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**THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA
IN A POST-CFE SITUATION**

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1. Introduction

The deployment of naval forces is seldom determined only by military requirements deriving from the threat posed by potential adversaries. Capable of staging in the area of deployment, and performing their assigned missions for protracted periods of time with the necessary operational and logistic flexibility, naval forces represent the ideal military instrument in support of foreign policy aims.

This is particularly evident in NATO's Southern Region where support for land operations and sea control in case of war, reassurance of friendly countries, military suasion (1) and military intervention in case of out-of-area (2) crises constitute the rationale behind the Mediterranean presence of the U.S. Sixth Fleet and elements of its mission.

A Conventional Force Reduction (CFE) treaty will significantly reduce the level of U.S. troops and armaments in Central Europe. It appears that forces in Southern Europe will also be affected, but only marginally -- partly because the United States, as agreed with the Soviet Union, will be allowed to maintain 30,000 Army and Air Force men in Greece, Italy, Turkey and the United Kingdom in addition to the established total of 195,000 men for Central Europe; and partly because naval forces, which constitute the bulk of the U.S. military presence in the region, are excluded from the CFE negotiations.

If a CFE treaty is signed and ratified, however, it is expected that pressure will mount in the United States and in Europe for at least a partial inclusion of naval forces in the CFE-2 talks. Moreover, it is expected that declining defense budgets and a shrinking Navy will force the United States to re-evaluate its military posture in NATO's Southern Region.

This paper will analyze the future of the U.S. military presence in the Mediterranean region in a post-CFE environment, considering the dichotomy between the new strategic situation created by the revolutionary events in Eastern Europe and the old, endemically unstable political and military situation of this region. The contradiction between the decline of the threat, which logically calls for a reduction of the U.S. forces, and the continuing American political and security interests in the region, which call instead for the maintenance of a significant military presence will also be considered. The analysis will address both the political and the military factors and will determine if, and eventually how, the overall size, composition and posture of American forces could or should change. The main focus will be on U.S. aero-naval forces in the Mediterranean, though land and air forces will not be totally ignored.

2. The Military Picture

The fall of the communist regimes in Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania -- though in the latter two countries the democratization process is far from being completed -- and the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Hungary, to be completed by 1991, has disrupted the cohesion and the

effectiveness of the Warsaw Pact in the Southern Region. What has been noted in reference to Central Europe is even more valid when applied to NATO's Southern Flank (3). It is presently impossible to imagine an aggression against NATO's southern European countries conducted by the Soviet Union with the support of its allies.

This means that part of the Sixth Fleet's traditional war mission, i.e. to provide air support to NATO defensive land operations and to use the amphibious forces to help defend the Turkish Straits, has lost much of its rationale and significance.

Moreover, there appears to be a clear trend on the part of the Soviet Union to reduce its naval deployments worldwide (4). This trend has already affected the Mediterranean deployment of the Fifth Escadra (5) - or Sovmedron, the traditional NATO designation for the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron. In fact, its presence has progressively declined from the peak of 20,600 annual ship-days in 1973 to 13,505 in 1989, while the average daily strength has been somewhat reduced from 56 to 37 units (combatants and auxiliaries). (See appendix A for data). Finally, some Soviet strategic analysts are advocating the unilateral withdrawal of all Soviet naval forces from the Mediterranean as part of the attempt of reducing defense spending and external commitments.

There are, however, specific political and military requirements which are bound to force Moscow to maintain its naval presence in the Mediterranean. It is then presumable that the Sovmedron -- even though smaller in size and adopting more diluted deployment patterns -- will still be part of the Southern Region's military landscape for the foreseeable future.

Furthermore, even if a total withdrawal is achieved the Soviets would retire their naval forces to the Black Sea, which is separated from the Mediterranean only by the Turkish Straits. Their return to the Mediterranean would be much easier than the redeployment of U.S. naval forces from the Atlantic or the Indian Oceans. The Soviets have demonstrated their ability to reinforce their Mediterranean Fleet quickly, when necessary. Significant surges of Soviet naval presence occurred during the Arab-Israeli war in 1967 and 1973, the Jordan crisis in 1970 and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Thus, the concept of a variable naval force can be applied by the Soviets more rapidly and effectively than by the United States. Furthermore, the Soviet Naval Aviation's Tu-26 Backfire and Tu-16 Badger medium bombers would still be deployed from airbases in the Odessa Military District (MD). These medium bombers, armed with air-to-surface missiles give the Soviets an effective anti-ship capacity. Moreover, they could be supported by Su-24 long-range fighter-bombers deployed from the Kiev MD.

On the other hand, the construction of true aircraft carriers capable of carrying high performance combat aircraft (6) is a clear indication of the continuing Soviet interest in sea power and particularly in the achievement of an at least embryonic power projection capability.

The entry into service of the Soviet "Tbilisi" class aircraft carriers is also bound to affect the overall military situation of the Southern Region. The change could range from minimal -- if no aircraft carrier is assigned to the Black Sea Fleet -- to significant, if a carrier battle group eventually forms the bulk of the Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean.

Even a carrier-centered Sovmedron, however, will continue to face the present problems of limited endurance and sustainability, and suffer from today's operational shortcomings: (i) major choke-points in the Mediterranean under Western control; (ii) lack of facilities, apart from the anchorages in international waters and the infrastructures utilized in the Syrian port of Tartous, which have reportedly been expanded (7); (iii) lack of adequate air cover; (iv) high vulnerability to NATO land-based air power; (v) marked inferiority vis-a-vis NATO naval forces (French and Spanish forces included).

The military situation in the Mediterranean is not characterized only by the presence of

Soviet naval forces. In fact, the most significant changes in the situation are the result of trends outside the East-West framework.

The first, is the continuing militarization of the littoral countries of the Mediterranean and of the Gulf countries. The second trend within this militarization effort is the proliferation of long-range surface-to-surface missiles (see appendix B), and the capability of producing chemical weapons in the Middle East and in the Gulf region.

The build-up of the air and naval forces of the littoral countries means that they will be able to take and enforce specific military measures. In particular, limits might be placed on freedom of transit and navigation in certain zones of the Mediterranean sea for alleged motives of security, navigational safety, or pollution control. In a crisis or conflict between two coastal countries, security zones might be created in which navigation would be subject to rigid control measures, or large tracts of the sea might be implicitly considered or explicitly proclaimed war zones, dangerous for the navigation of all ships. In this context, two elements should be underlined: first, the diffusion of submarines in the naval inventories of the North-African and Middle Eastern countries, and the inherent sea-denial capability they provide; second, the difficulty of conducting Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) operations in the Mediterranean due to the high thermal gradient, especially in the summer season, the elevated salinity of the sea, and the uneven conformation of the seabed.

The acquisition of significant military capability by the Third World countries of the Mediterranean and Gulf regions implies a redistribution of political and military power that would be naive to ignore. It could also mean a growing tendency to assume that military capabilities could be effectively utilized to solve bilateral controversies, thus increasing the possibilities of political crises ending in open conflicts. The August 1990 Gulf crisis initiated by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait is a good case in point.

Finally, it means that the threat of use of military force for foreign policy objectives has become less credible and more difficult, and that the political constraints to its actual use have increased because of the higher risks involved. This is especially true when it is envisaged outside the framework of the United Nation's resolutions and commitments.

The proliferation of long range ballistic missiles and the expanding capacity among countries in the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf regions to produce chemical weapons has increased the threat perception of the countries in the European Southern Region.

In April 1989, CIA director William Webster disclosed that at least fifteen nations will be producing and possibly exporting their own theatre ballistic missiles by the year 2000. Even though somewhat crude and inaccurate, these missiles could be used with conventional or chemical warheads and would pose a serious threat to the Southern Region and to American and/or European forces deployed for out-of-area contingencies, in crisis-cooling efforts, peacekeeping missions or interposition operations.

A scenario similar to that of the October 1983 terrorist attack against the U.S. Marines contingent in Lebanon could easily be drawn. But in such a scenario it is supposed that the terrorist attack against the American contingent forces would be conducted using short/medium range surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs) armed with chemical warheads. Another, more real and frightening scenario is an Iraqi chemical attack conducted with SCUD missiles against the U.S. and Arab forces deployed in Saudi Arabia since August 1990 in the context of the most difficult crisis in the Gulf.

Now, while there is always the possibility of increasing defenses against a kamikaze attack by a TNT loaded truck, there is no defense against a full-fledged missile attack. No countries in the Mediterranean region possess an anti-tactical missile defense capability. And

ATBM systems are not part of the armaments of the U.S. forces, at least not until PATRIOT PAC 2 surface-to-air missile systems are fully operational. However, even these systems will not be capable of providing an area defense and will be vulnerable to saturation.

Thus, the threatened use of ballistic missiles armed with conventional or chemical warheads by a state or by a terrorist organization would provide them with very significant political leverage, an element which should not be underestimated in the volatile situation of the Southern Region. In a not too distant future, SSMs blackmail could become a characteristic of the Southern Region's political landscape and eventually affect Southern European foreign policy behaviour.

3. The Political and Economic Framework

It is beyond the scope of this paper to illustrate the present political situation in the Mediterranean region, underlining the factors of internal and external instability and the risks of crisis and confrontation. It is sufficient to indicate among these factors (i) the spreading Islamic fundamentalist movements in the Arab countries of the Mediterranean region (conservative such as Egypt, socialist such as Algeria, or revolutionary such as Libya) (8); (ii) the still unresolved Palestinian problem; (iii) the difficult economic situation in all the countries of the region; (iv) the dramatic, upward demographic trend and the related problem of immigration from the south to the north; (v) the geostrategic and geopolitical linkage between the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean region and the repercussions in this region of any crisis in the Gulf, as the crisis precipitated by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait has clearly demonstrated.

Today, one of the political determinants of the U.S. military presence in the Mediterranean -- to be an element of the containment policy by deterring and checking any Soviet attempt to expand its political influence in the region -- has practically vanished, giving more significance to other elements, which were also at the base of the U.S. naval deployment decision, and which increased in importance through the years. These include the mentioned closer geostrategic link between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf in which U.S. special interests are present; the defense of sea lines of communications (LOCs); the specific interest in the unimpeded operations through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal; the protection of American citizens and economic interests in the area; the political and economic relationship with several key countries in the region -- in the case of Israel this relationship has become a strategic entente with significant military implications.

These relationships now constitute one of the most important elements justifying the continuation of the U.S. military presence in the Mediterranean. It is in fact assumed that American aeronaval forces are needed as a sign of reassurance and eventual support considering the internal and external challenges to the friendly countries in the region.

On the other hand, the end of the cold war and the new climate in the relationship between Washington and Moscow, coupled with the retrenching of the Soviet Union and its apparent willingness to downgrade its military ties with its regional friends has diminished the perception of the U.S. presence as a necessary counterbalance to the Soviet presence.

Finally, there is another factor which should be considered: the increased importance of the Mediterranean as a waterway for oil transportation. Since the outbreak of the Iraq-Iran war, there has been an evident trend to re-direct the oil flow from the Gulf to the Mediterranean. The Saudi oil pipeline connecting the Saudi fields to the Red Sea port of Yanbu, the pipeline from the fields near Basra and Zubayr in southern Iraq to a terminal in Moajez north of Jidda, the

increase in the oil flow of the two pipelines connecting the Iraqi Kirkuk fields to the Turkish Mediterranean coast are all good cases in point (9). Today, more than 600 million tons of petroleum products, one third of world traffic, are carried annually through the Mediterranean (10).

It could be argued that this new element of strategic and economic transformation of the Mediterranean region should concern the European nations more than the United States. In fact, 40 per cent and 25 per cent of the previously cited oil flow is directed to the central European and Italian ports respectively (11). The Americans are also concerned about the maintenance of a secure oil flow, considering that 46 per cent of the oil used by the United States is delivered by sea (12). However, the Persian Gulf and the Arabic Sea are obviously of more concern than the Mediterranean. In this respect, a naval deployment in the Indian Ocean seems operationally more rational and useful than one in the Mediterranean. Therefore, the increase of oil transportation through the Mediterranean might not be included among the factors the U.S.DOD would consider pertinent in the overall evaluation of the issue of future American military presence in the Southern Region.

4. The post-CFE Framework

The post-CFE framework will be characterized by several elements:

(i) The U.S. and European defense spending is likely to continue its declining trend with larger cuts expected if the U.S.-Soviet relationship improves further, and if a new round of disarmament negotiations (including short-range nuclear weapons) immediately follows the signature and ratification of a CFE treaty.

(ii) The desire to reap real "peace dividends" and the requirement for a different allocation of limited defence resources, plus the further fading of the Soviet "threat" to Europe in the context of a totally new American-Soviet relationship, will probably push the U.S. Congress to ask for a larger reduction of the American troops in Europe than that presently tabled at the CFE negotiation in Vienna. The likely reluctance of the European countries to assume a larger share of NATO defense burden in the framework of the anticipated reshaping of the Alliance will tend to reinforce the predisposition of Congress.

(iii) Budget constraints and the presumable relative decline in ship acquisition, coupled with the basically unchanged U.S. worldwide commitments will force the Pentagon and the U.S. Navy to re-evaluate the requirements for fleet deployment.

It could be argued that the August 1990 Gulf crisis will force the American and European governments to reconsider in a different light the projected defense spending cuts. The result could be reductions of the defense budgets smaller than expected. It is very difficult, however, to predict the final outcome. Much will depend on the developments of the crisis and its ultimate solution.

In any case, one should consider that the poor economic situation in the United States and in many European countries will still be a predominant factor in shaping future defence budgets, even if there will eventually be a military solution of the crisis. Thus, the economic constraints will still play a significant role regardless of the new military requirements prompted by the events in the Gulf.

For this reason, it is assumed that European and American defence budgets will not be

increased, even though specific acquisition programs -- in particular in the naval and aerospace fields -- are likely to be revived or expedited by additional funds (13). Furthermore, in the context of this analysis, it is assumed that the decision to cut the number of the U.S. Navy's carrier battle groups will be maintained.

The 1990 Presidential Report, "National Security Strategy of the United States", states that a U.S. naval presence will be maintained in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean (14). Even though these areas are the only ones specifically mentioned in the report, it is logical to assume that the Pacific and the Atlantic will also remain areas of American naval deployments.

If the carrier battle groups are eventually reduced to 10-12, then the U.S. worldwide naval presence will have to be critically reviewed. A 14 deployable carrier battle group force is based on a requirement for a continuous peacetime presence in the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean and Western Pacific. According to Vice Adm. Richard M. Dunleavy, assistant chief of naval operations for air warfare, the U.S. Navy requires 7.6 carriers to meet its commitment in the Indian Ocean, 5 for the Mediterranean and 1.7 for the Western Pacific. This means a deployment of 1.5 carrier battle group in the Mediterranean, 1 in the Indian Ocean, and, including the Midway home port in Yokosuka, 1.2 in the Western Pacific (15). It has been argued that with 12 carriers it would not be possible to maintain the present deployment commitment. Rear Adm. Thomas P. Lynch, commander of the U.S. 12th Cruiser-Frigate Battle Group, has expressly warned that with only 12 deployable carriers "You cannot count on the U.S. Navy having a carrier 365 days of the year in the Mediterranean. We are going to get trimmed. We know that" (16). However, some lay naval experts argue that the present deployment pattern will not be sustainable if the carrier battle groups are reduced to 10. In any case, even in a 12-carrier force the Mediterranean deployment could be given a lower priority, especially if the Soviet Union unilaterally reduces its naval forces, continues to show a willingness to work with the United States towards resolving regional crises, and relinquishes its military ties with radical Middle East and Persian Gulf countries.

Both elements -- lower priority of the Mediterranean naval deployment and a very cooperative Soviet attitude and behaviour -- were most evident at the outbreak of the August 1990 Persian Gulf crisis precipitated by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Finally, the Mediterranean naval forces appear likely to be put first on the negotiating table should naval arms control negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union begin in the future.

On the other hand, there are other considerations, stemming from NATO and national requirements, which call for a continuous U.S. aeronaval presence in the Mediterranean.

There is the requirement to maintain the continuity of NATO in the Southern Region, where sea and air forces predominate.

The U.S. military presence is needed to help shape the transition from the traditional East-West framework to a different political and military posture.

There is the requirement for the U.S. Sixth Fleet's nuclear capability to sustain NATO deterrence and war prevention in the Southern Region.

Another element is the volatility of the Mediterranean area and the presence of important American political and economic interests which have to be protected.

A final element is the spreading of the Islamic fundamentalist movements and the possibility of the resurgence of openly anti-American international terrorism.

5. Extent and Significance of the Reduction of the U.S. Military Presence

According to Sen. Sam Nunn, the United States should plan on a residual force in Europe of 75,000 to 100,000 troops within five years and a reduction of American carrier battle groups to ten or twelve (17).

On 10 September, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker announced in Brussels that the 195,000 troops limit agreed upon with the Soviet Union in February was overtaken by events, and that proposals for personnel reductions were taken out of the CFE talks in Vienna. This suggests that the U.S. will no longer be restricted to the 30,000 man limit agreed upon as the U.S. forces deployment in Greece, Italy, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

A radical reduction of U.S. forces in Europe is nevertheless expected and will affect also the Southern Region. It is even possible that the limit of 30,000 men for Army and Air Force personnel could still be considered as a likely, although not binding, target. Part of the reduction will be Army units. The LANCE missile battalions are likely to be withdrawn considering that the program for the modernization of the LANCE has been terminated and no replacement is currently foreseen (18). Moreover, cuts could amount to 30 per cent of communication personnel in the Azores, Greece, Turkey and Spain (19).

The U.S. Air Force is also bound to be affected. The USAF personnel deployed in Italy, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom amounted to 38,627 airmen as of September 30, 1989 (20). Taking into consideration the importance of the nuclear and conventional role of the F-111 wings deployed in the UK, and the USAF plan to deploy in England by 1995, while withdrawing some F-111s, F-15E aircraft armed with nuclear Tactical Air-to-Surface Missiles (TASMs), it is logical to assume that the eventual reductions might be centered on NATO's Southern members.

The U.S. F-16 aircraft seem to be considered too precious an asset for the defense of the Southern Region, in particular in case of out-of-area crises, to be eliminated (21). The redeployment of the 72 F-16s of the USAF 401st Tactical Fighter Wing from Torrejon (Spain) to Crotona (Italy) is expected to survive the cuts in the U.S. defense budget, the doubts of several American Congressmen about its necessity, and the weak Italian domestic opposition.

Now, taking into consideration that USAF personnel in Greece will decrease with the announced shut down of U.S. facilities at Hellenikon Air Force Base (AFB) near Athens, it is possible that the reductions will eventually focus on the USAF presence in Turkey, where Erhaç AFB and Eskisehir Munitions Storage Site have already been selected for closure (22). However, focusing the reduction on Turkey would be a mistake, because it would deepen Ankara's feelings of emargination. These feelings, presently stemming from the European Community's refusal to accept Turkey's membership application -- while paying lip service to the importance of Turkey for European security -- and from the prospect of cuts in American aid programs, might be exacerbated by a large withdrawal of the American forces, with negative repercussions on Alliance cohesion.

It is hoped that Turkey's fundamental role in the course of the August 1990 Gulf crisis -- a clear indication of the paramount importance of integrating Turkey in all European structures - - will eventually change European attitudes and convince the United States of the importance of its military presence and economic role.

Outside the CFE framework, a very small reduction is expected to come from the U.S. Navy with the closing of bases and facilities in the Mediterranean area and perhaps also a decline of Sixth fleet strength. The trend toward the closure of bases (23) is bound to continue, in particular if the hosting countries insist, as they have in the past few years, on an increase in U.S. military and economic aid as a "price" for the use of their facilities by the U.S. forces.

The U.S. Navy, however, is very reluctant to adopt any unilateral reduction measures. The reduction of the Sixth Fleet's size and composition and any change in its deployment pattern is bound to be forced in the long run by shrinking defense budgets, curtailed naval acquisition programs and reduction of carrier battle groups force.

In any case, the deployment options for the U.S. Sixth Fleet are quite limited, in particular considering that, with only 12-10 carrier battle groups in the U.S. Navy, each option will have an impact on the naval deployments in other areas.

The first option could be the continuation of the present policy of two carrier battle groups allotted for the Sixth Fleet with the understanding that only one will be permanently deployed in the Mediterranean, while the second will join the fleet in the case of NATO or out-of-area crises. The Sixth Fleet was cut down to one carrier battle group in the early seventies to cope with the Persian Gulf contingency. The second became part of the American naval force deployed in the Indian Ocean. However, during the U.S.-Libya confrontation in 1986, and again in January 1987 (citing the two most recent examples), the Sixth Fleet was restored to its full strength.

The second option could be a permanent reduction of the Sixth Fleet to only one carrier battle group, with the understanding that there will be some periods in which none will be present in the Mediterranean. Concurrently, there will also be a reduction of the U.S. combatants -- a gap which will hopefully be filled by the European navies.

The third option could be the withdrawal of all the Sixth Fleet carrier battle groups -- reducing the Fleet to only some major and minor combatants -- with the understanding that at least one carrier could periodically return to the Mediterranean area for ad-hoc deployments (for instance to participate in major NATO exercises), or on a contingency basis to respond to out-of-area crises. At the same time, some of the facilities used by the American forces in the Mediterranean would be either closed or reduced to a skeleton manning, but with the capacity of reverting to fully active status in a short time and with minimal support.

The second option appears to be the best to fulfill NATO and national military missions and protect U.S. foreign policy and economic interests in the Southern Region.

Now, assuming that the third option would be instead the most likely to be gradually adopted in the first five years of the post CFE period, what would be its effects on NATO's military posture in the Southern Region? And how would the withdrawal of the Sixth Fleet be perceived by European and non-European countries?

6. The European Framework

It appears that the NATO posture will not be significantly affected, provided that the European countries with major interests in the Southern Region, i.e. France, Italy and Spain, will be able to maintain content and pace of their current modernization and acquisition programs, and willing to strengthen their air and naval cooperation. On the other hand, with the virtual disappearance of the traditional NATO threat, even a reduced NATO posture in the Mediterranean will be acceptable.

It can be argued that the fading of the Warsaw Pact threat and the prospect of an American disengagement from the Mediterranean, even though partial, will not necessarily also lead to a reduction of the European sea and forces.

On the contrary, the developments in the fields of ballistic missiles and the chemical weapons proliferation, coupled with the risk of a regional instability characterized by bilateral or multilateral crises and political or military confrontations might stimulate the Southern European

countries to fill the gap left by the departing American forces with a more organic and coordinated military posture and activities.

Reiterating a 1979 proposal (24), this paper advocates the creation -- in a medium term - of a European standing naval force (STANAVFORMED) different in concept and composition from the present NATO naval on-call force (NAVOCFORNED). It should include American, French, Greek, Italian, Spanish and Turkish units as well as some German, Dutch, and British units in rotation, to denote the interest of Central Europe nations in the stability and security of the Southern Region.

The creation of such a standing naval force, which could be put for a transitional period under the operational control of a reorganized NATO NAVSOUTH Command, would separate the Sixth Fleet's role, composition, size, and length of deployment in the Mediterranean from its NATO "framework". This would increase the U.S. flexibility in planning the Sixth Fleet's deployment options and stem the allied perception that the departure of the carrier battle groups will signal a diminished American defense commitment in case of an East-West crisis in the Southern Region. This, in turn, would permit the United States to measure the political weight of its naval presence more effectively in case of out-of-area crises.

Moreover, the STANAVFORMED would increase the responsibilities of Southern European countries for security and stability of the Mediterranean region, removing this problem from the context of a simple geostrategic rivalry between the two superpowers, and from the political and military framework of a "Pax Americana" in the region. By clarifying its political meaning, it could have positive repercussions on the Mediterranean countries in terms of a different perception of their own security problems, and perhaps greater openness to the North-South dialogue within the framework of a reconfirmed awareness that the Mediterranean is a region of preeminent European and Arab interests. Finally, it could lay the groundwork for a true European naval force representative of an economically and politically united Europe.

I am fully aware that this standing naval force would carry with it important implications, difficult political choices on the part of many European countries, and risks of wrong perceptions by the Third World Mediterranean countries. In fact, it would both assume and foreshadow changes in the American military presence in the Mediterranean, in U.S.-European relations, and in the NATO military structure in the Southern Region. It would also carry the risk that the Mediterranean countries would interpret the creation of the STANAVFORMED as a strengthening of the Western military apparatus, and as an essentially neo-colonialist decision unlikely to reduce tensions and encourage arms-control measures in the Mediterranean.

Perhaps, after the August 1990 Gulf crisis, even the medium term is not too early for such a development. Hopefully, also the process of European integration will soon force the European Community to address the problem of its Southern Region more seriously, both in political and in military terms.

At present, even an increased political cooperation and a more coordinated military posture among the European countries -- as that shown up to now in the Gulf crisis -- will not necessarily mean a willingness to act together in the event of all out-of-area crises. It will mean, however, that Southern European naval and air forces, fully trained to operate in a multinational environment, could be made available if and when needed. And it will mean that European political decisions on future integrated military actions would be easier to make.

The August 1990 Gulf crisis is a good example of the inability of the European countries to respond rapidly and in a coordinated way to the Iraqi challenge in its initial stage and, at the same time, their capability of reacting more organically in later stages. It also demonstrated the possibility of coordinating military aspects of the naval embargo through the structures of the

WEU.

In this respect, the increase in bilateral and multilateral aero-naval exercises, and the current French, Italian and Spanish air and naval modernization programs are of paramount importance.

These programs can be summarized as follows:

(i) France (25): The French Navy will be reduced to 112 combat and auxiliary ships in 1991 (175 in 1979 and 125 in 1987). In the 1989 budget, the funds allocated for the submarine nuclear force showed an increase of 16.4 per cent. Long term programs are listed below:

- The completion in 1993 of the refit and conversion program to the M-4 SLBM of the "LE REDOUTABLE" class submarines.

- The construction of the new "LE TRIOMPHANT" class submarines, armed with the M-45 SLBMs (a more sophisticated version of the M-4) and in the year 2000 with the M-5. The first is expected to be operational in 1994.

- The entry into service in 1998 of the nuclear powered aircraft carrier "CHARLES DE GAULLE".

- The completion of the program of the eight "RUBIS" class attack submarines. The fifth, the "AMETHYSTE", to be operational in 1991, and the subsequent boats will be significantly modernized, in order to be capable of performing both hunter-killer and anti-ship missions. In a second phase, the first four boats of the class will be also modernized.

- The construction of six "surveillance frigates" of the "FLOREAL" class two of which will be delivered each year from 1991 to 1994. Their task will be to operate in low threat areas for EEZ control missions, protection of fishing zones and rights, etc.

- The construction of six 3200 ton "light frigates" capable of operating for the protection of shipping in high threat areas for long periods of time. The first frigate, "LA FAYETTE", will be operation in 1994. The program is expected to be completed by the year 2000.

- The construction of three specialized, oceanic mine hunters (BAMO or Batiment AntiMines Oceanique).

- The continuation of the program for the replacement of the old ATLANTIC ASW aircraft with the more capable ATLANTIC 2 (ATL-2). The first aircraft have already been delivered. The entire line of 42 ATL-2 will be operational in the year 2000.

- The continuation of the multinational program for the production of the NH-90 naval helicopter. The first will be delivered to the French Navy around the end of the decade.

(ii) Italy (26): The Italian Navy's 1989 budget amounted to 3196 billion Lira, but only 47 per cent of this figure was allocated for procurement and modernization. The Italian Navy long term programs are as follows:

- The construction of two 4,000 ton "ANIMOSO" class destroyers to be delivered in 1991 and 1992 respectively.

- The completion of the program of the "SAURO" class submarines (eight boats).

- The completion of the program for the second lot of four "MINERVA" class corvettes. The boats will be delivered by 1991, joining the four already in service.

- The construction of the last six "LERICI" class mine hunters, to be delivered in the 1992-93.

- The mid-life modernization of the two "AUDACE" class destroyers. One was completed in 1988; modernization of the second has already been initiated.

- The procurement of 16-18 STOVL (Short Take-Off and Vertical Landing) aircraft for the "GARIBALDI" aircraft carrier (either the SEA HARRIER FRS 2 or the HARRIER 2 PLUS), to be completed by 1995.

- The production of the EH-101 helicopters, a British-Italian joint project, and of the NH-90 helicopters as a replacement of the SH-3D and AB-212 respectively.

(iii) Spain (27): In accordance with the "Plan de Alta Mar", which outlines the building program for the next fifteen years, the modernization of the Spanish Navy will be as follows:

- By 2002 the line of frigate class units will be composed of 15 ships: five upgraded "BALEARES" class (the modernization program to be finished in 1991); six "SANTA MARIA" class; four F-100 class, intended primarily as an ASW ship optimised for Mediterranean operations. Beyond 2002 an advanced frigate, the F-110, is expected to be procured.

- The complete renewal of the mine warfare units through the procurement of eight minehunters between 1993 and 1998 and eight minesweepers.

- The acquisition of a modern LPD amphibious warfare ship and of two fleet replenishment vessels (one currently under construction, the second to entry into service in 1993).

- The submarine fleet will be upgraded with the replacement of the four "DAPHNE" and the refit of the four "AGOSTA" boats.

- The replacement and procurement of various naval aviation components for the "PRINCIPE DE ASTURIAS" aircraft carrier commissioned in 1988.

When added to the operational forces, these new units will significantly contribute to the strengthening of the aeronaval capability of the Southern European countries. The result will be a military capability which the littoral countries would not be able to dismiss in assessing the balance of power in the Mediterranean region, and which the Southern Europeans could put to bear in any future North-South crisis situation. The prospect of delays and cancellations because of declining trends in the defense budgets of all three countries cannot be ignored. However, the confirmation of the importance of the naval forces in out-of-area crises -- as in the case of the imposition of a naval embargo against Iraq in August 1990 -- might shield the programs against drastic changes.

Finally, it can be argued that the impact of option three on U.S. Third World friends in the Mediterranean region would be also minimal, provided that American political commitments will remain strong and credible, that periodical fleet deployments will be staged, and that military support will be made available as necessary.

7. Conclusions

The U.S. military presence in NATO's Southern Region could be reduced below the levels established in the CFE negotiations. Changes in U.S. sea and air presence in the region are also to be expected, in particular when the U.S. carrier battle groups are reduced to 12 (or below this level) and if the Soviet Union decides on unilateral withdrawal of part or all of its naval forces from the Mediterranean.

Considering the changes in Eastern Europe and the substantial disintegration of the Warsaw Pact as a military alliance, these reductions will not basically affect the overall East-West balance of power in the Southern Region.

There is a possibility of an increase in intra-regional micro-conflicts in Eastern Europe, mainly due to the resurgence of old territorial claims tied to ethnic issues. The level of U.S. military presence in the region, however, will have no influence on the evolution and outcome of these issues.

The number of U.S. Army and Air Force personnel remaining in the Southern Region result from how the United States deals with the overall force cuts in Europe. In this context, the

maintainance of a degree of flexibility and balance in the number of U.S. Air Force squadrons deployed in UK, Greece, Italy and Turkey is of paramount importance. The military as well as the political requirements must be taken into consideration. The impact of the post-CFE situation on the size and deployment patterns of the U.S. Sixth Fleet will be determined by the number of American carrier battle groups remaining after the final reductions, and by the new DOD prioritization of deployment requirements.

The following considerations call for a continuation of the American military presence: the important U.S. political and economic interests in the Southern Region; the significance of the U.S. naval presence for the continuation of NATO deterrence and war prevention; the Soviet geostrategic advantage of rapid naval forces redeployment from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean; the need to shape together, the United States and its European allies, a new security framework also in the Southern Region; and the endemic instability of many crisis-prone areas within the region itself.

The best solution, in light of the anticipated cuts in the number of deployable carriers, appears to be that of maintaining a carrier battle group in the Sixth Fleet on a semi-permanent deployment basis. This means that there could be periods in which no carriers will be present in the Mediterranean. Concurrently, bases and facilities used by the American forces would be reduced to those which are essential to operations. Obviously, the August 1990 Gulf crisis will significantly affect the U.S. DOD perceptions and requirements in terms of necessary level of air and naval forces, areas and patterns of deployment, and availability of facilities and logistic support. Irrespective of the outcome of the Gulf crisis, the Arabic Sea and the Indian Ocean will remain areas of deployment of preminent interest, certainly more than the Mediterranean, in which the European navies are expected to play a more significant role.

The Southern European countries will not necessarily perceive a reduction of the U.S. forces as a sign of a decreased American interest in and commitment to the security of Europe. The European political and military perceptions are also bound to be affected by the Gulf crisis, which has dramatically posed the problem of how to confront and manage out-of-area contingencies directly affecting on important Europe's interests. The post-crisis situation could be one of greater European commitment and effort for the creation of political structures and military forces capable of dealing more rapidly and efficiently with such events.

A decline of European defense budgets is very probable and this will certainly affect the size and the pace of acquisition, with the probability of delaying or curtailing the modernization programs. However, it is possible that the air and naval forces will be less affected. In fact, the evolution of the military situation in the countries of North Africa, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf is expected to act as a deterrent against too deep cuts. This appears even more likely since the precipitation of the August 1990 Gulf crisis, even though each European country will have to consider its own economic situation prior to even thinking about a reversal of the current declining trend of its defense budgets.

It is unlikely that the eventual reshaping of the Atlantic Alliance will include the European willingness to transform NATO into the organization responsible for dealing with out-of-area challenges. Even though the European coordination is expected to increase in the future, it is probable that the European response to extra-NATO crises will still be based on a strict national appreciation of the interests involved and on a case-by-case approach. In fact, the European response during the initial phase of the August 1990 Gulf crisis has basically followed this rule, even though widespread consultations, leading to coordinated policies and initiatives, went on within the EC, NATO and WEU, while the operations of the different European naval forces were coordinated at the WEU level. It is hoped that after the crisis the major Southern

European countries will be willing to increase their military cooperation. This, in turn, will facilitate joint out-of-area operations if and when the appropriate political decision is taken.

The Third World littoral countries tied to the United States by firm political, military and economic links will not consider the reduction of the U.S. military presence in the Mediterranean as a sign of declining American commitment and support, provided that the continuing interest in the stability of the region is forcefully and clearly stated and that the United States demonstrates its capability and willingness to deploy its aeronaval forces in the region periodically and when needed. In this respect the American reaction to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait is a very good example of firm political commitment and swift military moves.

September 1990

Notes

1. In the sense used by Edward N. Luttwak in his "Sea Power in the Mediterranean: Political Utility and Military Constraints", *The Washington Papers*, 61, Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, 1979.

2. In this paper I used the term "out-of-area crises" to indicate crises taking place in regions, areas or zones which are outside the NATO's area of responsibility as defined in the North Atlantic Treaty.

3. By William Webster, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and Army Lt. Gen. Harry Soyster, Director of Defense Intelligence Agency, in Senate Armed Services Committee hearings, *Aviation Week and Space Technology (AWST)*, 29 January 1990, pp. 27-28. On the CIA assessment see also Patrick E. Tyler, "CIA views Soviet threat as slim", *International Herald Tribune (IHT)*, 2 March 1990, p. 1 and Patrick E. Tyler, "CIA riles Cheney on arms budget", *IHT*, 7 March 1990, p. 3. By Sen. Sam Nunn, chairmain of the Senate Armed Service Committee, in floor speeches in the U.S. Senate, *AWST*, 16 April 1990, p. 7. Even Richard N. Perle, the conservative, former assistant secretary of Defense, told the Senate Armed Services Commettee that the canonical threat against which a defensive NATO has long being poised is no longer credible, and that political changes in Eastern Europe have eliminated any possibility of a Soviet attack against Western Europe. See R. Jeffrey Smith, "A shift by Perle on arms", *IHT*, 26 January 1990, p. 6.

4. On the curtailment of Soviet naval deployments outside of their home waters, see the declarations of Adm. Carlisle A.H. Trost, U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, *IHT*, 7 March 1990, p. 3.

5. In the Soviet Navy, an Escadra or Eskadra is one level below a fleet in rank.

6. First deck landing trials on the Soviet "Tbilisi" class carrier were carried out by a Sukhoi Su-27 FLANKER fighter aircraft in late 1989. *International Defense Review (IDR)*, 1, 1990, pp. 19-20.

7. Simon Elliott, "Syrian base boosts Soviet power", *Jane's Defence Weekly (JDW)*, 29 July 1989, p. 154.

8. The June 1990 municipal elections in Algeria with the stunning victory of the Islamic Salvation Front are a good case in point.

9. *IHT*, 25 September 1989, p. 5.

10. Conference by Adm. Sergio Majoli, Chief of Staff Italian Navy, to the *Centro Alti Studi Difesa (Center of High Defence Studies)*, Rome, 15 June 1989, p. 8.

11. *Ibidem*.

12. *USIS, Daily Wireless File*, 13 April 1990,

p. 7.

13. After the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, a Senate amendment to 1991 defense bill ordering the Pentagon to mothball one battleship was defeated, Newsweek, 10 September 1990, p. 23.

14. National Security Strategy of the United States, The White House, March 1990, p. 13.

15. John d. Morrocco, "Reducing Carrier Force Raises Strategic Questions", AWST, 7 May 1990, p. 22.

16. JDW, 26 May 1990, p. 993.

17. AWST, 23 April 1990, p. 17.

18. Robert Mauthner, Peter Riddell and Philip Stephens, "NATO Agrees Heavy Nuclear Cuts", Financial Times, 4 May 1990, p. 1.

19. AWST, 11 June 1990, p. 15.

20. As of September 30, 1990, the breakdown was as follows: Italy, 5652; Spain, 4836; Turkey, 3572; U.K., 24567. Air Force Magazine (AFM), May 1990, p. 39.

21. U.S. Secretary of Defense, Richard Cheney, has declared that the F-16 aircraft in Crotona are "essential" for the defense of NATO's Southern Region. La Repubblica, 10 June 1989, p. 14. And SACEUR (Supreme Allied Commander Europe), Gen. John Galvin, declared in a letter to Congressional leaders : "If I had only two U.S. Air Force wings remaining in Europe, I would place one of them at Crotona". JDW, 11 August 1990, p. 185.

22. The Arms Control Reporter, (c) idds 3-9, 240.B-5.23.

23. In January 1990, the United States decided to close two of its four military bases in Greece (Hellenikon air base, adjacent to Athens International airport and the U.S. Navy communications station at Nea Makri, southeast of the capital), two facilities in Turkey (Erhac air base and Eskisehir munitions storage site) and Comiso air base, former site of deployment of American cruise missiles in Italy. The bases are supposed to be de-activated in the 1991-1994 period. IHT, 30 January 1990, p. 1 and p. 8.

24. Maurizio Cremasco, "NATO's Southern Flank. Problems and Perspectives", Paper presented at a IAI-IISS joint conference, Castelgandolfo, 18-20 April 1979.

25. Défense Nationale, January-December 1989 and January-July 1990.

26. Rivista Marittima, January-December 1989 and January-July 1990.

27. Alfredo Florensa, "Una Flota Para el Año 2000", Revista Española de Defensa, March 1990, pp. 18-23. Joris Janssen Lok, "Spain's Aim for Greater Naval Role", JDW, 20 May 1989,

pp. 931-933. Rene' Luria and Xoan I. Taibo, "The Spanish Armed Forces Face the Future", IDR, 4/1989, pp. 433-438. According to Adm. Fernando Nardiz Vial, Chief of Staff of the Spanish Navy, the Navy has long term plans to form a second battle group that would enable it to act simultaneously in various theaters of operations, and to count on at least one of the two groups at any time. Budgetary considerations are the only constraint. See Fermín Gallego Serra, "The Spanish Navy in the 21st Century", IDR, 1/1990, pp. 85-86.

Appendix A

Soviet Naval Presence in the Mediterranean 1957-1989

Year	Annual Ship Days	Average Daily Strength
1957	600	1
1958	1,000	3
1959	4,100	11
1960	5,600	15
1961	2,300	6
1962	800	2
1963	600	1
1964	1,800	5
1965	3,700	10
1966	5,400	15
1967	8,800	24
1968	11,700	32
1969	15,400	42
1970	17,400	48
1971	18,700	51
1972	17,700	48
1973	20,600	56
1974	20,200	55
1975	20,000	55
1976	18,600	51
1977	16,300	45
1978	16,600	45
1979	16,600	45
1980	16,600	45
1981	16,700	46
1982	16,100	44
1983	17,500	48
1984	14,600	40
1985	16,400	45
1986	16,400	45
1987	14,235	39
1988	13,140	36
1989	13,500	37

Sources: For the period 1957-1986, see Gordon McCormick, "Soviet Strategic Aims and Capabilities in the Mediterranean: Part II", in "Prospect for the Security in the Mediterranean", Adelphi Papers, n. 229, IISS, London, Spring 1988, p. 36. For the period 1986-1989, this author's data.

Appendix B

The Proliferation of Ballistic Missiles

An outline of the current research, development and production of surface-to-surface missiles in the regions geostrategically linked with the European Southern region is presented below.

- Saudi Arabia has deployed the Chinese CSS-2 missiles.

- Iraq has upgraded its SCUD-B missiles in a two-phase program between 1987-1988. The first modernized SCUDs (named al-Hussain) were upgraded to a range of 600-650 km and fired against Teheran. The Iraqis claim that the second upgraded version of the SCUDs (named al-Abbas) has a range of about 900 km. These missiles also were reportedly used against the Iranian cities. Finally, on December 1989, Iraq launched a three-stage, 48 ton rocket named Tammuz I, reportedly capable of carrying satellites into space, and there are reports that another missile (called al Abid with a range of 2000 km.) is being developed.

- Egypt has produced and deployed, presumably with Iraqi and possibly North Korean help, the 90 km range SAKR-80 missile, a derivative of the Soviet FROG missile. Moreover, Argentina has, at least in the past, reportedly helped Egypt on the R&D of the VECTOR missile, a derivative of the CONDOR missile family. Iraq has also worked with Egypt on the development of the same CONDOR-VECTOR-BADR-2000 missile with a claimed capability of accurate delivery to 400 km and maximum range of 1200 km. However, the CONDOR project has been reportedly abandoned.

- Iran has developed and deployed, reportedly with Chinese and North Korean support, the OGHAB and IRAN-130 missiles with a range of about 45 and 130 km respectively.

- Israel has deployed the JERICHO 1 missile and continued the tests of the JERICHO 2 up to a range of 800-850 km. On September 1988, Israel launched, using the SHAVIT rocket, the OFFEK-1 satellite with a 75 kg test payload. It has been suggested that the SHAVIT might provide the basis for the development of the JERICHO 3 ballistic missile, potentially capable of intercontinental ranges. There are conflicting analyses on the long range missile test reported by the Soviet news agency TASS being conducted in the Mediterranean in September 1989. The test has been interpreted to be either the launch of the JERICHO 2B version capable of a maximum range of 1300-1500 km, or the failure of the second stage of an SHAVIT-OFFEQ-2 launch vehicle. More recently, on 3 March 1990, Israel launched the OFFEQ-2 spacecraft (160 kg.) using as a booster a modified version of the JERICHO missile.

Furthermore, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria and South Yemen possess the Soviet SCUD-B missiles, while Lybia, Syria, North Yemen and South Yemen possess also the more accurate Soviet SS-21 missiles.

Sources: ACDA, World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1988, Washington, June 1989, p. 17-20. James Bruce, "The Middle East Missile Race", Jane's Defence Weekly (JDW), 1 April 1989, p. 553. Barbara Starr, "Controlling the Spread of Ballistic Missiles", JDW, 22 April 1989, p. 696. Aviation Week and Space Technology (AWST), 26 September 1988, p. 21 and 3 July 1989, p. 31. See also "The Military Balance 1989-1990", IISS, London, 1988, p. 93 and JDW, 23 September 1989, p. 549.