviets, the inflicting of heavy damage by their submarines on the American aircraft carriers permanently stationed in the Mediterranean can in no circumstances be ruled out. Thus the Eskadra would have accomplished its supreme objective: the fact that it would suffer defeat shortly afterwards is another matter altogether.

Russian encroachment on the Mediterranean is borne out by the experience of history, as is the enduring continuity of Czarist and Soviet imperialism. The Russia of the red czars is no longer pushing forward into the Mediterranean: she is there already. The Mediterranean has ceased to be a "Western", or as it was so often known, an "American inland sea". Looming behind the Pax Americana, which replaced the Pax Britannica in this area, are the Soviet empire's demands for a Pax Sovietica in the Mediterranean. Word is going round that the Mediterranean could become a tributary of the Black Sea. Lying as she does on the Black Sea - which Moscow, following the Baltic pattern, would like to imbue with the character of a "red inland sea" - the Soviet Union is claiming that this automatically makes her a Mediterranean power with the right to intervene in the area between the Nile Estuary and the Strait of Gibraltar. According to the Soviets' new Mediterranean Doctrine, Moscow's aim in this region is the stamping out of the "reactionary, imperialist forces led by the USA" and the preservation of peace, by force if necessary. Needless to say, peace in this instance means Soviet peace, the Pax Sovietica.

The slogan "The Mediterranean for the Mediterranean countries" questions America's right to be, let alone intervene, in the area - reflected most forcefully in demands for the withdrawal of the Sixth Fleet after more than two decades of operating on Europe's southern flank. In view of NATO shortcomings the Sixth Fleet, as much as ever before, constitutes the backbone of Western Mediterranean defence. With the concentrated nuclear fighting power of its aircraft carriers it provides at the same time, and in conjunction with the Polaris submarines cruising the Mediterranean, a first-class deterrent. And in its bid to dislodge this "alien element" from the Mediterranean Soviet propaganda is leaving no stone unturned.

The catchphrase "The Mediterranean for the Mediterranean"

countries" also reckons on widespread susceptibility among certain sectors in the northern shore countries to the slogans of neutralism. This is true of Spain, where the view that only in conjunction with the USA can the threat to the Iberian Peninsula be overcome is at odds with neutralist tendencies. This is true of France, toying with the idea of reasserting her supremacy in the West Mediterranean Basin against a background of neutralist undertones. This is especially true of Italy, where the country's strong Communist Party, bent on a popular front, is seeking to win the sympathy of the left wing in the government camp by means of this very slogan ("rid the Mediterranean of alien influences"). How far reactions in Greece to boycott-threats by the Western Alliance partners could result in a crystallization of neutralist currents among the radical wing of the junta is as yet difficult to ascertain.

Russia's Mediterranean dreams only really started to come true as a result of the Middle East conflict. The Soviet Union has emerged as the Arabs' protecting power with her promises to shield them from Israel, the "spearhead of Western imperialism". Moscow made decisive capital out of the emancipation of the Arab world, whose violent anti-Western and emotionally supercharged nationalism the Soviets were quick to inject with social revolutionary fervour and turn to their own advantage. By means of an uninterrupted stream of Soviet arms deliveries, instructors and advisers, Egypt and Syria were consolidated as red bridge-heads on the Mediterranean, which will find it increasingly difficult to extricate themselves from Soviet clutches. A similar situation prevails in Iraq, a country lying in the Mediterranean hinterland and at the same time flanking the Persian Gulf.

With the military putsch of September 1, 1969, Libya - the third largest oil producer in the world with a Mediterranean coastline of almost 1,250 miles - was wrenched from a position of pro-Western neutrality and exposed to Soviet influence by a dependence on its Egyptian neighbour similar to that of a protected territory. In the West Mediterranean the Socialist People's Republic of Algeria is proving susceptible to Eastern influence - albeit very cautiously, since the head of state Boumedienne views with horror the extent to

which his rival Nasser has become enmeshed in the expansionist policies of the Soviet empire. It remains to be seen how long Morocco and Tunisia, thanks to their pro-Western neutrality, can continue to serve as North African bridge piles for north-south communications across the Mediterranean.

The Arabs are in possession of more than half the Mediterranean coast, which the Soviet union is sparing no effort to wrest from Western influence. By a line of assault extending from the Levant to the Strait of Gibraltar, the European northern shore is to be separated from the African southern shore, at the same time creating an insulating zone between Europe and Black Africa. Yet the term Mediterranean means "middle sea", which in turn rests on the assumption that there shall continue to be a close interrelation between the two coasts. Now in the late twentieth century, in accordance with Soviet plans and contrary to a tradition dating back thousands of years, the Mediterranean is to be divided into two mutually hostile regions.

The role of protector of the Arabs has paid off for the Kremlin, whose massive arms aid to Arab countries, together with the stationing of Soviet troops in Egypt, already constitutes direct military interference. The Soviets are strengthening the Arab rear against Israel, but their primary concern in doing so is the consolidation and expansion of their presence along the southern flank of NATO. The result of this presence could be the transformation of the East Mediterranean into a "Soviet sea", where the Sixth Fleet would scarcely be able to continue its operations unhindered.

The extensive barrage, formed by NATO's Turkish partner which stands in the way of Russian expansion southwards between the Bosphorus and the Caucasus, has not been broken through, but rather overleapt. As a result Turkey today sees herself threatened militarily in a sort of pincer movement from north and south alike, and consequently sees her role as "guardian of the straits" as having been weakened. In geo-strategic terms this only serves to highlight all the more sharply the key position occupied by Greece, where despite all the Western European left's calls for sanctions against the colonels' regime careful attention must be paid to the priority of strategy

over ideology.

But the concentration of the Soviet fleet in the East Mediterranean is prompted by aims which are even more far-reaching. Indeed it will remain a mere patchwork, unless the Soviet Union succeeds in getting the Suez Canal reopened and so establishing her fleet's lines of communication from the Black Sea via the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean. The Soviets are pushing towards the Red Sea and have already established a naval base at the Aden exit, over-hastily evacuated by the British. They are pressing against Africa's eastern flank with Somalia, the "horn of Africa", as bridge-head. They are pushing towards the Persian Gulf, the richest mineral oil-producing area in the world, where, as a result of British withdrawals from all positions "East of Suez" and as in the case of the Indian Ocean in general, a power vacuum has been created which holds particular attractions from the point of view of Soviet global strategy. The reopening of the Canal route is also of crucial importance for the Soviet position in the Far East. In the event of open conflict with China the East Siberian railway is exposed to the most immediate danger. The laborious communications route round the Cape is a constant source of annoyance to Soviet strategy. Why not try, therefore, to open the Suez Canal by negotiation, since the risk of war on the Canal is too great?

This acute interest in the reopening of the Canal is one of the motives which in August this year prompted Moscow to accept the American plan for an armistice and peace negotiations in the Middle East. The Soviet position in the Middle East - a second motive - is so secure as a result of the military occupation of Egypt that Moscow could gain nothing from a third Middle East war. On the contrary, the Soviets would be running the risk of yet another Egyptian defeat, with an even greater arsenal of modern Soviet weapons falling into Israeli hands than was the case in the 1967 June War.

Moreover, Soviet Middle East policy is aimed at avoiding an open military conflict which could bring the USSR into direct confrontation with the USA. On the other hand, Moscow has no interest whatsoever in a real peace settlement, bringing to an end and finally clearing up the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In line with Kremlin calculations the Middle East must remain a smouldering trouble spot on Europe's doorstep, offering a constant opportunity for interference on NATO's south-eastern flank and at the same time providing a pretext to consolidate Soviet hegemony over the Arab world and its mineral oil resources. Whether the mutual interests of the nuclear Super Powers will be enough to control and check the conflict with some degree of reliability, the events of the next few weeks will show.

How far NATO - currently preoccupied with détente formulas for Central Europe - is prepared for a new outbreak of the Middle East conflict is obscure. An almost classic case is provided where the point at issue is the Alliance's much discussed "crisis management" formula for the localization and containment of conflicts. Israel's lightning victory in Summer 1967 spared the Atlantic Union the necessity of having to put this formula to the test - NATO had "got away with it once more". A new war in the East Mediterranean, in whose vortex the two Super Powers would this time be caught up, could flash across Central Europe like a spark. One only needs to think of the unstable situation in Berlin, which the Soviets can transform into a flash-point of crisis from one minute to the next. Such an eventuality, which may tomorrow become reality, demonstrates with particular forcefulness the close, mutual involvement of NATO's middle and southern sectors. It demonstrates in addition the grave repercussions which Mediterranean conflicts could have for the Federal Republic - exposed as it is on the boundary line between East and West.

But we certainly do not need to go to the lengths of depicting war situations. Apart from the purely military considerations, encirclement of the southern flank poses other eminent threats to Europe. Even after the closure of the Suez Canal, which reduces the Mediterranean to the cul-de-sac it was until a hundred years ago, the sea basin between Gibraltar and the Levant is still one of the world's great trade-routes. On any day there are on average 2,600 merchant ships in the Mediterranean, about 1,600 at sea and 1,000 in port. Italy, Greece and Turkey, NATO's three great Mediterranean peninsulas,

conduct between eighty and ninety per cent of their total distribution turnover by sea. In a crisis the Soviets would have it in their power to cut vitally important lines of communication and supply. By threatening the southern flank Moscow is also making a supreme effort to create a situation where pressure can be exerted on Western Europe by cutting off oil supplies. Whoever controls this vital power supply, has Europe in a stranglehold.

The acute danger and long-term menace threatening Europe from the southern flank cannot be assessed just from a purely military-strategic viewpoint. Continental Europeans, hitherto such die-hard prisoners of their own inland thinking, are coming to realize more and more that "down there in the South" there are also crucial factors at stake in the areas of economic, trade and development policy. The plea that the concept "Mediterranean" entails an all-European responsibility is directed not only to NATO, but also as a matter of great urgency to the EEC.

The glass palace in the Robert Schumann Square in Brussels, where the EEC with more than five thousand "professional Europeans" has set up its metropolis, is linked to the Mediterranean by countless threads. The mesh is becoming finer and finer. What we are now waiting for is an EEC blueprint for the Mediterranean, which will take notice of the southern region as a whole. A system of ad hoc measures, whereby contacts are established here, there and everywhere, is no longer enough. What is needed is a well thought out methodology, related specifically to space and time, which will create a convincing coherence throughout the area of the Mediterranean - albeit in graduated stages and within an overall system of procedural regulations. This is a propitious moment for thinking in terms of larger areas - a step which the Six, in their continental self-sufficiency, dismiss as an all-European responsibility. Calls for a Mediterranean collective system coincide with EEC expansion in the direction of Great Britain, Ireland and Scandinavia, on whose behalf the go-ahead has been given and a time-table fixed. Expansion in the north must be carried through to include the south. Seen through Moscow eyes, a constant correlation exists between Europe's northern and

southern flanks. In exactly the same way, the Western economic counter-offensive to protect the European border zones must also recognize the relationship between the northern and southern regions.

An initial medium-term plan would have as its aim the development of a unitary market to replace the divisive trade barriers of the Mediterranean region. Of course, for a supra-national organization using the style of European Economic Community in its firm-name, a gradual progression through associated status to eventual full membership of the Common Market can only be envisaged in the case of the northern shore countries of the Mediterranean Basin. Apart from Italy and France, who are founder-members of the EEC, this holds good of Greece and Turkey and in principle also of Spain and her Iberian neighbour, Portugal. At the same time it holds good of the two mini-republics, Malta and Cyprus, who in their insular existence feel anything but secure.

Other solutions, leading to ultimate association or limited to preferential trade agreements, would appear appropriate for the south Mediterranean shore, flanked exclusively by Arab countries. In order to prevent the estrangement of the two shores and establish the credibility of Mediterranean unity, the EEC must utilize the trade resources at its disposal far more systematically and conspicuously than in the past. A policy which plays itself out in the form of tariff concessions lacks any real drive. Modern methods and techniques such as monetary co-operation or joint capital expenditure plans are necessary, if we are to progress from the narrow path of integration along the broader highways of co-ordination. Trade policy can only serve as the point of departure for an EEC Mediterranean concept. Through financial and technical aid it must be fitted into an overall concept of development aid, which will set new standards for what is a notoriously underdeveloped area.

As long as the majority of the Mediterranean nations live in poverty, this region, both from the political and so too the security angle, will remain unstable in the extreme. Nor is it the case that Moscow reckons only with the susceptibility of the Arab world - far from it! Europe too has backward regions, which according to

the law of vacuum suction will draw communism and Soviet strategy like a magnet. This applies to wide areas along the northern shore of the Mediterranean: Greece, parts of Spain, Turkey and southern Italy (which for too long has led a separate existence inside its own country). The Western European industrial nations should give priority in their development policy to thoroughly rehabilitating these "backyards of Europe" and bringing their standard of living into line with that of Central Europe.

A tour round the Mediterranean Basin confirms the impression that the EEC is beginning to undergo changes to its character and objectives by the extension of its activities to adjoining regions. The self-satisfied and introverted egocentrism, which regarded uninterrupted prosperity growth in the highly industrialized Western nations as the be-all and end-all of this big Brussels enterprise, has become an anachronism. The EEC has bigger responsibilities. These are crystallizing along the southern flank of the continent in the shape of a "Grand Design", which will raise social and economic levels in this area of the Mediterranean threatened by the Soviet embrace, thus establishing it well and truly within the European field of force.

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International Interdoc Conference
Rimini, Italy
16, 17, 18 October 1970

SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS ISRAEL

by Katriel Katz.

Anyone investigating the policy of the Soviet Union vis-à-vis Israel will discern two characteristic features: the relationship towards Israel in the light of the Soviet policy of penetration of the Middle East and Africa, and the Soviet Union's attitude to Israel as a Jewish State, dedicated to the ingathering of exiles, a dedication in which Jews of capitalist countries and communist states alike are united in a spirit of solidarity and solicitude.

The support lent by the Soviet Union in the years 1947-48 to the struggle of the Jewish people to set up a Jewish State in Palestine was a departure from previous policy, which had looked askance at any Jewish national movement whatsoever. But always the overruling ambition of the Soviet Union had been to end British hegemony over Palestine, and then, of a sudden, came a heaven-sent opportunity to appear, in the eyes of a world that had signally failed to prevent the Nazi holocaust of European Jewry, as blazers of a trail to a fair solution of the problem of the Jewish displaced persons.

Though these reasons led to a momentary change in the traditional communist line which refused to regard the Jews as a people meriting its own political independence, the Soviets had by 1949 withdrawn their acceptance of the state of Israel. The establishment of a Jewish State was felt by the Soviets to be a factor making for ferment among its three and a half million Jewish citizens, generating in them a feeling of affinity with a state of the capitalist camp which, in Stalin's view, was busy plotting the downfall of the Soviet regime.

In that period internal security establishments and counter-espionage services gained control in the Soviet Union and its satellites and, to crush an upsurge of Jewish nationalism,

embarked on a campaign of persecution, expulsion, slander, show-trials and murder. They made "Zionism" a synonym for treason. By exploiting anti-semitic instincts, the Stalinist tyranny in the Soviet Union and its satellites played brutal havoc even with veteran communists, notorious for their antagonism to Zionism, yet doomed now to liquidation in the unending process of purges visited upon the communist world. To the list of crimes against the state, such as spying for British and American imperialism, was the added felony of spying on behalf of "international Zionism".

The death of Stalin and the end of Beria's authority halted these practices and a spell of Soviet "thaw" in international relations began. In this milder climate the Soviet Union reestablished diplomatic relations with Israel, broken off in February 1953. The influence of the internal security establishments was drastically curtailed, but Soviet foreign policy towards Israel was still cold, though the problem of the Jews in the Soviet Union was no longer a major factor in this negativity.

Like Czarist Russia the Soviet Union was on the look-out for an opportunity to find a foothold in the Middle East and thereafter even to sway it - the intrigues of the Comintern in the area between the two World Wars provide a wealth of evidence in support of this assertion. Soviet backing, after World War II, of the establishment of an independent Jewish State - and an independent Arab State - in Palestine was a reflex, a concomitant of Soviet interest in ousting the British from Palestine. The Soviet Union hoped that, in the vacuum created by the removal of Western prerogatives, it could come forward and claim a say in the shaping of a region that was on the very edge of its own southern borders.

Already on November 26, 1947, in recording the Soviet endorsement of the establishment of a Jewish State - in the teeth of Arab hostility - Gromyko had found it necessary to declare in

the General Assembly of the United Nations: "The peoples of the Soviet Union were and are sympathetic to the aspirations of the peoples of the Arab East. The Soviet Union views with understanding and goodwill their endeavours to free themselves of the last shackles of colonialist dependence.

.... The Soviet Delegation is convinced that the Arabs and the Arab countries will look to Moscow, and more than once, in expectancy of the help of the Soviet Union in their struggle for their legitimate rights and in their attempt to be released from all vestiges of dependence on aliens".

When Stalin died, the Soviets revealed their growing interest in the "Arab East" by strengthening their championship of the latter against Israel; they knew that antagonism to Israel was the single major issue upon which the contentious Arab leaders could come together. At the end of 1953 there were clear signs of increased Soviet efforts to penetrate the Arab states. The signing of the Baghdad Pact was construed by the Soviet Union as a bar to its expansion in areas touching its southern frontiers and as a threat to their security and, in consequence, support of Arab nationalism became a central element in Soviet global strategy. A declaration bolstering Syria against Western pressures was given wide circulation, a "Czech" deal with Egypt was concluded in 1955, and Soviet arms deals with Syria and Yemen followed openly in 1956. To Israelis who expressed concern at these massive deliveries of weaponry to their enemies, Soviet diplomats would blandly explain that they were not intended for use against Israel!

Even earlier, Moscow had embarked upon a policy of assistance to the Arab states in their political campaigns against Israel in the UN by vetoing draft Resolutions against Egypt's blocking of the Suez Canal to Israeli ships and cargoes, or in the context of the clash between Israel and Syria on the diversion of the Jordan waters. But, despite its quarrel with Israel's policy, Moscow did not break off diplomatic relations. What it did was to sever all commercial contacts and dismiss all pleas to allow Soviet Jews to emigrate and join their kinsfolk in Israel.

Though the displeasure of the United States with the Sinai Campaign was patent, Israel was nevertheless depicted in Soviet media not as an independent State, but, as usual, as a lackey in the service of "American imperialism" and responsive to the promptings of the CIA. This image hardly matched the actual relationship between the United States and Israel, but it did mirror the system of relationships between the communist power and its satellites and the degree of independence permitted in its orbit. At all events, such an attitude towards Israel made it even more important to maintain a diplomatic presence in Israel, if only to keep a close eye on its plans and "cabals" aimed against the "Arab East".

But there was one fact which the Soviet Union could not alter, viz that, even though Israel did not belong to any Western bloc, political or military, its mere being was a physical barrier which precluded military intervention by "progressive" Arab states designed to overthrow "reactionary" ones. What the Soviet Union allegedly feared was "active intervention by Israel at the instigation of the CIA" to capsize the so-called "progressive" Arab governments. Since armed encounters on the borders of Israel went on all the time and reprisals by Israel against infiltrators and their bases beyond the borders became fiercer, the Soviets did indeed try, at first, to urge the Syrians to keep the frontier quiescent, but urging was of no avail, not least because the Soviet Union was always concerned lest it tarnish its image in Arab eyes as the purveyor of multitudinous and unconditional arms supplies, as the out-and-out attorney of the Arabs in the United Nations and as the denunciator of every defensive act by Israel as a provocation of the Arabs. In the measure that changing regimes in Syria swung to ever greater extremism, the Soviet Union saw its chance to tighten its grip on that country by aligning itself unreservedly with each new dictator.

The persistence of a precarious domestic stability in Syria and Egyptian involvement in the civil war in Yemen

worked to magnify Soviet fears that Israel, as a "tool of imperialism", might exploit the uneasy situation on its northern borders to invade Syria, as "desired by the CIA". Lest it jeopardize its standing with the extremist factors in Syria, and mindful of its proven incapacity to check terrorism against Israel, the Soviet Union, which, pari passu, wished to avoid any development that might hinder the intrusion of its warships into the Mediterranean, adopted a new ploy to baulk any Israeli threat to Damascus.

So, in 1964, it set up a special naval task force for the Mediterranean. On the other hand, in full knowledge of how much Israel was likely to appreciate an improvement in relations, which would afford the opportunity and climate to seek to wean Moscow from its total support of the Arabs, and also to discuss the emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union to Israel, Soviet diplomacy essayed to generate a more congenial atmosphere in the relations between the two countries.

Cultural exchanges were permitted to a certain degree, Israeli "feelers" for the renewal of trade were countenanced, here and there emigration permits were granted. All these gestures were accompanied by hints from Soviet diplomatic sources that only two things stood in the way of further amelioration in the direction desired by Israel: "Zionist propaganda" regarding the plight of Soviet Jewry, which was tantamount to intervention in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union in respect of its Jewish citizens, and the acts of reprisal which "suspect circles are impelling Israel to adopt against its Arab neighbours, contrary to the real interests of the Israeli people".

In early 1966, the ultra-left faction of the Ba'ath party seized power in Syria. The new government sought to win favour at home by encouraging guerrilla attacks against Israel. These brought about Israeli reprisals, and the warning of even more vigorous retorts. To ensure the survival of a government that made possible the then deepest Soviet penetration, and to

browbeat Israel, the Soviets persuaded Nasser to sign a defence agreement with Syria.

At the 23rd Congress of the Communist Party in Moscow in March 1966 the influence of the die-hards was conspicuous. They held the upper hand in everything that concerned an appraisal of the situation in the "Arab East". The short-lived experiment of Soviet diplomacy to neutralize Israel by improving the "diplomatic weather" was wound up. "Feelers" for the renewal of trade links between Israel and the Soviet Union were proscribed, and the burgeoning of cultural exchanges came to an abrupt end. Demands that the US Sixth Fleet quit the Mediterranean began to be sounded with redoubled vehemence. Events in the international arena were interpreted by the Kremlin as requiring greater watchfulness against the "designs of imperialism" in the Middle East. The downfall of Sukarno in Indonesia and of Nkrumah in Ghana, the usurpation of power in Greece by a group of reactionary colonels, signs of unrest in Cyprus, the suspicion that a "Moslem Alliance" was about to be organized - all these things were apprehended by doctrinaire communists as forming a single pattern, woven by the CIA. Their warped logic told them that imperialism would not stop before it attempted to topple the "progressive" regimes in the Middle East as well. Consequently, Israeli acts of retaliation against the terror launched from Syria took on a specially sinister significance for the Soviets: Israel was now scheming, at the instance of the CIA, to invade Syria and bring down its government. Propaganda against the presence of the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean was intensified. The language of Soviet diplomacy in speaking of and to Israel became couched in stern accents of threat and warning: this tenor became particularly marked after April 7, 1967, when Israeli aircraft shot down six Syrian MIGs. As early as the end of 1966 meetings had been held in the Soviet Union in party cells to discuss "Israeli cabals against Syria": not only were the lecturers primed to reply to "questions from the public" by declaring that,

if "Israeli aggressiveness" did not stop, the Soviet Union would be constrained to consider the breaking off of relations, but the organizers saw to it that the warning should reach the ears of the Israelis in Moscow.

All these tactics of anti-Israeli bluster and intimidation could not affect the course of events on Israel's border with Syria. This was charted by Arab aggression, which the Soviets did not venture to curb, for it would have meant imperilling their hold on the ultra-leftist Ba'ath leadership. Their anxiety was now directed to saving a "loyal" regime, and, in their judgment, the danger to it loomed from an Israel that did the bidding of the CIA. To sterilize Israel, and to discourage it from crossing the border, the Soviet secret services gave currency in May 1967 to a report that Israel was mobilizing its army to march on Syria. On the strength of this fabrication, the Soviets managed to extract a show of solidarity with Syria from every Arab capital and to engineer the mobilization of the Egyptian army and its deployment on the border with Israel, poised for invasion from the south. The summary expulsion of the UN units from the Gaza Strip border and Nasser's blockade of the Straits of Tiran at Sharm el-Sheikh made Israel's confrontation with the Egyptian forces inescapable, and history has recorded June 5, 1967, as the day on which, climaxing a long Arab belligerency, the full-scale fighting of the Six Day War erupted.

The Soviet Union did not intervene in that fighting - a restraint which many observers believe to have been due, in part, to a conversation with the President of the United States on the "hot line".

On the last day of the battle for the Golan Heights, the Israeli Ambassador in Moscow was summoned to the Foreign Ministry, to be handed a Note beginning thus: "A despatch has just been received that units of the Israeli army, in disregard of the Security Council Resolutions on the cessation of military activities, are continuing in these acts, occupying Syrian territory and advancing towards Damascus".

The Note concluded with the statement that the Government of the Soviet Union had decided to break off its diplomatic relations with Israel.

At that very hour, the cease-fire, as called for by the Security Council, went into effect, but the breaking off of relations between the Soviet Union and Israel had already become a political fact, and one not likely to make easier the finding of a just and peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

mv/261070

International Interdoc Conference
Rimini, Italy
16,17,18 October, 1970

FRENCH POLICY AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

by Nicolas Lang

In the Mediterranean region, just like anywhere else in the world, French foreign policy is based on the principle of national independence. Through her actions and declarations she continuously reaffirms a personal attitude which complies, first and foremost, with her own interests. In the tumultuous world in which we live, which is made up of events, tensions and crises that provoke as many violent reactions, one must know how to make oneself seen and heard, in order to avoid being submerged in a kind of collective anonymity.

This is what the French government has done and is still trying to do. This policy may irritate our friends and allies, and sometimes holds out hopes - generally shortlived - to our adversaries, but its merit lies in that it exists and it is therefore only fitting to try and understand it better. For it may after all be beneficial, especially by its results and the repercussions it provokes, not only to France, but also to Europe and all the Western countries.

France's present Mediterranean policy was initiated by General De Gaulle and continued, even emphasized as far as the Western Mediterranean is concerned, by his successor, President Pompidou. This policy has several objectives which can be explained quite clearly.

First of all, the aim is to create the conditions which would allow France to assume her political, economic and cultural responsibilities in a region in which she is directly interested because, both geographically and by her spiritual and moral heritage, she reflects directly some of the characteristics of the Mediterranean Basin. Moreover, this policy should provide an opportunity for France to renew her traditional ties with the Orient and the Arab countries which, as a result of the numerous vicissitudes of the last few years, had either been weakened or even severed completely. Finally, this policy aims at ensuring that with regard to the supply of energy - i.e. in the field of hydrocarbons, since oil will be the main source of energy for at least one or two

generations to come - France will enjoy a maximum of national independence, thus avoiding the repeated encumbrances and irritations of foreign tutelage.

What was France's position in the Mediterranean when this policy was initiated six or seven years ago?

France had just emerged from the painful Algerian conflict, the traces of which were still very much in evidence both at home and abroad. Whereas during last century, and at the beginning of the present one, France's influence in the Middle East and the Arab countries had grown continuously, this influence had dwindled to almost nothing following Algerian independence.

The decolonization of Tunisia and Morocco, the ill-fated Suez campaign and finally the Algerian war resulted in an almost complete rupture of all the ties France had established with the Arab countries, especially with those of the Maghreb. No longer present in the Near East and having lost a good deal of her influence in the Maghreb, France met with an attitude among her Mediterranean European partners which, although polite, was marked by an evident reserve as a result of that long period during which France had played the part of the "grand malade", with whom it was not very attractive to commit oneself in view of the interests each of these countries had with the Arab countries, with which France entertained such poor relations.

To-day sees a profoundly changed situation. Not only has France found her place again in the Middle East, but she is acting, notably in the Western Mediterranean, as the instrument of a policy of unification, progress and promise for the future. Extension of relations with Tunisia, reestablishment of normal connections with Morocco, new negotiations with Spain, a strengthened policy of solidarity with Portugal and Greece - these have been some of the positive aspects of this French policy during the past few months.

Obviously, the application of this policy - which today is highly appreciated in Tunis, Rabat, Tripoli, Madrid and other capitals - entailed the taking up by France of a position which may have seemed to suggest that France was loosening her ties, as it were, with her Atlantic Alliance partners. Such a suggestion, in fact, derives more from appearances than from concrete reality.

For, what has really happened? France has left NATO but has remained a member of the Atlantic Alliance. She has pursued a policy allowing her not only to resume the place that she had previously occupied in this part of the world, but also to become the main, if not the only, Western partner of the Arab countries where Soviet influence is increasing and where the other Western countries, in particular the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany and even Great Britain are still, or were for a long time, absent.

Is it necessary to point out that since the "Six Day War" the United States has had to close most of its embassies in the Arab countries, that as a result of the Soviet presence the Arab countries have severed their ties with the Federal Republic and instead entered into relations with the GDR and that only very recently has England reestablished relations with such countries as Iraq and Egypt - a step, incidentally, which cannot be applauded loudly enough?

Would it have been right for France, when the opportunity arose, to be too selective and to ignore the possibilities that presented themselves, enabling to reestablish her position in the Arab countries and ensure a Western presence there and, by doing so, to offer the Arab leaders a political alternative to the ever-increasing Soviet engagement?

Such an attitude would have been, of course, not only absurd, but absolutely against France's interests and also against those of the entire West. It should be clearly understood that France's presence in Tunisia as well as in Morocco, in Algeria as well as in Libya, to a very large extent enables these countries - which, owing to the conflict between Israel and the Arab world, cannot and do not want to deal with the United States - not to orient themselves on the Soviet Union and accept the latter as their main partner. If France were to leave these countries, there is the risk that the deep vacuum so created would be quickly filled - not least by the USSR and her satellites. This is reality, largely due to the power relations that have existed in the Mediterranean ever since the "Six Day War".

As for the "Six Day War", French policy has not been able to prevent it. Today the Israeli military victory, however brilliant it may have been, gives rise to a situation which seems to be becoming increasingly more complicated day by day.

Indeed from the French government's point of view it is felt that the main consequences of the Six Day War for the Western countries have been as follows:

1. increased Soviet influence in the Middle East and an increased Soviet presence in the Mediterranean;
2. very serious difficulties for the moderate Arab countries such as Libya and Jordan and even attempted coups d'état in Saudi Arabia;
3. the appearance, or rather intensification, of the anarchizing element which, arising from the Palestinian movements, creates a latent situation of crisis and threatens to upset at any given moment the labile balance of forces existing in the Middle East;
4. finally, increased difficulties in ensuring a normal supply of oil to the Western countries. These difficulties become apparent in the necessity, after the closure of the Suez Canal, of building very large oil tankers and of repeatedly raising the price of oil products. Moreover, the Western countries are compelled to endure the policy of pressure and blackmail pursued by those Arab countries which are large producers of hydrocarbons. All this has an impact on the economy and the cost of living in the Western countries.

This is a deplorable situation from which nobody draws any benefit, except the USSR, which takes advantage of the tension by increasing its political and military influence in the Middle East and in the Mediterranean.

In the opinion of the French government it is therefore necessary and essential that nothing should be left undone to achieve the aim that everybody desires, irrespective of which camp they belong to, viz. the restoration of peace. France proposed the "Concertation à Quatre". The success of this step, which resulted in a meeting in New York of representatives of the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and France, has so far been rather meagre. But despite all the difficulties the French government has decided to continue along this course, for the day will come when it will be necessary to sit round the negotiating table and put the pieces together again. And to ensure the maintenance of peace in the Middle East, to ensure the maintenance of that fragile balance of power, it will most likely be necessary that the great powers undertake to guarantee either the new frontiers or the end of all acts of war.

action

And in our opinion urgent is needed. Unfortunately much time has been lost since June 1967. And it is the Soviets who were the cleverest in taking advantage of this time by installing themselves in a region whose strategic, political and economic importance is obvious.

Since I have had many opportunities to visit the Arab countries, I may say that as far as my experience goes the Soviet presence in these countries remains very precarious. Whether one takes Cairo, Damascus or Bagdad, one will find that those in power there tolerate the presence of their Soviet partners, rather than esteeming or loving them. Being Nasserites or Ba'athists, i.e. nationalists before all else, they strongly distrust communism and the USSR, a feeling that has only been strengthened after the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia.

But we have to admit that for the time being the USSR, which offers to these Arab countries its military and diplomatic support (and at what a price!) is the only partner on which they can count, notwithstanding their obvious suspicion. And this is very serious, for the so-called revolutionary Arab countries have no alternative. It is true that France has made some steps in this direction, but her material possibilities in the Middle East remain limited. However, the path she is tracing out, which to my mind should be slightly corrected by an improvement of her relations with Israel - the problem is a huge one - is beyond all doubt the only one to follow if we do not want the Arab countries to be left with the Soviet Union as their sole interlocutor.

To restore peace in the Middle East, to assume her political, economic, military and cultural responsibilities in the Mediterranean Basin, to ensure the presence of the West in a region with which she has so many traditional ties, both geographically and historically - these are the great objectives of French policy.

As Ambassador Straneo so rightly pointed out, its merit lies in that it exists. For my part, I have tried to make you understand it better.

International Interdoc Conference
Rimini, Italy
16, 17, 18 October, 1970

SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

by Ivan Matteo Lombardo

The Mediterranean is the region in which the "correlation of forces" (as the communists refer in their parley to the concept of the balance of power) has changed most to the disadvantage of the USA and of her European allies. It is also the region in which it is being fully demonstrated that whenever and wherever any even limited vacuum of power occurs, the Russians are immediately ready to fill it. It is also the area of the world which has revealed how effete, lackadaisical and asthenic Europe has become, not only in comparison with her past, but also in relation to her incapacity to assess her present state of danger, and to her indifference to the dire fate which threatens her in the not too far distant future.

Most of the European peoples - and the one I belong to is in the forefront- while fully enjoying the hedonistic snugness offered them by affluence and complacency, not only have entirely relinquished the role committed them by history, but are carelessly drifting towards enslavement.

The Mediterranean is not just an ordinary sea, somewhere at the antipodes of Europe - it is a most vital and crucial maritime expanse, and - with or without Suez - is still one of the world's most important life-lines. Peninsulas and islands bathing in the Mediterranean waters are entirely dependent for trade and supplies of every kind from those searoutes.

Its strategic importance is heightened by the fact that it is the cross-roads where Europe and Asia and Africa meet and the means of access to the Near East and the Middle East as a whole.

For fifteen years at least, in an unchangeable geography, the whole area has undergone a tremendous political upheaval and extraordinary strategic changes. The Mediterranean is no longer a "mare nostrum" (if ever such an appellation were justified), but it is no longer a Western basin either.

Its southern and eastern shores have become "off-limits" to the Free World. Most of the regimes ruling Arabic-speaking, Moslem peoples nourish deep enmity - if not outright hatred- against the West, repudiating its influence and, spurning any form of friendly co-operation with it.

The concept of Eurafrika has had to be dismissed from our mental schemes. Most of those shores, wherefrom the first great wave for the liberation of Europe started 27 years ago, not only are unfriendly to the West but could even become, in the not too distant future, the staging area for attacks against the northern littoral of the Mediterranean.

Europe is on the way to being outflanked from the south, and precisely in that region so aptly defined by Sir Winston Churchill as the "soft underbelly of Europe". And the Mediterranean is also the southern moat of NATO, the only surface link between the oceanic and heartland allies and their eastern ones (Turkey and Greece), the sea on which Italy mostly depends for her livelihood and co-ordinated defence, a major maritime highway for Great Britain and the USA, the most important basin linked with the Atlantic Ocean.

For the communist ideologue, in what is happening there, there is Lenin's characterization of the importance of the Mediterranean Sea by the statement that "The route from Moscow to Paris (considered by the Bolsheviks as the citadel of 'capitalism') passes through Africa. Once the capitalist world is encircled it will collapse like a house of cards".....

But I submit that it is a mistake to consider what is happening nowadays in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East exclusively, or even predominantly, in the light of ideological expansionism. Ideology is at the same time the sham and the instrument for fulfilling traditional imperialistic ambitions (for centuries motivated, in turn, by allegedly religious and pan-Slavic justifications, and only in the last half century by ideology) which have always determined Russian policy in this part of the world.

Stinging but appropriate is the remark passed by Karl Marx almost 120 years ago (July 29, 1853, London): "There is no more striking feature in the politics of Russia than the traditional identity, not only of her objects, but of her manner of pursuing them".

Except it happens that Russian ambitions have gone far beyond those nurtured in Marx's day. It is no longer a question only of the Balkans, of the conquest of "Tsargrad", the "second Rome" (i.e. Constantinople, Istanbul);

of penetration into the Holy Land; of the quest for bases in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea as a way of reaching "warm waters". It is a scheme for planetary conquest which Russian imperialism, coupled with communist expansionism, is relentlessly implementing piece by piece. In its unflinching determination to attain world domination the Kremlin must succeed in conquering or subjugating Western Europe as the fundamental premise for achieving future global goals. Most of our peoples identify the security of Western Europe with the line of its central area where Russia has stationed her troops and those of the Warsaw Pact. For more than 20 years, the West has been living in fear of direct military aggression starting from there.

But while maintaining a frontal pressure along the "Iron Curtain" and having aligned her forces after the invasion of Czechoslovakia along an uninterrupted line on the eastern borders of NATO, the Soviet Union has been developing a strategy of encirclement of Europe on the northern flank and on the southern one as well. In acting against the latter the Soviets are not content with military weight alone although this is the most powerful and threatening aspect, but resort to complex games - at which they are pastmasters - of political infiltration, subversive actions, diplomatic gimmicks, promotion of wars by "proxy" and "guerrilla" warfare in the countries around the Mediterranean. It is not between the Baltic and the Adriatic (though quite soon the latter may be witnessing some dangerous new situations), but between the Persian Gulf and the Atlantic coast of Morocco that the destiny of the Free World will be decided, because the Middle East and the Mediterranean Sea are the decisive geostrategical and political area where the fate of Western Europe could be sealed.

Yet having said this, one cannot abstract the situation in the Mediterranean from the context of the struggle which is being waged with the greatest purposefulness and ruthlessness against the Western World.

Yes, because we are not living in times of peace or even in the twilight of a "no real peace - no actual war" era. We are living in the midst of a permanent conflict in which the enemy's options are vastly diversified and can be selected by him, alternatively or complementarily; in which the shadow of the sword of Damocles is kept ever present to distract the attention of the Free World from the reality of the developments of psychopolitical warfare; in which subversive actions, "guerrilla" struggles,

pseudo "national liberation wars", limited conflicts, are continuously promoted and kept ablaze with the purpose of creating disarray, insecurity and fear in the Free World. It is a technique of the most devilish kind for continuously probing the Western World's will to stand the confrontation. Of course, if serious weaknesses in its moral and material armour were laid bare, a final all-out assault might be unleashed without any warning.

We are all involved in a global war, the aspects, battlefields, methods and intensity of which, are chosen and decided upon by the enemy.

A war of an untraditional character he has duly theorized, carefully studied and dutifully organized so as to destroy the fabric of the free societies as a prerequisite to attempting their final conquest.

The enemy is implementing a strategic design which is indeed no secret, both in its scope and aims, since its blueprint should have been read through, or gathered from countless statements over the decades by communist conferences and spokesmen. Nor could we pretend to ignore the "declarations of war" which have been notified to us in unequivocal form.

The trouble is that the Free World does not realize that a fight is being determinedly waged against it, and has seldom paid even scant attention to the blueprint unfurled under its own eyes; not to mention the contents of those statements about which, sometimes, some fuss is raised for a while, just long enough to argue whether to consider them war cries or love songs - after which they are filed and forgotten.

The Free World has only occasionally had in the past - but certainly does not appear to have today - any definite and sustained long-term policy of counter-action.

Most of the time it is being taken by surprise and caught unaware or unprepared to counter the communists' strategic designs, flexible tactics and diversified techniques. Having failed to understand the phenomenon in its entirety; having been unable, up to now, to devise and coherently sustain a global strategy of its own; having even been incapable of determining and conducting a common policy so as not to be nibbled to death, one bite after the other, the Western World is constantly on the losing side. Democracies get very frightened for short periods, but try desperately to forget for long periods the existence of communism, of its innate warlike disposition, of its ingrained imperialistic expansionism.

At every new occurrence the general attitude is just one of disappointment, mellowed by the suggestion of wait and see, in the hope that events will find solutions of their own accord; or there is a general effort at appeasement and climbing down in an attempt to soothe the enemy's ruthless determination; or else, the statesmen and policy-makers of the Free World indecorously scramble and vie among themselves in abetting the enemy.

We know by heart the theory about "fat communists being less dangerous than lean communists", or the justification that "after all, a pound is a pound", or the proposal to "turn the back to the sea and look ahead to the steppe", or the anticipation about the "unavoidable convergence of the two worlds".

The Soviet Union and the international communist movement, instead, have been dedicated for half a century to the fight against the non-communist world, with the ultimate and declared purpose of conquering it.

They wage the fight knowing that they are at war. N.S. Khrushchev (1963) plainly reminded us that: "A fight is in progress between two systems, a life-and-death combat. But we communists want to win this struggle with the least losses and there is no doubt whatsoever that we shall win": this statement is the condensation of the communists' Messianic belief and their syllabus from Lenin to Stalin, from Khrushchev to Brezhnev; it will be the same for their successors, be it a "collegiate" or one-man rule.

I therefore feel that the situation in the Mediterranean cannot be understood and coped with, if it is left unrelated to:

- a) The consciousness of the indisputable reality about a permanent, global, untraditional conflict which is raging throughout the world and which involves us all;
- b) the realization that the Free World, or rather the non-communist one, is considered to be the assaulted and besieged enemy "camp" that the aggressor has vowed to defeat and conquer;
- c) the understanding that the cold war escalation in the Mediterranean is one aspect and one front of that global conflict, and that in this context a new military doctrine is being enacted by a super-power which is implementing a strategic design gradually to wrest control from the hitherto great naval powers;

- d) the capacity to realize that the sudden "angelic" behaviour of the Soviet rulers in agreeing on cease-fire proposals, the signing of "non-aggression" pacts, talks about strategic arms limitations, drumming about détente, relaxation of tension, "peaceful coexistence", pan-European security conferences etc. etc., is nothing but an act for covering up their next aggressive performances, in anticipation of which they are flexing their muscles;
- e) the fact that Italy, a most coveted prize, has for a long time been under attack by the multifarious means of psychopolitical warfare which the Soviets wage so effectively, in order to weaken and subjugate a country they deem ripe for plucking - but that it is her geographical position in the Mediterranean and her appearance of being NATO's weakest link that makes her the actual target.

Right from the establishment of NATO there has been a flaw in the general strategy of Western defence in the light of what were the characteristics of the enemy's strategy.

The Alliance did not appear to be taking into due account the political and subversive warfare waged by the communist movement under the leadership or at the instigation of the USSR.

The most ominous alarm, which hurriedly prompted our countries to establish the Atlantic Alliance, had been sounded after the annexation of Czechoslovakia by the Prague coup d'etat of 1948.

And this had been a paramount example of victory crowning a ruthless performance of political warfare: the eroding of a country from within, the military might of the Soviet Union looming from without the country's frontiers; the conquest of that sovereign, independent nation - via parliamentary means - by an active and purposeful minority of communists and crypto-communists having succeeded in plying and/or deceiving a larger majority of democratic parties lacking a common vision and a common will, mesmerized into weakness and irresoluteness, infiltrated and politically blackmailed by the Communist Party and its sycophants. By these techniques - dutifully theorized subsequently by a Czech "apparatchik", Jan Kosak, as the "parliamentary road to socialism" - they were able to accomplish the gradual erosion of all areas of the nation's life - political, economic, cultural, social and military - until they were able to capture the country.

This scheme, and the techniques for implementing it, are suitable for application elsewhere.

There are too many disturbing similarities between what happened there and what is brewing elsewhere for us not to feel anguish at the contemplation of methods suitable for the fulfilment of the Kremlin planners' aspirations for my own country.

Inasmuch as there is a strict correlation between the international situation and the Soviet military, and mainly naval, build-up and the stepping-up of disruptive actions, subversive plots masked by alleged labour vindications, threats and challenges against our democratic institutions, pressures from below matching weakness and irresoluteness from above, enabling anyone who knows anything of communist tactics and Soviet strategy to recognize the red thread running through the web of the plot.

No conscientious observer could dispel the feeling that, as far as Italy is concerned, the whole situation hinges on her foreign policy, on her participation in the Atlantic Alliance and NATO, and on her geographical position in the Mediterranean.

All the straight or devious talk, and the overt or covert domestic manoeuvring for a more "advanced democratic equilibrium", i.e. for an "opening to the left" - which means CP participation in, or external support to, the government - aim at attaining a goal of paramount importance for the bosses in the Kremlin.

That aim is relentlessly pursued by the Communist Party, by the two leftist Socialist Parties (PSI and PSIUP), by the various "New Left" and extra-parliamentary radical grouplets and movements, and by the multi-leftist fringes of the Christian Democratic Party.

It consists in the fundamental revision - official, or more or less masked - of Italy's foreign policy and international relations.

The foremost target is the Atlantic Alliance which the Kremlin wishes to weaken and disintegrate and finally dismantle. One should never forget that in 1949 - when communists and socialists were strenuously opposing, in the country and in Parliament, Italy's participation in the Atlantic Alliance and in the Marshall Plan for European recovery - the communist boss of the time, Hon. Togliatti, went as far as explicitly pledging "fifty years of social peace" (i.e. a firm clamp on any labour vindication and agitation), provided Italy did not join the political and military defensive Atlantic Pact. And the present Secretary-General of the Communist Party Hon. Longo, at the Party's last Convention in Bologna, was very

outspoken in indicating that if Italy would leave the Atlantic Alliance and NATO, most of the political and labour unrest, agitation and strikes would quieten down....

A Communist MP and spokesman for the CP in the parliamentary committee on Foreign Relations declared some time ago, at one of the committee's meetings, to members of the Cabinet: "we will not allow you any respite. The CP, nevertheless, is prepared to evaluate every position, each and every initiative indicating a fundamental change in the line of Italy's foreign policies".

Brezhnev, on the occasion of speeches made at Kharkov last spring, in a passing reference to Italy gleefully commented that she could be compelled to kneel down under the heavy blows her economy was undergoing because of the strikes affecting it.

The second target is, of course, European integration, but Soviet strategists realize that once NATO were out of the way, European unification would not stand a chance. This is why all propaganda batteries, and diplomatic pressures, and the show of military might, and the drumming of propaganda, and diplomatic niceties or pressures, aim at inaugurating a government pliable to the Soviets' foreign policy.

Though still more or less adamant on, or paying lip-service to, the Atlantic and European issues, most of our politicians and parliamentarians could be cowed in the long run into making that obscene bargain. Numerous operators, industrialists and managers, in their political obtuseness and ignorance of the geostrategical problems at stake, might be willing to agree that "social peace" in their plants, "business as usual" in Italy's economic set-up, law and order throughout the country, could well justify the desertion of the Alliance and of participation in the alignment of the Free World.

The Italian man-in-the-street is unaware of the dramatic international situation and does not easily grasp the relationship between domestic politics and international policies. Furthermore, he is greatly impressed by the show of the military might of the Soviet Union, whether it be represented by the ground and air forces which swiftly sealed the fate of Czechoslovakia, or by the missiles and maritime ^{might} in the Mediterranean.

Unfortunately, the ostentatious display of power and sabre-rattling have still a considerable influence upon the psychological reactions of the people.

And more so when they are mixed with paeans about "peace", "peaceful coexistence", "détente" and other such humbug

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The Communist Party and its political allies and henchmen had been insistent in trying to woo Italy into the dreamland of "neutrality". Except that they laid their scheme bare when they branded it as "positive", which even morons in my country understand to mean communist-oriented, and favourable to the Soviets. Quite recently one of the communist spokesmen even went a step further (lest too great a confusion should descend on the woolly minds of the rank-and-file zealots) by stating that "positive neutrality" should be the starting point for rallying the communist camp.

The writer has the feeling that too many people in the Mediterranean are attracted to the game of "Russian roulette". They would stop toying with this stupid and tragic pastime if they were firmly warned, and scared badly enough, that at the next spin of the chamber the bullet would go off for sure.

A suicide "Italian-style", following a series of domestic political mistakes and displays of weakness in a climate of ambiguity, in a situation of economic distress and moral decay, under the strain of troubles and violence determined by occult powers, while the enemy's military might

looms enigmatically on the horizon - none of this should be dismissed as improbable. The current theory that no free country will "go communist" of its own volition may be exploded right here in the Mediterranean.....

Have not "gone communist" of their own free will the Poles, the people of East Germany, the Baltic States, the Hungarians, the Bulgarians and the Rumanians, in that they were crushed into serfdom because of events they could not cope with, owing to their weakness and to the presence of the conqueror's military might, assisted where necessary by his sycophants from within?

Even the most socially progressive, freedom-loving, economically well-off people could fall prey to the communist scourge, when the majority of the people are prepared to be paralysed and bamboozled by an active, frenzied minority imposing its will; when the predestined victim, the people, are not alerted to the dangers and threats by their political leaders; when the latter acquiesce in any compromise, albeit dishonourable, with the enemy, because they are fond of the quiet life, of the benefits of affluence, of petty political "combinazioni"; or when a rampant, unobstructed imperialism weighs upon the people and the country with its military might, in support of strong political pressure and unprejudiced diplomatic gimmickry.....

Should Italy be toppled into the enemy's camp, even via a temporary stage of more or less "positive neutralism", Russian imperialism and communist expansionism would have gained a tremendously resounding victory because of Italy's strategic position in the Mediterranean. In its role as a springboard to Africa and a turnstile to Western Europe, it would be at the service of the Soviet Empire.

In a way, Russian penetration in the Mediterranean, the deployment there of a powerful naval force (and, perhaps in the near future, of adequate air cover), the chain of satellite governments and "proxies" subservient to the Soviet Union on the North African coast and in the Middle East have considerably altered the political and military map of this crucial area.

Yet, the psychopolitical attack on the three peninsulas jutting into the Mediterranean is a duplication of the one attempted twenty-five years ago and which, at that time, failed because of the Truman Doctrine, which pledged to "support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure".

But the Truman Doctrine has been abandoned and may, instead, be superseded by the Brezhnev Doctrine.

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In a situation of this kind, with the massive Russian presence in the Mediterranean; their entrenchment in Egypt, as though they were at home; their upper-hand on Syria, Algeria and Libya; their penetration East of Suez, in the Red Sea and beyond; their flag-showing in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean; the virtual envelopment of Europe's southern flank - little wonder if weaklings, potential traitors and Kremlin lackeys were to find common ground for understanding and for the ultimate betrayal of their country, of Europe and of the Free World.

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She aims to become the sole power there, and to remain as such; to transform the Mediterranean into a series of adjoining basins for her to dominate one after the other; to plug access to, and egress from, the Mediterranean; to rule from the Black Sea Basin all the other Mediterranean basins in a coherent whole.

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Indian Ocean, the only other exit left, and by far the most important one, is Gibraltar, i.e. the gateway to the Atlantic Ocean.

The Soviet Union is relentlessly and unflinchingly aiming at the dis-Atlantization of the Mediterranean. This, I submit, is to be the dire fate in store for those still free countries which border this inland sea.



International Interdoc Conference
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SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

by Ivan Matteo Lombardo

The Mediterranean is the region in which the "correlation of forces" (as the communists refer in their parley to the concept of the balance of power) has changed most to the disadvantage of the USA and of her European allies. It is also the region in which it is being fully demonstrated that whenever and wherever any even limited vacuum of power occurs, the Russians are immediately ready to fill it. It is also the area of the world which has revealed how effete, lackadaisical and asthenic Europe has become, not only in comparison with her past, but also in relation to her incapacity to assess her present state of danger, and to her indifference to the dire fate which threatens her in the not too far distant future.

Most of the European peoples - and the one I belong to is in the forefront- while fully enjoying the hedonistic snugness offered them by affluence and complacency, not only have entirely relinquished the role committed them by history, but are carelessly drifting towards enslavement.

The Mediterranean is not just an ordinary sea, somewhere at the antipodes of Europe - it is a most vital and crucial maritime expanse, and - with or without Suez - is still one of the world's most important life-lines. Peninsulas and islands bathing in the Mediterranean waters are entirely dependent for trade and supplies of every kind from those searoutes.

Its strategic importance is heightened by the fact that it is the cross-roads where Europe and Asia and Africa meet and the means of access to the Near East and the Middle East as a whole.

For fifteen years at least, in an unchangeable geography, the whole area has undergone a tremendous political upheaval and extraordinary strategic changes. The Mediterranean is no longer a "mare nostrum" (if ever such an appellation were justified), but it is no longer a Western basin either.

Its southern and eastern shores have become "off-limits" to the Free World. Most of the regimes ruling Arabic-speaking, Moslem peoples nourish deep enmity - if not outright hatred- against the West, repudiating its influence and, spurning any form of friendly co-operation with it.

The concept of Eurafica has had to be dismissed from our mental schemes. Most of those shores, wherefrom the first great wave for the liberation of Europe started 27 years ago, not only are unfriendly to the West but could even become, in the not too distant future, the staging area for attacks against the northern littoral of the Mediterranean.

Europe is on the way to being outflanked from the south, and precisely in that region so aptly defined by Sir Winston Churchill as the "soft underbelly of Europe". And the Mediterranean is also the southern moat of NATO, the only surface link between the oceanic and heartland allies and their eastern ones (Turkey and Greece), the sea on which Italy mostly depends for her livelihood and co-ordinated defence, a major maritime highway for Great Britain and the USA, the most important basin linked with the Atlantic Ocean.

For the communist ideologue, in what is happening there, there is Lenin's characterization of the importance of the Mediterranean Sea by the statement that "The route from Moscow to Paris (considered by the Bolsheviks as the citadel of 'capitalism') passes through Africa. Once the capitalist world is encircled it will collapse like a house of cards".....

But I submit that it is a mistake to consider what is happening nowadays in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East exclusively, or even predominantly, in the light of ideological expansionism. Ideology is at the same time the sham and the instrument for fulfilling traditional imperialistic ambitions (for centuries motivated, in turn, by allegedly religious and pan-Slavic justifications, and only in the last half century by ideology) which have always determined Russian policy in this part of the world.

Stinging but appropriate is the remark passed by Karl Marx almost 120 years ago (July 29, 1853, London): "There is no more striking feature in the politics of Russia than the traditional identity, not only of her objects, but of her manner of pursuing them".

Except it happens that Russian ambitions have gone far beyond those nurtured in Marx's day. It is no longer a question only of the Balkans, of the conquest of "Tsargrad", the "second Rome" (i.e. Constantinople, Istanbul);

of penetration into the Holy Land; of the quest for bases in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea as a way of reaching "warm waters". It is a scheme for planetary conquest which Russian imperialism, coupled with communist expansionism, is relentlessly implementing piece by piece. In its unflinching determination to attain world domination the Kremlin must succeed in conquering or subjugating Western Europe as the fundamental premise for achieving future global goals. Most of our peoples identify the security of Western Europe with the line of its central area where Russia has stationed her troops and those of the Warsaw Pact. For more than 20 years, the West has been living in fear of direct military aggression starting from there.

But while maintaining a frontal pressure along the "Iron Curtain" and having aligned her forces after the invasion of Czechoslovakia along an uninterrupted line on the eastern borders of NATO, the Soviet Union has been developing a strategy of encirclement of Europe on the northern flank and on the southern one as well. In acting against the latter the Soviets are not content with military weight alone although this is the most powerful and threatening aspect, but resort to complex games - at which they are pastmasters - of political infiltration, subversive actions, diplomatic gimmicks, promotion of wars by "proxy" and "guerrilla" warfare in the countries around the Mediterranean. It is not between the Baltic and the Adriatic (though quite soon the latter may be witnessing some dangerous new situations), but between the Persian Gulf and the Atlantic coast of Morocco that the destiny of the Free World will be decided, because the Middle East and the Mediterranean Sea are the decisive geostrategical and political area where the fate of Western Europe could be sealed.

Yet having said this, one cannot abstract the situation in the Mediterranean from the context of the struggle which is being waged with the greatest purposefulness and ruthlessness against the Western World.

Yes, because we are not living in times of peace or even in the twilight of a "no real peace- no actual war" era. We are living in the midst of a permanent conflict in which the enemy's options are vastly diversified and can be selected by him, alternatively or complementarily; in which the shadow of the sword of Damocles is kept ever present to distract the attention of the Free World from the reality of the developments of psychopolitical warfare; in which subversive actions, "guerrilla" struggles,

pseudo "national liberation wars", limited conflicts, are continuously promoted and kept ablaze with the purpose of creating disarray, insecurity and fear in the Free World. It is a technique of the most devilish kind for continuously probing the Western World's will to stand the confrontation. Of course, if serious weaknesses in its moral and material armour were laid bare, a final all-out assault might be unleashed without any warning.

We are all involved in a global war, the aspects, battlefields, methods and intensity of which, are chosen and decided upon by the enemy.

A war of an untraditional character he has duly theorized, carefully studied and dutifully organized so as to destroy the fabric of the free societies as a prerequisite to attempting their final conquest.

The enemy is implementing a strategic design which is indeed no secret, both in its scope and aims, since its blueprint should have been read through, or gathered from countless statements over the decades by communist conferences and spokesmen. Nor could we pretend to ignore the "declarations of war" which have been notified to us in unequivocal form.

The trouble is that the Free World does not realize that a fight is being determinedly waged against it, and has seldom paid even scant attention to the blueprint unfurled under its own eyes; not to mention the contents of those statements about which, sometimes, some fuss is raised for a while, just long enough to argue whether to consider them war cries or love songs - after which they are filed and forgotten.

The Free World has only occasionally had in the past - but certainly does not appear to have today - any definite and sustained long-term policy of counter-action.

Most of the time it is being taken by surprise and caught unaware or unprepared to counter the communists' strategic designs, flexible tactics and diversified techniques. Having failed to understand the phenomenon in its entirety; having been unable, up to now, to devise and coherently sustain a global strategy of its own; having even been incapable of determining and conducting a common policy so as not to be nibbled to death, one bite after the other, the Western World is constantly on the losing side. Democracies get very frightened for short periods, but try desperately to forget for long periods the existence of communism, of its innate warlike disposition, of its ingrained imperialistic expansionism.

At every new occurrence the general attitude is just one of disappointment, mellowed by the suggestion of wait and see, in the hope that events will find solutions of their own accord; or there is a general effort at appeasement and climbing down in an attempt to soothe the enemy's ruthless determination; or else, the statesmen and policy-makers of the Free World indecorously scramble and vie among themselves in abetting the enemy.

We know by heart the theory about "fat communists being less dangerous than lean communists", or the justification that "after all, a pound is a pound", or the proposal to "turn the back to the sea and look ahead to the steppe", or the anticipation about the "unavoidable convergence of the two worlds".

The Soviet Union and the international communist movement, instead, have been dedicated for half a century to the fight against the non-communist world, with the ultimate and declared purpose of conquering it.

They wage the fight knowing that they are at war. N.S. Khrushchev (1963) plainly reminded us that: "A fight is in progress between two systems, a life-and-death combat. But we communists want to win this struggle with the least losses and there is no doubt whatsoever that we shall win":

this statement is the condensation of the communists' Messianic belief and their syllabus from Lenin to Stalin, from Khrushchev to Brezhnev; it will be the same for their successors, be it a "collegiate" or one-man rule.

I therefore feel that the situation in the Mediterranean cannot be understood and coped with, if it is left unrelated to:

- a) The consciousness of the indisputable reality about a permanent, global, untraditional conflict which is raging throughout the world and which involves us all;
- b) the realization that the Free World, or rather the non-communist one, is considered to be the assaulted and besieged enemy "camp" that the aggressor has vowed to defeat and conquer;
- c) the understanding that the cold war escalation in the Mediterranean is one aspect and one front of that global conflict, and that in this context a new military doctrine is being enacted by a super-power which is implementing a strategic design gradually to wrest control from the hitherto great naval powers;

- d) the capacity to realize that the sudden "angelic" behaviour of the Soviet rulers in agreeing on cease-fire proposals, the signing of "non-aggression" pacts, talks about strategic arms limitations, drumming about détente, relaxation of tension, "peaceful coexistence", pan-European security conferences etc. etc., is nothing but an act for covering up their next aggressive performances, in anticipation of which they are flexing their muscles;
- e) the fact that Italy, a most coveted prize, has for a long time been under attack by the multifarious means of psychopolitical warfare which the Soviets wage so effectively, in order to weaken and subjugate a country they deem ripe for plucking - but that it is her geographical position in the Mediterranean and her appearance of being NATO's weakest link that makes her the actual target.

Right from the establishment of NATO there has been a flaw in the general strategy of Western defence in the light of what were the characteristics of the enemy's strategy.

The Alliance did not appear to be taking into due account the political and subversive warfare waged by the communist movement under the leadership or at the instigation of the USSR.

The most ominous alarm, which hurriedly prompted our countries to establish the Atlantic Alliance, had been sounded after the annexation of Czechoslovakia by the Prague coup d'etat of 1948.

And this had been a paramount example of victory crowning a ruthless performance of political warfare: the eroding of a country from within, the military might of the Soviet Union looming from without the country's frontiers; the conquest of that sovereign, independent nation - via parliamentary means - by an active and purposeful minority of communists and crypto-communists having succeeded in plying and/or deceiving a larger majority of democratic parties lacking a common vision and a common will, mesmerized into weakness and irresoluteness, infiltrated and politically blackmailed by the Communist Party and its sycophants. By these techniques - dutifully theorized subsequently by a Czech "apparatchik", Jan Kósak, as the "parliamentary road to socialism" - they were able to accomplish the gradual erosion of all areas of the nation's life - political, economic, cultural, social and military - until they were able to capture the country.

This scheme, and the techniques for implementing it, are suitable for application elsewhere.

There are too many disturbing similarities between what happened there and what is brewing elsewhere for us not to feel anguish at the contemplation of methods suitable for the fulfilment of the Kremlin planners' aspirations for my own country.

Inasmuch as there is a strict correlation between the international situation and the Soviet military, and mainly naval, build-up and the stepping-up of disruptive actions, subversive plots masked by alleged labour vindications, threats and challenges against our democratic institutions, pressures from below matching weakness and irresoluteness from above, enabling anyone who knows anything of communist tactics and Soviet strategy to recognize the red thread running through the web of the plot.

No conscientious observer could dispel the feeling that, as far as Italy is concerned, the whole situation hinges on her foreign policy, on her participation in the Atlantic Alliance and NATO, and on her geographical position in the Mediterranean.

All the straight or devious talk, and the overt or covert domestic manoeuvring for a more "advanced democratic equilibrium", i.e. for an "opening to the left" - which means CP participation in, or external support to, the government - aim at attaining a goal of paramount importance for the bosses in the Kremlin.

That aim is relentlessly pursued by the Communist Party, by the two leftist Socialist Parties (PSI and PSIUP), by the various "New Left" and extra-parliamentary radical grouplets and movements, and by the multi-leftist fringes of the Christian Democratic Party.

It consists in the fundamental revision - official, or more or less masked - of Italy's foreign policy and international relations.

The foremost target is the Atlantic Alliance which the Kremlin wishes to weaken and disintegrate and finally dismantle. One should never forget that in 1949 - when communists and socialists were strenuously opposing, in the country and in Parliament, Italy's participation in the Atlantic Alliance and in the Marshall Plan for European recovery - the communist boss of the time, Hon. Togliatti, went as far as explicitly pledging "fifty years of social peace" (i.e. a firm clamp on any labour vindication and agitation), provided Italy did not join the political and military defensive Atlantic Pact. And the present Secretary-General of the Communist Party Hon. Longo, at the Party's last Convention in Bologna, was very

outspoken in indicating that if Italy would leave the Atlantic Alliance and NATO, most of the political and labour unrest, agitation and strikes would quieten down....

A Communist MP and spokesman for the CP in the parliamentary committee on Foreign Relations declared some time ago, at one of the committee's meetings, to members of the Cabinet: "we will not allow you any respite. The CP, nevertheless, is prepared to evaluate every position, each and every initiative indicating a fundamental change in the line of Italy's foreign policies".

Brezhnev, on the occasion of speeches made at Kharkov last spring, in a passing reference to Italy gleefully commented that she could be compelled to kneel down under the heavy blows her economy was undergoing because of the strikes affecting it.

The second target is, of course, European integration, but Soviet strategists realize that once NATO were out of the way, European unification would not stand a chance. This is why all propaganda batteries, and diplomatic pressures, and the show of military might, and the drumming of propaganda, and diplomatic niceties or pressures, aim at inaugurating a government pliable to the Soviets' foreign policy.

Though still more or less adamant on, or paying lip-service to, the Atlantic and European issues, most of our politicians and parliamentarians could be cowed in the long run into making that obscene bargain. Numerous operators, industrialists and managers, in their political obtuseness and ignorance of the geostrategical problems at stake, might be willing to agree that "social peace" in their plants, "business as usual" in Italy's economic set-up, law and order throughout the country, could well justify the desertion of the Alliance and of participation in the alignment of the Free World.

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Indian Ocean, the only other exit left, and by far the most important one, is Gibraltar, i.e. the gateway to the Atlantic Ocean.

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SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS THE MEDITERRANEAN

by Carlo Alberto Straneo

The area which will be dealt with in this paper consists of the Mediterranean proper - divided by Sicily, the Island of Pantelleria and Tunisia in the Western and Eastern Mediterranean - as well as the Adriatic Sea. In assessing Soviet policy towards the Mediterranean, therefore, reference will be made to the entire zone and to the countries bordering it.

The presence of a Russian fleet in the Mediterranean, even if it is not likely to provoke a major conflict, denotes the beginning of a new era for that sea. Already the Yalta conference had the ominous effect of bringing the Soviets within reach of the Adriatic shores. Two years ago the application of the doctrine of limited sovereignty of the socialist states authorized Brezhnev to advance his armoured cars to the very border of the Federal Republic of Germany. The military frontier of the Soviet world has thus been brought to about 300 kilometres distance from Italy. The Russians have also augmented the potentiality of their fleet in the Baltic Sea. The appearance of the Soviet navy in the Mediterranean and the material and diplomatic help given by Moscow to most Arab countries, coupled with the withdrawal of British, French and American bases, complete the picture. The encirclement of the Atlantic Alliance is practically accomplished.

It is not, however, the purpose of this paper to consider the strategic implications of this move or to deal technically with the fighting capacity of the Soviet vessels. It is probable that, from a purely naval point of view, the Russian units, efficient as they may be, are considered by the Atlantic Powers as a nuisance of little danger, as they could be silenced in a few hours in the event of actual war or compelled to beat a hasty

retreat. Incidents or confrontations between opposing navies may always occur, but we know that both Moscow and Washington and their respective allies are anxious to avoid a nuclear war which might change the face of the world and we trust that the commanders will keep their heads in case of a major crisis. What this paper aims at is to point out the political significance of the Soviet war-flag in the Mediterranean and in particular to show that even in time of peace the Soviet fleet in Arab waters marks a radical change in the area under examination.

The limited scope of this study does not permit a detailed examination of the geo-political situation. It will be sufficient for our purpose to reflect that the Mediterranean is the meeting-point of three continents with all their variety of races, laws, religions, customs and political creeds.

The Eastern Mediterranean has preoccupied Western statesmen and military leaders since time immemorial. Few zones have been the subject of more diplomatic rivalry and discussion. This situation still persists, although the danger no longer stems from a struggle for territorial gains on the part of the European powers or from quarrels over entry through the Straits. As we will see later, this last question has been settled much to Russia's advantage by the Montreux Convention of 1936. The unrest on the Mediterranean shores today is due mainly to Arab hostility towards the state of Israel and to the clever and unscrupulous exploitation of this situation by the Soviet Union, which is actually inciting hatred and animosity not only towards Israel but also towards the so-called imperialist countries.

At present there are several factors which justify the assertion that the Mediterranean is entering a new era fraught with political implications.

Let us consider above all the situation of the three entrances.

Just as, with the discoveries of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, the Mediterranean ceased to be the centre of the civilized world and the sceptre of commerce passed from the cities of Italy to nations having easy access to the Atlantic Ocean - first Portugal, then in succession Spain, the Netherlands, France and England - , so today, with the Suez

Canal closed after nearly a century of intense activity, the Mediterranean is reverting to a condition of relative stagnation, while power and influence are contended by the two mighty nations which hold the destiny of the world in their hands. It is true that every day there are present in the Mediterranean 2,600 vessels, of which 1,100 are in ports and 1,500 at sea, but it is no less true that the main lines of commerce now run outside Gibraltar.

The Suez Canal has been closed twice: the first time in 1956 until the end of 1957 and again in 1967 after the so-called six-day war. During 1966, 21,250 ships passed through the Canal, of which 3,601 were British, 2,721 under the Liberian flag, 2,271 Norwegian, 1,943 Greek, 1,469 Russian and 1,236 Italian. The majority of these ships are now avoiding the Mediterranean. The Canal is no longer essential for oil traffic. In fact the large oil-tankers of today go round the Cape and will surely continue to prefer that route, even if the Canal is reopened but not sufficiently enlarged and made safer. Moreover the passenger, postal and much of the commercial traffic is conveyed by air. It is clear, therefore, that if it is reopened, the Suez Canal will be important mainly for strategic reasons. But even these have changed.

Nearly fifty years have passed since Lord Allenby said that the whole territory of Egypt was essential to communications between Great Britain and the East. Egypt is no longer the "wasp-waist" of the British Empire. Great Britain has relinquished the responsibility for protecting legitimate foreign interests in that zone. It is no longer an essential concern for England to maintain that free passage as a commercial thoroughfare, as it is no longer necessary for her warships to use it. If the Suez Canal is reopened it will probably fall under Russian control owing to the ever-increasing Soviet influence in Egypt.

The passage through the Dardanelles is an almost exclusive Soviet interest. It is subject to rules and restrictions laid down by the Montreux Convention of 1936 which abolished the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, but they are not strictly observed

by the warships which fly the Russian flag. The restrictions affect submarines and air-craft carriers. Submarines built outside Soviet territory have freedom of passage only for the purpose of being repaired in their original dockyards. The passage of other submarines is barred. There is reason to doubt, however, whether this proviso is always respected and as for air-craft carriers, whose transit is also forbidden, the Soviets consider that helicopter-carriers, like the Moskva, do not come under that rule. The Turkish government has the right to permit passage in both directions to war vessels of a State with which Turkey is allied through a pact or mutual assistance agreement, but the objections and difficulties raised a year ago by Moscow when the United States sent two small units (the Dyes and the Turner) to the Black Sea show that the Soviets consider that passage free only to their own warships. The Ankara government has been entrusted with the proper application of the Montreux Convention and is responsible for its fair interpretation. In the controversy over the Dyes and the Turner, Turkey firmly and courageously supported the United States' point of view, but is it really wise to lay the burden of guardianship on a single state which could easily be subjected to undue pressure from its powerful neighbour? Would it not be more expedient to revive the international "commission des Détroits" established by the Treaty of Lausanne? That commission was composed of Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Bulgaria, Greece, Rumania, the Soviet Union and Turkey. Its abolition was mainly due to the hostility of Great Britain towards Fascist Italy. In fact the Montreux solution had been devised under the banner of a united front against Italy, but that situation no longer exists. What is important now is to enforce a better system of control.

There remains only one free passage to the Mediterranean: Gibraltar. Over this dominant rock the British flag has flown since 1704, but Ceuta occupies a similar strategic position. If Gibraltar under Spanish pressure is relinquished by England the control of the Strait in time of war would pass to Spain and Morocco, two countries very friendly to the Arabs and not members of the Atlantic Alliance. It should also be remembered that the

Strait of Gibraltar, which at its narrowest point is nearly 9 miles wide, is freely used by Soviet submarines.

The Western Powers have lost practically every foothold on the East African shores. At the end of World War I Great Britain and France (and also Italy with the possession of Libya) were strongly established on the African coast. Today Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt are independent. We find the same situation in the Middle East. This is a natural and welcome development, but what we deplore is that the place of the Western Powers is gradually and consistently being taken by the Soviet Union. Moscow is pursuing that encirclement of Europe which Lenin has indicated as the indispensable preliminary for the expansion of communism in the whole world.

The Soviet Union is exploiting the only valid element which keeps the Arabs united, namely their hostility towards the Jews. In 1917 and 1918 Arab nationalism could still be considered as a British political discovery soaked in sentimentality. In 1919 T.E. Lawrence, the champion of the Arabs, could still write that Arabs and Jews were cousins and express the conviction that they could work together for a reformed Near East. But after the creation of the State of Israel according to the Balfour Declaration ("the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine") the situation is radically changed, and appears to be almost hopeless. Steered by nationalist propaganda the Arabs are victims of ideas, from which they cannot free themselves, as many armed conflicts with the Jews have proved. Israel is a state recognized by the United Nations and has a right to peaceful existence. The Arabs, armed by the Soviets, contest that right. The increase of anti-semitic feeling in Palestine and the actions of the resistance movements, which demand the complete liberation of Palestinian soil, are jeopardizing any reasonable solution of the crisis and the prospects for a just and lasting peace. It must also be borne in mind that Jerusalem is not just any town. It is the seat not only of the holy places and historic traditions for Jews and Arabs alike, but also a city sacred to Christians, Mohammedans and Jews, which complicates the problem of its status. The Soviet government, however, has scant regard for religious feelings and therefore a suggestion based on

age-old traditions is not likely to come from that quarter.

Instead of trying to alleviate the conflict between Arabs and Jews, the Soviet Union is taking full advantage of it. She is not really interested in peace because a state of war and unrest facilitates her policy of penetration and influence in North Africa and in the Middle East. From Syria to Libya, with the sole exception of the State of Israel, Soviet influence is practically unchallenged. Where the Russian agents are not actually present, there are always watchful eyes ready to note and to report to Moscow any weakness in the position of the Western Powers and any gap in the Atlantic Alliance. One of the latest events from which the Soviets will profit is the insertion of Libya in the group of countries which is under the influence of Nasser. Colonel Ghedaffy, in denouncing the military agreements with Great Britain and the United States, has practically opened the way to Soviet infiltration in Libya also.

On the western frontier of Libya, Tunisia is also menaced by the advance of Nasserism. President Bourguiba represents amongst the Arab leaders the voice of moderation and good sense, but nobody can predict which way Tunisia will eventually go. Menaced by the advance of extremism, Bourguiba is apparently trying to reinforce the security of his country in an anti-communist block with Morocco, the only kingdom now left in North Africa. But Algeria stands in the way and so-called Maghreb solidarity is a long way off. Some time ago there was a feeling that the menace of communism could be met by means of a Mediterranean Pact, but this project could never materialize.

If we now consider the Adriatic, we find that Yugoslavia and Albania are also under Soviet pressure. At present Yugoslavia, an uncommitted country, has excellent relations with the Atlantic powers and notably with Italy, but also in her case nobody could prophesy which way she will eventually go. As for Albania she is under the influence of China. These two countries are indispensable for the encirclement of Europe and Moscow plans to extend her influence over them.

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In analysing the reasons prompting the ever-expanding presence of the Soviet navy in the Mediterranean, one is tempted to quote, as an initial warning, the late Sir Winston Churchill's remark about Russia. "Russia", he said, "is a riddle wrapped up in mystery inside an enigma". In point of fact, however, although the task of penetrating the Kremlin mind has always been highly complex, one must admit that Russian leaders and more especially the military authorities have been much more explicit and informative lately on their Mediterranean policy than on anything else. We are not completely in the dark as to their intentions. In fact we know exactly what they are driving at.

Moscow is trying to place herself in a position to control events in the Mediterranean area and to prevent events from being governed by any other power to the possible disadvantage of Soviet interests. The main purpose of the Soviet navy is to counter-balance and restrain the movements of the United States Sixth Fleet. While only a few years ago the Mediterranean was dominated exclusively by Western navies, by a consistent policy, which started with equipping fishing boats with radio and small means of defence, the Russian navy is now in a position to survey the whole of the Eastern Mediterranean. Reporting to the Kremlin what happens hour by hour in these waters is no longer a problem. Any information thus received is set against all other intelligence gathered from various sources to form a guide-line for the Soviet leaders who have to consider, or reconsider, their actions. It is clear that the ultimate end is world domination. We are in no doubt about that.

In 1960 Khrushchev told the representatives of 81 Communist Parties convened in Moscow: "The socialist revolution on a world-wide scale is not too far off. It is inevitable. But if the capitalist countries try to put up resistance, the working classes will certainly have recourse to arms". And again: "There will be a time when the capitalist countries will have on a map the same importance as two or three buttons on a jacket".

What is interesting is that the idea of equipping and maintaining an army and navy equal or superior to the forces of the Western nations is not a communist one. It is the development of the dream of the Romanoffs.

Peter the Great's personal interest in maritime affairs and in shipbuilding as well as his ambition to extend the borders of his dominions to the Baltic Sea to the North and the Black Sea to the South, with a view to reaching ice-free waters, are well known. His designs, though curtailed by his death, remained the constant vision of his successors and we may assert with confidence that the communist leaders take their inspiration not only from Lenin but also from that genial barbarian who in the sustained effort of a lifetime, and in the teeth of violent opposition, founded the naval power of Russia. The secret of Peter's extraordinary success was the same as that of the Soviet dictators. It consisted in his having organized a highly effective training system for turning out young men who would serve his revolutionary purposes. Slavophile in the previous centuries and communist now, the Russian autocrats have consistently pursued the policy outlined in the supposed will of Peter the Great.

In 1904 Russia's fortunes at sea were disastrous. Defeated by Admiral Togo, the Port Arthur fleet scattered. Some ships returned to port but finally surrendered with the fortress, while the remainder were either sunk or forced into neutral ports. The following year the Baltic fleet was destroyed in the Tsushima Strait. During World War I the role of the Russian fleet was negligible. These failures and the anti-communist revolt of Russian sailors in 1921 explain the small trust that Lenin placed in the Soviet navy. But already in 1924 the situation had changed. In that year Prof. Petrov was expounding his doctrine of supremacy at sea and in 1931 the gradual strengthening of the navy was already underway. Today we see the USSR operating in the Indian Ocean, in the Pacific, in the Mediterranean and in practically every other sea. Admiral Gorshkov is much admired in Russia and the Russian sailors and marines are so popular that they share with the astronauts the enthusiastic applause of the populace in Red Square.

Brezhnev's design is to demonstrate Soviet striking capability and power to put the Russian fleet in a position to intimidate and influence the Arab coastal states.

The crucial question is whether there will be a war. We do not think it likely that there will ever be a major conflict. Prestige considerations and critical pressure might still gain the upper hand with most disastrous consequences, but one can see that, in spite of a noisy and powerful apparatus of propaganda and notwithstanding occasional truculent assertions, the Russians are anxious to avoid a major conflict. Nationalism, and even imperialism, are inextricably wedded to communism, but, notwithstanding their unflinching objective of ultimate world domination, responsible members of the Soviet Communist Party are well aware that there are several limitations placed in the way of their movements. Above all, they know that a nuclear war will bring disaster to their plans. Paradoxical as it may seem, they realize that the sophisticated weapons which are paraded in Red Square can never be deployed.

Soviet military strategy since the last war has been shaped by four chief goals. The first is to counterbalance and possibly outdo the American nuclear capability; the second is to deter China from attacking Russian territory; the third to threaten non-nuclear European countries with a view to indirect conquest by political means; and the fourth - the one which concerns us today - to control North African and Middle East countries by furnishing them with military and economic aid.

The main purpose, therefore, of the presence of Soviet vessels in the Mediterranean is not to fight but to exert intimidation and pressure, to instil fear without actually having to fire a shot. It would be a great mistake, however, to take an optimistic view of such a strategy. This state of affairs is seriously damaging Western prestige among the Arab countries and is in fact a potential threat to the Southern flank of NATO. Most Arab governments on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean grant access to the Russian fleet and with the Russian penetration goes, as a matter of course, a political identification of interests. It is probable that in due time most Arab countries will resent the Soviet presence. There will be a natural reaction that may possibly restore the balance in our favour. But with the political influence

the assignment of technicians and the supply of military and economic aid, the Soviets are building a net from which escape will be difficult. It would indeed be extremely imprudent to rely on Arab opposition to communist penetration. We already have proof that Marxism is not regarded as incompatible with the practice of Moslem beliefs. Temperamentally the Arabs are very responsive to the anti-Western Soviet propaganda and it would only be in the long run that they will try to shake off a yoke which they may no longer be able to remove. For the moment they see that the Russian presence is beneficial to their economy and to the strengthening of their armed forces. Moreover the Russians are giving them full support against Israel and there is no chance for many years that they will change their minds as to the advisability of keeping close to Moscow.

The average Russian is proud to know that Soviet ships are sailing in waters which were previously regarded as a Western preserve. His leaders claim that the Soviet fleet does not signify a demonstration of military power. According to the official point of view the Russian sailors are in the Mediterranean in order to prevent it being turned into a hot-bed of war by the American Sixth Fleet. "Our ships", says Pravda, "are envoys of friendship and the proof of it is that they are always well received at the various ports of call". In this way and by these assertions Moscow is trying to convince the world that its navy represents a mission of peace.

On the contrary, even if we discount the possibility of a major naval conflict, the very fact that Moscow is pursuing a policy of systematic penetration in North Africa and is endeavouring with notable success to win the confidence of the Moslem states, constitutes in itself a potential danger for the West. It is obvious that by so doing the Kremlin is challenging the position of the Atlantic Powers. The right flank of NATO is considerably weakened by the presence of the Soviet fleet on the opposite shore.

The principal and traditional task of a fleet is the defence of the homeland, but the Soviets use their navy mainly for political purposes. They may insist that the strengthening of their military power is intended for the defence of their country, but they can

hardly assert that the concentration in the Mediterranean of naval units is indispensable for the safeguarding of the Black Sea. As we have seen, it is definitely aimed towards the extension of Soviet influence over the Arab countries with the object of weakening the position of the NATO Alliance and of reducing the supremacy of the Sixth Fleet.

Moscow's main purpose is not the acquisition of oil sources. The Soviet Union has plenty of oil and although it would be convenient for the Russian ships to have a ready supply of fuel on the African shores, what she wants is to be in a position to shut off African oil supplies to Europe in the event of a major crisis.

One important fact is to realize that the Mediterranean region, as a geographical unit, is considered by the Soviets as including the Sea of Marmora and the Black Sea. Indeed it should be clear to everybody that the Russians consider themselves as Mediterranean.

In a recent article published in Red Star, the official paper of the Soviet Army, the following significant statement appeared: "Our state is, as is well known, a Black Sea and therefore a Mediterranean Power, and it cannot remain indifferent to the intrigues of lovers of military adventures organized so near the borders of the Soviet Union."

The claim to be a Mediterranean power is pregnant with meaning.

In the already accepted Conference on European Security suggested by the Warsaw Pact the USSR delegation will almost certainly advance proposals for the withdrawal of foreign contingents from Europe. Although point 11 of the principles put forward by Brezhnev at the 1967 communist rally in Karlovy Vary states that the withdrawal will apply to foreign forces stationed in European countries, by this formula Moscow does not mean "forces which are stationed in a country different from that of their origin" but simply "non-European forces".

In conclusion, the Soviet government knows only too well that it lies outside its power to impose the withdrawal of the Sixth Fleet, but it is also aware that a group of American Senators,

led by influential and authoritative men like Fulbright and Mansfield, are recommending a gradual US disengagement from Europe. Moreover, it reckons that this tendency towards isolationism is likely to increase, now that the German Federal Government has reached an understanding with Moscow and also with Warsaw and Pankow. In consequence the Russian leaders are planning to exploit the situation. In the diplomatic field their chances of success appear to be reasonably assured.

On major and vital strategic questions the Kremlin is always ready to come to terms with America, especially if these terms are favourable to its own interests. It is probable, therefore, that in the forthcoming conference on European Security the Soviet delegates will make a point of showing themselves co-operative and reasonable. However that may be, we must remain under no illusion as to Moscow's ultimate aim: to turn the balance of power in its favour in the Mediterranean as well as on the continent of Europe.

International Interdoc Conference
Rimini, Italy
16, 17, 18 October, 1970

APPENDIX

to the Paper

SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS THE MEDITERRANEAN

by Carlo Alberto Straneo

The subject that I have been asked to develop is that of Soviet policy towards the Mediterranean. The word policy has different shades of meaning, from prudence and foresight to cunning statecraft.

If prudence is notably absent from the management of Soviet foreign affairs, we cannot deny that cunning statecraft is typical of the attitude of Moscow towards the Mediterranean countries. "Our State is, as is well known, a Black Sea and therefore a Mediterranean Power", declared "Red Star", the official paper of the Soviet Army, a few months ago; and this bold statement has a considerable political and psychological implication. (I see that Prof. Waldman is of the same opinion). The "Red Star" statement is meant first of all to describe the presence of Soviet warships in the Mediterranean as a matter of ordinary administration and to assure that their task is legitimate and peaceful. But it also insinuates that the presence of the American Fleet is illegitimate and dangerous. As we will see in the course of this discussion, the Soviet Union wants to give a permanent character to the military and political operations in the Mediterranean with the object of gaining an influential and almost exclusive position at the eastern end of that sea. It is a fact that the Soviet Navy is already in a position to claim the right of presence, and so to speak with the right of citizenship, in an area which a few years ago was completely foreign to her.

I take the word "policy" to mean a course of action to reach a certain end. A paper of mine has been distributed to the participants of this debate and I presume that some of them may have taken the trouble to read it. For the benefit of the majority I will presently summarize its content, but, before analysing and elucidating its main purport, I ask leave to make some preliminary remarks in order to give a proper perspective to this debate.

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Soviet policy in regard to the Mediterranean is only a part of a much larger canvas. It is obviously not my intention to survey the whole of Soviet internal and foreign policy; but before examining the Mediterranean problem in detail it is necessary to take a look at the entire panorama lest the close examination of the tree should prevent us from seeing the magnitude of the forest which confronts us.

Two great wars, and in between a civil struggle and years of revolution,

have imposed incredible hardships upon the Russian people, whose hardiness, power of resistance, long-suffering and long-sufferance I truly admire. While the armed forces, together with closely related programmes for heavy industry and space research, have enjoyed for many years a high priority and the full attention of the government, the people are still in a condition of unhappy discomfort as regards housing and other essential needs. The standard of living in Russia is still very low. In contrast to the political and military chiefs, and the professional "elite" who enjoy great privileges, the ordinary Soviet citizen is still subject to the whim of the executive and deprived of essential liberties. The large majority of workmen and peasants are not members of the Party but work for the state. The state and the machinery of government exploit them ruthlessly, destroying their individuality, and this is easy, as Russia has no tradition of democracy in the Western sense. Young men who have ideas of their own, or have drawn attention to themselves by writing about political or social problems in a critical way, are often sent to mental hospitals or to labour camps. A case in point is that of Solzhenitsyn, author of "The First Circle" and "Cancer Ward", to whom has been awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. The suppression of conflicting opinions and the oppression of those who hold them is a common practice of the Soviet regime.

I draw attention to this state of affairs to make the point that the policy of prestige pursued abroad by the Soviet government is partly due to the necessity of compensating the labourer, the student and the ordinary citizen for his hardship and frustration at home. This is in fact a peculiar characteristic of all dictatorship but it also means that Admiral Gorshkov is much admired in Russia and that the Russian sailors and marines share with the astronauts the enthusiastic applause of the populace in Red Square. The whole of Russia is backing the naval penetration of the Mediterranean.

The second point that I would like to make is that the men in the Kremlin consider their position challenged both by China and America. The operations of the Soviet Fleet reveal an effort to prevent the above-mentioned countries from exercising a determining influence in North Africa and in the Middle East. The confrontation with America will probably continue unabated, but one can detect already in some particular fields a desire for co-operation with Washington in order to maintain the bipolar balance of power as long as possible.

Brezhnev's doctrine of limited sovereignty of a socialist state is an indication that Moscow is not so sure that the Soviet bloc can remain a single whole. The main purpose of the recent treaty with Germany may be seen in the earnest desire of the Soviet government to have a legal certificate approving the status quo in Central Europe. The Soviet leaders are in fact afraid of the formation of varying degrees and shades of political ideas within their own circle. Even the pressure brought by the Kremlin on the successors of Nasser

may be regarded as a symptom of the present uneasiness of Moscow and of her fear of losing her hold on Egypt.

But if these last remarks introduce a certain note of optimism in the overall picture, let me say frankly that the general outlook is far from satisfactory.

It is not my intention to engage in a detailed examination of the NATO situation, the more so as I understand that this particular point will be dealt with by Brigadier Thompson. It will be sufficient at this stage of our discussion to point out that the Atlantic Alliance created in 1950 a number of responsibilities and obligations which the participant governments are now apt to forget. In 1966 France withdrew from the military organization set up by NATO and since then the situation within the Alliance has never been the same. The debates on North Atlantic defence cost-sharing are depressing. That other nations should do their share is a constantly recurring demand of America which falls on deaf ears. Experience has shown that a reduction in the American presence in Europe is not a stimulus for others to do more, but rather a motive for doing less, as it is interpreted as a signal that the Allies also can reduce their commitments. Apart from that there is no longer the original cordiality and co-operation amongst State members (I refer mainly to the case of Greece). These circumstances and the fact that political and financial reasons of a compelling nature prevent the European governments from augmenting their contribution to NATO are well known in Moscow and the inference is that NATO, at best, is a tepid alliance which is gradually disintegrating.

Moreover President Nixon's State of the Union Message of January 23, in which he declared that, although it will remain true to its treaty obligations, the American government will reduce its engagements and its presence in the affairs of other countries, coupled with Senator Mike Mansfield's call for "substantial reductions" of American troops stationed in Europe, has encouraged the Soviet government to stage a show of strength in our waters. It was therefore a timely decision on the part of President Nixon to visit the Sixth Fleet and to make clear his determination to strengthen it and to use it, if necessary. Let us realize, as Dr Höpker points out in his paper, that the Soviet Mediterranean Fleet is a branch of the nutcracker encircling Western Europe. - The defence of the Mediterranean is, therefore, the defence of Europe -.

Having made these few points as a background to the detailed discussion of my subject, let us now come to the paper that you have before you.

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The main purpose of my report is to demonstrate that, even if there is no great likelihood of a Mediterranean war, the Soviet presence in Arab waters

is fraught with serious political implications. Already the Yalta Conference had the effect of bringing the Soviets within reach of the Adriatic shores. Two years ago, at the time of the repression in Czechoslovakia, Brezhnev advanced his armoured cars to the very border of the Federal Republic of Germany bringing the military frontier of the Soviet world to about 300 kilometres distance from Italy. The appearance of an efficient Soviet navy in the Mediterranean, and the material and diplomatic help given by Moscow to most Arab countries, coupled with the withdrawal of British, French and American bases, complete the picture. We are facing the encirclement of the Atlantic Alliance, while the Soviets claim that the Sixth Fleet should leave the Mediterranean waters. The situation is serious.

Let us now consider the three entrances to the Mediterranean, for it seems to me that this topic could be profitably discussed at this conference.

With the Suez Canal closed after nearly a century of intense activity, the Mediterranean is reverting to a condition of relative stagnation. It is true that every day there are afloat 2,600 vessels, of which 1,000 are in ports and 1,600 at sea, but it is nevertheless true that the main lines of commerce run now outside Gibraltar. The question therefore arises: Is it advisable to promote the reopening of the Suez Canal?

The Russians have an obvious interest in reopening the Canal for the purpose of sending their warships from the Black Sea and the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. They may not, however, be quite so interested in enlarging it, as this might facilitate the position of the oil companies, which with their giant tankers are at present using the route round the Cape. In order to reopen and enlarge the Suez Canal a large amount of capital would be required at a low rate of interest. Let us remember what happened with the Aswan High Dam. The Americans refused to allot the capital for that important public work. The Soviets gladly stepped in and that was the beginning of their consistent and deep penetration in Egypt. Is it judicious to let the Egyptians undertake the reopening of the Canal with the sole assistance of the Russians? The Soviets have a great interest in controlling the Canal zone. It seems to me that it could be advisable to envisage already the establishment of an international fund for the reopening of the Suez Canal. The basic conditions are full sovereignty of the UAR over the entire zone and right of passage in time of war as well as in time of peace without the exclusion of any flag.

With respect to the second entrance (the Dardanelles), are we satisfied that the Montreux Convention of 1936 meets all the requirements for the control of that passage? The interesting paper prepared by Brigadier Thompson gives many details of this convention and I refer to them for the technicalities of the right of passage, but it seems to me that Brigadier Thompson also thinks that the convention is in many respects out of date. The Turkish govern-

ment has been entrusted with the proper application of the Montreux Convention and is responsible for its fair interpretation. Is it really wise to lay the burden of guardianship on a single State which could easily be subjected to undue pressure from its powerful and not too scrupulous neighbour? It goes without saying that in any case the full sovereignty of Turkey should be respected. Attention should be paid also to the consideration that, once the Montreux Convention is brought into question, the Soviets may accept the present regulations with a view to obtaining modifications in their favour. As Brigadier Thompson points out, Stalin once made a bid to have the Montreux agreements revised with the intention of establishing a Russian naval base in the Dodecanese.

I do not think that it will serve any practical purpose for this Conference to debate the Anglo-Spanish dispute, but it is necessary to bear in mind that if Gibraltar, under Spanish pressure, is relinquished by England, the control of that Strait in time of war would pass to Spain and Morocco. There was once talk about a Mediterranean Pact which could include France, Italy, Spain, Morocco and also Great Britain, but the conditions of that pact never materialized. I confess that I did not have the time to go deeply into Jebran Chamieh's excellent paper, but I can only endorse what he says in number 3 of his conclusions.

So much for the three gates of the Mediterranean. If we decide to discuss these questions, let us remember that they involve consideration of many important points of international law.

My paper draws attention to the fact that the Western Powers have lost practically every foothold on North African soil and in the Middle East. We are glad that the states on the North African coast and those of the Middle East are now free and independent, but we deplore the policy of intimidation that the Soviet Union has adopted towards them. We also deplore that Moscow is exploiting the conflict between Arabs and Jews.

If we decide to discuss this question also, special attention should be given to the Security Council Resolution of 1967, to the status of Jerusalem and to the claims of the Palestinians. This last problem is no longer an economic one but it has important political implications. For the purpose of this conference let us take note that from Syria to Libya, with the sole exception of the state of Israel, Soviet influence is practically unchallenged. The dissemination of communist ideology is spreading in the whole zone. In addition to loans, tanks, artillery, anti-aircraft guns, trucks and small arms, and equipment in ample supply, the Soviets are furnishing the Arab states with revolutionary ideas.

We would like to see the Arab states less dependent on Moscow, but is this possible to achieve?

Moscow has no interest in the establishment of a lasting peace in the

Middle East. A pertinent question is: therefore: What are the implications for Europe of the conflict between Arabs and Jews? What are the chances of settling their controversies?

It is clear that there are many problems intimately connected with the policy that the Soviet Union is pursuing in the Mediterranean, but to remain close to the subject let us examine what there is behind the Soviet penetration in that sea. I submit that Moscow is trying to place herself in a position to control events in the Mediterranean zone and to prevent them from being influenced by any other Power to the possible disadvantage of Soviet interests. I submit also that the main purpose of the Soviet presence in the Mediterranean with a fleet of considerable strength is to counterbalance and restrain the movements of the Sixth Fleet and eventually to obtain its withdrawal.

This is the summary of the first part of my paper.

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In the second part I maintain that we are confronted with an imperialistic policy and I point out that the policy of the Soviets is to a certain extent the continuation of the policy of the Czars.

The idea of equipping and maintaining an army and navy equal or superior to the forces of the Western nations is not a communist one: it is a Russian one.

Peter's personal interest in maritime affairs with a view to reaching ice-free waters is well known. The secret of his success was the same as that of the Soviet dictators. It consisted in his having organized a highly effective training system for turning out young men who would blindly serve his revolutionary purposes. His successors were no less autocrats than he himself. Their authority was not controlled. Physical coercion and psychological pressure were common in the Russian empire as they are now in the Soviet Union. Democracy was not a method of government favoured by the Czars.

If "imperialism" means the policy of extending control over territories lying outside the nation's natural boundaries, the Soviet Union is surely an imperialist country. For what is Brezhnev planning in the Mediterranean area, if not to put the Russian fleet and aviation in a position to intimidate and eventually dominate the Arab states? Some very pertinent observations on this subject are made by Professor Waldman in his paper.

The main purpose of the Soviet Mediterranean task force is to exert intimidation and pressure, to instil reverential regard, without actually having to fire a shot (see page 6 of my report). But even if we discount the probability of a major naval conflict, the very fact that Moscow is interested in keeping tensions high constitutes in itself not only a potential but an

actual danger. The Soviet Union is cynically exploiting the only valid element which keeps the Arabs united, namely their hostility towards the Jews. Excited by nationalist propaganda the Arabs are asking for weapons and Russia furnishes tanks, artillery, anti-aircraft guns, trucks and small arms in addition to fighter-bombers and helicopters. Israel is a state recognized by the United Nations and as such has a right to peaceful existence. The Arabs, armed by the Soviets, contest that right.

Algeria also is a recipient of Soviet arms. It is plain that Moscow, by calling at Algerian ports, is attempting to pave the way for more permanent base rights. In this respect it is very interesting to note what Brian Crozier points out in his valuable paper on Soviet penetration in Northern Africa. In Algeria there is a general hostility to imperialism, but is it quite true that her special relationship with France constitutes a valid barrier to Soviet penetration? Soviet technical and economic penetration continues in that country also on a very large scale.

As for the policy of France - in Libya, Algeria and elsewhere - one could make a very long speech. For the purpose of our debate it will suffice to say that France's attitude differs totally to that of America over the Mediterranean question. I do not know if it is advisable to go deeply into this question, but it is a fact that a better co-ordination of policy amongst the Western powers is necessary. In some of his assertions, for instance, Pompidou has given the impression that he is against the presence of the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean. This is very dangerous and helps Soviet propaganda. Only the other day M. Chaban-Delmas said that the French Government affirms the complete independence of France from the two Superpowers. This is hardly the speech of an Ally.

It is clear that the Kremlin is challenging the position of the Atlantic Powers and in particular of the Sixth Fleet.

The question therefore arises: Is there an answer to that challenge? I suggest, however, that there is a proper answer to the Russian challenge, and it was given by President Nixon himself a few days ago. His visit to the Sixth Fleet and his speech from the "Saratoga" was the proper and timely answer to that challenge.

Also in view of the forthcoming European Conference for Security and Co-operation proposed by the Warsaw Pact and already accepted by the NATO Powers it is imperative to let the Soviets know that we are definitely opposed to a substantial change in the balance of power in Europe as well as in the Mediterranean.

I suggest further that the NATO Powers should strengthen their Mediterranean defence and adopt a more co-operative attitude towards Spain and Greece. These two countries are essential for the defence of Western prestige in the Mediterranean. Finally the extreme political and strategic importance of Italy and Turkey should be fully appreciated.

International Interdoc Conference
Rimini, Italy
16, 17, 18 October, 1970

(10) 

NATO AND RUSSIAN PENETRATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

by Brigadier W. F. K. Thompson

Introduction

Any examination of NATO's role in the face of Russia's penetration into the Mediterranean must of necessity deal with Russian policy towards that area. As, however, a detailed consideration of this is the subject of another paper, I have, as far as possible, confined myself to its broader manifestations.

Only four of the 17 Mediterranean countries are signatories of the North Atlantic Treaty, and only three (Greece, Italy and Turkey) are at present members of NATO. Nevertheless, the strategic importance of the Mediterranean to the Alliance as a whole can hardly be exaggerated. In the paper that follows I have set out what seem to me to be the salient points of the strategic importance of the area, the political, economic and military situation as it has developed, the nature of the threat and the action which NATO might take to deal with it.

Strategic Importance

The Mediterranean forms a natural area of conflict between NATO and Russian interests. For the three wholly Mediterranean NATO powers it is their only sea link with the world in general, while for the others it is a most important highway for trade, particularly when the Suez Canal is open. From the Russian point of view, ever since Peter the Great aspired to turn Russia into a maritime power, the need for access to the warm waters of the world has caused Russia to follow a forward policy towards the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf.

It is estimated that on any day there are some 2,600 merchant ships in the Mediterranean, about 1,500 at sea, of which 1,200 would belong to members of the Alliance. Each year the seaborne imports and exports of Greece, Italy and Turkey total some 160 million tons.

Vis-à-vis Russia, the West is operating on exterior lines of communications. By sea these are lengthened for Western Europe by 4,000 miles or more following the closure of the Suez Canal. Before the Arab-Israeli war closed the Canal in 1967, an average of 50 ships a day passed through it, with an annual displacement not far short of 250 million tons. In 1965 155 million tons of oil and 28 million tons of other goods passed through the Canal from south to north, while eight million tons of oil and 34 million tons of other goods went in the other direction. Since the Canal can no longer be regarded as a secure route, the great oil companies have built giant tankers that can deliver oil more cheaply than was the case before the Canal was closed (ships using the Canal were limited to 70,000 tons displacement). Nevertheless, whether the oil comes through the Canal or not it must reach Greece, Italy and Turkey by the Mediterranean, while France gets most of her oil from North Africa, Algeria and now Libya.

For Russia the Mediterranean is the route from her warm water ports on the Black Sea to the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. To get there her ships must first pass through the Dardanelles, which, under the Montreux Convention of 1936, are under Turkish control. Moreover, the Turkish Straits are so shallow that submarines must go through on the surface.

The Montreux Convention was signed by Australia, Bulgaria, France, Britain, Greece, Japan; Rumania, Russia, Turkey and Yugoslavia. Russia tried to get the Treaty revised at Yalta. From 1956 onwards, any of the signatories could give two years' notice of renunciation - none has done so. The Convention provides for the free passage of merchant ships in peace, and in a war in which Turkey is neutral. The Black Sea powers are permitted to send capital ships through the Straits providing they pass singly and are not accompanied by more than two destroyers. Small naval craft of Black Sea powers may pass without restriction, and similar craft of non-Black Sea powers may pass into the Black Sea. Small naval craft are defined as from 100 to 10,000 tons displacement, having guns not exceeding 203mm calibre. In this respect the Treaty is out of date as modern ships rely on aircraft or guided missiles for their main armament. The latter is particularly

true of the Russian Navy, which may be the reason why Russia has not again raised the question of revision.

Having passed the Turkish Straits Russia's Black Sea fleet has still to negotiate either the Suez Canal or the Straits of Gibraltar before reaching the open sea. The former has been closed since the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, but paramountcy in Egypt and at the exit from the Red Sea has passed from the West to Russia, who if and when the Canal is again open would be able to control its use in war. The Straits of Gibraltar are still firmly controlled by the West. By Spain with a United States Naval Base at Roja, near Cadiz, and the British base at Gibraltar. So far no method has been found of preventing hostile submarines from navigating these Straits. Also of strategic significance are the narrows between Sicily and the African shore, where Malta holds a key position.

Turkey, though a firm member of NATO, has recently been mending her fences with Russia, who has given her diplomatic support vis-à-vis Greece in Cyprus. There is, moreover, considerable anti-Americanism in Turkey. Russia has also supported Spain in her dispute with Britain over Gibraltar.

Even if Russia were unable to win assured access to the oceans through the Mediterranean, her ability to use the sea or to deny its use to NATO could be of great strategic importance. On the one hand, it would expose the under-belly of Europe to Russian maritime power; on the other, it would push back, for some 2,000 miles, that most potent instrument at SACEUR's disposal in war, the United States Sixth Fleet.

In order to put forward suggestions as to how NATO should counter the increasing penetration of the Mediterranean by Russian influence, it is necessary to say something of the economic, political, and military situation as it is today and then to consider the nature of the threat.

Present Situation

Politically the Mediterranean has never, since it was the mere nostrum of the Roman Empire, been in any sense a politically unified region. Far from it, and the most obvious and least happy aspect of

the situation has been the continual disunity within the North Atlantic Alliance towards the problems of the area. It was the United States that put an end to the ill-fated efforts of France and Britain to bring about an end to the growing Russian influence in Egypt, in 1956; Turko-Greek rivalry bedevils the politics of Cyprus, where Britain still retains sovereign base areas; Northern members of the Alliance are among the most outspoken critics of the Greek Regime; while it is in the Mediterranean-Middle East area that France most ardently pursues a policy aimed as much at reducing United States influence as that of Russia.

Economically, the most significant factor is the difference in wealth and population between the European and the Arab shore, even though the former includes the least prosperous areas of Western Europe, while the latter is gaining increasing wealth from developing oilfields. In 1967, the total population of the 17 Mediterranean countries, including Cyprus and Malta, was 280 million, supporting armed forces of 2.8 million. Of this population, that of the European coast, from Spain to Turkey, accounted for over 200 million, with a total GNP of 240 billion dollars, while the Arab coast from Syria to Morocco had a population of 75 million, nearly half in Egypt, with a GNP of only 16 billion dollars.

Strategically, Western Europe has been losing ground in the Middle East and Mediterranean since 1945 and NATO since 1955. At the end of World War II, Greece and the Middle East, from Syria to Libya were in British hands, while the remainder of North Africa, with the exception of Spanish possessions, was in French occupation or under French influence.

Stalin's bid to have the Montreux agreements revised in his favour and for the establishment of Russian bases in the Dodecanese and Libya were rejected by his Western Allies. His attempt to get a frontage on the Mediterranean by supporting the communist insurgents in Greece and by putting pressure on Turkey led to the United States accepting responsibility for the security of those two countries in 1947, while the defection of Tito's Yugoslavia from the Comintern sealed the fate of the Greek communists and left the Russian submarine base at

Valona in Albania isolated. (Albania now supports Mao and is no longer a member of the Warsaw Pact). The American commitment to Turkey and Greece was backed up by the powerful Sixth Fleet and with American air bases in Libya, Morocco and Spain.

When the North Atlantic Treaty was signed, Algeria was included in NATO territory and the long established British Naval Mediterranean Command continued as a separate command, AFMED, under NATO with responsibility for the protection of the sea lanes through the area. The Mediterranean was virtually a NATO lake.

Today, Britain is out of the whole area, with the exception of Gibraltar, certain base facilities in Malta and two sovereign base enclaves in Cyprus. Algeria is outside the NATO area, France and the United States are out of North Africa, with the exception of a French air base near Tel el Kebir, and France, though still a member of the North Atlantic Alliance, has withdrawn from NATO.

Syria, Egypt and Algeria have become entirely dependent on Russian arms and Russian military missions and technicians are active in all these countries. Russia has also supplied some arms to Cyprus. Naval and air base facilities are available for the Russians in Syria and Egypt, and air base facilities in Algeria. Since 1967, Russia has established a permanent Naval Command in the Mediterranean, where her fleet varies in strength from 35 to 75 vessels, about half of which are for logistic support, The main purpose of this Russian fleet is to support Russian diplomacy by showing the flag. In composition its main naval role appears to be to keep tabs on NATO naval activities, particularly those of the US Sixth Fleet, and for anti-submarine and small scale amphibious warfare it also has a considerable ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore guided missile capability.

Russia's strategic aims in the area appear to be: to become the paramount power in the Middle East; to outflank NATO from the south; and to bring about the withdrawal of the American Sixth Fleet from the Mediterranean. In April 1967, at a meeting at Karlovy Vary, Mr Brezhnev told Communist Party leaders from 24 countries that "There is no justification for the permanent presence of the United States Navy in the waters washing the shores of Southern Europe.... The time has come for the demand for the removal of the United States

Sixth Fleet from the Mediterranean to be loudly proclaimed". Sentiments that at the present time find some echo in the United States among those bent on cutting the cost of defence, those who believe that their European Allies should do more in their own defence, and those who are historically isolationist or emotionally "contractors out".

On the allied side, the United States Sixth Fleet is by far the most powerful embodiment of maritime power in the area. Composed of some 50 vessels, 25,000 men and 200 aircraft, it comprises, besides its own logistic support, two operational task forces: an attack carrier striking force with nuclear capability, and a strike radius of over 1,000 miles; and an amphibious assault force, including 2,000 Marines. In war, the whole comes under SACEUR. In times of crisis, the Sixth Fleet is reinforced by an anti-submarine force. Its Commander also controls the American Polaris submarines in the Mediterranean allocated to NATO.

Of the other NATO Navies in the Mediterranean, the Italian is the largest and most modern, larger than Russia's Mediterranean fleet. The Greek and Turkish Navies are of very limited capability and badly in need of new ships.

General de Gaulle withdrew most of the French Fleet from the Mediterranean, but left some 12 frigates, some escort vessels and submarines. Despite its withdrawal from NATO the French fleet still exercises with Allied Navies, and could quickly return to the Mediterranean, though the great naval bases at Tel el Kebir and Bizerta have been relinquished.

Although the rapidly changing balance of influence in the Mediterranean - influence rather than power - is going against NATO, the Alliance has so far done little more than to "take note" of these developments. Following the Czechoslovakia crisis of 1968, NATO Ministers declared that any Soviet intervention affecting the situation in the Mediterranean "would create an international crisis with grave consequences". At Reykjavik, in June 1968, they announced their intention to set up a Maritime Air Command Mediterranean (MARAIRMED) to provide a co-ordinating Headquarters, under CINCSOUTH, for surveillance of Russian naval activities in the Mediteranean.

This has since been done with Greek, Italian, Turkish, UK, and US contributions, with Britain transferring a Maritime Reconnaissance Squadron from the UK to Malta for the purpose. This command has a good working arrangement with the French maritime forces, the two harmonize their activities and share the result.

They also announced their intention of establishing an "On Call" NATO Naval Task Force for the Mediterranean. At the NATO Defence Planning Committee meeting in January 1969, it was announced that this force would be called together periodically for exercise and diplomatic visits. The force would consist of three or four destroyer-type ships, contributed by Italy, the UK and the USA, with later contributions from Greece and Turkey. Britain's normal contribution of 2 frigates and a guided missile destroyer are a detachment from her Atlantic fleet.

Subsequent NATO meetings have produced little except pious platitudes about "frequent consultation in depth" and the need for "constant vigilance". As we meet, the NATO Council in Permanent Session is preparing a detailed report on the situation in the Mediterranean for presentation to the Ministerial Meeting of the Council in December.

So much for the present situation. Details of the NATO Command structure in the Mediterranean, and of naval forces in that area (the latter will be brought up to date after I have visited Headquarters, NATO South at Naples prior to our meeting at Rimini) are set out at the end of this paper in two appendices. Before going on to consider what steps NATO should take to meet the developing situation it is necessary to consider the nature of the threat.

The Threat

In general war air power is the key to maritime operations in the Mediterranean, as the then British Defence Secretary, Mr Denis Healey, said in February 1969, - "..... as long as we have complete air superiority in the Mediterranean the threat of these (Russian) ships is very limited". The present situation is that the greatly superior numbers of aircraft of the Warsaw Pact (about 4:1 in tactical aircraft) can only reach the Mediterranean by penetrating NATO's

air defences. It is also true that the best aircraft in the West are better than those of Russia, but whereas the Warsaw Pact has one modern fighter for every one that is obsolete, NATO's ratio of obsolete aircraft is twice as high.

There is no doubt that the necessary local air superiority for secure operation of the US Sixth Fleet can still be procured. On the other hand the NATO air defences, the lack of seaborne air cover and the distance of their land-based aircraft from the Mediterranean denies such air cover to the Russian fleet. The presence, however, of this fleet in the Mediterranean means that the Sixth Fleet has an additional task in war. Instead of air support for NATO's land forces being the first priority, this must now be given to neutralizing the Russian naval presence in the Mediterranean.

Moreover, the potential of the Russian air threat to NATO's southern flank has been greatly increased by events in the Middle East and along the northern littoral of Africa. The Russians have been supplying their Arab clients with aircraft and spare parts well in excess of what would be necessary to maintain the present Arab air forces, even against a high wastage rate. In Egypt they have constructed some 200 hardened aircraft shelters in excess of the number required for Egypt's existing air force. This could enable the Russians to establish their own air forces on Arab territory very quickly.

In the Eastern Mediterranean such use by Russia of airfields could be countered from NATO's bases in Turkey, Southern Greece, Crete and Italy. In the Western Mediterranean, which is far wider, any such use of Algerian bases by Russia would be a direct threat to NATO sea communications. There is good reason to hope that President Boumedienne will take care that Algeria does not fall under Russian domination to the extent that Egypt already has. For one thing the French connection is economically of great importance. But Algeria receives all military aircraft from Russia, and a situation highly adverse to NATO's security could develop far more quickly than NATO could take effective counter-measures.

The most necessary counter-measure for NATO to take for the

protection of the sea lanes on the Western Mediterranean, and to be in a position to avoid blackmail in time of crisis is to mend her fences with Spain. Spanish air bases on the mainland and in the Balleric Islands could provide the necessary air cover.

The most difficult task of NATO's Maritime Forces in the Mediterranean is to keep track of Russia's nuclear-propelled submarines, whose proportion of a dozen or so, thought to be at any time in the Mediterranean, is increasing. Unlike most of the Russian Mediterranean Fleet these are based in the North and enter the Mediterranean via the Straits of Gibraltar. At present there is no really effective way of keeping track of Russian submarines entering and leaving the Mediterranean by these Straits, and while there is no single technical answer to the problem a great deal more could be done than is done at present, from Gibraltar, and even more with Spanish co-operation.

But general war is the last thing the Russians want to provoke. Their purpose in the Mediterranean and Middle East is to substitute Russian for American influence, to have political control of the land-bridge to Africa and of the Suez Canal route to the Indian Ocean and beyond, so that they can exploit their rapidly increasing maritime power to ensure that Russian rather than Chinese or Japanese influence takes over in Southern and South East Asia, if that of America and Britain declines, and to outflank NATO and bring her influence to bear on the underbelly of Europe.

Referring to the Mediterranean situation, Vice-Admiral Smirnov said in 1968: "But what balance of forces is there? Until the Soviet ships appeared, the American Sixth Fleet contributed the only 'balance of forces'. It is clear to any unprejudiced person that **the** Americans are lamenting the loss of their ability to threaten coastal states seeking political independence, to prepare military adventures, to support reactionary regimes and counter-revolution.....Our state is, as is well known, a Black Sea state and, therefore, a Mediterranean power and it cannot remain indifferent to the intrigues of the lovers of military adventures organized so near the borders of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries." (Red Star, November 12, 1968).

What we are seeing in the Mediterranean is all part of what I call "Super-power Chess", by which each side seeks by all means short of an armed clash between them, to maintain or enlarge their area of influence at the expense of the other. Game it may be, but the outcome is vital to the future of Western Europe. Moreover, it is a game in which we must remain committed to the side of the United States, for if we are to maintain the principles of the open society, I do not believe that Western Europe can afford to adopt Charles de Gaulle's Byzantine view, showing equal concern over the threat from the barbarians of the West as from those of the East. On the other hand the maintenance of French influence in North Africa is to the West's advantage as a whole.

The first round was played over Cuba, in which Russia, lacking the Queen - strategic mobility -, had to concede in the face of America's overwhelming local conventional superiority. Since then Russia has been building up her strategic mobility and resetting the board for a return match in the Mediterranean and Middle East. The essence of the game is to be in a position to turn local situations to one's own advantage, or at least prevent their being turned against one. This is primarily a matter of diplomacy and economic action to ensure that, when the time comes, over-flying rights for military forces in peacetime and the use of port and airfield facilities are forthcoming, so as to ensure the rapid assembly of the requisite conventional forces in the area.

A measure of Russia's progress is the unlikelihood that an American President would today order the Marines into the Lebanon in the circumstances in which they landed there in 1958. Though were he to do so, I have no doubt that the Russians would back down. There are many ways into danger in this game of super-power chess. One undoubtedly lies in allied disunity in any situation that may arise; the other by too timid a response. Russia cannot be blamed if from the Czechoslovakian crisis she draws the lesson that she can at any time mobilize and deploy large forces in Central Europe, or elsewhere, without fear of any reaction from NATO, other than the cancellation of long planned military exercises which the Russians might label provocative!

It cannot be stressed too often that Marxists are taught to look at every situation in the round, taking into account all relevant factors: political, economic, psychological and military. That Russian ambitions, whether springing from the nature of historically

conditioned imperialism or Marxist-Leninist ideology, are expansionist, and that so long as this is the case there can be no peace, if the open societies are to be preserved, except as understood by Lenin when he defined peace as the continuation of war by other means.

NATO Action

The general nature of the danger in the situation developing in the Middle East and Mediterranean is clear. To particularize is always dangerous, for if there is one thing to be learnt from history it is that what actually occurs is almost always unforeseen. But to look for an example of a highly dangerous situation which might occur, one has only to consider the situation in Yugoslavia following the death of Tito. If, as is possible, this were to lead to an internal split (only under Tito has the country been united other than by Serb domination), then an opportunity would be offered for Russia to establish a dominating influence over the country, an opportunity considerably enhanced by the growth of Russia's maritime presence. The political consequences of such an event in Italy and the strategic consequences for Greece and Turkey are sufficiently alarming to underline the importance of NATO taking action, at least to prevent any further deterioration in the Mediterranean situation. Another danger-spot is Greek and Turkish Thrace, where Bulgaria could start a war as a Russian proxy to give her control of the exits from the Black Sea. This danger is enhanced by the difficult relations between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus. To ensure that no such temptation is presented to the Russians, regular NATO exercises are held in the area for the local forces and ACE mobile force which brings British, German, Belgian and additional American forces into the area, thus demonstrating Allied solidarity. A large exercise is in progress at this time. The exercise area unusually includes both Greek and Turkish territories.

The purpose of this paper is not to put forward cut and dried solutions but to introduce and stimulate discussion. For which purpose I would like to put forward five proposals for your consideration:

- (i) that NATO must insist that any East-West discussion on European security should deal with the situation as a whole, dealing in particular with NATO's flanks, the Mediterranean and Middle East. It should on no account be confined solely to the situation in Central Europe;
- (ii) that Western Europe, with or without the United States, should propose a Colombo plan for the Mediterranean-Middle East area;

- (iii) that a Mediterranean Committee should be established to advise the North Atlantic Council on political and military events in the area and to recommend actions to counter growing Russian influence;
- (iv) that the Greek and Turkish fleets and air forces be modernized;
- (v) that Spain should be invited to join NATO;
- (vi) that Malta should join NATO or become officially associated.

Basic to any Allied action in the area is the need to establish unity of purpose among the signatories of the North Atlantic Treaty. The principal causes of dissension at the present time among countries opposed to the further extension of Russian influence in the area, are: the Turko-Greek quarrel over Cyprus; the attitudes of some Alliance countries to the Greek and Spanish regimes and the highly individualist policies of France

As far as the members of the Western European Union and the Scandinavian members of NATO are concerned, I would suggest that their most fundamental interest is the preservation of their open societies. The concept of the "open society" is, however, a most sophisticated one, requiring the maintenance of a nice balance between discipline and freedom, lest the latter degenerate into licence, a balance which must needs be struck at different points according to the historical background, social development and temperament of the peoples concerned. Some societies, though recognizably open, are more open than others.

Clearly it would be of political advantage were all members of the North Atlantic Alliance to come within the definition of open societies. Some do not and this has led to emotionalism clouding the relationship between some members of the Alliance with Greece and Portugal, and with Spain. These divisive attitudes, though not without some justification, we can ill afford at the present time. Moreover, they appear to me to be frequently lacking in realism, devoid of historical perspective and on occasion ill-informed.

While acknowledging the political disadvantages of alliance with countries whose practices fall short of the ideals of the "open societies", it is as well to remember that should it come to war, they are likely to be a good deal more effective than some of their severest critics, some of whose forces are inadequate in size, training and equipment. French policy is a notable exception in this matter, as

she is busy strengthening her relations with Greece and Spain.

(a) Turning to the first of the suggested areas for NATO action, we must consider the place of the Middle East and Mediterranean in any East-West security discussions that may come about.

Recognizing a military stalemate in Central Europe, which the West calls détente, Russia's primary aim in proposing East-West discussions on European security appears to be to get a Western guarantee of her imperial frontiers in Central Europe, so that she can turn her attention elsewhere: to eliminate American influence from the Mediterranean and Middle East, and from Southern and South East Asia, while ensuring that China's influence is contained. At the present time, Russia is playing a very bold hand in the Middle East, a boldness which I attribute to the complete lack of NATO response at the time of the Czech crisis (other than the cancellation of an exercise in Bavaria!) and the cracking of the American home front under the impact of the Vietnam War.

If the Russians still want discussions, and with the accelerating disarmament of the West there may be some doubt about this, then the situation must be discussed as a whole and not be broken up into packages for Russian convenience. Nor must any agreement be reached that would imply tacit approval of the Brezhnev doctrine.

(b) A long-term settlement must take account of the economic situation of the countries in the Mediterranean area. These vary greatly, and through the discovery of oil some of the poorest are now on the road to wealth. Its distribution is, however, arbitrary and takes little account of Egypt's great and growing population. Nor is it only a matter of capital investment, of even greater importance is technical training and assistance. Greece, Turkey and Southern Italy also have their problems. This is not the place to go into details of a scheme for economic self-help, along the lines of the Colombo plan, which would enable European and Israeli know-how to be linked with Arab oil for the mutual benefit of the whole region. Such a concept deserves consideration, as does the question of whether the initiative for launching such a scheme should come from Western Europe or from the North Atlantic Treaty. The overt support of the United States would be of considerable economic benefit.

The suggestion for setting up a special committee to advise the NATO Council on Mediterranean affairs also deserves our consideration.

We are, as our own discussion has shown, dealing with an important and most intricate area from which politicians' eyes all too often stray to NATO's central front.

The Turkish and Greek navies have difficulty in co-operating with the naval forces of other allies in the Mediterranean because of the age of their ships. To expand NATO air forces in AFSOUTH would be a major operation of great expense involving airfield construction and the recasting of their support system. What is essential is that the Turkish and Greek air forces be reequipped with modern aircraft. These are at present inferior to those of Russia and her satellites. It cannot be right that these two allies should have to face Russia with aircraft far inferior to those which the USA and France have provided for Israel against Egypt.

Strategically Spain should be a member of NATO. That she is not is partly due to emotional and irrational reasons. These may not be overcome before Franco dies but a reconciliation with Spain would be in line with a consolidation of Western Europe and some compensation for a run-down of United States forces in Europe, should this occur.

Though Malta is not a member of NATO, there are two important NATO headquarters stationed there. It is strategically highly desirable that she should either become a full member or an associate having special status. The degree of her participation, should she wish it, could be much on the same lines as that of Iceland.

Appendix ' A '

NATO Command Structure in the Mediterranean

Headquarters Allied Forces Southern Europe

Located in Naples, exercises overall command under SHAPE. CINCSOUTH is always an American Admiral.

Allied Forces Southern Europe (AFSOUTH) has the following subordinate Commands:

- (i) NAVSOUTH Commanded by an Italian Admiral with HQ in Malta.
- (ii) AIR SOUTH Under Command of an American Air Force General. HQ in Naples. Embraces the areas of the two Land Commands:
 - (a) Italy, which it supports with Fifth ATAF, HQ at Vicenza.
 - (b) Greece and Turkey, which it supports with Sixth ATAF, HQ at Izmir, Turkey.
- (iii) LANDSOUTH Under Command of an Italian General, has the task of defending Italy's northern and north eastern frontiers. Since withdrawal of France from NATO is physically cut off from AFCENT. HQ at Verona.
- (iv) LANDSOUTHEAST Commanded by an American General. Responsible for defence of Greece and Turkey. It is responsible for controlling the Turkish Straits. HQ at Izmir, Turkey.

In addition, Cincsouth has direct control of the following task forces:

(A) UNITED STATES SIXTH FLEET

In peacetime, the Sixth Fleet is answerable to the C-in-C United States Navies in Europe, whose HQ is in London. In war, or for exercise purposes, the SIXTH FLEET becomes STRIKE FORCE SOUTH under CINCSOUTH. Commander, SIXTH FLEET, also commands American Polaris submarine force in the MEDITERRANEAN. SIXTH FLEET comprises some 50 ships, 200 aircraft and 25,000 men.

It consists of three main Task Forces:

Task Force 60 An attack carrier task force made up of two large carriers, two cruisers equipped with surface-to-air missiles, rocket-launched anti-submarine weapons and anti-submarine helicopters.

Task Force 61 An amphibious task force consisting of a squadron of amphibious shipping including attack transport ships, minesweepers and assault craft.

Task Force 62. A 2,000-strong landing force of Marines.

Task Force 63 is a logistic support force containing tankers, repair and supply ships. In time of crisis, SIXTH FLEET is reinforced by Task Force 66, an anti-submarine force having specialized aircraft and destroyers.

- (B) MARAIMED. Maritime Air Command, Mediterranean. Task of surveillance of Russian naval activities in Mediterranean. Contributors: Greece, Turkey, Italy, United Kindom and United States of America.

Appendix B.

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF NAVAL VESSELS
IN MEDITERRANEAN

	N.A.T.O.					France**	Total
	U.S.A.	G.B.	It.	Gr.	Tur.		
1. Attack Aircraft Carrier	2	-	-	-	-	2	4
2. Escort/Helicopter Carrier	-	1*	-	-	-	1	2
3. Cruisers	2	-	-	-	-	2	4
4. Missile Carriers	1	-	4	-	-	-	5
5. Destroyers/Frigates	20	3*	19	12	10	41	105
6. Missile Destroyers/Frigates	4	-	2	-	-	-	6
7. Coastal Escorts, Submarine Chasers Patrolcraft, escort minesweepers	-	-	25	12	22	22	81
8. Minesweepers	4	-	61	14	22	99	200
9. Submarines W/torpedoes	4	-	10	2	10	18	44
10. Submarines W/missiles	1	-	-	-	-	1	2
11. Landing Craft	-	-	60	55	18	10	143
12. Landing Ships	3	-	3	15	-	5	26
13. Auxiliaries	20	-	75	35	22	140	292
14. MTB/MGB	-	-	17	7	27	-	51
15. Rocket Patrolboats	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16. Intelligence Trawlers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

* Varies considerably detached from Atlantic Fleet.

** Not all in Mediterranean.

	<u>Russia Max.</u>	<u>Russia Min.</u>
1.	-	-
2.	1	-
3.	-	1
4.	4	1
5.	10	6
6.	-	2
7.	10	4
8.	4	2
9.	13	6
10.	3	?
11.	8	4
12.	-	-
13.	30	12
14.	-	-
15.	-	-
16.	8	4

OTHERS

Ref. No.	Sp.	Yug.	Cyprus	Albania	Israel	U.A.R.	Sy.	Alg.	Lib.	Leb.	Tun.	Morocco
1.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3.	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	25	5	-	-	2	12	-	-	-	1	-	1
6.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7.	20	20	20 [?]	20 [?]	5	11	3	2	1	5	2	3
8.	25	38	-	8	-	6/9	2	1	2	-	-	-
9.	4	5	-	-	4	16 [?]	-	3	-	-	-	-
10.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11.	29	-	-	-	7 [?]	19	?	-	-	-	-	-
12.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13.	-	-	-	-	10 [?]	?	-	-	-	-	-	-
14.	3	100 [?]	-	14	16 [?]	45	15	19	3	-	-	-
15.	-	?	-	-	5	20	10	-	-	-	-	-
16.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

International Interdoc Conference
Rimini, Italy
16, 17, 18 October, 1970

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

by Prof. Dr. Eric Waldman

Introduction

The last few years witnessed a dramatic change in the balance of power in the Mediterranean basin. It is no longer possible to refer to the Mediterranean Sea as a mare nostrum of NATO. A number of specific events underscored the development of a situation in which the Mediterranean became vulnerable to Soviet efforts of penetration. The Soviet Union successfully challenged the postwar Western position and transformed the Mediterranean Sea and its fifteen littoral states into a most sensitive arena of the East-West conflict.

President Richard Nixon recently compared the situation in the Middle East, the eastern end of this area, with that of the Balkans prior to the outbreak of World War I. With this statement, the American President apparently recognized the inherent danger of a possible confrontation of the superpowers in this part of the world. In other words, the existing tensions should not be seen merely as the upshot of local or regional problems but are to be evaluated as part of the global controversy. Thus the Soviet extension of power into the Mediterranean with its subsequent change of the balance of power in favour of the Soviet Union, represents the implementation of a deliberate Soviet policy designed to outflank NATO, to separate Western Europe from Southeast Europe, Europe from Africa, and eventually after the reopening of the Suez Canal, Europe from Asia.

An examination of the prevailing situation in 1970 reveals that Moscow has been able to make significant advances in this direction. Within fifteen years, beginning with the Soviet-Egyptian arms agreement of 1955, the Soviets have succeeded in becoming solidly entrenched in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, especially in Egypt and Syria, and are presently engaged in working for the control of the western end.

The Soviets managed to transform the Arab defeat in the Six Day war of 1967 into a marked improvement of their own position within the Arab world. A powerful Soviet fleet with up to 61 ships ploughs through the waters of the Mediterranean giving visible proof of Moscow's power and presence. Ships of the Red Eskadra are welcomed in many Mediterranean ports and naval bases, especially in those belonging to Soviet client states. Syria's Latakia and Egypt's Alexandria and Port Said have been used by the Soviet navy for several years.

Also the political climate in this area developed according to Moscow's liking. Nationalist and socialist ideas are spreading throughout the Arab world. Many of the littoral states have recognized the change in the balance of power and are consciously seeking accommodation with the inevitable facts of life. This observation incidentally does not only apply to most of the Middle Eastern or North African Arab states, but equally holds true as far as some of the NATO allies and other littoral countries are concerned.

The United States has compelling reasons to be concerned about these developments and Washington is forced to contemplate the implementation of policies designed to stop any further deterioration of Western influence in this vital area because of its detrimental effect upon the various interests the United States and other Western powers have in the Mediterranean basin.

Ultimately, this paper is concerned with United States foreign policies and their implementation in the Mediterranean theatre of operation, borrowing the term from the military. However, before attempting to analyze and to evaluate these policies, it might be advisable to examine American interests in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East and to review the challenges faced by the Americans in this area. This approach must not distract from the fact that U.S. and Soviet foreign policies concerning the Mediterranean ought to be regarded as part of their global strategy with the Soviet Union providing the dynamic force and the United States in the role of reacting to the challenge.

I. American Interest in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East

One of the major steps in the formulation of foreign policy consists of the effort to define and delineate the national interests and objectives concerning a country's relations with other states, groups of states, or international organizations. The determination of these interests as well as of the state's capabilities and resources must precede the development of any foreign policy programme both in terms of contents and implementation in order to produce a realistic policy best suited under the given circumstances to pursue a country's interests on the international scene. Considering the sequence of the foreign policy process, it becomes quite obvious that the quality of a foreign policy can hardly be better than the quality of the analysis of what the national interests are. When the decision makers are in doubt or confused concerning the interests of their country, the foreign policy programmes worked out by them, are usually ambiguous and frequently self-contradictory.

It has been asserted that some of the frustrations of American policy toward the Arab world are at least in part due to the confusion as to what American interests in the Mediterranean and Middle East really are.

Some of the American interests in the Mediterranean basin are identical with those of other Western or littoral states. For example, the adequate defence of the Arab world in relation to the security of the free world is both of international and American interest. One of the difficulties faced by the American policy-makers is to disentangle U.S. interest from past Western colonial policies. Further complications in defining specific interests are provided by the continuously changing character of the over-all situation after the major Western responsibilities were acquired from the British and French. It is realized that the situation in the Mediterranean never remained static after World War II and reflects the different phases of the East-West confrontation, the global nature of the security problems, the U.S. leadership role and world-wide commitments, and last but not least, the changing relationships and tensions among the littoral states of the Mediterranean.

Primary U.S. interests in the Mediterranean (frequently they are the same as those of other countries) include:

(1) Security considerations.

This category includes the effort to contain (not to eliminate) Soviet influence, the security of Western and Southeastern Europe (NATO), the defence of the Middle East, and the maintenance of a balance of power in the Mediterranean, not withstanding that this last concern constitutes a typical defensive concept which has been deeply eroded by events.

(2) Economic interests.

The United States and the Western powers are vitally interested in maintaining access to Middle Eastern oil under reasonable arrangements since it constitutes the principal source of power for the West European economy (60 per cent of their oil import comes from the Middle East). This interest in the access and availability of oil is the real significance and not the type of commercial and concessionary arrangements.

(3) Communication interests.

The United States is also greatly concerned in maintaining access to air routes, international waterways, air overflights, and refueling rights. This specific area of interest straddles military and commercial considerations.

(4) Interest in stability in the Mediterranean basin.

This category includes U.S. concern with the elimination of tensions among the littoral states (e.g. Arab states versus Israel), as well as support of progressive socio-economic changes within certain countries. The difficulties in realizing this interest, the maintenance of stability during meaningful changes in the domestic arrangements, are overwhelming because at times it requires the support of radical movements which have a tendency to get out of control and to reject ultimately relations with any Western power. Furthermore, some states in which America has some other strong interest, a change from traditionalism to more progressive forms of government and socio-economic arrangements, might result in most undesirable instability.

(5) Cultural interests.

The United States has maintained, especially in the Middle East, a number of institutions of higher learning and is interested in the continuation of their functions. It is one of America's better methods of influencing the emerging leadership group and of providing at the same time a form of "development aid." There are, for example, the American University of Beirut, the American University in Cairo, the Robert College near Istanbul, the Jesuit University in Baghdad (Al-Hikma University), and the Aleppo College in Syria. As a result of these cultural activities, good contacts are cultivated with American colleges and universities and numerous students from the Middle East come to the United States, especially for graduate studies.

(6) International impact of the Mediterranean countries.

The U.S. realizes that actions and international policies of the littoral countries of the Mediterranean might have some telling impact upon American interest in other parts of the world. The non-Arab states have defence relations with the West, e.g. in NATO and CENTO, and this alignment reflects the general support of the Western position in many international matters. The Arab states have adopted a policy of so-called non-alignment and as a result of the impressive Soviet military, economic, and diplomatic support received by them and of their identification with the emerging nations, are often taking the Communist position. U.S. concern rests on two considerations: first these actions tend to prolong international problems as was witnessed in the Congo when the Congo rebels received arms from the Arab nations. Secondly, United Nations peace-keeping efforts might become inhibited and non-aligned groups, such as the Afro-Asian Group, incited to anti-Western or pro-Soviet actions.

This brief enumeration of the categories of U.S. interest might serve to indicate the inherent difficulties in developing an over-all American policy which applies equally well to short and long-range developments.

II. Challenges faced by the United States in the Mediterranean Area

The United States is a relative newcomer to the Mediterranean basin. In the past Washington has as a rule recognized Britain and France as the dominant powers in this part of the world and was perfectly satisfied to have this arrangement reconstituted after the conclusion of World War II. For a variety of reasons, but primarily because of growing Arab nationalism and strife for national independence, British and French influence steadily declined. The final collapse of the British position came in the crisis which followed the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company by Egypt in 1956. Anglo-French military action, supported by Israeli land forces, constituted the single most disastrous incident of postwar Western politics in the Middle East. It broke the last link between Egypt and Britain and enhanced the reputation of the Soviet Union throughout the Arab world. The Soviets had threatened to intervene with military forces in support of the Egyptians. Incidentally, the United States also assisted in ending the ill-conceived invasion but did not benefit in improving her position in the eyes of the Arabs because they continued to identify American with British and French interests. Even the facts of a century of practical non-involvement in Arab affairs and a long record of philanthropic and educational services rendered by the United States, did not change the image of the U.S. The United States was considered to be the successor of the old imperial and colonial powers. Most of the Arab states throughout the Mediterranean basin still regard the Americans as the chief guardian of Western interests which allegedly are diametrically opposed to Arab national and regional aspirations. The U.S., for example, is charged with using the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to bring pro-Western regimes to power or to support them against "progressive" forces. For the Arab nationalists the Americans are "imperialists" of the same kind as the British and French were in the past.

Any American effort to change this image is bound to fail as long as the present Arab-Israeli confrontation continues and the United States is forced to sell arms to Israel and to guarantee her national existence in the face of combined Arab and Soviet pressures.

However, the most serious challenge to the United States in the Mediterranean basin derives from the rather permanent character of the military and political presence of the Soviet Union. It is the task of another presentation to this Conference to analyze and evaluate Soviet policies towards the Mediterranean; therefore, it will suffice to stress in this paper only a few of the outstanding developments which must be considered in a discussion of U.S. policies and responses and of the emerging Soviet-American rivalry which under certain circumstances might be heading towards a collision course.

Soviet attempts to revise the Montreaux Convention at Yalta in 1945 and Stalin's demands to obtain control over some of the prewar Italian colonies in North Africa were definite indications that Moscow's traditional objectives of breaking out from the isolation of the Black Sea and to secure access to the Mediterranean Sea and Persian Gulf were part of the Soviet global strategy. U.S. countermeasures were geared primarily to anticipated overt Soviet military actions. The defence alliances with the northern tier (Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan) concluded by the United States and Britain were supposed to create a military bulwark against Soviet occupation and control. These efforts, however, proved to be entirely ineffective because the Soviets managed to jump over the "frontier zone" by concluding the Soviet-Egyptian arms deal of 1955 and since then to broaden and deepen their penetration throughout the Arab world.

After Egypt had been won as a client in 1955, Syria, Yemen, and Afghanistan (located in the frontier zone) followed.

It is important to emphasize that the Soviet Union obtained her influential position of power in the eastern end of the Mediterranean -- and is presently engaged in the process of extending the control also into the western part -- not through threat of force nor through the support and assistance of Communist subversive movements but by identification with Arab nationalism. Communist and ideological motives hardly played any significant role. Moscow is apparently not in the slightest concerned by the fact that the Communist parties remain outlawed in the Arab states and that Communist leaders are kept imprisoned.

Soviet penetration and expansion of control followed a relatively simple pattern. The supply of arms came first. Development projects, such as the Aswan High Dam, and technical assistance came after. Soviet credits, barter agreements, and acceptance of local currencies increasingly tied the local economies to the Soviet Union.

Simultaneously, the Soviet pursued a diplomacy of "polarization" by assuming the unabashed role of protector of the Arab cause including diplomatic support at the United Nations. At the same time, the Soviet Union labelled the United States as the supporter and protector of Israel. U.S. counterpolicy of antipolarization, consisting of supporting the "conservative" Arab states, showed only limited success and the Six Day War of June 1967 removed the United States almost entirely from any meaningful influence within the Arab world. The Arab military republics broke off diplomatic relations and have failed to restore them up to this time.

Also United States efforts to implement a policy of arms restraint for the entire area failed because of Soviet opposition. Not even the United Nations Security Council Resolution of November 1967 contains any reference to an arms embargo because of Soviet insistence to the contrary.

Probably the most dramatic example of the Soviet presence and rivalry with the United States is the appearance of the Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean. Moscow had attempted much earlier to show its flag in this area, but abandoned the attempt after Albania withdrew berthing privileges in 1961.

The present Soviet Mediterranean fleet represents a development of the last few years. At times there are up to 61 ships in the Red Eskadra. However, they are still no effective counter-balance to the U.S. Sixth Fleet in a non-nuclear shooting war. On the other hand, the Red Mediterranean Fleet gives weight to Soviet actions throughout the basin and makes it abundantly clear that even the waters of the Mediterranean are no longer the sole domain of NATO. Its presence is also of great psychological importance to the Soviet client states and even has made an impact upon other littoral countries. A Yugoslav reaction to the presence of the Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean

is indicative of the change of heart experienced even by a country which has been under considerable pressure from the Soviets for a long period of time. According to Yugoslav opinion, the best would be if both fleets, the U.S. and the Soviet, would "sail away." Yugoslavia suggests that the U.S. Sixth Fleet should leave first because the very reason for which the Soviet fleet chose to come, would thereby be removed. It is also of interest to note that Yugoslavia differentiates between the purpose of the two fleets. The U.S. fleet serves as a tool of pressure to be applied to the Mediterranean countries, while the Soviet fleet does the work of "an instrument of anti-imperialist policy and of a standby ally to these same countries in their efforts to safeguard their freedom and independence."¹

Both NATO and CENTO have shown concern about the impressive growth of the Soviet naval commitment in the Mediterranean, since it is generally believed that its ultimate aim is to deny a U.S. naval presence and to open up a secure passage through the Suez Canal to South Asia.² Soviet Communist Party Chief Brezhnev stated at the meeting of Communist parties at Karlovy Vary, Czechoslovakia on April 24, 1967, that there is no justification for the constant presence of the U.S. fleet in the Mediterranean.

Summing up Soviet strategic objectives in the Mediterranean basin, which must be seen as part of Moscow's global policy, we may note:

- (1) the attempt to utilize military pressure from the African shores against the "soft underbelly of Europe,"
- (2) the desire to keep the sea route open from the Black Sea to the Atlantic,
- (3) the efforts to provide for access to the Persian Gulf in order to secure the sea route to Asia after the contemplated British withdrawal and the reopening of the Suez Canal, and
- (4) the attempt to bring the Middle Eastern oil under Soviet control, a situation which would greatly strengthen Moscow's hands vis à vis the West European states which greatly depend upon this source of power supply.

The present situation in the Mediterranean basin, as far as Soviet influence is concerned, is as follows: In spite of the fact that the Soviet Union has in no case established Communist satellite states, as she has done in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, Soviet dominance in the Arab states of the "revolutionary camp" (Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, South Yemen, Algeria, and increasingly Libya) is most substantial. Egypt is almost entirely taken over by Soviet imperialism and even commando raids across the Suez Canal prior to the present cease-fire have been planned by Soviet military "advisors."

The Soviets were also able to establish a strong foothold in the western end of the Mediterranean. Algeria signed its first arms contract with the Soviet Union in 1968. Substantial arms shipments were recently also received by Libya. Tunisia, still supplied by the United States, is under considerable Soviet pressure and Morocco receives arms from both the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Soviet military aid in the Maghrib outdistances by far similar aid from the U.S. For example, the American military aid programme to Morocco amounts to about 5 million dollars per year while Soviet military hardware for Algeria runs as high as 200 million dollars per year.³

But also non-Arab littoral states have become more cautious as result of the Soviet presence. Turkey shows strong neutralist tendencies and has quietly asked for reduction of the U.S. garrison. A Turkish evaluation of the situation, although not of an official nature, arrives at the conclusion that Turkey must revise its national strategy, free itself from NATO strategy, reject NATO policies which disturb regional stability, find its place in the Middle East and the Arab world, and develop a national war industry of its own.⁴

Even Spain carried on a hard bargaining with the U.S., NATO, and the Soviet Union.

Fortunately also Soviet pressure in the Arab world and in the rest of the Mediterranean basin is limited because of the American presence. The Arab states are conspicuously silent about the U.S. Sixth Fleet because they see in it a barrier to overt Soviet actions. As long as the United States is in the Mediterranean, there always remains the possibility to turn toward the Americans.

III. United States Policies in the Post World War II Era

U.S. foreign policy objectives in the Mediterranean from the end of World War II until the present are primarily concerned with the maintenance of peace and stability in this area and with keeping the littoral states free from Soviet domination.

These objectives constitute the application of the global responsibilities as conceived by the United States for the Mediterranean basin and consist basically of two major general objectives:

(1) The first objective is the containment of Soviet-Communist expansion throughout the world for military-political and ideological reasons. The U.S. regards the Soviet Union as the major competing centre of global power and is convinced that any further expansion of Soviet control over additional territory seriously threatens the security of the United States and the non-Communist world. Further acquisition of territory and positions of strength by Moscow must therefore be prevented. In addition to the security threat posed by the Soviets to the entire non-Communist world community, the U.S. also recognized that wherever Communist dictatorships came into existence, freedom and independence of these nations were destroyed and their national interests completely subordinated to the objectives of Moscow. (The Brezhnev Doctrine of 1968 openly admitted and "justified" this long established Soviet practice). The loss of national independence by nations under Communist rule eliminates the kind of international order in which even small countries can live in security. According to American opinion, even the Soviet strategy of "peaceful coexistence" which made it possible that agreements could be reached on some issues of mutual interest, is bound to be terminated as a result of any substantial expansion of Soviet power.

(2) The second general objective is concerned with the maintenance of stability throughout the world. This objective is in fact merely the other side of the same coin. Instability brings about tensions and disputes which in turn may escalate into major conflicts or even into a direct confrontation of the two superpowers. It also has a detrimental effect upon the internal development of the emergent

countries which require peace and stability in order to develop their economic, social, and political systems. Instability, local tensions, and conditions marked by radical changes present ideal settings for Communist activities and Soviet penetration, which in turn would generate even more involvement by the United States as the major non-Communist world power.⁵

Considering the American global objectives and their application to the Mediterranean area, there is really nothing inherent which would point at any incompatibility of interests of the United States and of the littoral nations.

Global foreign policy objectives are as a rule too general in order to provide sufficient direction in the formulation of specific policies to be employed in the field. For example, not every expansion of Soviet control must necessarily result in a security threat. Also the professed objective of supporting stability is far too general to be of any great guidance value. Actually the maintenance of the status quo is frequently not only impossible but also most undesirable and the suppression of change might eventually result in violent explosions. However, U.S. support for orderly and productive changes is a very reasonable proposition.⁶

While global objectives might at best furnish some general guidelines to the policy-makers, they have frequently provided the general political atmosphere for American responses and reactions to international events.

As has been pointed out before, American noninvolvement in the Mediterranean constituted the rule prior to the end of World War II, although the United States did not fail to make her interests known when, for example, at the end of the First World War the distribution of oil resources were at stake.

American expectations of a resurgence of British influence in the Mediterranean basin proved to be wrong. Britain withdrew from the Palestine problem and also admitted her incapability to assist Greece and Turkey to withstand Soviet pressure following the conclusion of World War II. (On February 21, 1947, Britain notified the

United States that she could no longer support the governments of Greece and Turkey.) It was this growing pressure from Soviet activities, utilizing British weakness, which caused the U.S. to assume its first responsibilities in this area. Originally only the northern tier (Iran, Turkey, and Greece) were affected.⁷

The Truman Doctrine, announced on March 12, 1947 (approved by Congress on May 22, 1947), provided not only 400 million dollars in aid in the first year to Greece and Turkey, but it also put the Soviet Union on notice that the United States would not stand idly by in the face of further Soviet aggression anywhere in the world.

I am fully aware of the broad implications involved if the United States extends assistance to Greece and Turkey. ... One of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion. ... The United Nations is designed to make possible lasting freedom and independence for all its members. We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose on them totalitarian regimes. This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples by direct or indirect aggression undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States.⁸

American involvement in the eastern end of the Mediterranean became even greater when it eventually joined as an associate member the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO, 1959), the successor organization to the Baghdad Pact which was formed in 1955 between Turkey and Iraq and later joined by Iran, Pakistan, and Britain.

The great turning point in Middle Eastern affairs was initiated by the Soviet-Egyptian arms agreement in 1955 and the subsequent Suez crisis and war in 1956. This brought to an end Western collective responsibilities and Western-Soviet rivalry changed to an American-Soviet contest. The United States took up the challenge. The Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957 declared that the U.S. was willing to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of any Middle East

country "requesting such aid against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism." Only Libya and Lebanon formally accepted the protection provided by the Eisenhower Doctrine.

The Eisenhower Doctrine as well as the U.S. military intervention in 1958 in the Lebanon indicate that American interests in the Mediterranean were conceived of being continuously threatened by direct or indirect Soviet aggression. This assumption of the nature of the challenges has not substantially changed up to the present time and the Soviets are still considered as the prime-mover for practically all the difficulties encountered by the Americans in the Mediterranean area. For example, President Nixon in his Report to Congress on February 18, 1970 declared: "... the United States would view any effort by the Soviet Union to seek predominance in the Middle East as a matter of grave concern." This view fails to realize that the existing nuclear stalemate of the superpowers has given the Arab and other littoral states a greater latitude of actions. The June War of 1967 might illustrate this point.

The unchanged position of the United States as far as her basic interests are concerned in the Mediterranean are reflected in President Johnson's statement on the Middle East on June 19, 1967, i.e. after the Arab-Israeli War of the same month. President Johnson stated:

Our country is committed -- and we reiterate that commitment today -- to a peace based on five principles:

- first, the recognized right on national life;
- second, justice for the refugees;
- third, innocent maritime passage;
- fourth, limits on the wasteful and destructive arms race;
- and fifth, political independence and territorial integrity for all.

It was the same spirit which made the United States also support the United Nations Security Council Resolution of November 22, 1967, an attempt to defuse the dangers of a continuation of the Arab-Israeli

tensions which might eventually bring the superpowers into direct conflict and confrontation. At the same time, the U.S. is still attempting to foster good relations with the moderate Arab states and for example, provided arms and aid to Jordan even after the June War of 1967.

As a result of the impressive Soviet support to the United Arab Republic and other Arab nations, the United States, being interested to maintain a balance of force between Israel and the Arab nations, has become the principal supplier of arms, especially aircraft, to Israel. However, the U.S. has no official special commitment to Israel and all public statements of American interests in the Mediterranean or Middle East, always stress the "impartial role" the United States is playing in the Israel-Arab conflict. But the alleged unofficial favouritism toward Israel has had strong repercussions among the Arab states as the severing of diplomatic relations of six Arab governments with Washington has demonstrated.

America's great interest in defusing the Arab-Israeli powderkeg was also reflected in Secretary of State William P. Rogers' address on December 9, 1969 in which he pointed out that the Middle East like "no other area of the world today ... is more important because it could easily again be the source of another serious conflagration." Mr. Rogers re-emphasized American efforts in seeking a solution in accordance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution of November 1967.

The newest attempt to bring peace to the Middle East is the so-called "Rogers Plan" proposed by the American Secretary of State on June 19, 1970. This proposal was eventually accepted by Egypt, Jordan, and Israel. Already on June 9, 1970, Mr. Rogers declared before the House Foreign Affairs Committee that since President Nixon had reaffirmed the United States policy in the Middle East in his February Report, "... the military situation has deteriorated largely as a result of increased Soviet involvement in the air defence of the U.A.R. For the first time the Soviet Union has introduced into a non-bloc country S-3 missiles and Soviet personnel to man them." He also

stated that "the only hope for progress is to convince both the Arabs and the Israelis that compromise is necessary."¹⁰

Following the recommendations of the "Rogers Plan," a cease-fire of at least 90 days and indirect Arab-Israeli peace talks through United Nations mediator Gunnar V. Jarring was agreed upon. The cease-fire commenced on August 7, 1970 and the first discussions of representatives of the three countries with Mr. Jarring have taken place. It is impossible to prophecy if this attempt will restore peace to the Middle East because its outcome depends to a large degree not only upon the decisions of the parties directly engaged in the conflict but also upon what the Soviet Union might consider to be of advantage to the realization of her own objectives. There are probably three major reasons which made Moscow apply pressure on President Nasser to accept the provisions of the Rogers Plan. One might be the recognition of the dangers inherent in a further military escalation especially since Soviet pilots had been engaged and shot down by Israelis. American concern about the intensification of the Soviet military commitment in Egypt was expressed in the strongest terms by the President's national-security advisor Henry Kissinger and two other Administration officials on June 26, 1970. They warned Moscow of the serious consequences of its Mideast policy and considered the possibility of the United States to "expel" Soviet combat troops from Egypt.¹¹ In other words, the U.S. considered definite counteractions to the continuation of the Soviet military build-up on Egyptian soil. A second reason probably is that the Soviets are already so strongly entrenched that a period of consolidation in the eastern end of the Mediterranean -- while simultaneously improving their position in the Maghrib states -- might appear advisable. The third reason is undoubtedly the Soviet interest in reopening the Suez Canal which only will become feasible after an Israeli withdrawal.

Ultimately the implementation of U.S. policies in the Mediterranean vis à vis the Soviet challenge relies on the availability of American and allied military power. The U.S. Sixth Fleet has at least three functions to perform. First of all it is a deterrent force, armed with nuclear weapons; secondly it might be used for interventions

of a non-nuclear nature; and finally it is intended to provide support for any defensive efforts made by NATO littoral states (Turkey, Greece, and Italy.)

Also the conclusion of the new U.S.-Spanish agreement on August 6, 1970 concerning the future use of the air bases at Torrejan and Saragossa and the submarine base at Rota points at the importance of continuing the American military presence in the Mediterranean basin. It is the hope of American strategic planners that the U.S.-Spanish agreement like the Spanish-French military agreement of June 22, 1970 will be followed by additional pacts of military cooperation in order to strengthen the Western position in this part of the world. The Spanish-French agreement has since June been extended to include Portugal. At present the interest is directed to inducing Italy to join also.

Thus the U.S. military presence is based on specific alliances and security arrangements such as NATO and CENTO. However, there is also an autonomous American force in operation in the Mediterranean basin.

The U.S. commitments in the Mediterranean have increased proportionally with the intensification of Soviet activities. However, neither all of America's European allies nor powerful forces within the United States realize the need to maintain and to improve the means required to back up the interests and objectives of the non-Communist countries within the Mediterranean area.

Summary and Conclusions

U.S. foreign policy as applied to the Mediterranean, and especially to the Middle East, has been subjected to criticism from America's allies as well as from several quarters within the United States. For example, with reference to U.S.-Arab relations, there are those who claim that the United States has been too soft, while other critics claim that America has never properly understood the great opportunities offered by a U.S. identification with Arab nationalism. What these critics have overlooked is that strong domestic influences place severe limitations upon the choices the policy-makers can make.

Pro-Israeli groups would like to see stronger support given to Israel because the Arabs are, for all practical purposes, already in the Soviet camp. Senator Frank Lausche (Democrat from Ohio) stated that "we should not permit Russia to obtain domination of the Mediterranean" because the area is vital to the "defence of the United States" and because "Israel is our greatest friend in the Middle East."¹² On the other hand, the pro-Arab lobby in Washington is spreading the view that President Nasser is afraid of getting into more dependency with Moscow and therefore he is more inclined toward a peace move with Israel than he can afford to say publicly.

Attempting to judge objectively alternate policies on the basis which one of them would serve best American and Western interests in the Mediterranean basin, it appears that efforts of carrying out a "balanced policy" as pronounced by Mr. Rogers is in the long run the best choice. A balanced policy includes conscious efforts to reach compromises among all parties concerned, even among the Arab nations themselves. There are of course other alternatives which range from an open American alliance with Israel to full cooperation with the Arab states with the objective in mind of eliminating or at least of curtailing Soviet influence. While an alliance with Israel could be implemented, the same cannot be achieved with the Arab nations because of the Soviet military presence in these countries. Therefore, some of the alleged alternatives are more of an imaginary nature than real.

The real criticism which justly can be levelled against U.S. policies relates to the inherent weakness of the American position throughout the world as a result of domestic difficulties in arriving at a realistic evaluation of the over-all world situation. For example, it is reported that military officials at NATO headquarters are genuinely worried that in the wake of the expected reduction of American military strength in Europe, also the U.S. Sixth Fleet will be cut in size in spite of the fact of the continuous increase of Soviet military strength in the Mediterranean.¹³

The weakness of the American position on the international scene does not only encourage further Soviet initiatives and expansion of control, but it de facto forces allies of the United States to search for solutions for their security. Neutralist trends have made their appearance in NATO countries and compromises with Moscow are considered by several non-Communist governments.

Summing up, it might be stressed that in the case of U.S. foreign policy in the Mediterranean it is not so much the policy which deserves criticism than the deliberate failure to develop and maintain the means required for the conduct of international relations in a world challenged by Soviet imperialism backed up by a powerful military establishment.

Footnotes

1. Belgrade TANYUG International Service in English, 1320 GMT, 4 March 1968.
2. "Increasing Soviet Naval Power," NATO Letter, Vol. XVIII, No. 5, Brussels, May 1970, pp. 19-20.
3. "Arab vs. Arab: Gain for Russia," U.S. News & World Report, July 24, 1967.
4. Sezai Orkunt, (ret. Admiral), "The Soviet Union's Developing Mediterranean Policy," Cumhuriyet, Istanbul, 9 November 1967.
5. John S. Badeau, The American Approach to the Arab World, New York, 1968, pp. 17-18.
6. Ibid., pp. 18-20
7. For an excellent discussion of Soviet-American rivalry in the frontier zone from 1945 until 1968 see J.C. Hurewitz, edit., Soviet American Rivalry in the Middle East, New York, 1969, pp. 5-7.
8. Cited in: George Lenczowski, "Conditions and Prospects for Tranquility in the Middle East," American Enterprise Institute, United States Interest in the Middle East, Washington, October, 1968, p. 14.
9. President Lyndon B. Johnson, The Prospects for Peace, (Foreign Policy Address), Washington, June 19, 1967, pp. 6-7.
10. Secretary of State William P. Rogers, Address to the 1969 Galaxy Conference on Adult Education, Washington, December 9, 1969.
11. "Arms to Israel: The U.S. Moves," Newsweek, July 20, 1970, p.17.
12. "U.S. Urged to Act in Med.," Jerusalem Post, March 8, 1968.
13. "Possible U.S. Cut Disturbing NATO," The Calgary Herald, August 19, 1970.

International Interdoc Conference
Soviet Activities in the Mediterranean
Grand Hotel, Rimini, Italy
16-18 October, 1970

Conclusions

It was stressed from many sides:

Strategic aims of the Soviets in the Mediterranean should be regarded within the context of their global aims.

1. a. counterbalance and possibly outdo the American nuclear capability;
- b. deter China from attacking Russian territory;
- c. threaten non-nuclear European countries with a view to indirect conquest by political means; and
- d. control North African and Middle East countries by furnishing them with military and economic aid.

2. The Soviet Union's strategic aims in the Mediterranean area appear to be:
 - a. to become the paramount power in the Middle East;
 - b. to outflank NATO from the south;
 - c. to bring about the withdrawal of the American Sixth Fleet from the Mediterranean.
 - d. the attempt to utilize military pressure from the African shores against the "soft underbelly of Europe";
 - e. the desire to keep the sea route open from the Black Sea to the Atlantic;
 - f. to try to get access to the Persian Gulf in order to secure the sea route to Asia after the contemplated British withdrawal and the reopening of the Suez Canal.

3. In regard to the attitude of the Arab countries towards Soviet policy a few points were stressed:
 - a. Soviet ideological influence on the Arab peoples should not be exaggerated;
 - b. Arab unity is a myth. Hostility towards Israel unites the Arabs;

- c. Soviet influence is increasing but this is to a large extent the result of the policy of the West or better: lack of policy. The Soviets have exploited their rather weak position, while the West has allowed its position of strength to erode.
- d. The role of Algeria was stressed: Soviet presence and influence is still strong there, but there has been a decline over the past year.

4. Soviet policy towards Israel has two different sides:

- a. The Arab-Israeli conflict;
- b. Their attitude towards Jews in the world and in particular in the Soviet Union.

The history of Soviet-Israeli relations after the Second World War is an account of increasing hostility towards Israel, endangering its existence.

5. In regard to the question as to what should be done in general, and by NATO in particular, concrete suggestions were made in regard to Allied action:

- a. Basic to any Allied action in the area is the need to establish unity of purpose among the signatories of the North Atlantic Treaty;
- b. that NATO must insist that any East-West discussion on European security should deal with the situation as a whole dealing in particular with NATO's flanks, the Mediterranean and Middle East. It should on no account be confined solely to the situation in Central Europe;
- c. that Western Europe, with or without the United States, should propose a Colombo plan for the Mediterranean-Middle East area;
- d. that a Mediterranean Committee should be established to advise the North Atlantic Council on political and military events in the area and to recommend actions to counter growing Russian influence:

- e. that the Greek and Turkish fleet be modernized.
6. A comparison was made between Soviet activities in the Mediterranean and along the northern flank of Europe. There is a clear interdependence. In the view of the Soviet General Staff a mutual relationship exists between these two areas. They form the pincers of the nutcracker encircling Western Europe.
7. The role of several countries was discussed:
- a. France was criticized because of its withdrawal from NATO and its negative attitude towards cooperation. On the other hand it was pointed out that in regard to the Mediterranean, France is very well aware of the increasing Soviet influence and the intensification of anarchism in the Arab world. It is not only aware of this development but has taken initiatives to promote peace in this area.
 - b. Italy. On the Italian side it was stressed that we should be united in our effort to oppose Soviet activities. Unfortunately NATO members are too divided among themselves. The role of the Communist Party of Italy was explained: this party has always tried to disengage Italy from NATO. It is a factor of importance as the events in 1948 have shown.
 - c. Spain. On the Spanish side the necessity of collaboration in the Mediterranean area was stressed and it was suggested that Spain could do some bridge-building in regard to some Arab countries. It is realized, however, that the prospects for more cooperation appear rather gloomy because of the many conflicting interests and attitudes. We should try to find points of common interest, especially in the economic field, and develop them.

8. Finally the role of the USA was examined. What had been said several times about the Soviet Union is also true of the USA. The policy of the USA towards the Mediterranean should be regarded as part of their global strategy, with the Soviet Union as the dynamic force and the USA in the role of reacting to the challenge. The US has increasing interests in the Mediterranean and with that the challenges are increasing. The main objectives of US foreign policy in the Mediterranean are to maintain peace and stability and to stop the increasing Soviet influence. US foreign policy in the Mediterranean is of course criticized from different sides. The real criticism which can be justly levelled is that their foreign policy is weakened by domestic difficulties. This might lead to the situation where the US fails to develop and maintain its policy for want of the necessary means. This of course will be exploited by the Soviet Union. Here lies the real danger.

Int.Gr. 201070