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DO IT YOURSELF:
THE NATIONAL APPROACH TO THE OUT-OF-AREA QUESTION

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For historical reasons, and because of still existing political relations and economic ties, the European countries (France and Great Britain in particular) have a special interest in the geographical area stretching from the Persian Gulf and Red Sea regions to the Mediterranean Middle East and Maghreb regions. In fact, Algeria and Djibouti were French colonies. Libya and Somalia were Italian colonies. Syria and Lebanon were French mandates and Tunisia a French protectorate, while Jordan, Iraq and Palestine were British mandates. Finally, Egypt, Sudan and South-Yemen, although technically not colonies, were part of the British domain.

The European countries have today, due to their growing integration within the EEC framework, larger common interests and are affected more than in the past of by international crisis influencing their foreign policy and their economic situation. Moreover, there is a growing awareness among the European countries that the threats to their security stem less from the traditional scenario of a Soviet aggression and more from South-South or North-South crises in areas outside NATO's boundaries, leading to a Soviet-American, hence East-West, confrontation.

The European countries are also aware that situations of domestic instability in the "grey areas" at the NATO borders could be exploited by the Soviet Union to expand its political and military influence. Furthermore, they recognize that oil from the Persian Gulf and other parts of the Middle East will continue to be of vital importance for their economic growth and that Soviet direct or indirect control of the "oil faucet" in those regions will give Moscow an instrument of political pressure and jeopardize their independent industrial development. Finally, the European countries know that the solution of Middle East political problems and the fight against the spectre of a spreading State-sponsored international terrorism require a common effort and a closely coordinated policy.

Yet, nothing is more divisive in the Atlantic Alliance than the out-of-area issues. Too often national - if not "nationalistic" - approaches to these issues undermine a badly needed coherent "European" attitude and puts heavy strains on Euro-American relationship. Today, not only would it be impossible to expand NATO's area of responsibility (1) but also impossible to generate the political willingness to establish even the basic lines of a collective strategy to confront the most immediate and evident out-of-area challenges.

This chapter intends first to describe the political framework for such a lack of foresight and political wisdom, and then to examine the specific positions of the European countries on the out-of-area question. The United States position is also analyzed. In fact, the interests affected and undermined by out-of-area crises are clearly collectively Western and not simply European, even though the European stakes might be higher. Furthermore, it would be very difficult to understand the complexity of Euro-American interface, interdependency and interactions without an explanation, though very

schematic, of the United States' approach and attitude toward the out-of-area issues. Finally, several case studies of real out-of-area crises are schematically outlined in search of a thread of common attitudes and responses, thus providing in the concluding section a tentative recipe for future use.

THE POLITICAL FRAMEWORK.

The European countries recognized, as early as in the 1950s (2), that their security could be deeply affected by developments in areas beyond the boundaries of the Atlantic Alliance as established in the 1949 Treaty. They indicated their concern for and their interest in the stability of those areas collectively in several key Alliance documents (3), in almost all final communiqués of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) meetings and individually, in a more concrete and direct way, through the expression of their foreign policies.

Historically, the focus of Alliance security concern has switched from area to area of the world in accordance with the changes in the international scene and the behaviour of the Soviet Union. In 1967 and 1973 the focus was on a Middle East in turmoil over the Arab-Israeli wars. At the end of the '70s South-West Asia became the most important out-of-area issue due to a combination of events: the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran; the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which brought the Soviet forces only 600 km. from the Gulf, and thus within easy striking distance of the oil supply vital to Western industrialized countries; the war between Iran and Iraq, which posed the threat of a closure of the Straits of Hormuz. In 1982, the Israeli military operations in Lebanon re-focused the European concern on the Middle East.

However, the European countries' openly expressed recognition of out-of-area challenges does not solve the problem of clearly define what out-of-area really means in terms of collective or individual security interests, and what threats are such as to require an Alliance response. The need for wide ranging consultation in case of crisis is shared by all European countries, as is the need to give priority to political and economic instruments over the employment of military power. But the problems of how to express political support for American policy and initiatives, of contingency planning for "real-case" scenarios - including the logistical and technical support of the American Rapid Deployment Force - of "division of labor" and burden sharing between the European countries and the United States are far from being solved.

There is an evident influence on European interests of the American global commitment and world competition vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. And there is also a clear influence on European interests of Moscow's foreign policy in areas where those interests are felt as vital. This has various implications: on the one hand the superpowers' confrontation in the Third World tends to turn any regional South-South crisis into an East-West conflict, a prospect which raises serious concern in Europe. On the other hand, the European countries seem to think that any threat to their particular interests in the out-of-area context can be better dealt with on a bilateral basis, unless there is an evident Soviet military intervention requiring a possibly collective Western response.

There is a general agreement between the United States and the European countries on the need to protect the West's vital interest in regions such as the Middle East and the Gulf. And there is a basic recognition that insuring access to oil, maintaining Israeli security and setting limits to Soviet expansion are three elements essential to stability in the area. But

there are also differences as to the best political and military means of achieving it. This does not mean that there exists a "European" attitude towards out-of-area issues as opposed to an "American", attitude not only because complete agreement does not exist within the American Administration (the State Department's position does not entirely reflect the position of the Defense Department), but also because the opinions of the European countries differ, often considerably. (It could not be claimed that Mrs Thatcher's views resemble those of President Mitterrand). It can be said that whereas the United States tends to place priority on the "Soviet threat", the European countries tend to be more concerned about the "regional" elements, like the factors causing internal instability, the persistence of the Arab-Israeli confrontation, the dangers of inter-Arab radicalization, the effects of the failure to find a solution to the Palestinian problem, and so on. There also is a difference between the United States and its European allies on how to define, evaluate and deal with the threat, which is not only and always Soviet, both politically and militarily. The threat of international terrorism is a good case in point.

This diversity in the lenses through which out-of-area challenges are seen is at the base of the very cautious wording of the official statements on the subject and the lack of real coordination within the Alliance.

The "let us do the best we can" and "if somebody wishes to do more let him" attitudes on out-of-area issues were already present in the 1967 Harmel report: "Crises and conflicts arising outside the area may impair its (NATO) security either directly or by affecting the global balance. Allied countries contribute individually within the United Nations and other international organizations to the maintenance of international peace and security, and to the solution of important international problems. In accordance with established usage the Allies, or such of them as wish to do so, will also continue to consult on such problems without commitment and as the case demands." (4)

They were even more evident on the final communiqués of the North Atlantic Council meetings in the '80s. Typical are the paragraphs on out-of-area threats from the final communiqué of the June 1983 NAC in Paris: "The Allies recognise that events outside the Treaty Area may affect their common interests as members of the Alliance. If it is established that their common interests are involved, they will engage in timely consultations. Sufficient military capabilities must be assured in the Treaty Area to maintain an adequate defense posture. Individual member governments who are in a position to do so will endeavour to support, at their request, sovereign nations whose security and independence are threatened. Those Allies in a position to facilitate the deployment of forces outside the Treaty area may do so on the basis of national decisions." (5) The only real agreement appears to be on the "timely consultations" in case of crisis, even though it is not clear what "consultations" are supposed to entail.

Out-of-area developments are normally discussed at ambassadorial level within the Atlantic Council framework. But these discussions are general in nature and amount to information gathering and perception exchanging sessions rather than to a real discussion of policy options. Furthermore, consultation, while considered desirable, has often been carried out in a cosmetic way and very late with respect to the development of events.

The United States tendency has been more to inform its allies and seek their blessing than to consult, except in cases where it was felt that the issue had to be multilateralized in order to insure military support and burden sharing. Even then, reliance has been placed on bilateral consultations with

each European country, but with special treatment to "special" allies, in terms of level of officials involved and amount of information provided. The American consultation process before the April 1986 air attack on Libya is a very good example of this.

Finally, the United States has, understandably, never been very willing, in the course of consultations, to provide details of its military operations being planned, or ready to be implemented. The risk of very damaging leakages is considered too high to be taken lightly, and information is passed on a selective basis, and only if and when necessary. Thus, again considering the April 1986 bombing of Libya, the information provided by the United States to the British Premier, Mrs Thatcher, was more detailed than that given to French President Francois Mitterand, which was, in turn, more ample than that submitted to the Italian Prime Minister, Bettino Craxi.

Furthermore, the statement of the 1983 NAC Final Communiqué on the need to maintain "an adequate defense posture in the Treaty area" implies a willingness on the part of the Europeans to fill the gap created by the possible re-deployment of American forces and equipment from Europe, in case of an out-of-area contingency. This is far from being technically or politically feasible. The decision to facilitate the re-deployment is recognised to be not an automatic response but a choice based on a case by case evaluation. This impairs its certainty and reduces its value.

But the significant words of the communiqué are "if it is established that common interests are involved". They are the key clue to the difficulties, a clear indication of the uncertainty of the European commitment, of the different national perceptions of out-of-area challenges, and of the blocks on the road to an effective and coordinated Allied response to crisis outside the NATO-Warsaw Pact context. However, despite the cautious and ambiguous wording, the language on the out-of area problem in the NATO communiqués has constituted the framework within which it was formally possible and politically feasible for the European countries to establish bilateral agreements with the United States on the utilization of European facilities by the American RDF and on military compensation measures if American forces are taken out from Europe.

Paradoxically, the reasons at the base of the European concern for out-of-area crises are the same as those which limit the "commonality" of the evaluation of the situation.

First of all, each European country has specific political relations and particular economic ties with the countries of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. Some are a heritage of the colonial past, or of the immediate post-war years. Some grow out of the economic and industrial development of the European countries and of their increased role as armament suppliers. These ties play a significant role in generating diverse European attitudes.

Secondly, European attitudes are influenced by energy dependence on Arab states. The situation today is admittedly different from that of the seventies, marked by the two oil shocks of 1973 and 1979. The reduction of oil consumption, the establishment of strategic reserves, the present oil glut and the sharp dropping of its price have contributed to lower the oil vulnerability of the European countries. However, continued oil flow from the Middle East-Gulf area will remain vital for the industrialized West. Any attempt by the Soviet Union to directly or indirectly control it, or any regional instability conducive to its interruption, would still be considered a very serious threat.

However, even this common perception, and the fact that it would be easy to draw detailed oil-related crisis scenarios, do not seem sufficient to stimulate coordinated European contingency planning, which, by the way, does not exist on anything else.

Partly this is because the growth of strategic oil reserves has reduced the urgency of taking action. The solution of any crisis involving the oil flow will be viewed presently in a longer (from 90 to 180 days) and less dramatic perspective than it would have been ten years ago, thus further diluting the European willingness to consider the hypothesis of a military intervention. Furthermore, this unwillingness is strengthened not only by a sense of the high political and military risks involved and also by the lack of a "real" military intervention capacity, as Cordesman notes in chapter III, the forces suited to this purpose are small indeed.

Finally, Europe's attitude is also conditioned by internal political factors, particularly in those countries where foreign policy decisions tend to have an abnormal effect on the domestic political situation; countries in which, for example, the presence of strong Communist parties means that such foreign policy choices can be utilized to create an extensive popular opposition. In any case, there is no doubt that public opinion will have a significant impact on how the European countries react to out-of-area challenges. (It must be emphasized that these domestic factors would have an effect even if the United States and the European countries held identical views on how to deal with out-of-area crises.)

A fairly clear example of the effects of these influences, and of the difficulty of achieving a united Western position, was the abortive attempt, at the time of the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war, to set up a Multinational Naval Force for the purpose of keeping open the Strait of Hormuz. The proposal put forward by the United States was explicitly shunned by all the European Allies. The fact that two European countries, France and Britain, did send warships into the Arabian Sea and the Gulf (both in a strictly national capacity) makes no difference to the argument. Rather, it serves to demonstrate the difference of attitude and reaction between Europe and the United States on out-of-area issues, and the foreign and domestic policy restrictions which prevent European countries from associating themselves fully with American decisions and responding completely to American requests for cooperation.

There are a number of elements which characterize the European attitude towards the out-of-area questions.

No European country, while recognizing the North-South and South-South dimension of its security interests, and the possibility of a Soviet threat outside NATO's area of responsibility, would agree on expanding the present Alliance boundaries. In fact, the Europeans seem to consider advantageous the sharp delimitation of NATO area, which permits a more flexible approach to out-of-area crisis situations, an approach which can be portrayed as national and unilateral, as opposed to an alliance approach which could be internationally interpreted as being the expression of United States policy. Even though the support of an American military initiative could be better justified in the context of an Allied response to a global security challenge, the European countries prefer to maintain the freedom to play it in a unilateral or bilateral way. There is the evident concern that doing otherwise would entail the possibility of local crises escalating into an East-West confrontation.

For the European countries, the possibility of American unilateral initiatives in out-of-area crises undermining East-West relations and increasing the tension with the Soviet Union is of serious concern, and tends to determine their supportive attitudes. This is particularly true if there is disagreement on the evaluation of the Soviet role and threat in the crisis. During the 1973 Arab-Israeli war the European countries negative attitudes and unfavourable responses to American requests, for overflight rights and other

support were the result both of preoccupations with the disruptive repercussions on their relations with the Arab world and of a marked skepticism about the alleged Soviet threat (6).

Moreover, the European countries do not wish to make commitments in advance, particularly if these can be interpreted as full-fledged support for American policy. They do not like to take public stands on out-of-area issues and prefer to act without too much external and internal publicity.

No European country is willing to clearly define the criteria of out-of-area security. Each country has its own perceptions and the general feeling is that it will be a theoretical exercise anyway, due to the many different scenarios which could be drawn. The case-by-case approach is the only one considered feasible and politically acceptable.

However, each European power (with the exception of the Federal Republic of Germany) is preparing its armed forces to operate with enhanced rapidity and increased flexibility far from the national borders. Since November 1983 the United Kingdom has developed a Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) of about 10,000 men. France is building up its own Force d'Action Rapide (FAR) 47,000 man strong. Italy has constituted a Forza di Intervento Rapido (FIR) similar to the English one. (For details, see tables , , and , Chapter III).

The creation of these rapid employment forces has its rationale more in the need to adjust the military instrument to the changing threat environment, and on the need for a better defense of the national territory - even the French FAR can be seen in this light, considering that its priority employment is on the Central Front - than on the need to perform out-of-area missions. However, enhancing the mobility of some units, establishing a skeleton structure of C3 for the force, and planning for integrated training exercises means creating the capability - and the mentality - to employ the military instrument rapidly, selectively, with specialized, mission-oriented forces. And these are the relevant features needed for many out-of-area contingency military interventions in future contingencies.

To some extent the European RDFs are more shadow than substance, especially in terms of long-range air transport capability, logistic sustainability and specialized armament (7). It would be naive to believe that they can effectively be employed in an out-of-area contingency different from simple peacekeeping operations, without being strengthened and supported by other national forces. However, the mere possession of a force which can be rapidly employed outside the national territory can have a deterrent effect, apart from any judgement of its true level of effectiveness and operational capability, always difficult to assess exactly.

It has been often suggested that in a long term period, the availability of rapid deployment forces, which due to their specialization could be integrated in a single force, would facilitate the decision of the European countries to coordinate their military initiatives when confronted with out-of-area problems involving common interests. In fact, even though it is true that the integration of military units is easier when they have similar characteristics (in terms of organization, equipment and training), the need to maintain a tight political control, and the difficulty in finding a solution for the problem of the military command in the field, will push toward the employment of the RDFs on a strict national basis. As the Lebanon MNF has demonstrated, even simple coordination among national forces is a difficult and politically biased task.

Finally, the European countries tend to prefer the United Nations as the organizational framework within which to act in case of out-of-area crises.

The participation of European military contingents in multinational forces would be more likely if those forces are formed under UN auspices and if their task were clearly one of peace-keeping or peace-building. This is more true today after the failure of the multinational force in Lebanon in the years 1982-83.

In summary, the European countries reaction to an out-of-area challenge will be determined, influenced and limited by the following factors.

- The type of threat involved and the importance of the out-of-area crisis in terms of international stability and of national interests being eventually touched. The overall assessment of who is behind the crisis, or who is pushing for the intervention (for instance is it advocated in the United States by the Israeli lobby ?), who will eventually gain, and how the regional situation will be affected, will be strong determining factors.
- The submission of a formal request to participate in the solution of the out-of-area problem either by the Third World country/ies directly involved, or by a Western nation (the United States or a European ally). In this context, a role will be played by former colonial-type relationship or by the existence of a "special" relation with the United States within the Transatlantic framework.
- The threat of escalation either due to the participation of other regional actors or due to the possibility of a direct or indirect involvement of the Soviet Union, conducive to an East-West confrontation.
- The level, range and scope of the consultation process conducted by the United States with its European allies, prior to taking unilateral initiatives in an out-of-area contingency. The amount of flexibility available in responding to an American request for cooperation is an element which will have a direct bearing on the European attitude. Pre-commitments will not be accepted and the timing of the consultation will also be important. Late consultations will be interpreted as a formality and not as a true process aimed at searching for European advice and support.
- The political acceptability and the military credibility of the rationale submitted to justify and sustain the need for an out-of-area intervention. In this context other elements will be important such as: the overall military capability needed; the size of the military operation, and then the size and type of armed forces to be employed; the role these armed forces are supposed to perform; the risks involved in terms of possible losses.
- The domestic situation and the impact on the political system and on public opinion of the decision to participate in an out-of-area operation. This factor has a special significance in those European countries where strong opposition parties which are against out-of-area involvements - in particular communist parties of the European Mediterranean countries - can rally vast popular support.
- The eventual involvement of the United Nations, which offers the possibility to dilute the international and internal repercussions of an out-of-area intervention, and to present it as a supra-national affair without any NATO or Western coloring.
- The risk of retaliatory actions conducted by one or more countries involved in the out-of-area crisis or by international terrorism. This is a factor which will have a special meaning for the most vulnerable European Mediterranean countries such as Italy and Greece

with long coastlines and many insular territories, easy targets for hit-and-run terrorist attacks.

- The consequences of not participating in the out-of-area intervention in terms of negative effects on the cohesion of the Western Alliance and on the relationship with the United States.

THE NATIONAL POSITIONS ON THE OUT-OF-AREA QUESTION.

FRANCE

France's policy towards Third World countries has shown a substantial continuity through the years. This policy was clearly outlined by President Mitterrand in 1981 in a speech during his visit to Mexico. Its basic elements are: support for those populations struggling for freedom and social justice; reaffirmation of the concept that no international stability can be achieved without the contribution of developed Third World countries; refusal to accept that conflicts arising in the South should inevitably and automatically have an effect on the East-West confrontation.

France is aware that it has limited means to fully implement this policy, particularly in terms of instruments to help the Third World countries free themselves from the tutelage of the superpowers. However, efforts have always been made to provide at least the intellectual and diplomatic framework within which solutions to regional crises could be sought.

In the Mediterranean area, which is considered vital for its own political and economic interests, France has been particularly active.

Since 1976 France has redeployed to Toulon in the Mediterranean Sea the bulk of its naval forces, including the two aircraft carriers "Foch" and "Clemenceau" and several ASW (Anti-Submarine Warfare) and AD (Air Defense) warships such as the cruiser "Colbert" and the destroyers "Suffren" and "Duquesne".

The links with NATO have been strengthened. The French STRIDA air defense system is tied with the NADGE system. French liaison officers are assigned to the major NATO Commands of the Southern flank. French naval forces routinely participate in NATO naval exercises in the Mediterranean while French maritime patrol (MP) aircraft cooperate with NATO MP aircraft under COMAIRMED.

In 1980 France sent warships to the Gulf of Gabes following the attack on the Tunisian city of Gafsa by guerrilla forces reportedly supported by Libya. And it has supplied Tunisia with arms and military equipment.

Following Libya's incursion into Chad, France has reinforced its military presence in Central Africa. In 1983, it intervened in Chad with a 3,000 man force, to stop the Libyan invasion (Operation "Manta"). Presently, French military forces are deployed in the Central Africa Republic, in Gabon, in the Ivory Coast and in Senegal.

Furthermore, France participated in the MFO in Sinai, in the MNF in Lebanon and in the mine-hunting operations in the Gulf of Suez, while its military contingent is still part of UNIFIL in Lebanon.

Finally, France maintains a very important military presence in the Indian Ocean (5 frigates, 3 minor combatants, 1 amphibious and 3 support ships), and in Djibouti (3800 men, whose main elements are 2 light tank regiments, 1 armored squadron, 1 air squadron with 10 Mirage-IIIC aircraft and 13 helicopters). This is the only Western force stationed in the Horn of Africa.

Since the mid '70s France has also devoted its diplomatic and economic attention to the Persian Gulf region. Relations with Iraq have been strengthened, while economic and armaments supply agreements have been signed (1974, selling of helicopters and army guns; 1976, signing of an economic cooperation agreement; 1977, Iraqi order of 36 Mirage F-1 fighters; 1978, visit

to Baghdad of French Defense Minister Yvon Bourges and new arms contracts; 1978, agreement for the delivery of a nuclear research reactor; 1980, Iraqi order of 24 additional Mirage F-1 aircraft, AMX tanks and "Super-Frelon" helicopters; 1982, visit to Baghdad of French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson and Iraqi order of "Roland" and "Exocet" missiles; 1983, Iraqi order of "Super-Etendard" strike aircraft and "Exocet" missiles).

It is quite significant that France openly sided with Iraq after the outbreak of the Gulf war, while underlining that it has friends but no enemies in the region. The delivery of very sophisticated weapons systems like the "Super Etendard" aircraft and the "Exocet" missiles, giving Baghdad the capability to strike at the Iranian oil terminals in the Kharg island, was a clear sign that France was ready and willing to support Iraq.

The reasons behind French policy were not only based on economic interests - the oil factor was certainly preeminent when the French-Iraqi relations started to become tighter in the mid-70s - but also on the political evaluation of the Gulf situation. An Iranian victory was seen as a dangerous and destabilizing outcome. The unrestrained Iranian influence in the Gulf would have facilitated the spreading of Islamic revolutionary fundamentalism to the entire region and put an unbearable pressure on the smaller Emirates and on Saudi Arabia. A possible formal alliance of Iran with Syria, (and eventually with Libya and South Yemen) would have further complicated the situation radically, changing the strategic and political picture of the Middle East.

Iraq was not the only state to be the focus of French diplomacy in the Gulf. In the same period, Paris multiplied its relations with Qatar, the Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, particularly the latter.

In 1979 France quietly helped the Saudis during the attack on the Great Mosque in Mecca. In the same year Saudi Arabia ordered 200 AMX tanks and AS (Air-to-Surface) "Exocet" and SA (Surface-to-Air) "Crotale" missiles. In 1980, the French Minister of Defense Yvon Bourges visited Riyadh: a naval cooperation agreement was signed including warship deliveries and training. Again in 1980 a bilateral agreement on internal security was concluded between the French and the Saudi Ministry of the Interior. In 1982 another accord was signed for the development of Saudi naval forces.

As has been said, even though the main stream of these increased relations with the Gulf countries was represented by the selling of French modern weapons systems (arms supply to Iraq amounted to 40% of the total French arms exports in the period 1980-82, reaching 40 billion francs), the political elements were clearly present. France is interested in the maintenance of its cultural, economic and military presence within its traditional sphere of influence (the Mediterranean Sea with particular emphasis on the Maghreb and on Central Africa), and at the same time is interested in the stability of the Persian Gulf, a region economically very important both for oil imports (Iraqi oil amounts to 20% of all French oil imports) and arms exports.

In summary, France is deeply involved in the Middle East-Gulf regions. It will very likely be directly concerned about any crisis involving the stability of the area or radically endangering the present strategic situation. Presumably it will be willing to take action, also of a military nature.

However, France has always stressed that an Alliance attempt to meet challenges or to control out-of-area instabilities would risk transforming them into an East-West problem. France thinks that addressing out-of-area issues on a case-by-case basis, without any prior contingency planning, is the most effective way. Those European countries, which have the interest and the capability of doing so, should intervene, eventually by coordinating their

political and military initiatives. However, intervention would be internationally plausible and domestically acceptable only if there were a request for help or support on the part of the country which is felt to be threatened. The bilateral framework is preferable, in particular if the country is a former colony and has maintained close post-colonial links.

The victory of the center-right in the 1986 elections and the nomination of Jacques Chirac as Prime minister has created a new situation. The so-called "cohabitation" seems to work, even though Mr. Chirac's approach to international problems does not fully mirror that of President Mitterand. In the future, however, there could be cases where the French attitude and response to out-of-area issues - even outside the French traditional sphere of influence - and to American requests for cooperation and support could be different from those which could have been taken by a Socialist led government. The domestic constraints against a radical change of French autonomous and independent position in out-of-area issues will still be strong. However, the more conservative views of Jacques Chirac and his determination to defend the international policy making role of the Prime Minister might result in some surprise in the realm of French out-of-area policy, even for operations where the American "factor" would be unmistakably visible.

GREAT BRITAIN

England withdrew its forces from the East of Suez in 1971. However, not all the previous political and military ties have been completely cut. London maintains good relations with Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, in particular Oman.

In the '60s Britain helped Saudi Arabia to confront the incursions of North-Yemeni Il-28 and Mig-17 aircraft (some reportedly piloted by Soviets) by supplying an air defense system. The delivery of radars, six "Lightning" interceptors, six "Hunter" fighter-bombers and a battery of surface-to-air "Thunderbird" missiles was organized and conducted under the code name of "Magic Carpet" by a purported civilian dealer. In fact, the role of the English government was more than evident. All weapons systems and equipment were taken from Air Force and Army stocks, the personnel (pilots, crew chiefs, technicians and instructors to train the Saudi military) were former Royal Air Force and Royal Army officers and non-commissioned officers, and the agreement included a provision for British pilots to participate in operational missions.

As for Oman, Masqat's international relations were represented, when Sultan Said Taimur was in power, by his personal ties with Great Britain. These strong connections were also maintained when Sultan Qaboos Ibn Said deposed his father breaking Oman's isolationist tendency. Britain helped Oman to fight and win the guerrilla warfare conducted by the PFLQ (Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman) in the Dhofar, and the special link with London was maintained, while Sultan Qaboos was strengthening his military-strategic relationship with Washington. The Omani army has been trained by the British and the Baluch regiments, the best in the Army, are still commanded by British officers, while the air defense radar net is manned by British personnel. In recent years, British military contingents participated in the MFO in Sinai, in the MNF in Beirut (just a token force of 100 men) and in the mine clearing operations in the Gulf of Suez. At the same time Britain has resumed its naval presence in the Mediterranean, though with deployments of short duration and limited participation to NATO naval exercises. Furthermore, the strong military presence on Cyprus and the Sovereign Base Areas in the island play an important

role in supporting British participation in peacekeeping operations in the Mediterranean region (UNFICYP, UNIFIL and MFO), and any eventual military intervention requirements. In the whole, Britain considers that its overseas activities indirectly contribute stability and that its out-of-area military capabilities provide protection against challenges to the security interests of the Atlantic Alliance (8). No doubt Britain shares with the United States a concern about out-of-area challenges and the need to strengthen the Western strategic posture in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf. The British-American agreement on the upgrading of Diego Garcia's facilities to better meet American RDF requirements should be seen in this context. But in line with the basic European attitude, the out-of-area threat is seen to stem more from regional instability provoked by domestic problems of the Middle East and Gulf countries than from a direct Soviet threat. (Obviously, the hypotheses of Soviet indirect interference or exploitation are not discounted.)

Britain feels that individual European countries should expand their security horizons and should take a more active part in responding to global security threats.

However, the option of military intervention is considered viable only when vital national interests are at stake. (In this context, the Falklands campaign is a good case in point). The possibility of an East-West confrontation is obviously seen as a concrete limiting factor. In any case, diplomatic, economic and military help in terms of arms deliveries is given priority over a direct military initiative.

According to former British Defense Minister Michael Heseltine, coordination among the European countries is deemed possible only in the long term. At present, no specific initiatives to improve coordination are seen feasible. However, it is important that the European countries understand that their interests extend outside the European continent (9).

Mr. Heseltine again stressed these points in the House of Common in May 1985, in answering a question posed by the MP Bruce George on what discussions there were with the United States and the NATO allies in terms of operating outside the NATO area. "I think that it is quite wrong for major powers such as ourselves - not superpowers but major powers, for all that - to see no role for themselves on a world stage. That is not to say that you can have an orchestrated policy of working automatically with your allies. You cannot get this, it is not real. There is no way in which the Americans, or ourselves, or our European allies, are going to say in advance that they will cooperate in certain fields; they will not do it. However, there are countries of world significance, of a general good-neighbourly disposition, who will see if there is anything they can do to help, and try to work together." (10)

Furthermore, in another Commons debate, while disclosing that Britain was planning a big military exercise outside the NATO area, Mr. Heseltine declared: "We must be prepared to bear our share of responsibility for protecting trade routes and for promoting peace and stability in those areas where local conflicts could spread and risk wider East-West confrontation." (11) It is felt that this realistic assessment of the situation is still at the base of British out-of-area policy.

ITALY

Since the end of the '70s Italy has conducted a more active foreign policy in the Mediterranean area with a higher profile and a more evident willingness to assume responsibilities and commitments.

In July 1979 an Army helicopter unit (composed today of 48 men with 6 AB-205 helicopters) was deployed to Nakoura as part of the United Nations Interim Force for Southern Lebanon (UNIFIL).

In September 1980, Italy signed with Malta a treaty for economic, technical and military assistance, assuming the commitment of safeguarding the neutrality of the island. The commitment has clear security implications, since it suggests that Italy is ready to confront any external threat to Malta's sovereignty. This is true even though the treaty does not provide for an automatic military help in case of emergency, but does require prior bilateral consultations. As of May 1986, the arrangement was altered by the former Premier Don Mintoff's decision to accept a Libyan offer for a parallel safeguard of Malta's neutrality, and by his request for more economic aid and his threat to break the Italo-Maltese agreement. The subsequent talks between the new Maltese Prime Minister Bonnici and the Italian Foreign Minister Andreotti redefined the terms of the agreement and a new treaty is pending ratification by the Italian Parliament.

A small group of Italian military advisors and instructors are still on the island, even though their support activity has been reportedly reduced.

In March 1982, the Italian government agreed to participate in the Multinational Force designed to guarantee the full application of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel resulting from the Camp David agreement. The Italian contingent assigned to the MFO (Multinational Force and Observer) was composed of three "Larice" class minesweepers and 92 men. The task of the naval group, which is still today conducting its daily patrolling mission, is to assure the freedom of navigation through the Tiran Strait and in the Aqaba Gulf.

In August and September 1982, an Italian military contingent participated in the two multinational forces which were deployed to Lebanon, first to assure the safe withdrawal of the Palestinian fighters from Beirut and then, after the Sabra and Chatila massacre, to protect the Lebanese people and facilitate the regaining of authority by the legitimate Lebanese government.

Finally, in August 1984, a naval force composed of three "Castagno" class minehunters, of the "Cavezzale" support ship and of 305 men was deployed in the Suez Gulf to search for the mines which had impaired navigation through that waterway.

Due to its geostrategic position, Italy is very concerned about the maintenance of stability in the Mediterranean region and does not underestimate the threat posed by crisis situations in the Gulf. It does, however, emphasize its position in the Mediterranean, an area where it has a comparative advantage for geographical and historical reasons with respect to other European countries, and where its military instrument can be most effective. But Italian officials, in particular Defense Minister Giovanni Spadolini, have stressed that Italy cannot play a realistic and effective stabilization role unless there is an organic tie with Western strategy.

In general, there is a strong preference within Italian coalition governments (this has been a characteristic feature of all Italian governments) to participate in multinational peace-keeping or peace-building initiatives when these initiatives are conducted under United Nations auspices. In these cases, there will be a more pronounced willingness to send small military forces outside the Mediterranean. The Italian air operations in the Congo in the 1960-62 period is a good case in point.

On the other hand, bilateral US-Italian agreements have been reached on the eventual utilization by American forces of Italian air facilities in case of an out-of-area crisis. But the right to use Italian airports as staging

bases for the support of the RDF is not automatic and will be granted by the Italian government on a case-by-case basis.

Italy also considers that out-of-area challenges are most likely to stem from regional internal instability. However, the possibility of Soviet-supported or Soviet-exploited domestic "revolutions" is not excluded.

Military intervention is considered the least likely option due to its multiple political international repercussions and escalatory risks.

Italy's willingness to participate in multinational actions aimed at defusing crisis situations in the Middle East and the Gulf is limited by several factors.

- The endemic instability of the Italian political system; the overly large effects of foreign policy decisions on the coalition's cohesion and the tendency of all political parties to utilize foreign policy issues for their short term domestic interests.
- The tendency to insert Italian Middle East policy in the context of that of the EC.
- The desire to avoid giving the appearance that Italian policy toward the Arab world is identified with American policy.
- The negative effect of the failure of the MNF in Lebanon which has cast serious doubts on the viability of multinational initiatives even when organized and conducted among allies.
- The domestic political weight of the Communist Party, particularly its capacity to mobilize a large popular opposition to military "adventures" within the Mediterranean (and even more so outside the area).
- The still inadequate capabilities of the Italian armed forces in terms of long range air transport, logistic sustainability and low percentage of volunteers. This element would pose a serious handicap every time the military force include draftees (as it did in Lebanon), due to the inevitable public opposition to their employment for missions not directly connected with the defense of national territory.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

The official position of the West German government can be summarized as follows:

- Germany's position with respect to out-of-area challenges is very difficult both politically and psychologically;
- France, Great Britain and the United States are permanent members of the UN Security Council and maritime powers and possess a real capacity of force project, thus they can play a true political and military role;
- the German Constitution forbids the deployment of German military forces outside the NATO area. There are legal experts who maintain that article 87(a) does not necessarily preclude the employment of German units overseas where the missions are exclusively defensive. However, this school of thought has few followers and, as Rummel notes in Chapter V, any attempt to employ German forces in any out-of-area context will face strong domestic opposition both within the political class and from public opinion;

- West Germany feels that having assumed the major burden for the defense of Europe it is paying a good share for overall Western security and it could not do more on the military plane, even without the binding Constitutional provisions;
- the Federal Republic is more than willing to provide technical and economic aid to those countries which are seeking Western support.

In fact, West Germany has been (and still is) the European country which has provided the most extensive military aid to other countries in the Atlantic Alliance. Greece and Turkey have been receiving such help since 1964, and Portugal since 1978. 80% of this aid consists of the delivery of new military material, free of charge, and 20% of the release of serviceable Bundeswehr surplus. The total value of German defense aid amounted to more than 4 billion DM, as of December 1984. Turkey received deliveries for 2920 million DM, Greece a total of 802 million DM, and Portugal a total of 292 million DM (12).

Furthermore, West Germany has in recent years diluted the rules governing its arms exports. Contracts for the delivery of German weapons systems have been signed with several Arab and African countries: Tunisia, in 1980 (3 Lurssen-57 Fast Attack Craft); Saudi Arabia, in 1981 and in 1982 (72 + 200 FH-70 155 mm howitzers); Cameroon, in 1981 (Do-128 Maritime Patrol aircraft); Oman, in 1983 (2 Do-228 transport aircraft); Nigeria, in 1985 (3 Do-228 transport aircraft) (13).

Finally, the Federal Republic government feels that its contribution to out-of-area stability is realized, aside from the measures of foreign economic and development policy, also through military training aid. Thus, since 1981, about 1400 military personnel from 55 different countries of the Third World have received Bundeswehr training free of charge (14).

In case of out-of-area crises, West Germany seems willing to participate in European supporting activities and initiatives, and to share part of the European burden if economic aid will be an element of the European response. But it is very unlikely that the Federal government would agree on the participation of German military contingents in any multinational force destined to operate outside NATO's area of responsibility. This appears to be true even if the force is assembled under the UN auspices and is acting under a UN flag.

TURKEY

Geostrategically, Turkey offers valuable advantages for out-of-area operations in the Middle East and the Gulf. Already in 1958, when instabilities in Lebanon and Jordan raised concern in the Eisenhower Administration about their eventual expansion to Saudi Arabia and Iraq, the Pentagon had outlined the need for prestocking of equipment and war consumable items in Turkish territory, and for staging rights at Adana airbase. The same requirements were expressed by the British military high command.

The strategic value of Turkish territory increased after the fall of the Shah in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan which has moved Soviet forces to a short distance from the Persian Gulf. However, Turkey seems unwilling to be directly or indirectly involved in dealing with crises which are outside the traditional NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation framework, as only these explicitly justify the commitment of Turkish armed forces.

Of course, Soviet military intervention capabilities and the general stability of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf are two elements which are

necessarily a part of the Turkish security picture, especially if a crisis in those regions would be bound to lead to an East-West polarization. If, however, the crisis did not stem from a direct Soviet military operation threatening vital Turkish interest, but from regional domestic instability, or from a South-South conflict, it is very unlikely that Ankara would consent to the use of its air facilities for the support of an American or Euro-American force. In these cases, consideration would be given to the presumable reactions of the Soviet Union and to its capacity to exert strong political and military pressure. The value and significance of Turkey's present political and economic ties with the Arab world would also be considered, with the aim of not undermining them.

These factors have seemingly influenced Turkish policies in the last two decades, as evidenced by

- The pro-Arab attitude assumed by Ankara during the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli conflicts;
 - The diplomatic recognition of the PLO and the permission to open an office of the organization in the Turkish capital;
 - The economic and military cooperation agreement between Ankara and Tripoli signed in January 1979 during Premier Bulent Ecevit's visit to Libya. (After the increasing evidence of the role played by Libya in supporting international terrorism, this bilateral relationship has undergone a review and cooperation has been reduced);
 - The extreme caution with which Turkey reacted to the Islamic revolution in Iran and to the Mujaheddins' raid on the American embassy in Teheran, and the refusal to follow Washington in applying sanctions against Iran;
 - The Turkish condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, but the refusal to apply sanctions against Moscow;
 - Turkish neutrality in the Iran-Iraq conflict, and the increase in commercial and economic ties with both countries.
- Furthermore, Turkey:
- Was unwilling, during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, to be directly involved in the American air bridge in support of Israel, while granting permission to overfly Turkish territory to the Soviet transport planes directed to the Middle East.
 - Has required the Soviet Union's consent before complying with the United States' request, after the loss of American intelligence gathering stations in Iran, to let U-2 reconnaissance aircraft use Turkish airspace for the verification of Soviet compliance with SALT-2 treaty provisions;
 - In the 1970 base rights agreement, has explicitly restricted utilization of US military installation in its territory - reduced from 26 to 12 - to NATO military contingencies.

In June 1981, the Turkish Defense Minister Haluk Bayulken, referring to the scenario of making Turkish bases available to the American RDF, said explicitly that the bases on Turkish territory could be used by US forces only to defend vital NATO interests. The following year, reiterating the same concept, Turkish Premier Bulent Ulusu stated that Turkey could not associate itself with actions that might jeopardize the security and interests of the Arab countries.

It does not seem that this attitude has changed, so that Turkish participation and/or support for initiatives to meet out-of-area challenges should then be considered as a very dim prospect. However, if the out-of-area crisis were to touch vital Turkish interests, it is very likely that Ankara

would review its attitude on the use of its bases and would react by utilizing its military instrument in the mode and to the extent considered necessary. In this case, American military operations from Turkish territory, or Turkish-American military cooperation could be possible.

UNITED STATES

In contrast to the European countries, the United States inserts its out-of-area interests in the context of its world-wide competition for influence and power with the Soviet Union. Thus, in the Middle East and the Gulf regions the United States tends to stress and give priority to the Soviet "threat", while the European countries are more concerned about the regional sources of instability.

Furthermore, the United States' attitude and policy toward the Middle East and Gulf regions is based on several assumptions some of which - as has been previously indicated - are not fully shared by its European allies.

- The endemic instability of the Middle East/Gulf region will persist even after the solution of the Palestinian problem and the fading-out of the Arab-Israeli confrontation, two very difficult and long term eventualities.

- The Western nations can only hope to perform "damage limitation" work in the region, not possessing the political and military instruments to truly influence the development of the events.

- It is very unlikely that the Soviet Union will be willing to play a positive and stabilizing role in the region, or that the Soviets will agree to a special "code of conduct", involving for example the armament supply.

- Arms control negotiations will not solve the problem of the region and even proposals for an arms control regime in the Indian Ocean offer little prospect for enhancing Western security.

- The pro-Western and friendly countries in the region will not be able to confront their regional problems without external support. Thus, it is essential to demonstrate to the countries of the region that the United States is, and will continue to be, a reliable partner. The European allies should help the United States to perform this task. In this context, the special relationship with Israel should be closely safeguarded, since Israel is considered the only "true" ally in the region.

- The United States is expecting that in the event of a crisis the countries in the region with which it has signed agreements for the utilization of air and naval facilities (Oman, Kenya and Somalia) will fully support the American policy.

- The United States will continue to build its force projection capability in order to be able to fight a limited war in the region. The European allies should be ready to cooperate with the United States, by providing direct operational support and staging facilities for the American RDF and by adopting military compensation measures in Europe.

State-sponsored international terrorism is to be confronted not only with diplomatic initiatives, but also with military actions. The states for which a supporting role has been unquestionably proven must bear the responsibility and pay a price for their actions.

There is no doubt that the United States intends to protect and defend its strategic interests in the region, utilizing military force if and when necessary. The so-called Carter Doctrine has been explicitly restated and supported by the Reagan Administration. As recently as April 1986, US Vice-President George Bush reiterated during a four country tour of the Gulf the American commitment to keeping open the Gulf shipping lanes (15). Furthermore, the Reagan Administration has expanded the effort to build up a "strategic consensus" in the region, by involving, besides Israel, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco, where bilateral Joint Military Commissions have been created.

However, it should be underlined that the "strategic consensus" policy and the stressing of the Soviet threat do not entirely reflect, and do not constitute the priority factor of, the more articulated American policy in the region.

Over the long run, the United States seeks, with the help of its allies, to create a more peaceful and prosperous Middle East. Both as a means to this end, and because it is a long-term objective, the US wants the Allies to share the risks and the burdens of preventing further deterioration in the area: in this respect, its policy is aimed as much at Europeans as at the inhabitants of the Middle East.

For all the reasons given earlier, it is hard to develop a common Euro-American approach to the Middle East, especially with regard to the use of force. Moreover, the American propensity to employ force more readily than would the Europeans, as in the attack on Libya in April 1986, has further undermined the possibility of harmonizing policies and strategies in the area. Thus an obstacle to the implementation of US policy may be the inability to obtain European support in those few instances in which this may be crucial.

On the other hand, those factors which constrain European actions are also affecting the American willingness to intervene in out-of-area crises. Apart from the possible lack of Congressional support for Administration policy, military interventions are limited by their eventual international repercussions and their economic and human costs. Thus, an air attack against Syria, if Syria were to be unquestionably identified as a state sponsoring international terrorism, would be something completely different from the case of Libya.

In such an eventuality, however, European and American approaches might well converge, even though not in a fully coordinated way. And this means that the difference between the ways in which the United States and its European allies address the out-of-area question is not an organic feature of the question itself, but is wholly dependent on the type of crisis situation.

WESTERN ARMAMENTS AND YESTERDAY CRISES

A multinational naval force in the Indian Ocean

Speaking four days after the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war on a TV channel in Wisconsin, President Carter declared that the United States would do everything that is necessary to keep the Strait of Hormuz open (16).

Interviewed on September 28, 1980 on the CBS television news program "Face the Nation", Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher said: "The Strait of Hormuz is an international waterway through which nations are entitled to send their ships. We intend to keep that Strait open. We think that other nations have a very strong interest in doing so. Actually, the European

countries have a stronger interest in that oil than the United States does, but working with our allies, we intend to see that what is necessary is done to keep the Strait open." (17)

On 3 October, a US State Department spokesman told reporters that the United States had talked with other nations about the possibility of joint naval action if there were a threat to shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz. However, he underlined that the talks were exploratory, "simply one idea in a number of different ideas that have been discussed" and they should not imply that formation of a joint naval force was "an imminent development" (18).

In fact, the joint naval force was bound to be a no-development. The proposal put forward by US Secretary of Defence Harold Brown, and which many opposed also within the Administration, was let down by all the European allies.

There were strong political reasons for the refusal. France, Great Britain and Italy felt that a formal Western military presence would have been a too evident sign of commitment, not welcomed by the regional states, and capable of polarizing the Gulf crisis into an East West confrontation by stimulating a stepped-up Soviet response. In fact, Moscow had expressed its hostility to an integrated Western naval force in the Indian Ocean. And, significantly, strong concern was expressed not only by the two belligerents in the Gulf, but also by the conservative, pro-West states of the region like Saudi Arabia and the Arab Emirates.

Additionally, a joint naval force in the Indian Ocean would have too much resembled NATO naval task forces such as Stanavforlant (Standing Naval Force Atlantic) or Stanavforchan (Standing Naval Force Channel), giving the impression of a surreptitious expansion of NATO's area of responsibility.

Furthermore, the Allies were concerned with avoiding a too close identification with American policy.

This was especially true of France, which was in favor of a demilitarization process of the Indian Ocean that would exclude the presence of superpowers' armed forces. In July 1980, after the visit to Paris of Secretary Brown, who met with the French President to brief him on the US plan to acquire base rights in Kenya, Oman and Somalia and on the creation of the RDF, an Elysée spokesman expressed the view that France could not consider the expansion of American presence in the Indian Ocean a stabilizing factor. Even though, due to the ongoing Iran-Iraq war, the situation was now different, Paris was not willing to completely reverse its previous stand.

Great Britain was also very cautious about openly endorsing a proposal which provoked the opposition of the Labour Party and actually restricted the flexibility of British policy in the region.

Italy reiterated that the Italian armed forces had solely a regional role and Minister of Defense Lelio Lagorio went so far as to say that the Italian flag was in the Mediterranean and should remain there.

However, even though a political agreement was not reached, on a military level events took, very quietly, a different course. Both Great Britain and France increased the level of their naval forces permanently stationed in the Indian Ocean and Gulf regions. Bilateral military consultations took place between French and British Defense Staffs and the US Department of Defense concerning naval movements and contingency plans for coordinated intervention (19). A US-UK naval exercise was conducted in October 1980 in the central and north-west area of the Indian Ocean (20). By the end of October 1980 there were about 60 Western warships and support vessels in the

Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. French warships also cruised the Omani Sea, which was outside the traditional operational areas of the naval force based in Djibouti.

Thus, a Western force was present in the area and there is little doubt that the different national naval groups were closely in touch, exchanging data on reciprocal position and intelligence information. The coordination not reached at the political level was thus achieved at the operational level and the joint naval exercises conducted by British and American ships were a clear indication of that achievement.

This does not mean that, in case of an Iranian or Iraqi attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz, the European countries with a military presence in the area would have displayed the political will to take collective action. But at least, if the decisions were taken, the existing operational coordination would have facilitated military action. However, even without operational coordination, the presence of 60 Western ships cruising in the area was bound to have a military significance and a clear deterrent effect.

Even Italy, while refusing to send its naval forces outside the Mediterranean - the reasons were partly political and partly operational due to the lack of staging bases in the Indian Ocean/Gulf area - was ready to indirectly support the American effort in line with the "division of labor" formula. In fact, when the United States was forced to reduce from two to one the Sixth Fleet carrier battle groups to strengthen its naval presence in the Indian Ocean, the Italian Navy partially filled the gap by expanding its role in the Mediterranean.

The United States, France and Britain have maintained their military naval presence in the Southern end of the Persian Gulf to prevent the Iranian Navy from challenging or intercept their cargo ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz (21). And though they have exercised their power discreetly, it has been exercised, as when an American warship warned away an Iranian vessel trying to stop a cargo ship sailing under US colors.

The Multinational Force (MNF) in Lebanon (1982-1983).

The MNF 2 was sent to Lebanon after the massacres at the Sabra and Chatila Palestinian refugee camps. The redeployment of the American, French and Italian military contingents was quite rapid - only six days after the complete picture of the events emerged between 18 and 19 September 1982.

The mandate was the same for all contingents: that of interposition in agreed areas to assist the Lebanese government and its armed forces in Beirut and its surrounding areas. This mission would facilitate the re-establishment of the Lebanese government's authority and sovereignty, thus assuring the safety of the population and the end of violence.

Gradually after the deployment, however, each country began to develop a national interpretation of the mission, based on divergent perceptions of the policy necessary to solve not only the Lebanese but also the whole Middle East problem. Further complicating factors were the historically and politically different relationships that each country had with the participants in the Lebanese scene and the way they projected their short-term and long-term interests in the region.

The United States saw the MNF as a way to further the Middle East peace process. The final aim was the withdrawal of both Israeli and Syrian

forces and a free, pro-Western Lebanon under the guidance of President Gemayel. This aim was evident in the explicit American support given to Gemayel, in the effort undertaken to strengthen the Lebanese Army by providing weapons and training, and in the willingness to openly confront the Syrian forces, in the later phases of the MNF stay.

France, a long time friend of Lebanon and with a special relationship with Syria, strove to maintain an autonomous line of action, even though agreeing with the mandate for the MNF.

It tried to emphasize its independent negotiating position, which included a PLO and Syrian role. Even when it used its military force in response to terrorist attacks, it conducted its retaliatory strikes in a fashion which tended to emphasize that they were somewhat different from the American ones.

Italy went into Lebanon with immediate expectations, convinced of the need to quickly re-establish peace and stability in the area. The emotional factor played a significant role in terms of political and public opinion support for the deployment. The pre-eminence of the humanitarian role of the Italian contingent was reflected by its composition, which included a field hospital. However, like France, Italy felt that any long term solution could be achieved only by taking into consideration the interests of the Palestinian people.

Great Britain's military contingent, more a token presence than a real force due to its very limited size (100 men), was less the result of a specific commitment toward Lebanon than of the political need to be there. And this was demonstrated by the limited support that the force was prepared to give to the Lebanese government.

On the other hand, there were also the illusions and misperceptions of the Lebanese government about the role of the MNF, often considered as an instrument capable of serving the interests of Christian Maronite groups.

On the ground, not only political but also military coordination was substantially lacking. Each contingent, taking into consideration its own security requirements and defense needs, acted in a very independent way both in terms of relations with the population, with the different religious sects forming the complex Lebanese picture, and eventually with Syria, and in terms of projection of their own image and military behaviour.

The deterioration of the local situation in Beirut and in the Shouf mountains, the increased threat to the MNF, the different way each participating country interpreted the mandate of the force, the further loss of authority of the Gemayel government, the ineffectiveness of the Lebanese Army, and the gradual withering away of the MNF's impartial status, were all elements bound to bring the MNF mission to an unsuccessful outcome.

The failure of the Euro-American attempt to act together in an out-of-area context to defuse a crisis situation underlines the political and military difficulties of a coordinated effort, in the face of differing perceptions and divergent foreign policy interests. Moreover, the Lebanese experience, apart from having a direct influence on the 1984 Western naval operations in the Suez Gulf, is bound to be recalled by the European countries in any future out-of-area contingency.

The Mine Hunting Operation in the Suez Gulf (1984).

On July 9, 1984 an explosion damaged a Soviet container vessel navigating in the Gulf of Suez. More blasts - assumed to have been caused by

mines - occurred in the same area towards the end of the month, followed by a series of similar explosions in early August, damaging 17 merchant ships and oil tankers passing through the southern part of the Red Sea and the Suez Gulf.

From July 28 to August 7, Egyptian concern at the damage to merchant shipping and at the lack of success of its Navy in ending the threat, led to a request to Western governments for help in clearing the vital waterways of mines. France and the United States were also asked by Saudi Arabia to help clear the sea approaches to Jidda and the oil port of Yanbu.

Responding to the Egyptian request, the Western countries began to move (22).

The United States was the first to be contacted and the first to react to the Egyptian request for help, sending a 15-member team of navy mine experts to Cairo (2 August), while preparing mine-sweeping helicopters to be deployed from Norfolk Naval Air Station to Egypt. The American force was eventually composed of 8 RH-53D "Sea Stallion" helicopters, three support ships and over 1500 men.

The United Kingdom moved to the Suez Canal the four mine countermeasures ships it had had in the Eastern Mediterranean since the height of the Lebanon crisis. A fifth was sent later.

France deployed to the area four mine-hunters based at Brest Toulon and Cherbourg in the Mediterranean. They were joined by a repair ship based at Djibouti.

This force, in operation in the Red Sea and in the Suez Gulf by mid-August, was joined by the end of the month by three Italian mine-hunters and a support ship and, in early September, by two Dutch minesweepers. Also three Soviet mine-hunters were reportedly operating in the Red Sea waters, searching in the Bab el Mandeb and Aden areas.

The operation was far more difficult and complex than expected, due to demanding weather conditions, to the partly rugged and partly muddied characteristics of the sea bed, and to the great amount of metal refuse. The search yielded poor results. Suspicious buried contacts were blown up producing bigger explosions than could have been expected if they were just metal refuses, but this did not constitute hard evidence.

Only one mine was found: a recent Soviet made mine retrieved by a British ship. The condition of the mine substantiated the hypothesis that it had been recently laid. But it could not be proved that the explosions which had damaged shipping could be attributed to similar devices. Moreover, it could not be proved that Libya was implicated in the mining, even though some evidence was collected.

By October 1984, the national naval forces were withdrawn.

Again, it is not the military aspects of the operation that are worth analyzing, but instead the political framework within which the operation was conducted and the differing political approach of the Europeans in confronting this new out-of-area crisis.

The recognition of the vital importance of the Red Sea and Suez gulf for Western commercial traffic and the need to intervene to keep important sea lanes of communications free of any threat were elements openly and commonly shared by all. An unrestrained flow of oil traffic through the Suez Gulf was of paramount importance for the Western nations, in particular after the entering into service of the Transarabic pipeline, with its Red Sea terminal, and the "tanker war" going on in the Strait of Hormuz. This was particularly true for Italy which in the 1980s imported about 30% of the yearly 37 million metric tons of oil passing through the Suez Canal.

However, while the United Kingdom was ready to participate with the United States to the "Egyptian Coordinating Committee" (ECC) established at Adabiyah, France and Italy refused to formally join it, stressing the strictly bilateral framework of their participation in the mine searching operation.

France coordinated directly with Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Italy worked with Egypt only, sending a Navy team to Cairo to define the technical details of the operation (in particular the search area to be assigned) prior to the agreement with the Egyptian government. In any case, the Italian naval force joined in the search only after the government decision was presented and endorsed by the Parliamentary Defense and Foreign Affairs Committees.

France's independent attitude was basically in line with its traditional foreign policy and thus did not specifically indicate a change in the French approach to attempts at coordinating Western operations in extra-European areas.

The Italian case was somewhat different. The caution expressed by the Italian government in dealing with the mine issue, after the apparent initial willingness to respond quickly to the Egyptian appeal, was indicative of how much the Lebanon syndrome had encroached into the Italian political system. Apart from a repeated preference, and hope, for a United Nations role, Italy underlined not only the bilateral nature of the agreement with the Egyptian government, but also the "technical" aspects, of the mine-hunting operation in terms of support given to the Egyptian Navy, and the lack of any specific political significance, thus suggesting that any eventual comparison with the Italian participation in the MNF in Lebanon was totally inappropriate. Likewise, the time limit of the operation was emphasized, while no comments were made about the Egyptian allegations about the Libyan "paternity" of the mines.

Even though the decision could have been regarded as falling within the prerogatives of the Executive, Italian government preferred to present the case to the House and Senate Defense and Foreign Affairs Committees. The attitude of the political parties - not only the Communist Party's opposition but also the prudence of the Christian Democratic Party - was certainly an influencing factor in the difficult and slow decision-making process which eventually brought - fifteen days after the other Western naval forces - the Italian minesweepers to the Suez Gulf.

As in the case of the MNF, the mine searching operation provided some interesting hints of the politico-military pattern the European countries normally follow when confronted with out-of-area issues.

- The Europeans responded only after the explicit Egyptian and Saudi request for help.
- The "national" character of the decision was strongly underlined, even by Great Britain, the only European country to participate with the United States in the "Egyptian Coordinating Committee".
- France, and Italy in particular, stressed that the operation was not to be seen as a repetition of the MNF and that the mine-search was to be considered within the political framework of technical support provided to Egypt, which did not possess a sophisticated minesweeping capacity.
- There was the tendency, very evident on the part of Italy, to deny that the operation had any political implications, thus avoiding unwanted identifications with the American Middle East policy.
- The role played by the domestic political situation, very evident in Italy.

Even the United States, for domestic reasons, downplayed its participation in the mine-hunting operation, which was basically justified in the context of a time-limited technical assistance given upon request by a friendly nation to keep an international waterway free. In this respect, the American attitude was quite similar to the European one.

Furthermore, some other general points are worth considering.

- Egypt made an effort to treat the mine problem in a low key fashion to avoid the impression that it was unable to cope and to reduce the negative impact on the level of shipping using the Canal.
- The Western governments appeared more concerned than the shipping companies, the insurance companies and the official organizations such as the General Council of the British Shipping.
- In general, the negative effects of the explosions were less sharper than expected. By mid-August the traffic in the Suez Canal, which had had an evident drop in the early part of the month, was back to normal (23). This could be partly explained by the Western countries' political need to show that they were ready and willing to confront any threat to international naval shipping, and partly by economic considerations based on oil dependency and the level of oil imports.

The international perception of the motives at the base of the intervention was of preeminent importance for all participating countries and determined their behavior. However, as on previous occasions, the image of an uncoordinated Western approach to an out-of-area issue did not completely overshadow the actual coordination reached at the operational level. As Scott Truver has noted: "all the Western states worked within the framework established by the host government...Indeed, the objectives of the mine-hunting assistance never were debated or controversial." (24)

The American Attack on Libya (1986).

On 5 April 1986 a bomb destroyed the "La Belle" nightclub in West Berlin frequented by American servicemen. The blast killed an American sergeant and a Turkish woman and wounded 230 others, among them some 50 American military personnel. The evidence that the terrorist bombing was planned and executed under the direct orders of the Libyan regime was defined by President Reagan as "direct, precise and irrefutable" (25).

On the night of 14 April American F-111 fighter-bombers based in England, and attack aircraft from the Sixth Fleet carriers operating in the Central Mediterranean just outside the Sidra Gulf, conducted a series of air strikes against Libyan targets in the Tripoli and Benghazi areas.

The air raid was preceded by two events: the hastily summoned special meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the European Community, held at The Hague on the morning of 14th April; and the European tour of the chief US delegate to the United Nations Gen. Vernon Walters, acting as President Reagan's special envoy.

The aim of Gen. Walters' visit to five European capitals in three days - Madrid, London, Bonn, Paris and Rome from Saturday 13 to Monday 15 April - was reportedly to present the Reagan Administration's position on Qaddafi's support for international terrorism and press for stronger European sanctions against Libya.

The EC meeting, called by Italy and Spain following Libyan threats to attack NATO bases in the Mediterranean region, was to examine the issue of

international terrorism and the mounting tension in the Mediterranean. The final communiqué of the EC meeting was again the result of a compromise among different views on how to deal with Libya, even though it was more explicit in linking Libya to international terrorism than the one produced in January, following the bloody terrorist attacks against Rome and Vienna airports. This time Libya was mentioned and condemned for the threats to the European Mediterranean countries, but no specific reference was made to its involvement in the most recent terrorist actions in Europe. The EC countries decided to take measures against Libya such as restrictions on the freedom of movement of its diplomatic personnel, reduction of the staffs of diplomatic and consular missions in Europe, imposition of more stringent visa requirements and procedures, and a total ban on arms supplies. However, no agreement was reached on closing all Libyan embassies in the Community - as was proposed by the British Foreign minister Sir Geoffrey Howe - or on imposing economic sanctions, a measure opposed by West Germany and Italy in particular.

While prudently condemning Libya, the European statement did not endorse or back a US military action. It underlined the need for restraints on all sides in order to achieve a political solution to the American-Libyan controversy, and avoid a military escalation of the tension in the Mediterranean.

Even though it is impossible to say whether stronger European actions would have stopped the American raid, certainly the EC decisions were perceived by the Reagan Administration as inadequate eleventh hour initiatives, insufficient to forestall future Libyan planned terrorist attacks.

As was easy to predict, national interests and national perceptions were at the base of the European collective response. The past impression of equidistance was partly dissipated, but the unwillingness to take stricter measures against Libya was a repetition of the show of caution and reluctance given by the European countries every time they are called upon to support American policy in out-of-area crises.

The European reasons, however, were not at all negligible. France, which did not consider Libya as the only supporter of international terrorism, was driven by its determination to preserve the independence of its policy, and its links with the Arab world, by domestic constraints and by its preference for quiet diplomatic action. French reluctance to be directly involved in the American retaliation was probably due also to the need to protect the fate of the eight French hostages held in Lebanon. Thus France, while urging stronger anti-Libyan moves at the EC meeting, on Saturday 13 April rejected the American request to permit US fighter-bombers to cross its air-space.

The economic factor was very much present in the minds of the European ministers - in 1985 the EC had imported some 10.5 billion Ecus from Libya, while exporting only 3.5 billion (26) - together with the vulnerability factor and the common shared conviction that the military instrument was ill-suited to solve the problem of international terrorism. West Germany and Italy were particularly worried about their economic and commercial links with Libya, including an oil dependency which was particularly evident for Italy - about the fact that both countries had many of their citizens still working in Libya and in danger of becoming possible hostages, and about their greater vulnerability to terrorist actions.

Only Mrs Thatcher's Great Britain was ready and willing to stand with the United States, not only advocating at the EC meeting a stronger European stance but also consenting to the use of British bases for the American air strike. This attitude was only partly the result of the role played by the

"special" relationship which has bound the United Kingdom and the United States since WW II. There was also full recognition of Libyan involvement in sponsoring terrorism in Europe, including support to the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and the awareness that it would be unfair to deny to a country such as the United States so heavily involved in the defense of Europe, the help requested.

As far as the talks conducted by Gen. Walters in the eve of the American attack are concerned, the impression is that they were not consultations "strictu sensu", but just a way of telling the European allies about a decision already being taken. In fact, by the time the Presidential envoy was in London and Paris the use of the British bases had been approved and the overflight of French airspace had been refused. And when he was in Rome on Monday evening, talking with the Italian Premier Bettino Craxi, the orders for the attack had been given and the operation was under way.

As in the days and hours preceding the air raid, most of the European allies distanced themselves from the United States after the attack.

The French reaction was little more than a silence. In a 12 line, 149 word statement released by the Foreign ministry - but whose text was coordinated with Premier Jacques Chirac and President Mitterand - France admitted having been informed in advance about the American plan and said it had discouraged it. Furthermore, it deplored the fact that the escalation of terrorism had resulted in an action of reprisal capable of setting into motion "the spiral of violence". Finally, it indicated that the European countries would be willing to take collectively appropriate responses in case of Libyan aggression against Italy or Spain.

It was a prudent way to express French "dissociation" without explicitly approving or disapproving the American air strike, which was set in the generic framework of the action-reaction process stimulated by international terrorism. However, within the new majority there were also dissenting voices. Mr. Jean Lacauet, President of the UDF, and Mr. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, a former President of the French Republic, approved the American military action and regretted the government's decision to refuse the overflight of French territory to American aircraft on their way to Libya. Mr. Giscard d'Estaing went as far as to recall the American support for the French military operations in Zaire in 1978 and to underline the need to show Western solidarity in the face of terrorism. There were also reports that France was unwilling to join the American initiative because the raid was considered too "soft" to overthrow Qaddafi, and that had the United States decided to hit hard France would have been on America's side (27).

The reaction of the government of the Federal Republic of Germany was characterized by a certain embarrassment. Even though he avoided explicitly criticizing the raid, which was seen as a defensive action in the context of a struggle against a state continually preaching and practising violence, Chancellor Helmut Kohl stated that the Federal Republic was opposed to the use of force for the solution of international controversies. At the same time, he accused Qaddafi of being behind the West Berlin discotheque bombing, for which the German government had ample, independent evidence, and of having transformed his country into a nest of terrorists and a base for international destabilization. The official German attitude was thus one of "understanding" but not of approving or backing the use of military force. On the other hand, the American air raid was condemned by the Liberal Party and by the SPD, which interpreted it as a new demonstration of how little the United States was listening to its allies.

Mrs Thatcher defended the American action as legal and justified on the basis of the inherent right of self-defense, as recognized by Art. 51 of the UN Charter, and on the basis of Libya being a proven sponsor of international terrorism. Apart from sharing the American attitude towards states supporting terrorism (28), Mrs Thatcher defended her decision to allow the use of British airbases for several reasons. Over and above those already mentioned - solidarity for a country "that has hundreds of thousands of forces in Europe to defend its liberty" (29), Libyan support for the IRA, recognition of the international legacy of the American action, and the privileged link between the two countries - there was also the fact that the F-111 fighter-bombers were the only aircraft in the American inventory in Europe capable of carrying out such a difficult and demanding mission with good probability of keeping the level of collateral damages to civilians low. And there was the need to reciprocate in some way the support received from the United States for British actions in the South Atlantic during the Falklands war of 1982.

Disagreement was expressed not only by the Labour Party and the center parties, but also by members of the Conservative Party. Attacks against Mrs Thatcher's policy grew following the killing of British hostages in Beirut, clearly showing the risks taken by Great Britain and the domestic repercussions of the issue of international terrorism.

However, the British cooperative attitude was not without "qualifications". On the one hand, the support was given on the ground that the military action would be directed against specific Libyan targets, demonstrably involved in the conduct and support of terrorist activities. In other words, it appears that the British government had a role in the selection of the Libyan targets. On the other hand, Mrs Thatcher was keen to outline that the use of British bases could not be taken for granted, and that any future missions of the UK-based American aircraft would require another request and another specific authorization.

The Italian negative reaction was the least nuanced among those of key European allies. On April 15, when talking in front of the Parliament, the Italian Premier Bettino Craxi said that "notwithstanding the contrariety (la contrarietà) expressed by the Italian government and by all governments of the Atlantic Alliance and the European Community, the US government has maintained and realized its plan to attack Libya" (30). Based on the common position taken by the EC and on views convergent with those of Madrid, Paris and Bonn, Mr. Craxi stated "the disagreement of the Italian government for the American initiative" and outlined "the responsibility assumed by the American government".

Furthermore, Mr. Craxi said that the military actions "far from weakening international terrorism, run the risk of provoking a further explosion of fanaticism, extremism, criminal and suicide actions." Finally, he regretted that the position taken by the European governments was ignored by the United States, and that theirs was a "decision which did not take into the right account the value of Euro-American partnership in front of important issues".

The more evident Italian dismay and concern was related to several factors, similar to those of other European countries, such as wide economic and commercial relations and a large Italian working community in Libya. But it was also due to the peculiar geographical position of the Italian territory, which was very vulnerable to Libyan reprisals. In fact, only three hours and thirty minutes after Mr. Craxi's initial words, two Libyan missiles exploded close to the coast of Lampedusa island, where a LORAN station of the US Coast

Guard manned by American personnel is located. The Libyan strike put Italy in the forefront of the American-Libyan "war" and added the dimension of fear to the public perception of the Mediterranean situation, a dimension which the government and the political parties could not completely disregard.

In general, the attitudes of the European countries to the American-Libyan crisis were determined by the usual mixture of heterogeneous elements: the economic interests to be safeguarded; the Alliance solidarity to be shown, but with the limits of a clear political unwillingness to adopt a truly coordinated policy; the perception of an American Administration not very often ready to listen to the advice of its allies, and very often ready to rely on its military instrument; the "national" approach to out-of-area crises; and the concern about the deterioration in East-West relations resulting from a Soviet-American confrontation in out-of-area crises. (The cancellation of the mid-May visit to Washington of the Soviet Foreign minister Shevardnadze to arrange for the second Reagan-Gorbachev summit was seen in Europe as another negative repercussion of the raid.)

Other factors, however, influenced European attitude, factors peculiar to international terrorism when considered as an out-of-area issue: the linkage of Arab terrorism with the political problems in the Middle East and the different American and European approaches to their solution; strong doubts about the utility and the applicability of the military instrument in confronting and curbing terrorism; the higher vulnerability of the Mediterranean European countries to terrorist actions and retaliations; the difficulty in finding unquestionable evidence of state-supported terrorism; the constraints imposed by the international situation when such clear evidence would eventually involve states more closely tied to the Soviet Union than Libya; and the concern about being directly called upon as NATO allies in case of an attack against American ships or aircraft in the Mediterranean, a case which would fall within Art. 5 of the Treaty.

Notwithstanding European criticism and deploring of the attack, the United States preferred to downplay Alliance discord. It was a significant sign that Washington was aware of the peculiar position of Western Europe vis-à-vis the terrorist threat and was basically satisfied by the European willingness to expand the anti-Libyan measures and by the steps taken to fight international terrorism. However it is felt that the European "disagreement" will not be easily forgotten in the United States and that the way to fight international terrorism will be, in the future, another source of out-of-area differences between the two sides of the Atlantic and among European countries too.

THE LIMITS TO WESTERN ACTION

The picture of Western attitudes and responses to out-of-area issues is one of complex and contrasting tones. The uncertain and the cautious approach which has characterized the European politico-military reaction to out-of-area crises will form part of the picture in the future, as will the somewhat sharper approach of the United States.

Obviously, the European countries will evaluate their possible involvement in out-of-area contingencies first and foremost in term of national interests, even though not narrowly defined. In fact, they will consider not only vital security and economic interests, but will also weigh the strength of the political and economic ties (former colonial or post colonial) with the country/ies of the region where the crisis has erupted; the considerations of national prestige and the willingness to project an image of a power capable of

intervening in the international arena; the relationship with the United States within and outside the Atlantic Alliance; and the assessment of how the eventual support to American initiatives in out-of-area regions would affect those national interests.

The political ties with the out-of-area country being threatened by domestic instability or by external pressures will undoubtedly influence the European response. We have seen this pattern in the past, both on the part of Britain toward Oman and Saudi Arabia, and on the part of France toward Tunisia, Lebanon and the Central African States. On the other hand, economic ties could be an element of restraint in case of actions against an out-of-area country which is the alleged cause of regional instability: the lukewarm, if not implicitly negative, European reactions to the United States' policy against Libya, after the terrorist attacks at the Vienna and Rome international airports at the end of 1985 - and even more after the April 15, 1986 air raid - is a good case in point.

For the medium size European powers, the importance of regional ties will be enhanced by their willingness to continue to project themselves internationally as nations possessing the political and military capacity to be important elements in any out-of-area crisis. This sense of national prestige and the symbolic value of international commitments have been evident factors of French and British foreign policy, even in the post-colonial era. However, this should not be overestimated. Both France and Britain - even more Italy and West Germany - understand quite well the limits of their foreign policy and the political and military cost of too explicit out-of-area commitments, in particular in a supporting role for the American global competition with the Soviet Union.

On the military plane constraints are also obvious. France and Britain - and Italy to a lesser degree - possess naval forces capable of fulfilling the role and the missions typical of out-of-area operations requiring a maritime component. They have the proven logistical capacity to sustain limited naval forces at long range regardless of local resources. But, apart from Britain, France and Italy have inadequate long-leg air transport capacity, and airlift over long distances will either require the utilization of staging facilities en route to the crisis area or the use of the American air transport assets. Furthermore, any out-of-area military commitment, particularly if it is of some size and of long duration, will have to be considered in the context of its possible detrimental effects on the Alliance's conventional capabilities in Europe.

Finally, the utilization of naval forces as a foreign policy instrument to exert pressure or influence ashore, in other words their contribution to the solution of out-of-area contingencies, has been shown to be seldom effective and always very costly.

On the other hand, air forces cannot be utilized except in the transport and attack roles, in support of troops on the ground (as in Lebanon), but with dubious effects in those environments typical of many out-of-area scenarios. And the employment of ground forces would be likely only in peace-keeping or peace-building type operations, unless vital national interests are evidently at stake.

Outside the recognized and accepted need to defend these interests, the weight of the opposition parties and public opinion will be a limiting factor in the European countries attitude towards out-of-area crises. As has been demonstrated in the course of the Lebanese crisis in the 1983, both American and European public opinion played a manifest role in the withdrawal

decision. People are less and less willing to agree that the integrity of Lebanon, or the maintenance in power of Arab kingdoms in the Gulf, or the future of Chad should be part of their country's military concern. They are less and less ready to accept the human and financial cost of operations which cannot be easily explained in terms of national security. This is even more evident if, as in the case of Italy, the military force that will be eventually employed is composed of draftees who do not take very lightly the fact of a compulsory military service including the possibility of being killed, not for the defense of the homeland, but for the stability of a distant and unknown country.

In conclusion, the European countries' approach to the out-of-area issues will be one of political caution and calculated military risks.

The United States will be disappointed if it expects explicit allied support in case of out-of-area crises. Past events have shown that Europeans are not willing to act as supporters of American policy in the Middle East/Gulf regions, in particular if the possibility of an East-West confrontation is part of the crisis scenario.

This does not mean European inaction, even though the preference would be for a so-called "division of labor", whereby the United States would take care of out-of-area problems, while the Allies strengthen their commitments in the European theater.

Furthermore, another preferred policy seems to be that of helping the pro-Western regional countries both economically and militarily, thus strengthening their ability to act as stabilizing factors, and to intervene in support of other friendly countries. The military support provided by Iran to Oman in 1975-76 and by Egypt to rebel forces in Chad in 1981 and to Sudan in 1983 are considered good examples of a policy which could be endorsed as an alternative to direct European intervention.

The Europeans will eventually do their part. In many cases their part will take the form of an autonomous initiative rather than a coordinated response and it will be more likely conducted on a bilateral than on a multilateral basis, unless the United Nations is able to intervene. In this respect, the insistence on UN role is sometimes assumed by the Europeans as an alibi for not taking difficult initiatives. On the other hand, the UN umbrella helps domestically to justify, more easily, a policy of out-of-area intervention.

Even in those cases where a direct participation with the American forces would not be politically feasible or militarily possible, the Europeans could choose the way of indirect support, using their diplomatic and economic instruments and/or permitting the utilization of their facilities by the American RDF. This may not appear much of a policy and it is probably inadequate to confront the out-of-area challenges of the next decade. But asking for more will eventually mean introducing into the Euro-American relationship new elements of misunderstanding and friction.

How To Do It Together

This being the picture of the overall European attitude, is it possible to envisage different ways to confront the out-of-area question?

The first important point is for the European countries to intensify their intelligence collection effort in out-of-area regions and then share the information with the most concerned and involved allies. This would be particularly useful for fighting international terrorism and for coping better

with the local situation in cases of participation in multinational peace-keeping forces. Thorough intelligence in Lebanon in 1982-83 could have probably permitted a better defense against the bloody terrorist bombing attacks at the American Marine and French para troop compounds. France has acquired with the "Spot" satellite a good capability for high-resolution photographic survey of areas of interest. European countries could jointly develop a more sophisticated military reconnaissance satellite capable of providing precious intelligence.

The second point is related to the necessity for European governments to show greater determination in addressing the out-of-area crises. The sad picture of hesitation and ambiguity shown by the EC in the aftermath of the terrorist massacres at the Vienna and Rome airports in December 1985 should be avoided. European action in such cases is important as a political deterrent instrument and as a valuable, even though indirect, diplomatic support for the country that eventually will decide to act autonomously in an out-of-area contingency. In other words, it is not always necessary to have a common European response, sometimes, common actions might have an adverse effect on the development of the crisis situation. But a coordinated attitude in terms of diplomatic support and collateral initiatives is bound to buttress the action taken by a single country.

The third point is related to the European rapid employment forces. It would be useful if these forces could train together in specifically devised exercises, in a way similar to the training conducted by NATO ACE Mobile Force (AMF). If the possession of a rapid employment force increases the capability to deter and to intervene if necessary in an out-of-area crisis - even within the operational and logistic limits previously outlined - common training will facilitate a coordinated military response if and when it becomes politically feasible. In the long term, the European rapid deployment forces could constitute the hard core of a truly "European" military intervention capacity in out-of area contingencies involving vital European interests.

The fourth point concerns the European political coordination during the development phases of an out-of-area crisis, even though it should be underlined that even a timely and thorough coordination would not overcome the roadblocks represented by differences of priorities and objectives. In recent years, European countries have created high level crisis management centers. Their connection and a closer link with the American center in terms of technologically advanced communication means would be very important for a rapid transmission of information, for quick consultations, for real time coordination of military initiatives. In the post-Achille Lauro affair, when American F-14 fighters forced the landing at the Sicilian airbase of Sigonella of the Egyptian aircraft with the four Arab terrorists on board, the communications between Washington and Rome were far from perfect, and reportedly were complicated by translation problems. The possibility for the top decision-making bodies of the Atlantic Alliance countries to directly and fully communicate outside the NATO framework would enhance the badly needed timely consultation and coordination process, thus indirectly strengthening at, least at the "technical" level, the Western response capacity to out-of-area crises.

The fifth point regards the possibility of coordinating the European arms transfer to Middle East, Gulf and North African countries in such a way that it could be utilized as an instrument to consolidate regional stability, and to isolate trouble-making countries, to support pro-Western nations threatened by neighbouring countries. Obviously, this can be realized only

within the framework of a truly common European policy towards those regions, an objective still very far from being realistically attainable. However, the European countries should try to impose on themselves at least a certain degree of unilateral restraint, especially in those cases - and toward those countries - where for political reasons other Western nations are imposing limits to their arms exports. In other words, the European countries should at least try to consider not only the economic, but also the political implications - and the effects in any future out-of-area crisis - of their arms transfer policy.

These few points might seem inadequate to change the European approach to the out-of-area question.

In fact, the measures recommended are basically technical in nature and do not and cannot solve the most important out-of-area problem, which is political and refers mainly to the lack of political will of European countries to operate with a coordinated policy. No technical fix can replace the political will needed to effectively deal with out-of-area issues. In this respect, much needs to be done.

At present, however, the words of the 1977 Harmel report "without commitment and as the case demands", referring to an eventual out-of-area involvement, appear to represent the basic policy of the European countries. The do-it-yourself syndrome is still to be overcome. But another dichotomy in the out-of-area response between the European countries and the United States may well definitively transform the American sense of isolation into isolationism with dramatic repercussions on the Atlantic Alliance. Thus much must be done, if the Alliance is to continue.

FOOTNOTES.

01. In this respect, it is worth remembering an historic precedent. After the accession of Greece and Turkey, article 6 of the Atlantic Treaty was modified to include their territory and the Mediterranean Sea. However, interesting enough as a symbol of at that time American out-of-area sensitivity, the British bases in Cyprus, Wheelus air base in Libya and the French colonial bases in Algeria were not included in the NATO's area of responsibility. See Major James H. Williams, NATO out-of sector interests in the Middle East, The Military Review, October 25, 1985, pp. 54-59.
02. Paragraph 5 of the NAC final communiqué of the meeting held in Paris in December 1956 reads: "The Atlantic Alliance is primarily concerned with the threat to security of the Nato area. The council discussed the threat which Soviet penetration of the Middle East would present for Nato. In view of the fact that the security, stability and well-being of this area are essential for the maintenance of world peace, the Council agreed to keep developments in this area under close and continuing observation. See Nato Final Communiqués, 1949-1974, Brussels, 1975, p.101.
03. Reference to the out of area issue can be found: in the Report of the Committee of the Three (Mr. Gaetano Martino, Italy, Mr. Halvard Lange, Norway, and Mr. Lester Pearson, Canada) of 1956; in the Report of the Council of the Future Tasks of the Alliance, also known as Harmel Report, of 1967; in the Ottawa Declaration of June 1974; and in the final communiqué of the Bonn summit in 1982.
04. Paragraph 15 of the Harmel Report, Nato Facts and Figures, Brussels 1971, p. 367.
05. Notizie Nato (Nato News), October 1983, p. 35.
06. On the negative impact of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war on the Euro-American relations see the vivid account of Raymond L. Garthoff on his "Detente and Confrontation. American-Soviet relations from Nixon to Reagan", The Brookings Institution, 1985, pp. 401-405.
07. However, it should be noted that Great Britain in order to enhance rapid and long distance deployment has purchased the "Tristar" aircraft as a tanker for in-flight refuelling.
08. Statement on the Defense Estimates 1986, vol.1, HMSO, London, 1986, p.21.
09. Michael Heseltine interview as reported by Maurizio Cremasco, La pace dal terrore al disarmo, ADN Kronos, Rome, 1983, p. 192.
10. House of Common report, 8 May 1985, p. 82.
11. John Carvel, "British Army in practice run for oil war", The Guardian, 13 June 1985.
12. White paper 1985, The situation and the development of the Federal Armed Forces, Bonn, 1985 p. 122.
13. Michael Feazel, "New liberal arms export rules for review of German policy", Aviation Week and Space Technology, 2 December 1985, pp. 27-28.
14. White paper 1985, cit., p. 122.
15. U.S. to keep chief lanes open, Bush says, IHT, 9 April 1986.
16. Le Monde, September 28-29, 1980, p.2.
17. United States Information Service, Daily Wireless File (DWF), September 30, 1980, pp. 4-5.

18. DWF, 288, October 6, 1980, p. 21.
19. Le Monde, October 22, 1980.
20. Middle East Economic Digest (MEED), October 24, 1980, p. 10.
21. On the near confrontation between Western and Iranian warships see Christopher Dickey, "West Sails Close to Confrontation with Iran in Gulf", International Herald Tribune, 20 November 1985.
22. For the best and most informed account of the mine-hunting operations, see Scott C. Truver, "Mines of August: an International Whodunit", Proceedings/Naval Review, May 1985, pp. 95-117. See also John Moore, "Red Sea Mines a Mystery No Longer", Proceedings, May 1985, pp. 64-67.
23. Scott C. Truver, op. cit. p. 100.
24. Scott C. Truver, op. cit. p. 108.
25. "President Reagan's Nationwide Television Statement" in DWF, n.70, April 15, 1986, p. 2.
26. Antony H. Cordesman, "After the Raid: the Emerging Lessons from the US Attack on Libya", unpublished paper, May 1986, p. 4.
27. William Safire, "Tough Talk by France: Is It Serious ?", International Herald Tribune, 19-20 April 1986.
28. On April 15, in front of the Parliament Mrs Thatcher, referring to state-sponsored terrorism, said: "If one always refuses to take risks because of the consequences, then the terrorist governments will win and one can only cringe before them.", Harvey Morris, "UK Defends Use of Bases on Its Soil", International Herald Tribune, April 16, 1986, p. 1.
29. Ibid.
30. This and the subsequent quotations are translated from Mr. Bettino Craxi's speech in front of the House of Representatives on April 15, 1986, Parliamentary Records, 471, April 15 1986, pp. 31-33.

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