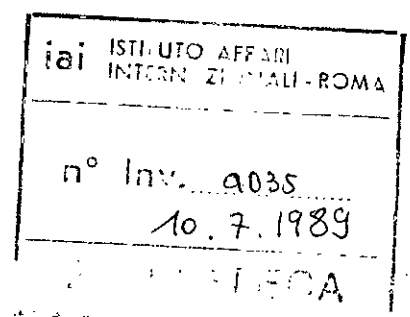


THE MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS:  
EVOLUTION IN THE BALANCE OF POWER AND PROBLEMS OF MANAGEMENT  
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Rome, 24-26/IV/1975

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"POLITICO-MILITARY EVOLUTION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN"

by Jon Kimche

Editor "Afro-Asian Affairs"

Conference:

THE MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS: EVOLUTION IN THE BALANCE OF POWER AND  
PROBLEMS OF MANAGEMENT

Rome, 24-26 April 1975

QUESTA PUBBLICAZIONE È DI PROPRIETÀ  
DELL'ISTITUTO AFFARI INTERNAZIONALI

Most major political decisions are dictated by events or by political need, not by Master Plans. This was true of the launching of the Ramadan War in October 1973 and of the fate of the Kissinger mission to the Middle East in March 1975. It is also currently affecting the shape of the Algerian plan for reshaping world trade in energy and commodities.

I want therefore to discuss here some of the principal specifics of the present situation in the Mediterranean and to do this against the background of the outcome of the Kissinger mission to Egypt and Israel which came to an end on March 22. For the ending of this mission, rather than the mission as such, has become a catalyst of major significance for the Mediterranean region.

It has, in the first instance, focussed attention on the role of the super-powers and, especially, on their preoccupation with their mutual relationship. It is this, more than anything else, which now conditions the political and strategic assessments of the two superpowers in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. It has largely resolved the previous uncertainty whether they faced each other in confrontation or collaboration.

It was Brezhnev's initiative at Vladivostock last October, which put the emphasis on collaboration rather than on rivalry or confrontation in the Middle East. It came as something of a surprise to President Ford and Secretary Kissinger when the Soviet leader proposed a two-tier approach towards a Middle East settlement on lines which the Americans favoured.

The Soviet Union would support, though not overtly, the Kissinger step-by-step method as an essential element in preparing the ground for the ultimate Geneva conference. Both the United States and the Soviet Union - and also the Israelis - assumed that with such patronage, and given Sadat's positive inclination, the Kissinger preparatory mission could not fail.

Kissinger did not succeed; but he did not fail. On the contrary, his two missions in February and March helped to clear the air, and to create a number of more favourable conditions for an ultimate settlement, probably partial, which had not existed before. It established clearly that there were

essential concessions which - in the conditions prevailing during March - neither Egypt nor Israel could make. Both the Rabin and the Sadat Governments were too weak in relation of their political support to make the concession which Kissinger required.

The first reaction by both superpowers was to misread the resulting situation and to opt, almost in a state of desperation, for a make-or-break session of the Geneva conference.

Then came the reassessments. The Russians were first off the mark. They had in the first flush of the aftermath assumed that President Sadat would drop like a ripe fruit back into the Soviet lap, a gift they could not resist even in the name of detente and collaboration. But it did not happen.

Moscow noted instead that the firmness shown by Sadat had boosted his position at home and in the Arab world, and that the same trend was reflected even more strongly in Israel. Rabin, after being a Prime Minister with a divided Cabinet and a dubious one-vote majority in parliament, had become head of a united nation, popular and strong inside the government and outside. Neither Sadat nor Rabin looked like a ripe apple.

At this point, there appears to have been high-level consultation between Washington and Moscow and the initiative had come from Washington. We know no details, only the outcome.

The Soviet ambassador to Egypt who was in Moscow, was despatched hastily to Cairo. At the same time, through a number of highly-placed intermediaries, the Soviet Government made direct contact with the Israeli leaders. What was significant in these Soviet moves was they were not conducted as counterpoints to the Kissinger mission but more as parallel moves to reinforce the Kissinger stand by clarifying the Soviet position in relation to the Geneva conference and the guaranteeing of the security of Egypt and Israel.

At this stage it is necessary to interpolate a broader Soviet assessment which considers the Mediterranean area as a whole and not only the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is one of the interesting by-products of these Soviet discussions in the wake of the Kissinger mission that it is possible to reconstruct the Soviet view on the current Mediterranean situation.

It is as much this evaluation of the Mediterranean situation as the all-important desire to maintain a high degree

of collaboration (more than detente) with the United States that is shaping current Soviet attitudes in the Mediterranean area and the Middle East.

It has to be noted here that there is an almost incredible gap or contradiction between the private face of Soviet attitudes as expressed in these confidential exchanges and the public face of Soviet press and radio presentation, and even of Soviet ministerial declarations.

The private face of Soviet policy is one of growing concern at the erosion of specifically Soviet position in the region. None of this was evident in the hard-line speech of Premier Kosygin with which he welcomed Sadam Husain in Moscow on April 14. In sum the Soviet position is put like this:

- The Soviet Government had made great efforts to court the Turkish Government and this had led Moscow to make a terrible mistake over the Cyprus issue. The Soviet Union has now withdrawn its support for Turkey and relations have never been worse between the two Governments.
- The Soviet Union had placed much hope on its relations with the Shah and even more on those with Iraq. Moscow has no illusions now that the Iranian-Iraqi Agreement signed in Algeria is in effect hostile to the Soviet position in both countries and especially to a Soviet presence in the Gulf.
- The recent conflict between Syria and Iraq over the Euphrates Dam control, which the Russians have constructed in Syria, has greatly embarrassed the Soviet Union.
- The Soviet leaders are also increasingly worried by the Byzantine politics of the Palestinian organizations, as they put it. They want to take the disruptive sting out of the Palestinian solution and have been active behind the scenes in seeking a rapprochement between Arafat and Husain.
- With so many uncertain factors and disunited elements on the Arab side, the Soviet view is that an early meeting of the Geneva conference would be disastrous: it would allow those Israelis who want to go to Geneva in order to expose its ineffectiveness to make their point.
- It would therefore be necessary to wait until these differences have been resolved, and the Preparatory work completed, before recalling the Geneva conference. Belayev has said the same thing publicly in his broadcasts to the United States.

Thus within three weeks of Kissinger's abrupt departure from the

Middle East, the Soviet Union, Israel and Egypt were suggesting ways and means to reengage him in another negotiating process.

- The only area where the Russians felt reasonably happy was in their strategic position in the Mediterranean. The policy of strategic parity, they claim, has enabled them to establish a sound bargaining position with regard to the US Sixth Fleet. They want to improve this further in order to make possible the mutual withdrawal of the US and Soviet fleets from the Mediterranean.
- They believe that in the changing popular mood of the United States this could become a possibility.

The United States position in the process of reassessment can be considered only marginally. The least mentioned aspect of it, at this stage, is the future of the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean. The Russians clearly consider this not as a short-range objective but one that could become of major significance at any time before the next Presidential election. Especially, if there are important political changes in Greece and Spain and possibly also in Italy.

A central element of the American reassessment process is the public discussion of the special relationship towards Israel. This is being conducted with a degree of frankness and realism unprecedented in American-Israel relations. But it also is evidently discussed with a great sense of responsibility by both parties.

The outcome of this facing up to the realities can be only beneficial for the United States and for the Israelis, but it could easily lead to a further misreading of the situation in the Middle East. For it has to be noted that neither the Soviet Union nor the United States has made any political gains in the Mediterranean and Middle East since the second world war as a result of direct military intervention.

The changes in the positions of influence and strength of the superpowers have come as a result of local military conflicts in Algeria, in the Arab-Israeli and the Turkish-Greek conflicts, and as consequence of domestic revolutionary changes in Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Greece and this would seem to be the pattern also for the future.

Yet despite the seeming uncertainties of the American reassessment process, the diplomatic initiative in the area remains with the United States and especially with Dr. Kissinger's own brand of diplomacy. This is characterized by its considerable measure of understanding and even collaboration with the Soviet Union with regard to the agreed priorities of current superpower diplomacy.

As Dr. Kissinger explained after the Vladivostock summit last October, one of the areas where this has become possible is in the Middle East. For it was here that the Soviet Union and the United States faced the most immediate need for an agreed form of crisis management.

Superpower policies in relation to their client states in the Middle East and in the Mediterranean has been composed hitherto of a mixture of intervention and non-intervention according to the needs of the client states. Before the 1967 war the United States intervened with massive help and arms for Israel; the Soviet Union did the same for Egypt. When war broke out both superpowers desisted from intervention: the United States because Israel was doing well and the Russians because they did not wish to clash with the United States.

There were some variations in 1973 with the roles reversed at the outset but basically the unwillingness or inability of the superpowers to intervene was still evident. The same was true of the Cyprus crisis in 1974.

At Vladivostock - and since - the superpowers faced their major preoccupation in the area: how can they prevent any of their client states (without using this term in any pejorative sense) from making an independent decision to go to war or reject terms of settlement acceptable to the superpowers.

This problem for both superpowers alike has gained an added urgency in recent weeks as a result of the Pact of Algiers between Iran and Iraq. This has introduced a new power-factor into the Gulf region with the tremendous military potential which from the outset was accompanied by a warning to the superpowers not to intervene in this region.

This unexpected Pact has created new areas of uncertainty and disquiet in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Syria not to speak of the lesser Gulf states. Since it is also the region with the greatest oil reserves in the world, it has added greatly to the

sense of urgency in the superpower need for reassessing more than anything their own ability to control the situation which developed during March and April 1975 in the wake of the Kissinger mission though not necessarily connected with it.

The central feature of this development was that quite suddenly the principal elements in the Middle East were in the hands of strong governments whose strength consisted to some considerable extent on their emphasis of their own independence from superpower pressures and intervention.

The Shah's recent policies in India, Afghanistan and especially his agreement with Iraq were all part of this resistance to Soviet policies in these areas; both Iran and Iraq had been urged by the Soviet Union two years ago to allow the Soviet Union to mediate a settlement between them. The Shah was not ready for it; his doubts about the Americans had not then developed as they have done since; and the Iraqi administration was too insecure to risk such a turn-about in policy.

This has changed. Iranian influence and connexions have been reinforced in West Asia, in the Gulf and in the Arab world. In Iraq, the de facto ruler, Saddam Husain al Tikriti, completed the deal with the Shah without Moscow's knowledge and added the warning against foreign intervention in the Gulf only months after Iraq had signed the Protocol attached to the Treaty of Friendship which permitted the Soviet Union to develop naval facilities near UmmQasr in the Gulf.

The role of the Kissinger mission as a catalyst, transforming a weak administration into a popular and strong government, was most evident in Israel. Had Rabin accepted the Kissinger terms on March 22 and agreed to withdraw from the Sinai passes and the Abu Rodeis oilfield without any political engagement by Egypt, he might have won the support of the Knesset with the smallest of a majority, possibly only a single vote.

The rejection of the American-sponsored proposal and his accompanying firmness rallied the country, the Cabinet and parliament. Rabin could express his wish that Kissinger resume his mission, or go to Geneva on this new basis of strength.

There was another important but not very evident development in the internal situation in Israel. The country has been in the unique position since the October War to have enjoyed the benefits of defeat without having had to suffer or pay the price of defeat.



In military terms, and also in the economic and other fields, the country has gone through a period of reassessment and revaluation.

The full impact of this may yet take time to show itself. But in two fields the consequences are becoming apparent.

Most immediately significant is the strategic reassessment of border security in relation to peace. Dayan, for example, said after the 1967 war that if he had to choose between Sharm as-Sheikh and peace, he would choose Sharm. More recently, however, Dayan has been discussing the sensitive problem of the Golan Heights and stressed that so long as Israel remains in occupation there could be no peace.

It is this realization in the wake of the October War that has led to an unprecedented scientific and production effort by Israel's war industries, especially aircraft and electronic, and in a total revision of previously accepted maxims of national strategy. The debate in some areas is still proceeding but conclusions are emerging and affecting the strategic pattern, in Sinai especially.

The basic assumption at the root of this strategy is that the superpowers have not yet mastered the problem of crisis management in the Middle East and that future strategy has to be based on a combination of non-dependance on superpower support and rigid economy in the use of force and supplies - in every way the opposite to the conditions prevailing during the October War of 1973.

The second area of reconsideration of attitudes as well as policies concern the Palestine problem. There is of course no single representative Palestinian position and there is no great constancy of policy. Algeria, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Syria have their protegé Palestinian movements, and so have, to a lesser extent, the Egyptians. This has become further complicated by the de facto adoption of the Arafat wing of the PLO by the Soviet Union.

The Palestinians are thus again in danger of becoming pawns in the power politics of third parties. Over the years, and even in the days of the British Mandate, they were often a convenient excuse for others to obstruct a settlement for imperial or national reasons which were of no concern or interest to the Palestinians. The most recent example of this is the way the Soviet Union orga-

nized the UN support necessary for the recognition of the PLO and for the address to the Assembly by Yasir Arafat.

In the same way, the Soviet Union is now mediating between Arafat and King Husain of Jordan. In a way, one could describe this as a Soviet approach to crisis management since the Russians are greatly worried by the instability and unpredictability of PLO policies which could provoke Israel into another military operation in which the Lebanon could be the principal victim.

The Israeli attitude towards the Palestinians has if anything hardened during the process of reassessment. In a way, the Israelis are probably better informed about the internal developments inside the PLO and other Palestinian groups than any western or Arab government. Because of this, they have a massive dossier of Palestinian intentions and policies towards Israel which are not the same as those presented to the western world.

These views may be no more representative of Palestinian intentions than any other views expressed but they do not encourage the Israelis to drop their guard. The Israelis agree on this point with the Soviet Union when they urge the Palestinians to produce the credible and representative voice willing and capable to negotiate.

The Russians believe that Arafat is such a man and are prepared to back him. In order to make him acceptable to Israel, the Russians are now urging the PLO to accept the Husain Federation plan, if only as a first step towards a Jordanian-Palestinian state which would in due course shed its Jordanian prefix.

The Palestinian crunch will come when the Geneva issue is again opened and relevant - this may take some time yet. But the Russians have been making preliminary soundings with regard to this, and have exchanged ideas about it not only with the United States and the Arab countries but also with Israel.

The Russians want a precise definition of what Palestinian demands mean. For the first time this month, the Russians have spelled out what they understand by the customary formula. But what is the Palestinian definition? Is it that advanced by Hassanein Haikal - a secular state in Palestine and contiguous frontiers between Egypt and Jordan in the Negev? Or is it that favoured by Sadat and the Russians at one time - a return to the 1947 frontiers proposed by the UN partition committee?

Before the Israelis negotiate the Palestinian question, they would want to know precisely what are the Palestinian demands now and how representative are the Palestinians who will negotiate the settlement, or what will happen if they are disowned by the "Rejection Front".

All this has produced an important change in the Palestinian aspect of the Middle Eastern settlement. It has been said often during the processes of negotiation that no solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is possible without the solution of the problem of the Palestinians. This is no longer true. Just as the so-called Jewish problem has not been settled by the establishment of Israel, so it is unlikely that the solution of the Palestine problem will settle the Middle Eastern conflicts. It may help - that is all.

The Palestine problem has to be settled for its own sake, and not for the sake of Arab or superpower strategic reasons; and that can be done only by a settlement arrived at by the two parties, the Israelis and the Palestinians, principally concerned, that is, if the problem is soluble in our time.

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"ITALY AND THE MEDITERRANEAN"

by Cesare Merlini

Istituto Affari Internazionali

(Institute for International Affairs)

Conference:

THE MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS: EVOLUTION IN THE BALANCE OF POWER  
AND PROBLEMS OF MANAGEMENT

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QUESTA PUBBLICAZIONE È DI PROPRIETÀ  
DELL'ISTITUTO AFFARI INTERNAZIONALI

I. Though bordering only on Atlantic waters, Portugal is bringing additional tensions and uncertainties to the Mediterranean basin. After a military-led coup d'état brought the longest lasting fascist regime in Europe to an end much less violently than one might have expected, the new regime is carrying on with some pain. The easy delivery had probably created more expectations for its infancy than it was reasonable to expect. The present difficulties should not, however, undermine the profound meaning of April 25, 1974, and be dismissed as solely a change from one dictatorship to another. Some irreversible facts, like the end of colonialism and the perception of democratic life, if only that, will remain a bright milestone in the history of that country, thus far so dark and ominous. Portugal is now a relevant actor in the international political scene.

Of the struggle for power between the armed forces and democratic parties, consequences will be felt first of all in Spain, France and Italy. If the anti-Franco movement was greatly encouraged by the early outcome of the Portuguese Revolution, the present drawback in Lisbon political life will encourage fears against any change towards democracy in Madrid connected with the decline of El Caudillo. The French communist party is known to be brotherly linked with the Portuguese comologue. Divisions may increase inside the already strained union de la gauche and be exploited by the majority. The Italian communists never liked Cunhal very much because of his traditionalism and strictly pro-Russian stand. Nonetheless their approaches towards joining government coalitions in Rome have been seriously handicapped by Portuguese events. The resemblance of the declarations made by both parties to reassure NATO allies has frightened several. They were dismissed as "pure tactics" by Secretary Kissinger, among others. In fact real or alleged continuity or foreign policy is a traditional feature to ease domestic revolutionary changes.

Whether the stated Portuguese fidelity to the Atlantic Alliance be real or feigned, it has been viewed with much caution by other members, notably the US. The Nuclear Planning group was frozen during 1974, while Portugal was a temporary member. With difficulties lying ahead concerning the use of the Azores base by the American air lift in case of a Middle East conflict, with pending negotiations between Washington and Madrid for the American base in Southern Spain and with some consequences of the partial withdrawal of Greece from NATO still to be compensated for, the western world is facing serious problems in southern Europe. All these considerations seem to justify the

opening statement about the "impact" of the Portuguese situation on the Mediterranean.

- II. Increasingly the Basin is the place for actual or potential conflicts, and witnesses the advancement of countries towards more significant roles in the world. This does not make the Mediterranean a "region". There are few unifying factors among the coastal countries. This is true for the northern coast even more than for the southern ones. Portugal, Italy and Turkey are members of NATO; France and Greece have left though they remain in the Atlantic Alliance; Spain is an ally of the USA; Yugoslavia and Albania are communist countries differently placed in the "gray area", while the Black Sea washes on the Warsaw pact countries.

"Mediterranean policies" are thus difficult to conceive. Several European countries have, however, had ambitions of this kind which mostly are the inheritance from past colonial situations. Colonial heritage dominated French and English Mediterranean policies till the Suez crisis ('56) and Algerian independence. Since then the English commitment has been constantly reduced and the French influence also diminished. Bilateral links remain that run from North to South; they mostly are of economic or of cultural nature. The transformation of these links into a small sphere of influence was thought of repeatedly. An example is the project of linking Madrid to the EEC in view of establishing a French-dominated region in the western Mediterranean, with the participation of Italy, Spain and Maghreb, an idea, attributed to President Pompidou. It received a good deal of sympathy among people in the Spanish regime, and also found supporters among some Christian Democrat groups in Italy. At the time of meeting between Pompidou and Andreotti in Lucca (1972) rumors circulated of a possible trade-off between Italy's acceptance of the SECAM colour TV-System and participation in such a project. Reactions were prompt and harsh and official denials came soon both on the French and Italian side.

The German interest in the Mediterranean was prevented for long after World War II, but it appears to be increasing in the last few years. Arab capital looking for investment has been naturally attracted by the promising German market. The FRG being one of the few surplus countries has been compelled to assume an increasing responsibility in the capital market, in favor of less fortunate countries. Italy received a bilateral loan almost a year ago. Portugal is said to have been offered substantial aid by Bonn, after an unsuccessful attempt to

bring in the Community to help the Lisbon government.

III. Power policies in Italy have traditionally looked at the Mediterranean as "mare nostrum". One can roughly identify two schools of thought in Italian history: a European one, leaning towards the French and English democracies, usually more progressive, if not leftist; and a Mediterranean one, claiming a Southern "spazio vitale" and having as a European counterpart the support of Germany as a state which had no direct interest in the Mediterranean.

After the last world war which practically squelched Italian aspirations to power, Mediterranean policy had little fortune. It reappeared however as an alternative to the ties which Italy was making with the rest of Europe both by means of the Atlantic Alliance and European integration. Italian internal opposition to adherence to the Atlantic Pact was quite strong, but it was conducted mainly not as an alternative between north and south but between east and west. However, there were also wings of the Christian Democratic left which were reticent; these found an important support in the policy of Mattei, which in the attempt to affirm Italian autonomy on the oil issue, privileged bilateral policies oriented in a south-east direction rather than those multilateral ones oriented to the north-west.

After Mattei the "Mediterranean alternative" became even more fortuitous. Meanwhile the change in support of Israel by one and the other superpowers led to a shifting to the left of pro-Arab sympathies (though the pro-Israeli attitude of diverse political forces not necessarily on the right remained). One can note, however, that neither the pro-Arab nor the pro-Israeli stance necessarily implies aspirations of Mediterranean policy, but are to be attributed to sympathy for the East or for the West to receptiveness from Jewish pressure groups and to sympathy towards the Palestinian movement.

At the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies the Mediterranean area and the Middle East appeared non-controversial, not only in the government coalition (center-left) but also in relations between the majority and the major opposition party (PCI-the Italian Communist Party). Moreover, once this party adhered to European integration and accepted the Atlantic Alliance, there followed a period in which government and opposition had no major differences on matters of foreign policy.

The October War, at the end of 1973, the oil embargo (Italy was not considered either friendly or inimical by the Arabs), the Cyprus crisis and the subsequent exit of Greece from

NATO, and finally the already mentioned Portuguese events, constituted motives of new international tension "near" Italy, and therefore of new tension internally.

- IV. The effective contributions of Italy to NATO are inferior to the theoretical ones. The conscription force, 160,000 men in all, is just over half (53%) of the total requested, the effective deep-sea vessels are not more than about ten, the airforce can count on about 280 crafts, many of which are largely obsolete, and about a hundred anti-aircraft missiles.

It ought to be mentioned, however, that in Italy there are five air or missile and three navy bases. Their importance would increase if tension in the Middle East flared up into a long conflict and/or if the rest of the NATO bases in the zone were called into question. This second case could come about with the growth of tension between Greece and Turkey, which remain the advanced points in the eastern Mediterranean alliance, or with eventual difficulties or conditions which could arise with regard to the use of the bases in the Azores and one day with the American base in Spain.

Greater Italian commitments (either as a consequence of conflicts in the Middle East and/or as a substitute for the insufficiencies of the other allies) would encounter various internal difficulties both of a political and of an economic nature. The alarm which the possibility (subsequently proved false) of a NATO request to substitute specific functions performed by Greece created in Italy is symptomatic. The economic situation of the country is such to discourage greater financial commitments and in reality the quota of the national budget given over to defense has constantly decreased in recent years. If it weren't for a diffuse and profound sense of danger, any request for a greater military commitment would probably meet with strong resistance not only from the communist opposition but also from within the present government coalition.

- V. Several months ago Italian public opinion busied itself in the exegesis of one of President Ford's statements in which he predicted that a country allied to the USA would go bankrupt in 1975. Is it Italy? it was asked worriedly or - malicious hope - is it England?

Now Italy ascertains with satisfaction the early active settlement of its non-oil balance of payments, repays a part of the German bilateral loan before the term expires, and to



the surprise of the Brussels' circles, declines the offer of being beneficiary of a community loan to use in the "petrodollar" market. Though remaining for the foreseeable future in debt, Italy has returned to be "solvent" in the eyes of credit banking. It is true that this does not satisfy everyone. On the contrary, it occasions violent criticisms: the Bank of Italy, it is said, did its part, but the government no, having permitted a suffocating restriction on credit facilities, serious recessive effects and rising unemployment. The responses of the government which has loosened the credit restrictions are also known. Perhaps Italy is destined to live for a while in this state of semi-asphyxia in which death is kept at bay by repeated small doses of oxygen. However, this is not the place to discuss this particular.

It is probable that no one ever seriously thought that Italy would fall on such evil days, but perhaps Ford was referring to Italy. Why? The first recipients of the message were the Arab exporters of oil, to whom were underlined the grave consequences of the high price of oil for their "clients". The crisis of Italy could have dragged down the others (the "domino effect") with the obvious consequences of the demand for petroleum. The other recipients were Europeans: it was necessary to underline the saving character of the American interventions, up until then accused of "exporting their inflation to Europe" (the same accusation which today the Arabs are making). If one really believes in the danger of the "domino effect", the first thing to do is to concentrate one's energies on the first piece. That is exactly what has happened. Italy has in fact benefited from a vast international solidarity, manifested in a wide range of financial aid.

VI. The internal Italian debate has been dominated in the last two years by the question of a communist participation in the government.

An analysis of the positions of communist foreign policy in recent years reveals a constant favoring of Arab and Palestinian positions, with the exception of terroristic acts, but not a tendency to confer on Italy a role more Mediterranean than European. Ties with the rest of the communist movement, hence with Russia and Europe, are dominant. The original action of the PCI confirmed in occasion of the recent Party Congress was rather bent on demonstrating western Europe's role both in the international scenario (European Community) and in the communist movement (Meetings of Western European Communist Parties).

Much depends on the international context. The PCI maintains that it does not aim at the abandonment of the western block, but at reducing the importance of the blocks. This seems reasonable.

However, it is necessary to ask what would happen if international events lead instead only momentarily to a reinforcement of the blocks. It is likely that in such a case the PCI would find itself in front of a choice between distancing itself from the area of government or partially detaching itself from the international communist movement. This latter possibility appears improbable, in that it is unimaginable that the USSR Communist Party in a similar situation would impose disciplinary action.

Another element of uncertainty is the Portuguese situation. The events of Lisbon have cast a dark shadow on the proposal for a "historic compromise" made by the PCI and have been largely exploited by those inimical to the proposal. If the pro-European and democratic line prevails in Portugal after the elections, this could be an important card in the hands of the Italian communists. If instead the alliance between communists and military were to win and give to the new Portuguese state an authoritarian character, the PCI would once again find itself faced with the alternative either to renounce the historic compromise or to detach itself from other communist parties (in particular the French). It would be important to see the Soviet attitude in this case. There remain, finally, the possibility of no communist government participation and, barring from the realm of the probable a rightist coalition, the continuation in power of the center-left coalition. The continuity of foreign policy is naturally reinforced, given some of the above-cited limits of the defense commitment.

VII. We have learned recently of documents made public by the USA Department of State in which at the time of the conception of the Atlantic Alliance a part of high ranking American civil servants, among whom G. Kennan, opposed Italy's participation therein because it opposed the participation of Mediterranean countries. (Greece and Turkey, as is well-known, joined subsequently, in the fifties). What do the functionaries of the American State Department say today in secret?

The phase of containment, the building up of integrated systems of alarm and of defense, the existence of a zone of greater confrontation in central Europe, the support without arrière-pensées of European integration by the Americans, and the relative indifference of the alliance to internal regimes - provided they are not communist: all this has contributed for years to the solidity of NATO. And all this is now called into question. Détente has reduced the perception of danger; the modifications in USA strategy have accentuated the importance of SLBM; Ostpolitik has resulted in the removal of major tensions from central Europe; while the concept of partnership is declining, bilateral ties with Washington have been strengthened; present or potential changes in regime to the south make a communist participation in government possible.

Will this bring a greater differentiation between the central and northern-central sector?

"THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT"

by Hisham Sharabi

Journal of Palestine Studies

Conference:

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There are three aspects of the Middle East conflict which, though definable separately, form a single interconnected whole. The discussion of any one aspect presupposes the discussion of the other two. The first aspect is seen in the superpower confrontation; the second in the energy crisis; and the third in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Thus there can be no lasting settlement without the agreement and cooperation of the two great powers. This implies that the negotiation toward a fruitful settlement cannot be carried out by the United States alone but should include the Soviet Union.

Moreover, the conflict cannot be separated from the problem of oil. So long as the Middle East crisis continues, the supply and price of oil will be threatened.

Finally, the Middle East conflict is essentially the Arab-Israeli conflict and no final solution is possible without the solution of the Palestine problem.

#### The Role of the Super-Powers.

A major result of the last (1973) Arab-Israeli war was the considerable gain in United States' political influence in the region and the corresponding decline of the Soviet position.

In the Arab world the October war brought to an effective end the period of Nasserism and the beginning of a new configuration of power based on pragmatic unity among the Arab states irrespective of their social and ideological systems. The two countries which formed the new power axis were Saudi Arabia and Egypt, one the richest and the other the largest and strongest country in the Arab world.

Nasserism, which had dominated the power system in the Arab World since the mid-fifties, presupposed the polarization of the two super-powers in the Middle East. The Arabs under Nasser leaned heavily on Soviet support in their confrontation with Israel. The new Egyptian-Saudi alliance, on the other hand, has moved away from the Soviet Union and toward dependence on the United States in solving the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Seen in the broader international context, the American position in the region has been strengthened not only in so far as the Arab-Israeli conflict is concerned but also in the vital

areas of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Gulf. It can thus be said that so long as the Egyptian-Saudi axis maintains its hegemony in the new Arab configuration of power, an American-oriented system of stability will prevail in the region. The Egyptian-Saudi hegemony, however, cannot be preserved unless the American peace effort is successful.

Is an exclusively American-oriented system of stability possible in the Middle East?

The erosion of the Soviet position was in part produced by the belief that American diplomacy could achieve what the Soviet Union had failed to achieve, namely, a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Egypt and Saudi Arabia have put all their eggs in the American basket. Their gamble has come under increasingly heavy fire in the Arab world, and unless a break-through is achieved their position will sooner or later become untenable. The American option, however, has to be taken and carried to the end before any shift becomes possible.

It is perhaps not surprising that the Americans are beginning to realize that they cannot resolve the conflict without bringing in the Soviet Union. Ever since the Vladivostok conference the Americans have moved towards a position of allowing the Soviet Union to play a role in the peace-making process. The step-by-step approach which Dr. Kissinger had advocated has gradually given way to the collective approach which the Soviet Union, and some Arab countries such as Algeria and Syria as well as the PLO, had called for all along. The piece-meal approach, which marked the phase of American diplomatic ascendancy, has now begun to give way to the whole-sale approach marking the phase of full Soviet participation. It can be said that the attempts to push the Soviet Union out of the region has failed. That attempt has resulted not in a settlement of the Middle East conflict but in a new polarization. The Soviet Union is a Middle Eastern power, and the Middle East is vital to its security. It is impossible to prevent the Soviet Union from playing its role in any Middle Eastern settlement.

It is now clear that detente cannot be firmly achieved anywhere in the world if it is not achieved in the Middle East. And detente in the Middle East is possible because it has been amply demonstrated that the fundamental objectives which motivate Soviet policy in the area are precisely those which dominate the policy of the United States: Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, guarantees for the existence of Israel, an end

to the arms race, and lasting peace and stability in the region.

The increasing awareness that an end to the Middle East conflict can be established only in agreement with the Soviet Union has shifted the ground of negotiations to the kind of framework where the Soviet Union can play its proper role, namely, to multi-party negotiations. Barring some irrational miscalculation, the superpowers may soon find themselves engaged in an effort at Geneva that might so reduce the Middle East crisis as to pave the way to settlement; if this were to come about it might constitute a corner-stone in the global system of detente.

#### The Middle East Conflict and Oil.

The most direct way the Middle East conflict can affect the energy crisis is through the imposition of an Arab oil embargo.

Some observers have argued that the Arab countries may be reluctant to use the oil weapon again, even if Israel were to attack Syria or Egypt or both. An embargo, it is argued, would have limited impact as the industrialized countries have accumulated considerable reserves of oil since the October war and have made arrangements to share energy resources among themselves in time of crisis. These observers point out that the Arab countries would probably do better by maintaining the flow of oil and keep the revenues coming in and thereby be in a better position to exert pressure on the industrialized countries.

Others argue that another war will inevitably force the Arab oil-producing countries to impose an oil embargo, regardless of financial considerations. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries would not be likely to sit back if the more militant producers, such as Iraq, Libya, and Algeria, imposed the embargo. A reduction in production of probably up to 40 per cent will accompany any embargo to make ineffective the sharing of energy resources among members of the International Energy Agency. Under such conditions oil reserves of the individual countries will probably prove insufficient and thus force these countries to pursue independent policies regarding the Middle East.

Of course, under such circumstances the temptation of the United States to intervene in the Arab oil-producing countries will be very strong. How likely is American intervention under such conditions and how effective would it be?

As far as the ability to intervene is concerned the Pentagon strategists seem convinced that landing and occupation operations can be mounted successfully. As to whether there will be a decision to intervene will depend on the mood prevailing at the White House and on the feeling in Congress and among the military leaders. Given certain conditions an American intervention in the Arab oil-producing countries must be considered as both possible and probable.

But if the will to intervene may be problematic the result of intervention is not. There is general agreement among observers that it would result in various types of reactions all of which could be disastrous in their effect. The Arabs may destroy oil facilities, such as jetties and pumping stations, causing disruption in the flow of oil for several months. Or they may blow up entire oil fields, sparking wide-scale upheaval. Under such circumstances one can envisage conditions of widespread chaos, with American and Western interests and personnel becoming targets of indiscriminate attack. "Intervention", as Mohammad Hassanien Heikal, the former editor of Al-Ahram, put it, "would make the Bay of Pigs and Vietnam seem like picnics".

From all this it appears certain that the solution of the Middle East conflict will have a direct impact on the energy crisis. In the first place, the need to use the oil weapon would decrease or altogether disappear; and differences over production and prices would have a better chance of being resolved under conditions of stability and peace than under conditions of crisis and the threat of war. If peace were achieved the flow of oil would be assured through old and new pipelines pouring into Mediterranean ports, and with the opening of the Suez Canal, costs would be reduced. The main beneficiaries of such developments would be the Mediterranean consumers who have suffered most as a result of war and tension in the Middle East.

On the other hand, so long as the Middle East conflict remains unresolved all Arab countries, regardless of their ideological or political orientations, will continue to be involved in it, poisoning their relations with the industrialized

countries and adding to the crisis and uncertainty in the energy and financial systems.

It is worth noting that by their threats to use force the Americans have contributed to increasing tension and undermining the confidence of Arab countries in Western intentions. Dr. Kissinger's remarks, reaffirmed and supported on different occasions by President Ford, Vice-President Rockefeller and Defence Secretary Schlesinger, seem to have predisposed large segments of American public opinion in favor of the use of force. This appears to be in line with American attempts to keep the Arab countries off balance and to form an oil consumers' front composed of the industrialized countries. The United States has called for discriminatory measures against Arab and other OPEC countries in the latest trade legislation by Congress, put pressure on international agencies to stop extending loans to OPEC countries, and exhibited increasing reluctance to provide adequate guarantees to the producers as to the future value of their current surplus revenues. Furthermore, the United States is still doing all it can to prevent the European countries and Japan from adopting independent energy policies suited to their own specific needs and susceptibilities and to confront the Arabs with an aggressive Western front.

In the Middle East conflict, on the energy level as well as on other levels, the only alternative to confrontation is negotiation. The United States is the key factor in determining the solution of the Middle East conflict and in finding the way out of the energy crisis. If the United States, then, is genuinely interested in finding an equitable solution to the Middle East conflict and the energy crisis, it is essential that its actions aiming at confrontation and intervention be abandoned and replaced by more rational and less aggressive positions, such as those taken by France and Japan.

#### The Arab-Israeli Conflict.

The core of the Middle East crisis is the Arab-Israeli conflict and there is general agreement that no solution of this conflict is possible without the solution of the problem of the Palestinians.



For a long time the Israelis have ignored the Palestinians and refused to acknowledge any role for them in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Thus, the official position of the Israeli Foreign Office toward the Palestinians has been that they "are not a party to the conflict between Israel and the Arab States". The well-known comment made in 1969 by Mrs. Meir, the former prime minister of Israel, reveals the long standing Zionist attitude toward the Palestinians. "It was not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took away their country from them", she said. "They did not exist".

More recently there has been some change in the Israeli position. Foreign Minister Yigal Alon admitted not too long ago that "a Palestinian problem" did exist and that its solution was a precondition for the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. But he saw the problem as one of "identity" rather than of "rights" and dismissed the Palestinian demands for national self-determination as contrary to Israeli sovereignty.

Although the position of the Israeli government is somewhat more realistic than it was a few years ago, it still falls short of that taken by most countries in the world regarding the rights of the Palestinians.

The international community, with the exception of the United States - together with Chile, Bolivia and one or two other Central American States - has come to view the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict as based on assuring justice to both the Israelis and the Palestinians. This implies the recognition of Palestinian rights, the withdrawal of Israel from Egyptian and Syrian territories occupied in 1967, the establishment of a Palestinian national authority in the West Bank, Gaza and Arab Jerusalem, and the guaranteeing of Israel's territorial security. This is the same position taken by the international community over a quarter of a century ago when it voted in 1947 the Partition Plan which divided Palestine into a Jewish state and a Palestinian state and gave Jerusalem an international status.

The Israeli government still refuses to recognize the PLO or to negotiate with the PLO. As King Hussein of Jordan is no longer (since the Rabat Conference of 1974) the spokesman for the Palestinians, the Israelis have no means of dealing with the Palestinians. Israel may now regret not having negotiated

with King Hussein before the PLO had gained international recognition, and would probably agree to deal with him if conditions required it. But unless Israel recognizes the PLO and thereby the rights of the Palestinians to self-determination there is little likelihood of progress in the direction of a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

But it is probably easier for Israel to recognize the PLO than for the PLO to recognize Israel. The Palestinians by granting recognition to Israel would be renouncing their rights to most of the land which they once possessed in its entirety, while the Israelis in recognizing the PLO would be simply adapting themselves to a political reality. True, implicit in the Israeli action may be acceptance of the principle of Palestinian self-determination and Palestinian authority over part of Palestine (namely, less than 20 per cent of Palestine), but Palestinian action in granting legitimacy to Israeli sovereignty means in fact giving up their birth-right. The Palestinians have much more to lose than the Israelis by the act of mutual recognition.

Stated in these terms the problem is put as it would appear from the Palestinian point of view. Within the larger Arab world context the problem is somewhat different. The Arab "confrontation" states have committed themselves to de facto recognition of Israel and to signing a peace agreement with her once a settlement is reached. For the Arab states, a peace settlement would result in the restoration of all their territories, the achievement of all their immediate goals. For the Palestinians, on the other hand, it will result only in restoration of territories occupied in 1967, and simultaneously in the relinquishing of the rest of Palestine.

The Palestinian pragmatists reject the all-or-nothing approach of the militants and call for compromise and realism in dealing with the present situation. They argue that Israel cannot be destroyed by war and that failure to achieve settlement now will lead to Israel's de facto absorption of the rest of Palestine. They see a peace settlement bringing about an end to Israeli expansionism and with it its religious and racist exclusivism. They see the possibility of genuine Palestinian-Israeli coexistence and in time cooperation between the two people leading even to federation or a bi-national state - to something along the lines of a "secular democratic Palestine" -.

There is opposition to this line of thought in Palestinian and Arab ranks. A political settlement based on surrender of rights that the Palestinians have struggled to preserve since the early 1920's is hard for most Palestinians and many Arabs to accept. The militants argue that the PLO should resist compromise at any cost, especially now that the Arabs have entered into a new era of economic and political power. It seems certain that were the present efforts to a peaceful settlement to be rebuffed, the militant opposition could gain the upper hand in the Arab world.

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"ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICO-MILITARY EVOLUTION IN  
THE MEDITERRANEAN"

by Mohamed Sid-Ahmed

Journalist, "Al-Ahram"

THE MEDITERRANEAN CRISIS: EVOLUTION IN THE BALANCE OF POWER AND  
PROBLEMS OF MANAGEMENT

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Although the Mediterranean is not in the immediate geographical vicinity of either the Soviet Union or the United States, in contemporary geopolitics it has been a most sensitive area to changes occurring in the balance of power on the global level. What can now be termed the "Mediterranean crisis" is particularly indicative of the DISTURBANCES produced by shifts in politico-military set-ups since the advent of what has come to be identified as a growing tendency towards DETENTE.

Within a limited period, practically every country bordering the Mediterranean has witnessed or is expected to witness marked changes. No one can fail to notice the irreversible processes taking place in the Middle East crisis since the October war. Abrupt institutional changes have occurred since in Portugal, Greece and Cyprus. Momentous changes are likely to occur in Spain, Yugoslavia and Tunisia soon after their aging, life-appointed heads of state disappear. Oil and gas have promoted the regional import of Libya and Algeria. No remedy has been found for Italy's chronic political instability. What future does Albania have, since China is no longer an outcast? NATO's cohesion has suffered rifts and setbacks, not only in the case of France a few years ago, but now also with Greece, Turkey and Portugal and possibly with Italy in the future. Inside the Mediterranean, the American/Soviet naval balance of power is bound to acquire a new dimension if and when the Suez Canal is reopened.

Forms and reasons for these changes seem heterogeneous, but can be traced to a coherent explanation. To simplify analysis we shall follow a logical rather than a chronological sequence, irrespective of incidental interactions and the relative import of the various phenomena under study.

Detente does not imply a cancelling of contradictions. Rather, it can be defined as a PURPOSEFUL REARRANGEMENT of contradictions, dictated by a growing need to FREEZE a specific set of contradictions, namely those accepted by all concerned as being more detrimental to them all than beneficial to any: nuclear war, pollution, possible future famines...

Now, with the freezing of mutually constraining, admittedly self-destructive modes of conflict, less "intolerable", more variegated forms of conflict come to the fore. Many of these new forms were screened, repressed or "absorbed" in the previous bipolar, pre-detente world pattern. Hence we witness a DISPLACE-

MENT OF ACTIVE CONTRADICTIONS, operating less at the "summit", more at "intermediary" levels and specifically in regions where a complex entanglement of hot issues remains unsolved, with a corresponding proliferation of distinct and relatively independent actors in cybernetical feedback interplay. The current crisis in the Mediterranean is a demonstration of the unfolding of this process.

The Mediterranean separates Europe from its previous colonies in Africa and Asia. World War II, which was, at least in the Mediterranean theatre, a war involving contending colonial powers, deeply undermined the colonial system in the region. Though this gave national liberation movements a powerful impetus, up till the end of the war only a few of the countries along the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean had achieved formal independence.

In the post-war years, the Cold War did not halt the decolonizing process. What it subjected to uncompromising polarisation was the area encompassing the developed capitalist states on the one hand and the socialist states on the other. This polarisation was delineated, grosso modo, according to the points reached by Soviet and western troops respectively at the end of the war and extended to all European Mediterranean countries, the non-communist among which were included in NATO. But outside this area of direct confrontation, the cold war relationship induced rather than discouraged the drive towards a new equilibrium.

National liberation movements were bound to look upon the Socialist Camp as an objective ally in their "struggle against Imperialism". Likewise, in their assistance to national liberation movements Socialist countries saw an effective deterrent to "capitalist encirclement" and a means "to undermine Imperialism and Capitalism in their weaker links" outside the zone of "saturated polarisation". In such a context, adherence to a policy of traditional colonial rule was more likely to precipitate than to prevent "defections" from the western orbit. Out of this rationale emerged a new situation: throughout the fifties and sixties, most ex-colonies developed into sovereign states.

To assert their non-commitment towards either bloc, these newly sovereign states rallied round a philosophy which was first defined as Positive Neutrality, later as Non-Alignment. Of the three states which promoted this stand, each with its own specific motivations, two were Mediterranean: Yugoslavia and Egypt.

Later, Non-Alignment was gradually embraced by all pact-free countries in the Third World, including all non-European Mediterranean states with the exception of Israel. It extended to become the yardstick of sovereignty for islands which acquired statehood inside the Mediterranean itself: Cyprus and Malta.

This change in the status of the Third World countries throughout the pre-detente period was neither LINEAR nor EXHAUSTIVE.

It was not linear. Spearheads of the western world coagulated inside Africa or on the Mediterranean in the form of settler-states: Algeria, Rhodesia, South Africa. In the western Mediterranean, the status of Algeria as a French settler-state collapsed in 1962; in counterpart, the end of the British Mandate over Palestine in 1948 brought into being a Jewish state in which the Arabs are not alone in discerning the features of the settler-state. The refusal of the Arabs to accept Israel, which the latter answered with a policy of systematic expansionism, created a hotbed of growing instability in the eastern Mediterranean, especially since the 1967 war. Up till October 1973, a couple of years after the onset of detente, the Arab-Israeli conflict was the last crisis to retain the acuteness and polarisation characteristic of crises situations in the Cold War climate.

Nor was this change exhaustive. Not all African countries within the Cold War rationale acquired sovereign status. But in the Detente rationale, it is more likely that decolonisation will come to completion. It is no accident that a component factor in the Mediterranean crisis today is the collapse of Portuguese colonialism, and that the question of the Spanish Sahara has come to a critical point. A non-colonial regime in Portugal cannot afford to alienate the support of the Left and can hardly sustain its previous relationship with NATO.

The collapse of traditional colonialism did not imply that the western world was prepared to relinquish its control over the basic raw materials furnished by the Third World. In fact, the change was tolerated insofar as it affected form rather than content. It was not to imperil a structure of the world based on a central core of developed industrialised countries around which the rest of the world was to revolve. This structure was perpetuated, among other means, by the increasing disparity in prices of finished products with respect to raw materials. When

the October war triggered the quadrupling of oil prices in the span of one year, it was the first significant signal that the era of cheap raw materials was coming to an end.

Indeed, demand on raw materials has been steadily growing and, for the first time since many years, primary prices are tending to grow faster than the prices of finished products. Synthetic materials are no substitute for raw materials: their production is based on a reshuffling of a wider variety of raw materials. More and more the seller, i.e. the developing countries, is acquiring a decisive say. This tendency is further stimulated by an unprecedented consumption in consumer societies with the psychological atmosphere of detente.

But with the rectification of prices of raw materials, decentralisation of the world risks to no longer remain a formal phenomenon. The issue is nevertheless ambiguous insofar as it can in the long run either be more favourable to DEVELOPED industrial countries, which might find it more economical to export industrial plants rather than import expensive raw materials (at least in the field of polluting industries or those in need of cheap labour), or to the DEVELOPING countries interested in promoting industrialisation. This is a typical example of the rearrangement of contradictions in the detente rules of the game.

Nevertheless, in the short run, this strive to bridge the price gap has deepened economic unrest in developed western countries. With no willingness to curtail industrial profits, consumer prices have skyrocketed with inevitable consequences: galloping inflation, slackening of industrial production, unemployment and creeping recession. Economic instability is bound to aggravate political instability and to threaten the cohesion and the military setup of the western world. This is bound to affect the Mediterranean scene, as witnessed by Italy.

A striking example of this threat to the cohesion of the West: the rise in the pre-October price of oil (\$1.99 at the time, per bbl) was obviously a heavy burden for the European consumers of Arab oil, but was not necessarily a disadvantage for the USA. It increased the profits of the majors. Even more important, higher prices created a better competitive situation in world markets for American commodities vis-a-vis Europe and Japan, who are substantially more dependent on Arab oil. Also, making oil prices commensurate with prices of alternate sources of energy is considered an incentive to develop



these alternate sources before available oil reservoirs are exhausted.

In 1950, western agencies forecast that nuclear energy would become competitive round about 1975. However, this did not transpire because, with the low price of oil, there was no pressing stimulant to invest in alternate sources of energy. The energy crisis is not evidence of the fact that there is a growing inability to meet the growing needs because of scarcity in raw materials, but rather of a bottleneck created by the discrepancy in prices between raw materials and finished products.

For the Americans, the optimum price for a barrel of oil has been calculated at around \$7. This was the price fixed by the OPEC countries in their Tehran meeting in December 1973. When prices through 1974 climbed beyond this threshold, threats of American military intervention in the oil-producing countries were voiced. This increased still more strains and stresses in the western military alliance.

There is no doubt that there is a definite correlation between the deepening energy crisis involving relations across the Mediterranean between oil producing and consuming countries, and the strive for a settlement of the Middle East crisis. It is to meet this new situation that the European community is so keen on promoting the Euro-Arab dialogue and, more important, that Dr. Kissinger has deployed such an active diplomacy since the October war. The stalemate before the war threatened the ability of the USA to go on reconciling their special relationship with Israel with maintaining a decisive word in regulating the price and flow of oil from Arab countries. When Egypt and Syria waged the war, American diplomacy was interested in rearranging the contradictions, in undoing the previous Cold War pattern of the Arab-Israeli conflict rather than to have this conflict become, in the new context, a liability to its own regional and global economic and strategic interests.

In fact, the new political climate, identified as detente, has raised a number of dilemmas for the West in the Mediterranean:

- If Israel is to withdraw from occupied Arab territories, its survival is to be guaranteed.
- If the October war further deepened reasons of strain between Europe and the USA, both parts agree that the western cohesion must be consolidated.

--If the economic stability of Europe makes it increasingly wary of confrontations with the oil producing countries, Europe also believes that the Atlantic military alliance must be preserved. --If the reopening of the Suez Canal is an asset for the deployment of Soviet naval strategy, the West is as interested in avoiding any shift to the former's advantage in the balance of power.

The rearrangement of contradictions has had its military implications insofar as the previous set-up of NATO all over the Mediterranean theatre has been deeply affected. This incited an attempt to strike at the non-aligned status of Cyprus. Instead of consolidating NATO's position, this brought about the downfall of the military junta in Greece, severed Greece's relations with NATO, promoted inter-communal tensions in Cyprus and brought about problems between NATO and Turkey following the latter's military intervention in the island.

The outcome of the Cyprus crisis is significant: it is not in opposing, but in meeting the requirements of a more diversified, more decentralised world after Detente that crises situations can be avoided. This is particularly true for the Mediterranean, at crossroads of a network of hot issues of world bearing.

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### THE SITUATION IN THE BALKAN COUNTRIES AFTER THE CYPRUS CRISIS

It is a fact that the Cyprus crisis is by no means over and it is also a fact that this crisis as well as the island of Cyprus, itself, concerns vitally the Balkan countries.

This concern, this vital concern, is due mainly to two factors:

First; the international status of Cyprus, which occupies a very important strategic position, especially within the context of actual sensitive international balance.

Second; more specifically, the growing possibility that two Balkan countries which are parties to the Cyprus dispute, may be dragged into an unfortunate armed conflict against one another.

Turkish <sup>military</sup> ~~peace~~ operation in Cyprus has prevented ENOSIS, the annexation of the Island to Greece and although relations have been extremely strained, a Turkish-Greek armed conflict has not taken place.

One major result of the Turkish intervention has been the toppling over of the Junta Regime in Greece and its replacement by a democratic government. <sup>Turks</sup> ~~It was~~ hoped that a more realistic approach by the new democratic government in Greece, to the problem of Cyprus will facilitate a just and permanent solution of this problem. This, in turn, would bring about an amelioration of the relations between the two countries and enhance, in general, the cooperation and goodwill in the Balkans.

It is very unfortunate that this hope has not been realized until today and it will be an illusion to think that its realization will be easy.

The main stumbling block to a permanent and just solution, from the Turkish point of view is this: Greeks have, up to now, chosen to "internationalize" the problem, rather than seeking a solution through direct negotiations with the Turks.

At the beginning Greece has <sup>hoped</sup> ~~demand~~ed an intervention by the NATO. When this intervention was not forthcoming, she has decided to withdraw from the military organization of NATO.

Greeks have then, attempted to "drag" the problem to an international level and have tried very hard to bring about a United Nations resolution in this direction.

It is indeed difficult to think that such attempts are either realistic or useful.

First, to drag the Cyprus issue - and the Island itself - into the NATO orbit, was a provocative attempt. It was quite natural that Balkan countries, the Soviet Union and Arab countries would react strongly to such an attempt. These countries would quite understandably like to have Cyprus remain independent and free from NATO influence as well as NATO bases.

As for the internationalization of the problem; it is only too obvious that to internationalize the question, to make it an international issue would introduce various conflicting interests into the question. This would make the problem, more complicated and insoluble.

Unfortunately, Greeks <sup>seem to</sup> have resorted to another dangerous and futile tactic.

~~Everybody, including the Greeks, must have realized by this time, that it is a mistake, a dangerous mistake, to try to bring about outside pressures on Turkey, in order to impose their will.~~

Greeks have succeeded in bringing about such pressures. The US Congress, under the influence of the Greek Lobby in that country has decided to put an embargo on military aid to Turkey and has not changed this decision despite the efforts of the US Government.

Greeks put too much hope in these outside pressures. They thought Turkey would give in as a result of these pressure and therefore, at first they slowed down and then, completely cut off negotiations. But just the opposite has happened. Turks are indeed very keen on their national honour and it has become a matter of national honour not to give in to the threats of military aid embargo.

There has been an immense reaction to these pressures and threats in Turkey, and ~~this has led to a growing intransigence~~. This was indeed the main factor in the announcement of the Federated Turkish State, without waiting the result of the negotiations.

For the safeguard of the security of ~~the security~~ of Balkans and of the whole region. It is imperative that the two countries, Turkey and Greece, reach an internationally acceptable agreement.

There are two essential conditions for such a solution. First, the Island should remain independent as before. Second, there should be a new order on the Island, which would enable the two ethnic groups, the Turks and the Greeks, to live in peace and security without the necessity of further outside interventions.

It should be made quite clear that Turkey does not want any changes in the international status of the Republic of Cyprus. Also it should be understood that Turkey does not desire the partition of the Island. She is against the idea of one community dominating the other. She is willing to seek, together with Greece, and the two communities on the Island, a lasting and just solution which would take into account, the past experiences respecting the rights of each community, permitting them to live in peace and harmony. Turkey believes that the only permanent and just solution which offers all these, is a bi-regional federal system.

It may be said that, in principle, the views of the Balkan countries ~~excepting Greece~~, is in the same parallel as those of Turkey. Furthermore, the Balkan countries accept the existence of two communities with equal rights in Cyprus.

The differences of opinion lie mostly on the question of the recognition of the Makarios Government and the mode of solution of the problem.

Balkan countries recognize the Makarios Government as the only legal government of Cyprus. Turkey, however, considers Makarios administration, which has violated the constitutional order in Cyprus from the ~~very~~ beginning, only as the representative of the Greek community.

Although the Federation is accepted in principle by the Balkan countries, they believe that the form of federation has to be decided jointly upon by the two communities, by their own free will and without any foreign intervention.

Romania and Yugoslavia have been concerned with the possibility that a further complication in Cyprus, might lead the super powers to intervene directly in Cyprus, thus creating the possibility of Soviet Russia demanding passage rights from their territories.

But one must point out here that Turkey, by insisting on the independence of Cyprus, by opposing both ENOSIS and partition has, in fact, prevented the direct intervention of the super powers in the problem.

Furthermore, Rumania might have been concerned that Soviet Union may use the Cyprus problem as a pretext, in order to push for "closer" cooperation between the Warsaw Pact countries. The Rumanian Foreign Minister, in his visit to Ankara ~~in May 1975~~, has confirmed his concern that the prolongation of the crisis might bring about such results and stating that the Problem has inevitably become an international problem.

He has, therefore, suggested between the concerned parties and the Balkan countries to permit an exchange of views in order to prevent the intervention of outside powers into matter.

Turkey has always believed that the problem should be solved by direct negotiations between the directly concerned parties and has not accepted the Rumanian proposal. According to the Turkish point of view to discuss the matter between the Balkan countries will further complicate the problem and will prepare the ground for undesirable outside interventions.

#### In Conclusion!

Cyprus will surely become a new trouble spot - a new threat - to peace in Eastern Mediterranean, if this problem infringes upon the détente between the super powers and push them into a new confrontation.

This surely is of vital interest to Warsaw Pact countries who are under the influence of the Soviet Union. Turkish Governments have been extremely careful to prevent such a confrontation. On the very first day of Turkish military operations in Cyprus, the Turkish Prime Minister of that time, Bulent Ecevit, stated openly that each step taken "will not endanger the détente, but would strengthen" it. His successors have also shown the same concern and sensitivity. It is because of this concern that Turkey refrained from occupying the whole Island, though she had the means and opportunity to do so. Turkey stopped at a point where she could guarantee the security of the Turkish community and also prevent ENOSIS.

In fact, this is Turkey's aim; to prevent the realization of the ENOSIS, the megalo idea which some people in Greece and Cyprus do not find necessary to hide. And also to bring about a permanent order on the Island which would make impossible persecutions suffered by the Turks since 1960's.

Turkey believes firmly that the just and realistic way of achieving these aims, is the establishment of a geographical federation within an independent and non aligned Republic of Cyprus. This is what Turkey wants.

Some people doubt the sincerity of this desire and think that Turkey's ultimate aim is to achieve the partition of the Island. This is an unfounded allegation.

The main reason for international sensitivity and concern over Cyprus arises from the strategic importance of the Island. The strategic importance of Cyprus concerns Turkey more directly than any other country, because the Island lies some 40 miles off her shores. It would be equally dangerous for Turkey, if the whole or a part of it were to be annexed to Greece. Greek Prime Minister Mr. Karamanlis has admitted that Greece has now been ~~illegally~~ fortifying the Dodecanese Islands which surround the Western approaches of Turkey. Greek presence on Cyprus would complete the encirclement of Turkey and provide a jumping point for Greeks. Turkey is, therefore, against both ENOSIS and "partition" which would mean the presence of Greek arms and forces on the Island.

Turkey and Greece, despite all the bad memories and strifes of the past are two countries which are forced by fate to live side by side, hopefully in peace and friendship. It is because of this, that after each conflict, they have signed pacts of friendship. It is not too late to reach a permanent and just solution on the Cyprus problem and on the problem of Aegean Sea, which has equally, if not more important. It is also yet not too late to establish Turkish-Greek friendship on more realistic foundations. But, it is vitally important that Greeks refrain from committing their past errors, and especially the error of bringing dangerous outside pressures to play. The only way lies in direct negotiations between the two communities.

It is quite possible that during the process, events will make Turkey and Greece less dependent on NATO and possibly lead them into new friendships and new treaties. This <sup>may</sup> ~~would~~ be a desirable development, both from the point of view of the interests of the two countries and also from the point of view of the balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean.

It is debatable that polarization in two camps, the NATO and the Warsaw Pacts, has always served the peace and security of the region. New treaties and friendships in the region may possibly put an end to this rigid polarization and thus enhance the peace and security in the Balkans.

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April, 1975.



16  
FEBRUARY 1975

[The Middle East Conflict - Can it be solved?]

(provisional survey, to be revised before April 25)

Arnold Forster

There are two rivaling concepts about solving the ME conflict: the step for step strategy proposed by Kissinger and preferred by Sadat and his Arab friends (Saudi Arabia, other "moderate" and "capitalist" Arab countries as well) as opposed to the Geneva strategy pushed by the Soviet Union and by her friends in the Arab world, the more radical and "socialist" countries. "Geneva" would mean to discuss and hopefully "solve" the whole complex in one parcel under joint chairmanship of the USSR and USA.

[Kissinger's step for step]

The step for step solution can look back on initial successes: Kissinger managed to disengage the troops on the Egyptian Israeli front in January 1974 and on the Syrian front in May<sup>19</sup> 74. But from then<sup>e)</sup> on the attempts at further steps stagnated. The whole summer and autumn passed in preparatory maneuvers and discussions for a further step. Jordan wanted some disengagement on the Jordan river, but this came to nothing because of Israeli diffidence and later because the Arab states decided that any territory recuperated from the west bank of the Jordan should go to the PLO not to Jordan. This was a consequence of the decision reached at the Arab summit in Rabat<sup>u)</sup> (Oct. 74) which designated unanimously the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians". Jordan had to accept this decision under pressure of all the Arab states<sup>o)</sup>.

A further step forward in the Golan proved impracticable because of the nature of the terrain. Only in the Sinai there seemed to be some hope of returning another slice of occupied ~~xxxxxxx~~ Arab territory. Israel seemed to be ready to do so, but wanted a counter concession from Egypt, and from the summer 1974 onwards it became clear that the principal difficulty lay in the question: what can Egypt offer as a counterconcession to Israel, if the Israelis take their troops back to the Mitla and Giddi passes and evacuate x

Abu Rodeis oil field?— Israel postulated a a declaration of non belligerence for "several years". Egypt declared it could not give any such assurance since the menace of a new war was the only real leverage Egypt had in order to compel<sup>(obtain)</sup> the return of all the occupied territories and the reinvindication of the rights of the Palestinians. ~~Further~~ Overmore Arab solidarity impeded any unilateral retreat from the war by Egypt, the <sup>(Arab)</sup> state with the biggest army, and Egypt had committed itself at Rabat not to take any unilateral steps towards peace. It seemed unlikely that Egypt would break such commitments because Arab solidarity on the financial and oil level are ~~her~~ <sup>its</sup> major hopes for extricating itself <sup>of</sup> from its very difficult financial and economic position, <sup>once</sup> after a possible solution to the conflict has been found. Kissingers personal diplomacy on his 9th round in the ME in February 1975 did not reach <sup>attain</sup> any results, but he declared himself willing to try again in March.

[The Geneva conference] [The need for a rapid solution]

Whatever the outcome of these future negotiations about a step forward in Sinai, it has become clear that each step forward will become more and more difficult to accomplish. On the other hand there is some urgency to reach some progress, principally because the financial and social difficulties of Egypt are growing rapidly and can only be remedied after the state of war has been abolished. At present Egypt continues to spend one third of its budget on the army, ~~EL 1 300 Mio~~ <sup>millions</sup> another 700 Mio <sup>millions</sup> went for food imports <sup>in 1974</sup> and they are expected to go up to 1 250 Mio in 1975. The Russians insist on payments ~~on~~ the debt of 2 billions; services in Cairo and other <sup>towns</sup> have run down; the canal zone has to be rebuilt; population increases by nearly one <sup>million</sup> Mio a year; prime minister Hegazi knows that the best chance to rebuild the economic structure would be to return to a market mechanism thus short circuiting the hopelessly inefficient state bureaucracy. But this aim can only be reached when the Russians will no longer be necessary <sup>needed</sup>. They keep being needed as long as the

state of war continues. Hoped for investments from USA, Europe and the oil states have been slow in coming, apart from some government subsidies, because the economic system being what it is rentability in Engypt is not assured.

If there is no rapid progress towards peace there is a serious <sup>dan-</sup>ger that Cairo will try another limited war, in the style of 1973, principally in order to speed things up. It could also be feared that Sadat's prestige continues to fall and that he would be overthrown if he engages the country into another lengthy period of "neither war nor peace". All this makes rapid progress imperative if a new war ~~xxxx~~ <sup>is to be</sup> should be avoided.

On the Israeli side similar reasons apply: the temptation to try a preventive war will grow, the longer no peace solution is found; this for reasons of prestige of state and army; economic reasons and reasons of strategy (a <sup>strategic</sup> ~~great~~ blow before Egypt is fully reequipped).

The urgency of finding a solution makes it very likely that the Geneva conference will be called together rather soon if the step for step strategy exhausts itself.

### [Dangers of Geneva]

US and Egyptian suspicions of Geneva are well founded. The principal danger would be "polarisation of the conference" as Sadat has declared publicly. This would mean the Russians giving strenuous support to the Arabs and forcing the Americans to defend the Israelis. If this should happen <sup>to the situation of</sup> the US would lose its present position as intermediary between the two sides and become the backer of one only, similar ~~as it was~~ before and after 1967. Today such a position would be much more dangerous to the US and the whole Western alliance because of oil. Oil pressure from the Arab side would certainly increase if the US were clearly seen to defend Israel against the Arab-Russian demands. It seems likely to the

the author of this paper that this is the real reason for the Russian advocacy of Geneva: they hope to maneuver the US and the NATO countries into a position of backing Israel against the Arabs and to take the political and economic punishment consequent to this state of affairs. Or alternatively to be seen backing down to Russo-Arabic pressure, sacrificing Israel at least partially, and to hand a prestige victory to the Russians and their Arab friends.

Sadat has been diffident towards Geneva because he has already lived through a period of "polarisation", when the US backed Israel and the Russians the Arabs, and he has seen that this led to the blocking of the ME question, a long period of "neither war nor peace" and could even lead to the freezing of the big power frontiers (Berlin style) between Israel and Arabs. But if Sadat can not achieve progress with the help of the Americans (Kissinger's step by step) he will be forced willy nilly to accept the Geneva set up and to hope that oil pressure might this time make a difference and force the western countries to back down and <sup>to</sup> sacrifice Israel..

[Political aims in case of a step for step, and in case of Geneva:]

If the negotiations continue under the auspices of Kissinger as intermediary the final aims of the Arabs remain rather well defined and comparatively limited: return of all territories, including Jerusalem and foundation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank. But if the negotiations will be conducted at Geneva the Arabs will insist on more, this is clear already today: The Palestinians will come to Geneva, if they are begged to come, but they will aim at a Palestinian state in the frontiers of 1947, reasoning that this has been consecrated by the UN <sup>(partition resolution)</sup> before the 1948-9 war. Overmore they will see this state only as a first step towards their officially proclaimed final aim of a "democratic Palestine" where Jews and Arabs can live together. This clearly postulates <sup>(previous)</sup> destruction of the present Jewish state of Israel. In Geneva the more moderate

Arab states, principally Egypt, would have little <sup>ch</sup> choice but to back the Palestinian demands, they have granted the Palestinians the right to decide their own political aims and strategy in advance (Rabat), and the balance of power <sup>(among the Arab states,</sup> seems to be such that the constellation effective at Rabat will also make itself felt at Geneva. Saudi Arabia is clearly decisive in this balance. In practice the Arab demands at Geneva, via the bias of the PLO, would go as far as the Saudi wanted them to go. The Russians <sup>(also an)</sup> have ~~xxx~~ interest in helping to maximise Arab demands, because in this way they will be able to maximise punishment for the West and for Israel; but they will probably be more cautious about it than the Saudis, because <sup>(will)</sup> they want to avoid a new war and the risks this would bring for the Super powers. However it is quite likely that they would gradually tighten the screw at Geneva if they could see the West and Israel <sup>(economically)</sup> either giving in gradually or weakening under oil pressure. Under the circumstances the only viable way for the US at Geneva would be to reach a previous understanding with the Soviet Union and to impose this on Israel, regardless of Israeli protests. But it is likely that the Russian price for such an understanding would be very high indeed, possibly exceeding the present day Arab official demands of all the territories and <sup>of</sup> a Palestinian mini-state.

### [The role of the Palestinians]

In all this the Palestinians ply the role of the ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ variable (the other demand: "all the territories" being fixed). They can be used by the Russians and by the Arab radicals in order to increase their demands whenever there seems to be scope for doing so. For this it is sufficient to give them encouragement. The inner structure of the PLO is such that the Organisation is forced to <sup>demand</sup> take always the maximum imaginable. Arafat has to count with the double opposition of the extremist groups (front du refus, PFLP, Jibril group, Tahrir-group, backed by Irak, etc.) and of the rank and file of all organisations (who are motivated by the desire to return to their homes in

present day Israel). He can only content himself with ~~xxx~~ less than the maximum demand of a "Democratic Palestine in all of Palestine" if he can prove ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~convincingly to his opponents that there is no other feasible solution than to accept a part of Palestine (at least provisionally). Therefore, if any bigger power ~~xxxx~~ gives reasons to (the Palestinians ~~xxxxxx~~ to hope for more, they will not accept any compromise for a lesser solution. The Soviet Union can use the PLO as an inflatable <sup>(balloon</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~, regulating their posture according to the needs and circumstances of the negotiations at Geneva.

How they will be used depends on the judgement one conceives of Soviet aims. If one believes that they <sup>USSR</sup> "really" want peace in the ME one has to assume the balloon will be deflated in the critical moment; but if one assumes, with the present writer, that they want rather a prolonged wrangle with the West and the USA about the future of the Middle East, stopping short of war but forcing the US and Europe into the position of defenders and backers of Israel, while they back the Arabs and their oil, in that case one would expect them to inflate the balloon just sufficiently to avoid a hot war but to keep the cold ME war going.

### [ Conclusion ]

It seems difficult for the Americans alone to achieve a near East settlement, except if they did it by forcing Israel to give in "all the way", however much this might be. If they are unwilling to do this, they will be forced to go to Geneva rather earlier than later, and there they risk to be degraded to the role of defenders of Israel and to accept the dislike of the Arabs with all the economic consequences ~~that are~~ inherent in this role. In Geneva a settlement seems possible only with the collaboration <sup>of</sup> the USSR. For this a price will have to be paid. It is possible, in the eyes of the writer even probable, that the Russians will put this price high enough for the US to be unwilling to pay it. In that case the con-

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flict will drag on indefinitely; <sup>(under those circumstances)</sup> talk in Geneva will earlier or later make room for a new and probably futile attempt to solve the conflict by an act of war. This might be contained by the Superpowers <sup>in</sup> / <sup>(as in the case of)</sup> similarly to the war of 1973 without conceding victory to either side; or else it might prove <sup>UN</sup> uncontrollable, because of its <sup>explosive</sup> unavoidable petroleum ingredient, and in that case it <sup>could</sup> ~~might~~ prove to be the beginning of the Third World War.