ISTITUTO AFFARI INTERNAZIONALI
ROME

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES
LONDON

THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE, SOUTHERN EUROPE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Mediterranean Area and the Southern Flank of NATO: Political Factors

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Castelgandolfo
18/20 April 1979

used to deploy elements of the strategic nuclear deterrent. Today, neither of these roles is any longer of primary importance. Certainly, there are still strategic nuclear submarines in the Mediterranean. Nonetheless, with the introduction of longer range SLBM's, these will tend to disappear or, at any rate, to become ever less important. What is more, the West no longer deploys MRBM's on the Southern Flank. Given the intensity of political change in the Middle East and in Africa, with the direct presence of the Soviet Union in these areas and of a Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean, the whole concept of containment has changed. The aim is no longer to surround and isolate Soviet power, but rather to compete with the Soviets on a world stage with no clear geographical boundaries.

Whereas in the past, strategic surveillance of the Soviet Union was primarily the task of bases on allied territory, today this work is largely done by American satellites. Ground bases and reconnaissance flights along the Soviet frontier are still important. Nonetheless, their main role is to check and confirm information already received rather than to serve as a primary source of intelligence.

What is more, the Mediterranean is neither the Soviet Union's main sea outlet onto the Atlantic nor a vital trade route for supplies to central Europe. It is possible that in the near future, full operation of the SuMed pipeline from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean and the opening of the new Saudi pipeline delivering crude oil to the Red Sea rather than to the Gulf will

The most obvious characteristic of the Mediterranean area is its political instability: the speed with which the situation changes both within individual countries and in their international relations. The Atlantic Alliance's Southern Flank has represented a relatively continuous, stabilizing element in the area. With the possible exception of Malta, the Alliance - despite a number of serious political and military crises - has never completely "lost" one of its member states. The Warsaw Pact, on the other hand, has never succeeded in taking on a similar role, having lost Albania and having consistently failed to integrate Yugoslavia.

Nonetheless, the Atlantic Alliance has not achieved a complete political success. The changes which have occurred in the international system and the serious crises which the Alliance has gone through have not changed its formal structure; they have, however, changed its nature, showing up its weaknesses and creating doubts as to its future.

In the following pages, we will attempt to define a number of these elements of crisis and the trends which these seem to suggest for the future, to determine the kind of role which the Mediterranean will need in the 1980s, and to clarify the position of the Southern Flank.

Over the last thirty years, there has been a change in the strategic importance of the Mediterranean. In the 1950s, it played a key role in the containment of the Soviet Union. The countries on the Southern Flank and the Mediterranean itself were

lead to a recovery of the importance of the Mediterranean for trade. However, it is probably that in view of political, security and ecological considerations as well as of the availability of low cost supertankers, the round-Africa route will continue to prevail.

Soviet pressure on the Mediterranean has increased and diversified, not only in the North - on the Balkans and on the Turkish frontier - but also in the South - in the Middle East. Nonetheless, there exists no clear international line-up such as to allow the definition of a front along which to deploy troops. The direct threat to the NATO countries in the Mediterranean has increased only marginally, above all as a result of the increased Soviet naval presence and the increased range and capabilities of Soviet air power. It seems impossible to argue that the Warsaw Pact has any well-defined plan to increase the military threat against the countries on the Southern Flank.

Nevertheless, the Alliance's situation in the Mediterranean is a difficult one.

The lack of a clear dividing line between the two opposed blocs and the instability of political groupings in the area have increased the importance of political factors which, in Southern Europe, over the last thirty years, have been regarded either as givens or alternatively as being of only secondary importance. It is possible to analyze the similarities existing between the Alliance's Southern and Northern Flanks.

In the North as well as in the South, political factors have assumed great political significance. The delicate balance between neutral and aligned states (which, in the Norwegian and Danish cases, however, are lacking in nuclear weapons) helps to maintain a special equilibrium which is not simply a balance of power between two opposed blocs but which is tied to the history of the Nordic countries. Unlike the situation in the Mediterranean, however, this balance is based on the great political and institutional stability of the Nordic states, which are capable of maintaining a continuous foreign policy regardless of major government changes. At the same time, the preponderant direct Soviet presence in the area constitutes a further conservative factor. Finnish and Swedish neutrality along with the Nordic balance, constitute the only credible response to Soviet military predominance.

Nothing like this is to be found in the Mediterranean: regimes and their foreign policies are unstable; neither of the two superpowers has a clearly predominant role. The Mediterranean area is less directly exposed to military pressure from the two blocs and, at the same time, less homogeneous than the Nordic area. The region is incapable of attaining a common outlook, a common perception of threat and common policies comparable to those achieved in the North.

In part, this is due to the fact that in practice the Mediterranean area is composed of a number of sub-regions which all border on the sea but which in no way represent an integrated

bloc: the Middle East, North Africa, Southern Europe and the Balkans. Even internally these sub-regions are far from being homogeneous; there is not the least trend towards growing ties between them. Certainly, these areas have a number of features in common from a cultural, economic and military point of view, but even these factors tend to be centred outside the Mediterranean. Thus oil increases the dependency of the Mediterranean states vis à vis the Gulf. From a military point of view, the most important ties are with the USA and the USSR. From a commercial and technological viewpoint, the key role is played by the European Community. Even from a religious point of view, the Mediterranean, despite a number of recent attempts at ecumenism, has remained more of a frontier zone between different religions than any kind of melting pot.

In brief, we can state that the vertical ties linking the Mediterranean countries to countries and interests outside the area are stronger than the horizontal ties linking these states to each other.

Nonetheless, none of these vertical ties is sufficiently strong or sufficiently shared by all the countries of the region to constitute a factor favouring regional cohesion and homogenization. Rather, these ties tend to superimpose themselves in inter-Mediterranean conflicts worsening these and rendering them endemic.

In Europe, the predominant role played by the East West conflict has contributed to the elimination of national conflicts

favouring the creation of relatively homogeneous, supranational political areas. In the Mediterranean, on the other hand, the East West conflict has adapted itself to the peculiarities of the region and has come to depend, to a large extent, on local conflicts. Thus, to a large extent, it is Libya which uses the Soviet Union rather than vice versa, Sadat's Egypt is far more capable of determining the level and nature of the American commitment in the Middle East than the US is of controlling Egyptian behaviour. At the same time, the intensity of conflict within the area and the instability which characterizes Mediterranean regimes tend to increase the superpowers need to exert control. What is more, the methods of intervention open to the superpowers are too few and too unreliable to allow these powers not to attempt to profit from existing conflicts to find allies. A vicious circle is established. Conflict creates a need for external intervention; external intervention tends to make these permanent.

Even a few rapid examples are enough to show the scope of the problem represented by the Southern Flank. The allied countries on the Southern Flank (France, Italy, Greece and Turkey. Portugal is excluded as being mainly projected towards the Atlantic) belong geographically to the Mediterranean. At the same time, however, they see these crises through the deforming prism of a view tied to Mediterranean crises. These countries have an interest in the joint defence of the Alliance. Meanwhile though, they seek to adapt the Alliance to the specific local situation. As a result, the Atlantic Alliance appears in the Mediterranean as a strange hybrid, born from the crossing of extremely different

perceptions and policies, and can be only partially assimilated to the rest of the Alliance. One could even go so far as to argue that the Alliance does not exist in the Mediterranean as an integrated politico-military body. France and Greece are both members of the Alliance but have still to settle their position vis à vis NATO. Spain is allied to the USA, to France and to Portugal (through three separate bilateral treaties), but is not a member of the Alliance. Greece and Turkey consider each other as a threat. Turkey has suffered a US embargo and has reacted by reducing the availability of bases on her territory and the contribution made by her armed forces. Italy has found herself "under suspicion" and has received "warnings" from her American ally, in connection with internal political developments. In this region, NATO's integrated command structures are integrated in theory far more than in practice. Above all, they work exclusively on account of the American role, rather than through integration between Mediterranean allies.

Nonetheless, the Alliance continues to exert a certain security role, in part because it provides an institutional framework for the maintenance of the American military presence in the area, in part because it represents a "choice of camp" - Alliance membership implies membership of the Western bloc. But it is below this general level that the real problems begin.

A - The Crisis in the East

The first of these problems seems to be that of the Eastern sector. The Central Treaty Organization is dead. What was once described as the silent Alliance, permanently in crisis but capable of surviving all possible developments in the region, has collapsed as a result of the emerging Islamic movements in Pakistan and in Iran. This means many different things:

- there is no longer a Western "safety belt" physically separating the Soviet Union from the Arab Middle East, nor is there any longer any possibility of using the Alliance to "moderate" political developments in the Middle East;
- Turkey, who, as a NATO member, is becoming ever more isolated in the area, risks becoming a dangerous exception in a world ever more inclined towards militant neutralism (or towards nationalist, nuclear adventures such as those attributed to General Zia's regime in Pakistan);
- the Atlantic Alliance has lost its Eastern cushion and has seen Middle Eastern crises coming dangerously close to its own frontiers;
- Great Britain has lost the last of the traditional justifications for her presence in Cyprus and in the Middle East.

The Islamic movement has not only overthrown the Iranian monarchy; it has increased concern for Gulf security and seems to have led to an intensification of conflicts around nationality problems (the Kurds, the Turkish and Afghan mino-

rities). These could in their turn lead to an increase in local conflicts.

These developments have led to increased Western and more particularly American nervousness and to an attempt to rapidly make up for the collapse of the CENTO security system and of Iran with a security system based on the moderate Arab states and on Israel with a stronger direct American presence. This attempt, however (like similar previous attempts by the Western powers before the setting up of CENTO), has failed to create a stable and coherent system. On the one hand, Saudi Arabia undoubtedly fears having to take on an excessive strategic and political burden if she becomes not only the centre of world oil policy, but also, at the same time, a pivot for Middle Eastern security and stability. On the other, the moderate Arab states have yet to be involved in the building of peace between Egypt and Israel and this leads to significant divisions within their own camp. All that remains then is the increased direct American commitment, which has become clearly visible with the increase in military aid and supplies to Saudi Arabia and to Egypt and with the extremely expensive financial burden taken on as a result of the agreement between Egypt and Israel.

These parallel developments in the Arab world and in CENTO are bound to affect the Mediterranean strategic framework. Ever since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the Europeans and Americans have had differing evaluations of the necessary commitment.

This difference of views worsened during the 1973 crisis when the confrontation between the two superpowers led to the nuclear alarm being given and when the Arab reaction took the form of an extremely rapid rise in the price of oil. Since 1973, the Europeans have attempted to define the roles assigned to American forces present in the Mediterranean with greater precision than in the past and to limit the forces present in Europe to the role assigned them by the Alliance. In reality, however, this is a very subtle and not always a possible distinction. It is impossible, for instance, to divide the VI Fleet, which plays a role both in the defence of the NATO area and in that of the Middle East. The same applies to many support, command, control, communication and intelligence services. What is more, it is equally impossible to hypothesize any Middle East crisis involving American forces without involving air forces presently deployed with NATO.

At the same time, the area covered by the Atlantic Treaty includes the non-territorial waters of the Mediterranean and thus applies to the VI Fleet when involved in operations directed towards the Middle East. Finally, from a more general point of view, it is impossible to deny the essential importance of Arab oil for European security and thus the interest of the Alliance in any kind of threat which might cut off free access to what is a strategic commodity.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that this increased American commitment in the Middle East increases the difference between

the situation on the Southern Flank and that in the central sector, while posing a difficult political and strategic problem for Alliance members on the Southern Flank. These countries have to face up to the problem of how to adapt their traditional strategic doctrine - centred on the confrontation with the Warsaw Pact in Eurpe - to the ill-defined problem of how to maintain stability in the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

B - The Difficult Eastern Mediterranean Theatre

None of these problems has been made any simpler by the continuance of Greek-Turkish conflict which, fortunately, has so far been limited to diplomatic skirmishing and to demonstrative gestures. Nonetheless, the presence of Turkish troops on Cyprus and Greek re-militarization of islands, where this was prohibited by Treaty - Rhodes, Mitilene, Cos, etc. - and the continuing dispute over territorial waters and sovereignty over air space in the Aegean, threaten to keep this conflict alive in the futre and thus to prevent any genuine allied integration in this delicate zone.

Furthermore, the increased American commitment in the Middle East undoubtedly contrasts with the pro-Islamic tendencies which the Turkish government has demonstrated on several occasions in recent years - even if this were only for opportunistic reasons. This increases the probability of a sudden loss of Turkish bases for operations in the area.

Finally, the increased range acquired by Soviet air forces

(in particular with the deployment of the "Backfire" naval bomber), the presence of the Soviet naval squadron in the Mediterranean, the possibility of Soviet access to bases in Syria and Libya and the non-commital position taken by Turkey on the application of the Montreux Convention which regulates traffic through the Dardanelles and through Turkish air space (the Turks seem favourable to free passage for Soviet forces), has reduced the peace of mind of Western forces in the Eastern Mediterranean. The development of technology and greater missile accuracy is bound to increase these worries. The narrow waters of the Mediterranean are not the ideal place to manoeuvre a large fleet; the Eastern end of the Mediterranean could well prove to be particularly inconvenient.

The whole of the South-Eastern Flank is affected by the difficult situation which has arisen between Greece and Turkey, not least because the failure of these two allies to cooperate has increased the tasks and responsabilities of American forces; moreover the political situation within the two countries hardly seems to suggest that any short term change in the situation is likely.

In Greece, the last elections confirmed Karamanlis' party - Nea Demokratia's hold on power. Nonetheless, the party's majority was much weakened as was the Centre Party's, its potential moderate ally. Meanwhile, there was a significant strengthening of Andreas Papandreu's Socialist Party - the Pasok - which is opposed both to NATO and to the EEC. This is thus the risk of a radicalization of Greek politics. This risk is accentuated by the triumph of the "external" Communist party - which follows a pro-

Soviet line - over the "internal" Party which has eurocommunist tendencies. This could lead to a process of obligatory side-taking which whould weaken the weak fabric of Greek democracy. Meanwhile, this radicalization has undoubtedly strengthened internal nationalist tendencies and made a diplomatic rapprochement between Greece and Turkey more difficult. Greek membership of the EEC, which should be ratified in the near future and which will become effective in 1981, could contribute to a better security climate and thus to a greater willingness to negotiate. It is also possible, however, that internal controversy around this decision could further complicate the picture leading to a facile identification between pro-Europeans, supporters of the Atlantic Alliance and the "enemies of the nation". This, in its turn, would bring about a further radicalization in the positions taken by the major political groupings. One should emphasize here, the relative isolation of the Greek political parties from their European counterparts (practically the only relations maintained/are by Pasok with the left wing of the French and Italian socialist parties). The external Greek Community Party's relations with the PCI are little more than diplomatic.

The Turkish political situation is not very different and is once again very isolated from Europe. In Turkey, both of the major parties are officially in favour both of the Atlantic Alliance and of the EEC. In practice, however, the nature of the Turkish political and economic system tends to favour a drift away from the West. Unstoppable population growth, a rate of inflation of around 50% per year, a serious balance of payments

crisis, 10 billion dollars of foreign debts (total official reserves less than one billion dollars) and 40-50% under-utilization of industrial capacity make up a crisis which it impossible to resolve with palliatives and short term aid.

Turkey today is concerned at her isolation from Europe and is under the influence of nationalist and Islamic pressures which inevitably become stronger in periods of crisis. As a result, she has found herself caught up in a game of double vetos with Greece. Turkey opposes the splitting up of NATO commands in the Eastern Mediterranean because this would allow Greece to be fully reintegrated in NATO. Greece opposes Western aid plans for Turkey, and, in the future, could oppose EEC initiatives in this direction. In the meantime, Turkey is looking - without much success - for other possible sources of finance from the OAPEC countries to the USSR. The results, however, have been disappointing. Apart from a Soviet aid plan and a modest loan from the Saudis, the most generous offers are still those coming from the West; the Guadaloupe conference emphasized the need for more generous loans to Turkey. What is missing for the moment is a well-defined plan for the coordination of Western efforts capable of bringing these within the framework of a common political strategy. As in the past, American initiatives have tended to be limited to the military field; at the expense of more serious economic and structural problems. Today, the demise of CENTO and the probably demise of "Regional Cooperation for Development" cut two ties between the strategic and the political-economic level of action.

C - Movement in the Balkans?

The whole Balkan peninsula seems to be waiting to see what is going to happen in Yusoglavia following the death of Tito. It would, nevertheless, be a mistake to limit one's analysis to this problem. Already today we are witnessing attempts to reopen the question of the inter-Balkan balance so as to base this on foundations which are rather more solid than those of the past, and which are capable of surviving changes in regime.

The crisis in non-alignment has undoubtedly made Yugoslavia's international position more difficult. For several years now, in the series of meetings of the non-aligned countries in Havana and Belgrade, Yugoslavia has tried to fight a difficult battle to avoid new schisms between the pro-Soviet and the neutralist countries not to account the various pro-Chinese or pro-Western states. Undoubtedly, Yugoslavia has achieved a degree of success here (the Cuban line, for instance, has never prevailed). The price of this success, however, has been a practical paralysis of non-alignment and great confusion concerning the group's political orientation. Thus, while it is true that the pro-Soviets have never managed to control the group, it is equally true that the non-aligned countries have never succeeded in separating their positions from those of Moscow's neo-aligned "legionaries". It is clear then that Belgrade can no longer hope to obtain the same moral authority and international prestige from non-alignment as she enjoyed in the 1960s.

At the same time, though, it is very hard to envisage an alternative to this policy. Inter-Balkan cooperation - relaunched by Karamanlis' Greece and hungrily taken up by Rumania - is not in itself capable of guaranteeing Yugoslav independence. Rather the contrary, if this became the dominant line in Yugoslav foreign policy, it would lead to a series of unpleasant consequences:

- it would contribute to increase Yugoslav isolation within the international system;
- it would increase Yugoslav dependency on unpredictable developments in the internal Rumainian situation;
- it would increase Yugoslav dependency on the COMECON area.

On the other hand, inter-Balkan cooperation could doubtless help to change COMECON rules and thus lead to more flexible international cooperation between the socialist and the capitalist countries. Today, however, Yugoslavia is at the cross-roads between these two worlds and would be bound to view with suspicion any strengthening of ties with the Communist world which was not matched by clear concessions from the West.

Inter-Balkan cooperation could, in other words, come to represent more of a restriction on Yugoslav policy than a contribution to her independence. Nonetheless, this situation could change if Greek membership of the EEC went in parallel with the formulation of a Community policy for the Balkans capable of increasing ties with these countries and of profitting from prospects for inter-Balkan cooperation.

Meanwhile, the inter-Balkan security picture has become ever more complicated. Rumania's problems with the USSR have worsened. What is more, while the Ceausescu power group has managed to hang on to the key positions within the regime, the international situation makes it impossible to construct a broader consensus around the government or to engage in any kind of liberalization. Having broken with China, Albania has still to find a new international role for herself and is acting rather like a drifting mine which could explode anywhere. The Helsinki and Belgrade ECSC agreements have granted a degree of international legitimacy to Yugoslav and Rumanian independence. They do not, however, contain the kind of concrete, binding decisions Belgrade would have liked. Certainly, the definitive normalization of relations between Greece and Albania and between Italy and Yugoslavia have resolved a number of perrenial border questions. Nonetheless, there are still border and minority problems between Yugoslavia on the one hand, and Albania, Bulgaria and Rumania on the other. Rumania, moreover, has her own problems with the Soviet Union (and might have to face problems with Bulgaria as well). In one sense, the continued existence of these latent conflicts is not altogether a bad thing. It reinforces solidarity between the different Yugoslav republics and thus strengthens the central government in Belgrade. At the same time, though, it prevents any genuine normalization of inter-Balkan relations and encourages a general atmosphere of uncertainty.

From the Alliance's point of view, the Balkan situation is particularly difficult and dangerous. The present situation has

made the area into a kind of cushion between the Soviet Union and the Alliance's Southern Flank. The loss of this cushion would have a profound effect on the general Mediterranean strategic situation. The Southern Flank would be immediately split into an Eastern and a Western sector divided by countries belonging to the Warsaw Pact. Not only would this cause the continuity of the front (which is already far from optimal) to be reduced towards vanishing point but it would change the political nature of the Alliance. Thus, Italy, for example, would suddenly find herself in the role of a frontier state with all the political and military consequences this could imply.

Meanwhile, the allied commitment to the maintenance of the balance of power in the Balkans is limited by the impossibility of defining any clear form of military commitment which would not threaten Yugoslav and Albanian neutrality or risk provoking negative effects on the independent line presently being pursued by Rumania. Politically, any explicit Allied declaration of military commitment could worsen, rather than improve, the situation. It is thus necessary to work ambiguously, as at present, without attempting any excessive clarification. This would not, in itself, be particularly difficult if the Alliance were clear about the scope of its commitment and its goals. Unfortunately though, the ambiguity of the Balkan situation itself is compounded by the ambiguity of the multilateral allied commitment, and by the unclear positions assumed by the different allies, the Europeans and the Americans. What risks are the allies prepared to run for Yugoslavia? The contradictory statements made by Carter during the election campaign

have certainly been of no help in clarifying the situation. The positions taken by the Europeans - and especially the Italian position - are hardly any clearer. There is thus a real risk of a confusion of language and a lack of coordination which, in a crisis, could render the Alliance completely ineffective.

D - The Threat from the South

The Alliance's most serious loss in recent years has been the bases in Malta. After a long period during which these bases were "rented" by the Alliance, the last contract has now expired. While the last allied soldiers were leaving the island, a large contingent of Libyan solders - viewed with a degree of suspicion by the local population - were arriving for the "independence" celebration. In itself, the lack of bases on Malta does not significantly weaken the Allied military posture. What is worrying though is the availability of Malta for use by the Soviets and the ever tighter ties which are being created between Malta and Libya. It has to be admitted that the Maltese government at one stage proposed a kind of "neutralization" of the island asking Libya, Algeria, France and Italy to provide a joint guarantee of Malta's independence and military security along with economic aid. This proposal, however, had very few attractions for the Europeans who would have found themselves committed to aid in return for which the other two partners to the agreement made any political return extremely dubious.

The Maltese case is just one example of a new policy which is emerging in the Mediterranean as a direct result of the Soviet presence and of the new Arab financial capability:- the old design

(which in the past has received the support of a number of European political forces) for the "neutralization" of the Mediterranean. This proposal has many structural failings. The principal of these is that whereas it is possible to conceive of a Mediterranean without the Americans, it would be impossible to close the Mediterranean to the passage of Soviet ships without this implying an unacceptable restriction on the freedom of navigation. Politically, moreover, this kind of proposal has usually concealed a drive towards hegemony by some Mediterranean power. What is more, the proposal has usually been made for tactical reasons so as to increase the isolation of those countries which oppose it. This is again the situation today with the difference that it is not clear which Mediterranean power could seek hegemony if not in a merely sub-imperialist role, played to the advantage of the Soviet Union.

There remains the fact that the South of the Mediterranean is waking up to "la grande politique" and this should be of some concern to the Alliance. Already today the Soviet military threat could come from the South. We should also take into consideration other threats: political instability, limitations of the freedom of navigation and on the economic exploitation of the sea, the use of energy blackmail, possible trends towards nuclear proliferation (for the moment, there is talk of Iraq and Pakistan, but the trend could spread), real rearmament including sophisticated systems such as the latest generation of fighter bombers and submarines). This poses the problem of how to orient the Alliance's defensive posture southwards. At the same time, however, a new form of political cooperation between the allies is required.

This will have to be extended to cover fields such as energy security where there are problems which have never been really resolved and where there are likely to be major divergences of analysis in the positions taken by the different allies.

E - Doubtful Allied Loyalty

The political and institutional situation in the Southern Flank countries is very far from being a stable one. In the space of a few years, a process of "democratization" has eliminated the Portuguese, the Greek and the Spanish dictatorships leading to the emergence of political forces which, up to that time, had been forced to operate in clandestinity. In Italy and France, there has been a significant growth in the strength of the Communist and Socialist parties which have won important victories at a local level even if they even if they have failed to win a majority nationally. All this has profoundly changed the political foundations on which the Alliance is built and the pattern of alliances on which it has traditionally relied.

In a certain sense, the Alliance has demonstrated its ability to adapt to a changed situation and to exert a certain force of attraction vis à vis left wing forces moving closer and closer to government. At the same time, however, it was inevitable that these forces would prove unwilling to continue with the often uncritical attitude taken by traditional Atlanticist forces towards Alliance policies and above all towards the USA.

The Atlantic option taken in 1949 (or in 1952 for Greece and Turkey), was seen by the government parties of the time as

necessary to consolidate the internal political situation and to isolate the opposition. As the distinction between government and opposition became less marked, so the identification of pro-government forces with pro-Atlanticist positions became less essential. At the same time, the beginnings of detente and the pro-Western trends gradually emerging within the European Socialist parties made a significant contribution to reducing the importance of the Atlantic option. When, at a later stage, a number of Communists (and above all, the Italian party - the strongest Communist Party on the Southern Flank) began to openly accept the maintenance of alliance membership, this new unanimity paradoxically reduced the importance of NATO as an internal political question.

At the same time, however, new "specialist" differences have emerged concerning not so much the "choice of camp" as specific policies, specific arms procurement decisions, etc. At this point, the major contenders are no longer as compact as in the past. Differences have emerged even in the Atlantic camp. Thus, on questions of arms procurement, standardization, defence budget policy, etc. for instance, the right is not alwyas more coherently Atlanticist than the left; rather the contrary, divisions emerge between those who seek to sustain a protected national industry and those who favour a higher degree of European integration, between those who favour a traditional policy on defence spending and those who opt for concentration on the air force and the navy or who would wish for more decisive iniatives in the field of high technology.

What no longer exists is an automatic Atlanticist, pro-American response. This has been replaced by a difficult balancing of advantages and disadvantages along with the consideration of a broad variety of national requirements.

All this complicates Alliance decision making and coordination. The emergence of a new political elite no longer tied to the original "choice of camp" creates new problems of language and of mutual trust and increases the risks of misperception and of mismanagement.

F - The Crisis of the "Atlantic Community"

The Atlantic Alliance has never succeeded in becoming a genuine integrated, multilateral community. Although on a number of occasions, it has succeeded in making a joint reaction when one of its members has been threatened (as occurred in Berlin), and although it has built up a number of military cooperation structures, in practice, it has remained a traditional alliance around the American superpower. The problems of this traditional alliance have been further complicated by the presence of nuclear weapons and the question of sovereignty over these and over their use; these are problems which have, at times, nearly led to a breakdown in the minimal forms of cooperation achieved - what is more, this risk still exists today. The real weakness of the Alliance, however, is the lack of a real, common political decision-making centre.

So long as the threat was clearly defined and any chal-

lenge to American power was clearly unthinkable, this was not particularly serious. Today, however, neither of these two conditions applies. The lack of a common political decision-making centre seriously weakens the Alliance, which is ever less able to adapt to changes in the strategic system in which it operates, and thus to meet the security requirements of its members.

Let us refer just to one very obvious example. Given that technically and politically, the USSR was, at that time, unable to cross this limit, the Alliance's Southern frontier was fixed along the Tropic of Cancer. Today, these considerations are militarily irrelevant. Nonetheless, a change in the limit would imply decisions which the Alliance is unable to make for these would imply an extension of the common allied commitment towards the Third World.

A second point: the Atlantic Alliance was set up at a time when the West was experiencing an economic recovery and at which there was as yet no problem regarding the security of energy and of raw material supplies. Economic security was thus left out of the Alliance's field of interest even though it exerts a considerable influence on the Alliance's strategic options.

Relations with the East were seen in the optic of the containment or even of the disintegration of the Soviet empire. Today, nuclear parity and detente have imposed a different kind of relationship with the East. However far the Alliance has

attempted to "up-dat" itself (who can remember exercise Harmel?), in reality, it has failed to develop a genuine multilateral method of managing detente, and has thus allowed the emergence of national policies which may, at times, diverge and which are, at any rate, completely uncoordinated. When these national policies are those of the USA and of Germany and when they are not in full agreement, all the Alliance can do is recognize the existence of a crisis.

Attempts to "relaunch" the Alliance, such as the Nixon Administration's sadly renowned "Year for Europe", have tended to underline rather than to resolve the Alliance's weaknesses. In practice, even between the Allies, real international decision making now takes place outside the framework provided by the Alliance, in a whole series of bilateral meetings or summits involving a greater or lesser number of major allies.

This general tendency within the Alliance is accentuated by the special features of the Southern Flank. In the Mediterranean, there is no institutional body or multilateral forum where the countries of the region meet (the only exception being the United Nations Assembly). Ever since the end of the colonial period (that is since about 1956), there has been no obviously dominant power in the area capable of controlling the shores as well as the waters of the Mediterranean and thus of guaranteeing security in the zone. The rapid Anglo-American interventions in 1958 did not re-establish the old pattern of dominion.

The Southern Flank's lack of territorial continuity and the existence of differing political regimes and economic structures

have also contributed to increase differences between countries. Thus rather than a common multilateral fabric, we have what in practice amounts to a network of bilateral relationships centred on the USA.

While formally, there exist integrated Alliance Commands for the Southern Flank, the way in which these are organized reflects these differences. Each country has its own separate command. The great exception is the American VI Fleet, which belongs to the whole Alliance. The other exceptions, where these have ever existed, are gradually disappearing (e.g. the integrated Turkish Greek Command which operated in a single geographically united theatre). The formal presence of officers from the different countries at CINCSOUTH headquarters is not enough to guarantee integrated operational command in the event of a crisis.

G - The Soviet Presence

If, on the other hand, we consider the threat against the Alliance from the East, we have to admit that it is hard to define this in purely military terms. Cremasco's paper analyzes the principle military parameters of the Mediterranean equation. His conclusion is that it is necessary to modify the Western military presence not so much in response to any clear increase in the Soviet threat, but rather for a complex of indirect reasons.

The overall Mediterranean picture has become less secure but not necessarily because of any real increase in Soviet strength. When, in 1969, I analyzed the Mediterranean situation resulting from the increased Soviet presence, I wrote that "the presence of the

Russian Fleet in the Mediterranean and Russia's direct commitment to some Arab states are not completely negative factors: the logic of the spheres of influence is a logic of stabilization..." Nonetheless, I went on to add that "perhaps because they have not yet clearly decided for the creation of two separate spheres of influence, the two superpowers seem to get pushed around by local events".

This inability of the two superpowers to exert their role has worsened over time rather than improved. The whole course taken by the peace negotiations between Egypt and Israel, from Sadat's visit to Jerusalem right up to the signature of the agreement, shows two minor powers' intention and ability to force the USA to the brink of a major domestic and international crisis simply so as to ensure themselves an acceptable compromise. Despite the positive outcome of these negotiations, they represent a dramatic demonstration of a superpower's loss of local initiative.

The Soviet Union has yet to reach these extremes, but has nonetheless suffered crises and defeats even worse than those suffered by the Americans. The USSR lost Yugoslavia in the 1940s and Albania in the 1950s, she has financed and then lost Egypt, as well as Somalia, has committed herself to a difficult war in Ethiopia and has so far failed to establish a stable presence in Iraq. Despite a largely favourable situation and a huge effort, the USSR has failed to construct a stable alliance system even vaguely comparable to that built by the USA - with all its weaknesses and failings. Finally, whereas Sadat's initiative has

forced the USA to run serious political risks, it has ended up by completely isolating the Soviet Union from the negotiations (at a time when, thanks to the October 1977 Joint US-Soviet declaration, the USSR believed that she was going to be able to play a full role in the talks).

Undoubtedly, the USSR has assumed a role in the Mediterranean which it would be impossible to eliminate. She has not, however, managed to conquer any form of hegemony. On the contrary, her increased economic and military presence has developed in parallel with increased dependency on the Mediterranean countries (requests for bases, oil and natural gas supplies) and with a weakening of the guiding role of the CPSU vis à vis the other Communist parties. It is in the Mediterranean that one can find some of the most independently minded Communist parties: not just the Yugoslavs, the Albanians and the Rumanians but also the Spanish, the Italians, the internal Greek party and the Cypriots. Overall, this means at least seven parties which refuse the role of the "guiding state". This is clearly not a brilliant success for Soviet strategy, particularly if one also counts the way in which a number of Arab Communist Parties have been abandoned so as to favour the unstable diplomatic relations which the Soviet superpower has so far succeeded in establishing with a number of dictatorial regimes.

It thus seems that what I predicted in 1969 - admittedly with little conviction - namely that the two superpowers would play a mutually stabilizing role, has failed to occur. The reason is simple. The two superpowers, far from increasing their power,

have tended to lose it.

H - Inadequate Instruments of Crisis Management

The difficulties facing the superpowers are not due simply to their failure to agree politically, but also to the lack of instruments adapted to the control of Mediterranean crises.

Traditionally, the USA, and, as a result, the Soviet Union, have tended to give priority to military instruments: the fleet, a landing capability, the nuclear deterrent, arms supplies, technology, various forms of military assistance. These instruments, however effective they may prove at times, have as a rule, proved to be inadequate.

There is an inherent contradiction between the structure and capabilities of the VI Fleet and its effective use in limited crises. The Fleet's escalation capability and the degree of political and military commitment its use implies, leads to a loss of flexibility. It is too powerful to make a graduated response.

What is more, new technologies, the sophisticated weaponry now in the possession of many coastal states, and the presence of the Soviet Fleet, forces the VI Fleet to adopt tactical formations better adapted to general war than to a local crisis.

Then there is another even more serious problem. The priority granted to military over political and economic means of intervention, has often limited or distorted the superpowers' ability to evaluate a situation and to intervene effectively. A dangerous adventure such as the excessive arming of Iran in the past or the excessive commitment to rearm Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Israel today, give the false impression that security in the area depends exclusively on the balance of military power; the reference is to the Central European model. Real crises, on the other hand, originate in developments within the Mediterranean countries, in socio-economic problems or in limited conflicts which, nonetheless, have an enormous power to break down the social fabric of these states. In dealing with this kind of question, modern weaponry has no role to play.

The tendency to load "faithful allies" with arms is in part the result of these allies' requests for a status symbol. At the same time, however, such policies presuppose that existing territorial, institutional and political set-ups are likely to persist indefinitely, whereas, in practice, the Middle East and Africa are still going through a process of "nation-building", of major migration and of institutional development which can only be compared to the period of the emergence of the European nations. If this is the situation then the only result of ill-advised supplies of arms is to increase military capabilities and the level of danger of conflicts in the region, without providing any real basis for stabilization. The superpowers are, in practice, supplying their opponents.

This military distortion has had negative effects even in Southern Europe. It is enough to look at the proportion of the aid recently granted to Turkey by the West which is going to be devoted to military expenditure to imagine the opposition to which this is going to lead within the country. It is not difficult to conclude that in the very best of hypotheses, this aid will serve to reduce Turkey's foreign indebtedness but that it will in no way help to resolve the structural problems facing Turkish economic development. It is these problems, what is more, which represent the real threat to Turkish stability and to her integration in the West.

A similar military distortion influenced the allied decision not to isolate the Greek colonels during their brief regime. The priority given to military considerations and military methods of intervention has, in practice, limited the West's ability to intervene in crises.

Fortunately, the USSR seems to suffer from a similar distortion or perspective; this is made worse by the fact that her allies seem even more willing to consider adventure and war than the other Mediterranean countries.

There is nonetheless, a clear risk that growing Soviet involvement in conflicts in the Third World in parallel with American involvement could lead in the end to a confrontation between the two superpowers. There have already been a number of warning signals (the most dramatic of these was at the end of October 1973). On several occasions, it appears as if Soviet

"instructors" have been on the firing line. The solution found in these cases, has been that of "freezing" the crisis so as to allow a direct agreement between the superpowers. In this way, they regain that control over local conflicts which they seemed to have lost. Nonetheless, this is purely a negative control. They can freeze conflicts but they cannot resolve them. Furthermore, it seems less probable than ever that they will be able to exert this control over states ever less willing to accept it. Countries such as Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have a sufficient political capability and sufficient international standing to negotiate a different kind of relationship with the superpowers.

We should also consider the problem of nuclear proliferation. Today, there are only a few Mediterranean countries fully equipped for the reprocessing of nuclear materials (France, Italy, Yugoslavia, Spain). Nevertheless, other countries may also have modest laboratory facilties. According to many observers, Israel has used these small facilties to construct around ten plutonium-based nuclear devices, with the same explosive power as the bombs dropped on Japan during the Second World War. If such reports were to be confirmed, it would not be difficult to imagine analogous situations developing in Iran, Iraq (which has bought a small, plutonium-producing reactor from France), and naturally Egypt. Other countries may try in some way or other to acquire fissile material for terrorist use. Nuclear proliferation is in precarious balance in the Mediterranean. The situation is further complicated by the multiplication of "tactical" nuclear weapons, belonging to the

Americans, Soviets, British, French and other European NATO members (with a double key with the US). These arms are generally intended for use in an East-West conflict. Nonetheless, prospects for nuclear proliferation and the increased conventional strength of many Mediterranean countries is slowly changing this situation. How would one of these new powers react against the the territories or interests of a European country should a nuclear or conventional/potentially nuclear threat arise? The problem of the security of prime energy supplies is equally risky: should the new powers refuse to supply oil, what pressures could be credibly exercised over them?

These problems could create serious crises for the Atlantic Alliance, yet the organization cannot possibly predict future events so as to be able to organize retaliatory actions. On the one hand, the Alliance must be capable of reacting to threats of an economic (energy) nature which do not come from the East. On the other hand, it could occur that member country forces present in the area covered by the Atlantic Alliance (e.g. the Mediterranean) could be used for national ends without prior consultation or agreement and consequently be attacked, thus provoking a "casus foederis". A double ambiguity exists here: whereas the Alliance can offer no guarantee to its members, at the same time, members may find themselves dragged into situations in which they had no intention of involving themselves.

The problem of how nuclear deterrence against countries which have recently acquared of which are about to acquire nuclear weapons is to function has not yet been concretely examined. In

part, it can be regarded as irrelevant since in many cases, those countries which have recently constructed or acquired nuclear devices do not as yet possess means of transporting these to a target. In any event, it is doubtful whether even from their own point of view, nuclear retaliation could be worthwhile. From the point of view of the Atlantic Alliance and of European security however, these assurances are not entirely sufficient. The possible growth of national, nuclear deterrents in the Mediterranean area poses problems of guarantees and problems concerning the political-military balance which need to be studied. Otherwise there is a risk of a kind of local proliferation - of mini-deterrents turned one against the other. In the long run, the world's nuclear situation could be thrown off balance; if this were to occur, the Atlantic Alliance would probably be thrown definitively into crisis.

I - Internal Security and Stability

In our opinion, the main problem is to single out those development processes within the region which, in some way can help bring about stabilization. In this way, the presence of military forces in the Mediterranean will be neither as necessary nor as risky as at present and their strategic roles will be clarified.

The opposite path could be given a try as well: control and reduction of both nuclear and conventional forces in the Mediterranean, thereby decreasing the level of violence and the danger of conflicts erupting. Nonetheless, although many proposals concerning the latter solution have been put forward, none

has succeeded in overcoming the political obstacles which form the base of the problem. These solutions (the control of naval weapons, the de-nuclearization of the Mediterranean, keeping records of and reducing the sale of weapons to warring countries and the control of the sale of fissile materials and nuclear technology), are all of considerable interest. The superpowers can agree to adopt them up to a certain point, but if the political climate is unsuitable, there is no hope of applying these solutions to the entire area. Within the framework of unstable regimes, harsh local conflicts and pressing requests for weapons (paid for in certain cases with sweet smelling petro-dollars), the external powers remain ambivalent. The have to compare the advantages gained from cooperating in order to stabilize the area with the disadvantages resulting from the loss of allies and of reciprocal control over the "droit de regard". Pressures for disarmament will contrast with equally powerful pressures for re-armament. Any collaboration between the superpowers which fails to consider the political situation in the Mediterranean presupposes a level of political cohesion (in practice, implying joint policies) which is absolutely unimaginable, and incoherent with existing trends in detente. The fact is that internal tensions in the Mediterranean region have negative repercussions on Soviet-American relations, making prospects for agreement ever more remote.

Nor are the political advantages resulting from Mediterranean stability entirely clear. The USA still holds strategic diplomatic hegemony in the Mediterranean and what is more, has no intention of sharing this power with the USSR if the latter does

not concede to offering more substantial compensation than the mere acknowledgement of a few common interests (all the more so when in reality these "common" interests are not common at all). The USSR's geo-strategic situation in the Mediterranean is very different from the USA's - it calls itself a Mediterranean country. There is absolutely no reason for accepting this Soviet claim, thereby upsetting the entire Mediterranean as well as the entire European balance. On the other hand, it would be difficult (and from the Soviet point of view, absurd) to demand that Soviet forces should no longer pass through the Mediterranean, one of the Soviet Union's main access routes to the oceans. Given this situation, quantitative and qualitative control of the superpowers' naval weapons would be extremely difficult and probably ridiculous All one has to do is to consider how far the Montreux convention (regulating passage through the Straits) is disregarded to understand that theoretical solutions are too far removed from reality to be credible.

All this does not mean that East-West initiatives and a re-examination of the role and the quality of weapons present in the Mediterranean is not called for. It merely means that such decisions should be based upon political considerations deriving from an analysis of the current Mediterranean situation. If such decisions help to reinforce stability within the area, then even more ambitious control policies will become possible in the future.

J - New Instruments and the EEC

All this indicates that there is a need to move beyond the instruments provided by the Atlantic Alliance. New instruments have to be used. Among the most obvious of these are those provided by the EEC. The enlargement of the Community towards the Mediterranean to include Greece, Spain and Portugal will make it necessary to formulate a strategy for this area.

Already today, in the summit meetings so characteristic of Atlantic relations, there is a clear tendency to attribute the European countries a particular responsability in the Mediterranean. In practice, however, major political decisions tend to be taken under the pressure of events in Washington (or in Moscow) without any preliminary consultation with the allies. A strange form of partnership thus comes into being in which the European allies are invited to consolidate or make repair for what has been done by the United States without enjoying any real power to intervene before American decisions are taken. Naturally, this is not all the fault of the USA. The European countries lack an effective joint decision making system and they are often paralyzed by their own internal differences. Nonetheless, their ineffectiveness is also due to a situation in which they have had no responsabilities to exert, a situation they must now leave behind them.

There have already been a few modest examples of independent European decision making in the Mediterranean: - European policy on Portugal, Spain and Greece, the offer to mediate over Cyprus, the launching of the Euro-Arab dialogue, the Lomé Convention... It is no coincidence that in all these cases, the Europeans

have had to face a reluctant and, at times, a frankly hostile American ally. Often, the decisions and evaluations made by the Europeans have been closely tied to perceptions of European problems and of specific local situations rather than to the global East-West framework which is of prime concern to Washington. It is important to emphasize, however, how once the American government has realized its inability to fit reality to its own priorities, it has ended up by discovering the usefulness of these European initiatives. It is, to say the least, amusing to hear American spokesmen praising European initiatives towards Portugal or expressing the hoep that the Euro-Arab dialogue could help to clarify a Middle Eastern situation which events in Iran and developments in Egyptian-Israeli relations have tended to confuse.

Nonetheless, there is the risk that these instruments could be accepted by the Americans for merely tactical reasons. Should this occur, it would go seriously against European interests. It is thus necessary to support the logic inherent within these European instruments against the short term requirements of the balance of power as interpreted in Washington.

Undoubtedly, it is also necessary, at the same time, for the Europeans to improve their awareness of a number of strategic problems. It is obvious, for example, that the demise of CENTO together with Greek membership of the EEC are going to lead to the emergence of a "Turkish problem", which the EEC is going to have to face up to directly.

To conclude: on the one hand, a greater international role for the European Community is both inevitable and desirable. On the other, it would be wrong to expect this increased presence to automatically strengthen the Atlantic Alliance on every occasion or to improve existing levels of stability in the Mediterranean. Rather the contrary, contrasts between the European Community and the Atlantic Alliance are more than likely: these could originate in differing national positions (Turkey and Greece) or in differing European and American perceptions of problems and priorities.

It is possible then that the future stability of the Mediterranean is g ing to depend on an increased European commitment and that only this commitment is capable of guaranteeing the maintenance of the Southern European countries within the West orbit. At the same time, however, it is necessary to make a partial, temporary compromise between a future balance and the situation at present, that is politically between Americans and Europeans and institutionally between the tasks of the Alliance and those of the Community.