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Patterns and Priorities of the Superpowers' Presence
in the Mediterranean Area. Present Situation and
Future Perspectives.

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INTRODUCTION

On the Southern Flank of the Atlantic Alliance and, indeed, in the Mediterranean area in general, the presence of the United States and the Soviet Union, the motives behind that presence, the priorities of the two superpowers and their mutual relations are very different from those to be found in continental Europe.

Here, the confrontation between them is based on two military Alliances with basically similar roles and missions (even if American forces do not have the same role as their Soviet counterpart in guaranteeing the "faithfulness" of their allies). The situation in the area is fundamentally a stable one. There is a well-defined dividing line between the blocs, well-defined, that is, in politico-military, as well as in purely geographical, terms. It is thus fairly clear how one side would react if the other attempted to change the status quo. (At the same time, the Soviet Union has a strong tendency to drastically limit the room for institutional change in countries lying within her "security belt" and does not hesitate to intervene if she believes internal order in her bloc to be threatened). The range of action possible in continental Europe is thus extremely limited. What is more, within this area, any confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union would inevitably be tied to the vital interests of the European members of the two Alliances, who could in no way avoid involvement.

Finally, there exists within the area a certain homogeneity of interests and behaviour between countries belonging to the same Alliance, and there exist neither political nor economic motives capable of pushing Alliance members into open, destabilizing dispute. In this way, each of the dominant superpowers avoids the

effort needed to resolve internal conflicts within their respective Alliances which could weaken it in its relations with its main opponent.

In the Mediterranean area, on the other hand, the frontier between the superpowers is far less well-defined, not only because of the predominance of water over land, but also because many countries in the area formally belong to neither of the two blocs. Although, over the last ten years, these countries have been losing their role as "extras" and have taken on a "star role" in international events, they are still open to military and economic penetration by the superpowers. The European members of the Atlantic Alliance participate actively in this penetration with economic and industrial aid as well as arms sales. Nonetheless, an overall political strategy capable of rendering these ties more coherent and of formulating objectives is, as yet, lacking.

At the same time, given that the area includes countries outside the two Alliances, it is possible for the two superpowers to arrive at a confrontation over questions of little or no interest to the European allies.

The different roles assigned by the United States and the Soviet Union to their respective forces represents a further element of instability lacking in central Europe. The United States are fully aware of the vital importance of free transit through the Mediterranean and, using the VI fleet capability to project power ashore, they have assigned their naval forces the primary tasks of keeping communications routes open and of giving support to the ground battle on the Southern Flank - two tasks of extreme importance to NATO. Clearly these tasks are, in the last analysis,

subordinated to the essential task of ensuring the fleet's own survival against attacks from Soviet missile-launching vessels and attack submarines. Nonetheless, the presence of the VI fleet in the Mediterranean is also useful for the defense of specifically American interests, namely among other roles, the defense of friendly states outside NATO, particularly Israel and as a deterrent against Soviet threats of direct intervention in recurrent crises in the Middle East.

The Soviet Union, on the other hand, does not depend quite as closely on the Mediterranean: even a drastic reduction in her trade via the Mediterranean would have no determining effect on her economic and industrial viability. She thus deploys her forces in a sea denial role with particular emphasis on the destruction of the most important elements in the United States fleet, that is missile-carrying nuclear submarines and aircraft-carriers. This gives her a certain advantage in the sense that she can exploit the vulnerability which is inherent in the position of a power which seeks to maintain a position of predominance which is being openly challenged and which is attempting to defend itself against a threat which is becoming ever more concrete and a cause for ever growing concern. Nonetheless, this advantage is offset by the fact that in order to enter the Mediterranean Soviet ships have to pass through two choke points and that if they are to operate effectively, they need naval and air bases. The Soviet fleet, just like its American counterpart, serves to protect Soviet interests in the Middle East, in North Africa as well as playing a supporting role in the penetration of the Third World and for "anti-imperialist" movements .

Finally, there exist on the Southern Flank, differences and conflicts between members of the same Alliance. If the main problem facing the Warsaw Pact is the degree of distinctly limited independence claimed by Roumania, NATO has to face the far more serious problem of the conflict which has torn Greek-Turkish relations, bringing the two countries to the brink of war, and provoking Greek withdrawal from the Alliance's military organization, the re-organization of LANDSOUTHEAST and SIX ATAF commands and United States involvement in an extremely difficult game. The Atlantic Alliance has played a very limited role here and has lost a certain degree of credibility. The end result has been a strengthening of bilateral defense ties between the United States, Greece and Turkey (even if these are now more limited in scope than in the past), sanctioned by two treaties awaiting final ratification by the United States Congress. The importance of the dispute should not, however, be under-estimated, given the weakening in the credibility and the military posture of the Alliance which it implies. Should the dispute be reopened and explode into an open conflict between Greece and Turkey, it would mean the end of NATO's Southern Flank.

Trends in Soviet Policy

It was logical that the transformation and strengthening of the Soviet navy would be reflected in the situation in the Mediterranean. Nonetheless, the increase in the Soviet presence in recent years has superceded all estimates. If one examines the geographical distribution of US/USSR combatant deployment (aircraft carriers, general purpose submarines, major and minor surface combat units, amphibious ships and mine warfare ships) from 1965 to 1975, a signifi-

cant trend becomes clear. Whereas in the Pacific the average Soviet naval deployment has passed from 2 to 3 units, in the Atlantic from 2 to 10 and in the Indian Ocean from zero to 9, in the Mediterranean the increase has been far more impressive: from 4 to 28 units. In the same period the US VI fleet has decreased from 34 to 31 units.

During the June 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict, the Soviet Mediterranean Eskadra was boosted to about 70 ships; since the war, the Soviets have maintained an average of at least 35 to 40 ships: 10 to 15 cruisers, frigates, destroyers, escort ships and sometimes a helicopter carrier, 2 or 3 amphibious ships, 6 or 7 diesel-electric submarines, a couple of nuclear undersea craft and 10 to 15 auxiliary ships.

Apart from nuclear submarines which generally come from the Northern fleet, since transiting the Strait of Gibraltar is less detectable than passing through the Dardanelles, most of the surface ships and conventional submarines are rotated from the Black Sea Fleet.

On some occasions, considering the arriving and the departing ships, more than 75 Soviet vessels have been present at one time in the Mediterranean.

If we analyze the pattern of Soviet penetration and attempted penetration in the Middle East and in the North African countries, it is possible to detect certain elements in common with Soviet-Yugoslav relations (even if the ideological context is very different).

The first characteristic element is military aid:

- the sale or gift of both sophisticated and less sophisticated weapons systems (with a trend to supply weapons with an ever higher technology content);

- the presence of both civilian and military advisers and technical personnel who, in certain countries, in given situations, become a military force in their own right with important, indeed fundamental, roles in operational and logistic duties (command and control of defense networks, running of radar and missile bases, piloting of aircraft on surveillance and reconnaissance missions over the Mediterranean with an anti-VI fleet role and occasionally of aircraft in a combat role, first and second level maintenance of equipment and weapons systems;
- training of military personnel in the countries receiving the weapons both in loco as on-job training and in the Soviet Union with specialized operational and technical courses.

Although the expulsion of military advisers is always a possibility (as we have seen in practice), the importance of this kind of tie should not be under-estimated.

Supplying weapons, technical assistance, training and spare parts means creating a degree of dependency from which it is very difficult for the receiving country to escape without risking serious military weakening (it takes much more time to build and strengthen one's armed forces than for these to deteriorate). Without spare parts and expert maintenance, operational efficiency falls extremely rapidly.

Turning to alternative sources of supply in no way reduces the complexity of the problem. Quite apart from all the possible delays in the acquisition process, there are the effects of the lack of standardization on operation efficiency, difficulties in integrating Soviet and Western weapons in the same logistics system

(maintenance, supplies, administration) and difficulties in training personnel.

What is more, training in the Soviet Union, especially on officer courses, at military academy or Staff level creates personal acquaintances, friendships and a characteristic process of identification with the mentality, attitudes and behaviour of the military élite in the host country. All this, if these officers take on a key role in the armed forces or the government of their respective countries, could, for the Soviet Union, prove to be extremely useful. At the same time, one should not forget the advantages deriving from a spread of doctrines, operational concepts and tactics which would facilitate joint or integrated operations should these countries decide to side with the Soviet Union in a conflict.

Apart from military supplies, there is also economic aid. Here, however, the Soviet Union has been less effective and influential. Outside the military sector, Soviet technologies, managerial techniques and models of industrial organization are decidedly inferior to those offered by the West; client states are fully aware of these shortcomings and tend to turn to Europe, especially to those countries from whom it is possible to receive economic and industrial aid without this necessarily signifying a political choice.

What seems to have been completely lacking, partly because socio-political conditions have not been apt, has been any attempt to export Communist ideology. The deep differences which exist between the Soviet Union and her client states, which have often taken the form of drastic opposition by the latter to any kind of domestic political movement with Communist leanings, have not pre-

vented the establishment of stable relations which, in many cases, have culminated in treaties of friendship and mutual cooperation. In other words, ideological differences in no way deprive the Soviet Union of possible leverage in these countries, which could be used in favour of Soviet international interests and which could provide useful support for Soviet policy in a crisis, enabling the USSR to exert external pressure on Western Europe and the United States. This pressure could be particularly effective if it included a more or less explicit threat to use the oil weapon.

If we move from these detailed considerations to the general pattern of Soviet policy in the Mediterranean area, with its specific objectives and priorities, we may note that, quite apart from winning a stronger influence over the international attitudes adopted by the Middle Eastern and North African countries and the creation of a degree of military dependency, the main aim is to win the (preferably exclusive) right to use naval and airbases in these countries. Naval bases serve to give the sort of logistic support which cannot be guaranteed from anchorages in international waters, the kind of maintenance which is only possible with port facilities and recreation areas for crews. Air bases are needed as staging bases for air-lifts to African countries, as deployment bases for reconnaissance and MAP aircraft for surveillance of Western fleet movements in the Mediterranean, especially during NATO manoeuvres and exercises and for photographic missions.

Air and naval facilities are useful in peace time and in periods of crisis for maintaining a significant military presence and for increasing flexibility in the ways in which this presence can be used. In war time they are essential for effective operations

in the Mediterranean. If we look at the situation in detail, we find that Soviet relations with the various countries in the Mediterranean area are as follows:

Syria - After the cooling in relations provoked by the Syrian military operation in Lebanon, these now seem to be as healthy as ever. Syria has received considerable quantities of military material including Mig-23's, SA-3, SA-6 and SA-7 anti-aircraft missiles, surface to surface SCUD missiles and T62 tanks. Soviet advisers and technicians are present in the country. Soviet vessels are using the ports of Tartus and Latakia, which are the only naval bases the Soviet Mediterranean fleet now has available.

Egypt - It is unnecessary to repeat the history of Soviet-Egyptian relations after the forced repatriation of Soviet personnel and the clear drop in the operational capability of the Egyptian armed forces due to the interruption in supplies of spare parts and the lack of necessary expertise in maintenance. Nor is it necessary to go into Egypt's efforts to diversify her sources of weapons supply with soundings, contacts and contracts with companies in various Western countries: France, Great Britain, Italy and the United States.

The Port of Alexandria is no longer available as a logistic base for the Soviet fleet.

Libya - Libya has received huge quantities of Soviet weapons including highly sophisticated weapons such T62 tanks, M-23 "Flogger" aircraft, medium-range Tu-22 "Blinder" bombers, SA-3 surface-to-air missiles and SCUD surface to surface missiles.

Soviet personnel are reportedly stationed in the

Country. During Kossygin's visit to Tripoli in May 1975, it is reported that agreement was reached for arms purchases to a value of 4 billion dollars (800 million according to official Libyan sources). The agreement is said to have provided for the supply of tanks, MIG-23's, 6 conventional submarines, aid in the rebuilding of service and repair facilities for submarines in the ports of Benghazi and Tobruk and submarine training courses in the Soviet Union for Libyan navy personnel.

The Libyan navy is equipped with missile launching "Osa 2" fast patrol boats, each of which possesses four launchers for "Styx 2" surface to surface missiles.

Although Libyan officials have always denied that the Soviet Union has been granted base rights, there have been repeated press reports that the Soviets have been allowed to use Okba Ben Nafie airport (or even that the airport has been given as a concession). There have also been reports of Soviet Mig-25's reconnaissance aircraft from Libyan bases having flown over the Western and Middle Eastern countries as well as over the Mediterranean.

Nonetheless, Libya has also turned to the Western market, purchasing Mirage F-1's, tank landing craft, "Alouette III" helicopters and "Crotale" surface to air missiles from France, missile launching corvettes equipped with "Otomat" surface to surface missiles from Italy, and C-130E transport aircraft from the United States. Yugoslavia has supplied "Galeb" training aircraft.

It is clear that use of naval bases and airports in Libya would give the Soviets significant advantages in terms of complete air cover over the central and Western Mediterranean for surveillance and reconnaissance, increased potential for contrasting and preventing VI fleet hegemony in the Eastern Mediterranean and precious logistic

support for attack submarines operating in the Mediterranean.

Algeria - Algeria too has received weapons from the Soviet Union. In the naval field especially she has received missile launching "Komar" fast patrol boats armed with the original version of the "Styx" surface to surface missile and "Osa II's" equipped with the up-dated "Styx II".

What is more, the Soviet fleet visits Algerian ports more frequently than those of other North African countries. There are press reports that Algeria may have opened the former French naval base at Mers-el-Kébir to the Soviet fleet and that during the Angolan conflict Soviet transport aircraft used Colomb-Béchar airport as a staging base.

Finally, it seems impossible to completely exclude the possibility that Soviet use of naval bases and airports could be exchanged for Soviet diplomatic and military support should there be a worsening in relations between Algeria and Morocco over the Saharan issue.

The availability of these bases (even more than that of Libyan bases) would not only facilitate control over the Western Mediterranean but could represent a real threat to traffic through the Straits of Gibraltar, which lie within the range of Soviet fighter bombers operating from Algerian territory.

Morocco - possesses very few Soviet weapons and is politically oriented in a pro-Western direction. Nevertheless, she has economic ties with the Soviet Union which are far from being insignificant. The recent visit by the Moroccan Prime Minister to the Soviet Union (March 1978) and his talks there with Soviet leaders led to a long term agreement on economic and technical cooperation in the exploi-

tation of the phosphate deposits at Meskala, involving an estimated two billion dollars of investment, as well as numerous protocols which should make Morocco the Soviet Union's main economic partner in Africa.

Yugoslavia - In her relations with Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union has sought to pursue two objectives: the broad goal of re-integrating Yugoslavia within the Soviet sphere of influence (and even, if possible, within the Warsaw Pact) implying a clear break with her present non-aligned position in international affairs, and the more limited (though no less important) aim of creating closer political and military ties (perhaps through a degree of Yugoslav dependency on Soviet military supplies) which in turn might make it easier to win concessions over the use of Yugoslav ports, over-flying rights and more ambitiously, the use of Yugoslav airports.

Yugoslav law allows the majority of countries, under certain conditions (essentially that they are not participating in aggressive operations) to use naval infrastructures in the Adriatic ports for repairs and for other maintenance and supply operations. In 1974, the law was amended so as to increase the number of warships and auxiliary vessels allowed to berth in Yugoslav ports at the same time ("Radio Free Europe" reported that the increase was from 3 to 5 vessels).

This does not seem sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the Soviet navy. The possibility of using Yugoslav port infrastructures and creating an exclusively Soviet base in the Adriatic has always been one of the main subjects discussed in talks between President Tito and Soviet leaders.

In this light, Admiral Gorshkov's visit to Yugoslavia in

August 1976, and the interest he showed in port facilities on the Adriatic coast, seems particularly significant. Equally significant was CPSU Secretary Brezhnev's visit to Belgrade in November of the same year and his insistence on real concessions from President Tito. There were press reports that he went so far as to request permission to rent the Gulf of Kotor to build a Soviet naval base there. It seems that Brezhnev was similarly insistent in requesting permanent over-flying rights for military and civilian Soviet aircraft.

To date, over-flying rights have always been granted when requested, even during international crises such as the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, when Soviet aircraft flew over Yugoslavia on the way to the Middle East. At the same time, however, similar permission was granted to American aircraft supplying the air-lift to Israel.

Nevertheless, it is always possible that the Yugoslavs could change their procedures and grant permission for over-flying only if considerable advanced warning were given; permission would even be restricted to particular kinds of aircraft or be denied altogether thus depriving the Soviet Union of a simple, direct route to the North African countries. If Turkish air space were similarly closed to Soviet air traffic, this would be very serious indeed, although such a situation is unlikely to arise except in a far broader international conflict than those we have so far witnessed in the Middle East.

Finally, it is unnecessary to emphasize how important it could be for the Soviets to dispose of or to have access to air bases on Yugoslav territory for assuring air-cover over the central Mediterranean, for attacking targets in Italy and Greece during a conflict and for support missions for operations on the central front.

To date, President Tito has always resisted Soviet pressures and refused to give the Soviets particular privileges for the use of Yugoslav air and naval facilities. Nonetheless, even if we exclude from consideration the possibility of a direct Soviet intervention after the death of Tito, more or less openly supported by the Warsaw Pact countries and unhindered by the Americans (with the support of the NATO allies), the coming to power of a leadership with a more favourable attitude towards rapprochement with the Soviet Union could change the situation.

Even if nothing changed, the Soviet Union could perhaps win certain concessions or "most favoured nation treatment", using military supplies and aid as a form of pressure as well as exerting indirect pressure as what we might call "an influential mediator".

In practice, even though it is believed that the Yugoslav arms industry is capable of covering about 80% of the country's requirements, in high technology sectors, procurement abroad continues to be essential. One of these sectors is combat aircraft.

In the very near future, Yugoslavia will need to modernize her airforce. Although it is hoped to complete the Yugoslav-Romanian "Orao" project which is behind schedule, the Soviet Mig 23 seems the most logical choice, particularly if one considers that interceptor squadrons in the Yugoslav air force are already equipped with Mig-21 F/PF. In any case, even if Yugoslavia wished to diversify her sources of supply, it would be difficult for her to find a Western country willing to supply her with aircraft of the same class as the Mig-23.

The offer of a Yugoslav-Soviet agreement in this field, particularly if coupled with attractive economic terms, favourable

trade-offs and industrial compensatory measures could represent one way of winning concessions, especially over the use of Adriatic ports by the Soviet Mediterranean fleet.

Pressure could be exerted within the context of a serious crisis in Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations, due to renewed Bulgarian claims on Macedonia. The Soviet Union could then present herself to Yugoslavia as a mediator capable of using her influence to limit Bulgarian claims, always providing that Yugoslavia were prepared to be more flexible in her attitude to Soviet requests. This is perhaps an improbable scenario. It is not, however, impossible if one considers the delicate transitional period which is bound to follow the death of Tito.

Albania - Albania is a special and extremely uncertain case. Internationally, she is practically isolated, after the evident cooling in her relations with China; she is closed off from the outside world in a rigidly dogmatic system which leaves little room for development. In the medium term a change of leadership seems likely. At this point, Albania could once again play the Soviet card and here, the question of Adriatic naval bases could return to the surface. After all, the only naval facilities the Soviets have ever possessed in the Adriatic was the naval complex for submarines near Vlone in Albania.

Turkey - Given the importance that these might assume should there be any further cooling in Turkish-American relations, some reference should obviously be made to Soviet relations with Turkey. One should recall:

- the technical cooperation agreement signed in 1975 for important industrial projects in Turkey, including the enlargement of the Iskenderum Steel Mills;

- Brezhnev's hint, in his opening speech at the 25th Congress of the CPSU in February 1976, that there is a trend in Turkish-Soviet relations towards political as well as economic cooperation;
- the passage of the Kiev through the Straits in Summer 1976 with Turkish acceptance of the Soviet definition of the ship as an anti-submarine cruiser;
- the repeated Soviet attempts to secure the signature of a Treaty of non-aggression between the two countries.

The advantages which the Soviet Union could draw from a more open Turkish attitude are self-explanatory, especially in so far as concerns transit for naval units through the Dardanelles, over-flying rights in a Middle Eastern crisis or in a confrontation between the Americans and the Soviets in which Turkey did not feel herself to be directly involved.

Trends in American Policy

Certain characteristics of the United States position are at least partially similar to those typical of the Soviet presence. The American position is undergoing a process of change which could lead to reduced availability of bases, as well as operation and logistic infrastructures, a reduction in the American presence or, at very least, a reduction in the flexibility with which American forces can intervene and a more limited overall operational capability.

In the same way as the Soviet Union, the United States have used economic and military aid as a way of obtaining access to ports and airports, of building dumps for POL and munitions, communications centres, listening stations, etc., as well as stationing troops.

(There are differences, of course, the United States are usually dealing with American allies). American military aid, like Soviet aid includes technical assistance, specialized training courses, etc.

Like Soviet policy, American policy in the Middle East and North Africa has had moments of success as well as a number of failures. The United States have lost their bases in Libya and seem to be completely without leverage in both Libya and Algeria. They maintain relations with and sell arms to Tunisia and Morocco where, until the end of 1977, they enjoyed communications facilities under informal arrangements. Once the Soviets had left the stage, they resumed relations with Egypt and are playing an active role as mediators within the Middle Eastern area.

Paradoxically, the main dangers of a weakening in the American position come from within the Alliance, due to a series of factors, including political and institutional changes in Spain, Portugal and Italy, the risk of a new break in Greek-Turkish relations which could push the two countries back to the brink of war and Greek and Turkish resentment against the United States stemming from the American role during and after the Cyprus crisis.

The facilities to which the VI fleet and other American forces have access in the Mediterranean are of fundamental importance. Their loss, or any limitation of their use to NATO contingencies and operations which serve mutual defense interests - such as those which emerge fairly explicitly in the agreements reached with Greece, Turkey and Spain in 1976 - could pose very serious problems for the United States.

In practice, the Americans are faced with an alternative: either they must accept a reduction in their ability to intervene in

favour of what their allies, at least, see as exclusively American interests, with the result that in a crisis as in 1973, they could come up against allied refusal to cooperate which could make it impossible to make full use of available resources and of all possible tactical and strategic options. The alternative would be to create an independent capability to operate throughout the Mediterranean basin even without supporting allied infrastructures. This would, however, mean paying a high price.

It is significant that the cost in terms of military and for economic assistance required to buy the right to use military installations in allied and non-allied countries is growing towards a level which could bring the United States to re-evaluate its presence in the Mediterranean area and to request greater European military participation in the NATO posture on the Southern flank.

Let us now proceed to examine United States relations with the various Southern Mediterranean countries in greater detail, with special reference to the importance of the facilities conceded to American forces, the possibilities open for replacing these while maintaining US forces' present missions and the impact of their complete loss.

Italy - Italy acts as host, not only to a number of NATO commands (CINCSOUTH, STRIKFORSOUTH, FIVE ATAF, LANDSOUTH) and a number of military communications stations in the US Defense Communications System (DCS), but also to three important bases: a major support complex in Naples, utilized by the VI fleet, a naval air facility at the Sigonella airbase in Sicily and a homeport for a submarine tender which services US nuclear submarines at La Maddalena, a small Island off the North-East coast of Sardinia.

Given Italy's particular geographical position, the loss of these bases would make it much more difficult than at present for American forces to fulfil their military mission, particularly in the Central Mediterranean. For the moment, it is unthinkable that the four countries capable of providing replacement air and naval infrastructures namely Libya, Tunisia, Malta and France would be willing to accept American military personnel on their soil.

Relations between Italy and the United States are extremely good. Nonetheless, it is possible that this situation could change if the Communist Party joined the government. It may be presumed that this would not lead to any significant change in Italian attitudes towards NATO and existing American bases, but that it would lead to strong resistance to the establishment of new military installations. Obviously, the Italian attitude would also depend on the reactions in the United States and within the Atlantic Alliance to such an important domestic political change, and, as far as regards new installations, on the overall international situation at the time of the request.

Greece - The most important installations used by American forces in Greece are the Hellenikon Airbase, close to Athens and the Souda Bay air and naval facilities on Crete.

Facilities in Greece ensure control over the Aegean Sea and thus over passage through the Mediterranean as well as providing staging bases and supply depots for air and naval forces committed to the surveillance and monitoring of Soviet forces in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Following the Cyprus crisis, Greece withdrew from the Atlantic Alliance's military organization. Greek-American relations also

deteriorated. In April 1976, Greece and the United States signed a series of "Principles to guide future US-Greek defense cooperation". These served as a basis for negotiations between the two countries for the amendment of the 1953 military facilities agreement.

If the United States were obliged to withdraw from Greece, the only two countries which could provide alternative bases would be Italy and Turkey (it is completely unrealistic to think that Egypt, Libya or Cyprus would be willing to tolerate even a minimal American military presence on their territory).

Turkey's geographical position has the advantage that it permits continued easy control over the Eastern Mediterranean. At the same time, however, there is the disadvantage that existing Turkish infrastructures (especially naval infrastructures) would need to be expanded and strengthened if American forces were to use them without loss of operational flexibility.

Italy possesses adequate air and naval facilities which could be used by American forces without excessive enlargement (much less than would be necessary in Turkey). Italy's geographical position would, however, make it difficult to carry out the tasks for which Greek bases are used at present.

It must, in any case, be emphasized that there is absolutely no certainty that the Turkish and Italian governments would be willing to accept an expansion of the American military presence. Much could depend on the international situation at the time of the request and the military and/or economic aid the United States were willing to offer in return.

Turkey - The military facilities which Turkey has granted the United

States has made it possible to monitor Soviet air and naval activities, to track missile and nuclear tests and to collect valuable information on military activity in the Near Eastern area around Turkey. Apart from the intelligence collection sites located on the Turkish Black Sea coast, the most important facilities include supply depots, communications centres, and the Incirlik and Cigli airbases. LANDSOUTHEAST and Vith ATAF Command headquarters have been established at Izmir in Turkey.

When, in July 1975, the American Congress decided to suspend military aid and arms sales to Turkey, the Ankara government declared that the 1969 Defense Cooperation Agreement and all related agreements had "lost their legal validity". All American installations were to pass under the "full control and custody of the Turkish armed forces".

In March 1976, the United States and Turkey signed a new agreement which was "consistent with but not identical to" the 1969 DCA. This agreement, like the Greek agreement, is still awaiting final approval by the United States Congress.

Should the United States be forced to abandon her bases in Turkey, there seem to be relatively few relocation options. For obvious reasons, it would be unrealistic to consider Egypt, Syria or the Lebanon. It might be possible to relocate bases in Israel, but the Tel Aviv government could always refuse an American request which, in any case, would undermine the United States possibilities of continuing in the mediating role which to date has represented the only hope of a continued dialogue between Egypt and Israel and a peaceful settlement to the Middle Eastern situation.

There remains the Greek option. Greek installations are more than adequate to meet the requirements of an increased American pre-

sence following the closure of Turkish bases. Nonetheless, Greece's geographical position is not such as to allow the collection of the highly valuable intelligence information presently collected from sites on the Black Sea coast. This information could, however, be collected using alternative methods (increased use of satellites, installations in Iran and Greece, etc.). Finally, here too one should always remember that the Greek government could always refuse to accept the transfer of American forces from Turkey to Greece.

Portugal - Rigorously speaking, Portugal does not belong to the Mediterranean area. Nonetheless, the bases in the Azores are extremely important for operations in this area, both as staging facilities for MAC aircraft bound for Mediterranean and European countries and as supporting installations for anti-submarine warfare and thus for the control of the sea-lanes linking the VI fleet to its major supply depots on the American East coast.

In the Summer of 1974, the date on which the agreement on the Lajes airbase expired, the Portuguese government declared that it did not intend to seek the withdrawal of the Americans from the Azores. In April 1975, it was announced that Portugal would not allow the use of the Lajes base for support to Israel in the event of a new Middle Eastern conflict. Since then, there has been no clarification in the position. It will only be with a new agreement between the United States and Portugal that it will be possible to know if limitations are to be placed on the use of the Azores' facilities by American forces.

Two countries could provide alternatives to the bases in the Azores should these be lost, namely Morocco and Spain.

Nonetheless, despite the fact that in the 1950's Morocco made

installations available to US forces (and to the Strategic Air Command in particular) and despite the presence of an American communications centre at Kenitra right until the end of 1977, it is unrealistic to suppose that Morocco, which is today in a substantially non-aligned if slightly pro-Western position, would be prepared to accept the establishment of new bases.

As far as Spain is concerned, which already acts as host to American military personnel in various bases, and which has recently signed a Treaty of Friendship and collaboration with the United States, the question is rather more complex. Although, it would be logical for the Spanish government not to refuse a relocation of American forces from the Azores, there is absolutely no guarantee that it would not insist on precise limitations on the strength and the kind of American forces stationed in the new bases. At the same time, it is very probable that acceptance of an American request would be tied to American military and/or economic aid.

If it were ever necessary to stage a new airlift to Israel, the loss of the Azores would be a very serious handicap. In order to avoid dependency on the availability of staging bases in other countries, the United States could proceed to purchase a certain number of advanced tanker/cargo aircraft (ATCA). It appears, however, that this solution would have an unusually high cost/effectiveness ratio.

Spain - Although Spain does not belong to NATO, she allows the United States to use a certain number of facilities on her territory. The most important of these are: the naval base complex at Rota; the Torrejon, Zaragoza and Moron airbases; the Cadiz-Zaragoza Pipeline and the Bardenas Reales Firing Range.

As mentioned above, in 1976 the United States and Spain con-

cluded a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, whose main clauses allow American forces to use practically all the facilities where they are presently located. Nonetheless, it has been agreed that the nuclear submarine squadron currently operating out of Rota naval base will be withdrawn by July 1, 1979, that the 98th strategic wing of tanker aircraft will also be withdrawn (a maximum of five tankers will continue to be stationed at the Zaragoza airbase) and that the United States "will not store nuclear devices or their components on Spanish soil".

Although it is unclear whether the United States will be allowed to use Spanish bases to resupply Israel in the event of another war, the most significant limitation imposed by the agreement is the withdrawal of nuclear submarines from the Rota base. It appears as if relocation will be extremely difficult. If Morocco is excluded, the only other two possibilities are France and Portugal.

France does not belong to the Alliance's military organization, has always followed an independent military policy and is extremely unlikely to accept the presence of an American base on her territory. Portugal could possibly accept the relocation of the nuclear submarine tender but in the Azores, rather than in Metropolitan Portugal (for domestic political reasons). Given, however, that what is required is a base for nuclear submarines, with all that the word "nuclear" implies, Portugal might also refuse an American request.

The only alternative would seem to be the deployment of submarines armed with long-range "Trident" missiles. This, however, is only possible if "Trident I" shows that it can actually operate over its planned 4000 NM range. This would make it possible to

base the Rota nuclear submarine squadron at a port on the East coast of the United States without any significant loss of strike capability.

Yugoslavia - The United States are fully aware of the importance of Yugoslav neutrality on the Southern flank and of how necessary it is that the country should continue its present independent policy without ceding to Soviet requests for naval and air facilities.

During Tito's visit to the United States last March, President Carter stated that "Yugoslavia's independence and territorial integrity are fundamental for world peace now and in the future", thereby indicating implicitly that the United States would not stand idly by should the Soviet Union attempt to profit from the delicate transitional period following the death of Tito for a direct intervention.

Nonetheless, it is difficult to see what the United States could do or how she could react if Tito's successors moved closer to the Soviet Union as part of a general readjustment in Yugoslav foreign policy (even if this were stimulated or rendered essential by the Yugoslav domestic situation), or how she could make her opposition felt if this kind of rapprochement led to a greater Yugoslav willingness to concede the Soviet Union special or privileged treatment in the use of the Adriatic ports, airbases or other facilities such as over-flying rights.

As far as regards the possibility of military aid, the United States and Yugoslavia are not in an easy position. In 1976, an attempt to reach an agreement on the sale of arms, which were to have included second generation "TOW" anti-tank missiles, failed as

a result of publicity in the American press and open Pentagon opposition to the sale of advanced technology weapons systems, even to a non-aligned Communist country, for fear that the technical and operational characteristics of these systems could fall into Soviet hands.

Today, as a result of Tito's visit to Washington, mentioned already, it seems as if the American administration is willing to sell weapons to Yugoslavia. It is possible though that they are not prepared to sell all the weapons on the list which the press says has been presented by the Yugoslavs ("Harpoon" anti-ship missiles, "Maverick" air-to-surface missiles, "Dragon" anti-tank missiles and an integrated naval defense system). According to US officials, however, there does exist an agreement in principle to sell Yugoslavia several of the requested items.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, a number of fairly significant trends seem to be emerging.

The Soviet Union:

- has drastically limited American supremacy in the Mediterranean;
- presents, with the high number of anti-ship missiles in the possession of its fleet in the Mediterranean, a concrete threat to the survival of the VI fleet, especially if there were to be a Soviet pre-emptive strike. Nonetheless, the operational flexibility of Soviet naval forces would, in a conflict be limited, unless that is, the Soviets achieved complete free access to the Mediterranean and to naval and airbases on the North African coast and in the Middle East;

- is able in a Mediterranean crisis to make its presence felt and to project power ashore although, for the moment, to a very limited extent;
- is continuing with success its policy of penetrating and of giving economic and military aid to the North African countries. It is probable that the USSR will succeed in obtaining naval and air facilities in these countries and indeed that a certain number of these facilities are already in use. This policy is tied to more general Soviet policy and direct Soviet intervention in Africa.

The United States:

- are forced by the presence of the Soviet fleet to reconsider priorities for her naval forces in the Mediterranean. The VI fleet could only provide support for possible land battles on the Southern flank if it had already won the battle at sea, thereby guaranteeing its own survival;
- no longer disposes of bases in North Africa. Even in allied countries these bases are not available unconditionally. What is more, the ties between a number of allied countries which provide facilities and the United States are today on a more bilateral basis and are thus more costly and in a sense more vulnerable than in the past. All this weakens ties with NATO;
- could find herself, during a crisis in which her allies did not feel themselves to be involved, having to count on her ability to support her forces without outside help;
- could find herself having to adopt a difficult mediating role in any new crisis between Greece and Turkey.

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