

THE MEDITERRANEAN IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

Por CIRO ELLIOT ZOPPO *

I. A U. S. MEDITERRANEAN POLICY?

The 1980's have hardly begun, but it is already clear that the political, military and economic complexion of East-West politics will be increasingly dynamic *. Structural changes have been taking place in areas that affect the complex relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States and their allies, and between the superpowers and Third World countries. These changes, which raise important questions about international political stability, and international security, involve political and military relations between major industrial countries—the United States, European countries, and Japan—and resource-rich developing countries; Arab, oil-producing states in particular. To this political and economic dynamism must be added the impact evolving military technologies (nuclear and conventional) will have on conflict resolution.

The Mediterranean, because of its geography, is the political, military, and economic junction of Europe, Asia Minor and Africa. Its eastern and southern shores have been a testing ground for the political ideologies, the economic systems, and the weapons of the Soviet Union and the United States. Except for Berlin in Central Europe and Cuba in the Caribbean, it is the only region in which actual or threat-

* The insights that inform this analysis of U. S. policies toward the Mediterranean derive from periodic interviews, starting with 1975, with selected American officials, dealing with Mediterranean affairs, in the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the National Security Council, and at U. S. embassies in key Mediterranean countries. Obviously, these officials are not responsible for, and may not agree with, my interpretation of U. S. policy.

ened local conflicts have risked escalation to nuclear war¹. Consequently, the geopolitics of the Mediterranean region critically intersect the conflictual factors of East-West political and military relations and North-South economic and political relations. The 1980's will tend to add conflictual economics to the former, and conflictual military relations to the latter.

The United States plays the cardinal role for Western security in the Mediterranean. It is the only country that can bring to bear sufficient countervailing military power to balance the projection of Soviet military power into the region. And until now has been the Western nation most capable of discharging the role of conflict manager. Moreover, it is the only Western country that, for the foreseeable future, has the political capacity—through its network of bilateral relations, within and outside NATO, with Mediterranean countries—to bring coherence to the defense of the area. No European power, including France, can substitute for the United States in creating the required political cohesion among the European nations of the Mediterranean. And in the Mediterranean especially, no multilateral viable diplomatic and military mechanisms are politically promising.

The American military presence in the Mediterranean and American diplomatic interest in the Mediterranean region coincided with the transformation of the United States into a global military power with a permanent internationalist foreign policy. Before the Second World War, the United States had intruded directly into Mediterranean affairs only twice. Militarily, when U. S. Marines punished the Algerian corsairs, in the 18th century because they were interfering with international maritime commerce. Free trade was the keystone of the fledgling American Republic's foreign policy. Diplomatically, with the proclamation of President Wilson's «Fourteen Points», in connection with the demise of the Ottoman Empire, at the end of the First World War.

Thus it may be argued that the first act of U. S. policy that could be qualified as Mediterranean, was the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine in 1947². The Truman Doctrine anticipated the Marshall Plan

¹ A recent exploration of the relationship between Soviet and American superpowers and Mediterranean politics, is: CHARLES ZORGBIBE: *La Méditerranée sans les Grands?*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1980.

² The Truman Doctrine was promulgated on March 12, 1947 as a «defense of freedom throughout the world». A systematic recent discussion is in: KENNETH THOMPSON: «The Ethics of Major American Foreign Policies», *British Journal of International Studies*, vol. VI, no. 2, July 1980.

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and NATO by being the harbinger U. S. concern about the actual and potential political and military threats the Soviet Union was seen to pose for Western Europe and the Mediterranean, in the minds of American policymakers.

The U. S. economic and military aid to Greece, torn by civil war, and to Turkey, under Soviet pressure at the Dardanelles and at Turkey's eastern frontiers, became the first concrete acts that launched the U. S. bipartisan policy of containment. This diplomatic and military containment of the Soviet Union remains the keystone of the national policy of the United States.

The Truman Doctrine's political and military rationales and its bilateral diplomatic approach—issuing in separate security treaties with Greece and Turkey—also defined the future orientation of U. S. relations with the countries of the Mediterranean. During the following decade the United States negotiated additional bilateral agreements (all involving some form of economic and military aid), all serving some security purposes, with Italy, Spain, Libya and Morocco.

With Italy, the U. S. signed agreements to berth the U. S. Sixth Fleet. With Libya an agreement to develop and use the Wheelus airfield complex was signed. With Morocco, agreement regarding surveillance and related operations were concluded. With Spain, the United States negotiated a treaty which allowed the development and the American use of naval and air facilities. Except for the agreements with Libya and Morocco, these agreements, although renegotiated several times, and modified, remain in force.

If defined from the perspective of the various U. S. Administrations since Truman, and presented to the U. S. Congress, the specific objectives of U. S. policies toward the Mediterranean remain essentially those the United States set forth when it first entered Mediterranean politics in the immediate postwar period:

— To maintain a balance of power with the Soviet Union—the most visible expression of this policy has been the U. S. Sixth Fleet and the network of U. S. bases in Mediterranean countries.

— To help defend Greece, Turkey, Italy, and Spain against direct and indirect military and political pressures by the Soviet Union. What is meant is not only, or necessarily, the threat of the armed invasion of the national territories of these Mediterranean countries, but also Soviet incentives to utilize the threat of military power to achieve political purposes inimical to their independence.

— To keep the Soviet Union and Soviet influence out of the Middle East and North Africa.

— To guarantee the survival of Israel, and after the expulsion of the Soviets from Egypt, also the independence of Egypt.

— To help assure the flow of vital oil to Western Europe.

— To promote regional stability, not only in the Mediterranean but also in adjoining regions.

— Finally, and as important, to maintain the political cohesion of the Atlantic Alliance and support democracy.

Qualifications on this last goal have been allowed when security considerations prevailed, or temporarily tolerated for the same reason.

Do these goals define an independent U. S. Mediterranean policy? How central are they in American foreign policy? The answers, as subsequent analysis will attempt to prove, are: No, to the first question; and, contingently, to the second. No because U. S. Mediterranean policy can be understood almost exclusively in terms of the Soviet-American rivalry and the East-West conflict. Contingently, because the importance of the Mediterranean in U. S. foreign policy is directly correlated with the threats that emanate from crises and conflicts in the Mediterranean and adjoining regions to the South to European and U. S. security.

To the United States, a global power, the Mediterranean necessarily appears less centrally located in foreign policy concerns than it is, understandably, to the Mediterranean countries, or to Continental Europe and Britain. From the outset, in the wake of World War II, U. S. involvement in Mediterranean affairs has been defined by the conflictual relationship with the Soviet Union. Consequently, the Mediterranean is for the United States one of several important regions that becomes crucial primarily in connection with NATO's Southern Flank and the East-West military and political balance in Europe—the fulcrum of deterrence and detente. The Mediterranean is focal in connection with regional conflicts which have the potential for escalating to a U. S.-Soviet strategic confrontation or war—such as the Arab-Israeli conflict; or as a staging area to the Persian Gulf and the oil-producing Arab East. This approach does not denigrate the significance of the Mediterranean for American policymakers, but underscores that the United States cannot set aside the global outlook of a superpower in its diplomatic relations with countries whose shores are washed by the Mediterranean Sea.

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II. CONFLICTS IN EAST-WEST PERSPECTIVES: HISTORIC FOCUS OF U. S. MEDITERRANEAN POLICY

The American political leadership has consistently defined U. S. national interests in the Mediterranean primarily within a military security framework while the constraints on American diplomacy have been essentially political. These constraints, often deriving from the internal politics of Mediterranean countries, were generated by conflicts among Mediterranean countries themselves. In Washington's view, they created, actually or potentially, opportunities for Soviet diplomacy to expand the political influence and the military presence of the Soviet Union into the Mediterranean and adjacent areas. There is little question that although the United States generally supported the decolonization of the area (the actions of the United States in the 1956 Suez War are its most notable expression), it has been the *status quo* power in the region in regard to Soviet expansionist tendencies.

The successful efforts of the United States to bring Italy (and Portugal), later Greece and Turkey into NATO, and Spain—politically unacceptable to America's European allies—into a mutual security treaty did not stabilize East-West relations in the Mediterranean, as in Europe precisely because of the impact of decolonization on the relations between its northern European shores and its southern Arab ones.

With the birth of Israel which converged with this decolonization, the conflict between Arabs and Jews provided the Soviet Union with unprecedented opportunities to exploit historical change to its advantage in the Mediterranean region. The 1955 Soviet arms deal with Nasser's Egypt was its first concrete example. These openings were facilitated by the USSR's Marxist-Leninist ideology which rationalized Russia's national interests while facilitating political communication with nation-building elites in the new states of the Arab world. The leaders of these, when in search of a revolutionary ideology to add their newly found national identity, perceived in the Soviet Union a convenient counter to their former colonial rulers—and to the United States, once American commitments to Israel emasculated the credibility of U.S. sympathies for Arab nationalism³.

³ See for example: WALTER LAQUEUR: *The Struggle for the Middle East*, Routledge and Kegan, London 1969.

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To the residual conflicts between Europeans and Arabs on the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean and the Arab-Israeli conflict—which prevented the establishment of a clear demarcation between East and West political and military interests—were added the internal political instabilities in the European countries of the Mediterranean and Turkey (Turkey being itself more a former colonial power than a Third World nation), particularly marked after the mid-1960's. Radical shifts in internal politics, and regime changes sometimes accompanied by violence, have taken place in Italy, Greece, Turkey, and Spain (Portugal if it is included in Mediterranean politics), and earlier in France with the change from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic.

The universalist cast of the Truman Doctrine, and its clear preference for economic reform, in a capitalist mold and political gradualism, as opposed to revolutionary change, fitted well within the *status quo* nature of the U. S. containment doctrine but threatened the flexibility required by U. S. diplomacy in the light of the U. S. security requirements, and of destabilizing regional conflicts in the Mediterranean, principally the Arab-Israeli wars and the Greek-Turkish conflicts in regard to Cyprus. U. S. policies toward the Mediterranean have been stretched by the tensions between the requirements of security against a potential Soviet threat and of fostering democratic regimes rather than anti-Communist ones. To these tensions were added those flowing from the changes from Cold War to Detente and to the current transitional period.

American diplomacy has pursued two roles vis-à-vis the Mediterranean in an effort to surmount difficulties: as the strategic guarantor of security for the Mediterranean against Soviet military and political threats; and as crisis manager and mediator in regional conflicts that could escalate into East-West conflict or severely undermine the political cohesion of the Atlantic Alliance. The U. S. has discharged these roles through and essentially bilateral diplomacy with Mediterranean countries even when they have been NATO allies. Bilateral relations have included economic and political exchanges as well, but for the United States they have been anchored by considerations of East-West security and politics.

The centrality in U. S. Mediterranean policies of the rivalry with the Soviet Union and U. S. focus on the political uses of military force, inevitably cast the United States as the ultimate guarantor of security for the Mediterranean countries of Europe, members of the Atlantic

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Alliance, and for Spain as well. The U. S. guarantee to Spain has been somewhat less explicit because Spain has not been a member of NATO. But for all that, the longstanding defense relationship with Spain binds the security of the Spanish metropole against Soviet attacks to the American guarantee⁴. Disputed territories of West European nations in Africa have never benefited from a U. S. security guarantee, as Britain, France and Portugal have discovered.

Relations with Israel are a unique case in U. S. foreign policy and require particular explanation. Except that although Israel has not had a formally explicit U. S. security guarantee against a Soviet attack, a guarantee may be presumed⁵, and would probably be forthcoming (perhaps in the form now extended to Spain) should facilities be made available to the United States on Israeli territory.

By means of a bilateral approach emphasizing defense against threats from the East, the United States has given political security priority in the American approach to the Mediterranean. This explains both the U. S. willingness to engage in the crisis management of conflicts between countries allied with the U. S. and the U. S. tolerance of regime changes within them, provided their commitment to the Atlantic Alliance and/or to security agreements with the United States remained. Continued Western orientation has been the touchstone of these relationships.

In the absence of East-West military conflict, how has the U. S. security guarantee been expressed? Since the 1950's, the most tangible expression of this U. S. security guarantee for the allies of the United States in the Mediterranean has been the deployment of the Sixth Fleet. This permanent military presence in the waters of the Mediterranean, has, nevertheless, served multiple purposes in U. S. policies toward the Mediterranean. The Sixth Fleet has played the dual role of support to the NATO fronts of the Alliance's southern flank, and that of a U. S. task force for non-NATO, Mideastern and North African contingencies. The most recent example being the encounter between Libyan and U. S. jet fighters over the disputed waters of the Gulf of Sirke.

As a political symbol of U. S. commitment, the Sixth's purpose has

⁴ A unique and illuminating discussion of U. S. bilateral relations with Spain, involving U. S. congressmen, diplomats, and experts based on a U. S. congressional conference is in SAMUEL CHAVKIN et al., eds., *Spain: Implications for United States Foreign Policy*, Greylock Publishers, Stamford, Conn., 1978.

⁵ In the American-Israeli Memorandum of Agreement of March 1979, quoted in: SHAI FELDMAN: "Super-Power Security Guarantees in the 1980's", *Third-World Conflict and International Security*, Part II, IISS, London, 1981.

been constant⁶. The utility of the Sixth in terms of its military functions has, however, gradually changed because of evolving technology. From a primarily strategic and nuclear force for NATO purposes, it has become a primarily conventional carrier task force most useful in local crisis management, or regional conflicts in the Mediterranean.

The distinction between U. S. military operations connected with NATO and U. S. operations in the Mediterranean region outside the NATO framework has had critical political significance. It is exemplified by the different factors operating in the U. S. Sixth Fleet's NATO contingencies⁷, which clarify what has become a crucial contrast in the political outlook of the United States and for its European allies regarding the definition of NATO's political and military roles. More recent crises in the Persian Gulf have compounded disagreement already existing because of differing policies toward the Arab-Israeli conflicts.

Of the several reasons why the distinction between NATO and non-NATO contingencies is compelling some are military and operational, others political and symbolic. On the military side, a non-NATO contingency does not necessarily involve direct engagements with Soviet naval and air forces. It could involve combat with forces from riparian Mediterranean states in the south, not in formal alliance with the Soviet Union. This does not mean that the Mediterranean deployment of Soviet forces and their potential for attack can be neglected in U. S. battle calculations, even in these cases. It suggests, however, that such potential U. S.-S. U. engagements would likely put the contingencies in the context of potential strategic confrontation; sooner or later involving NATO.

The distinction has additional consequences for the analysis and assessment of Sixth Fleet military capability to accomplish salient military missions—like defending itself against enemy attack and, relatedly, for the control of air space, and target coverage. The Arab East and Israel, the Maghreb, and Yugoslavia, are, in political terms, the plausible areas for non-NATO contingencies. A Yugoslav contingency is, however, hardly remote from NATO defensive concerns. The political constraints that NATO allies might place on the operations of the U. S. Sixth Fleet are mitigated, in the case of such contingencies, by the inhibitions placed on Soviet behavior by the risks of escalation

⁶ J. C. WYLLIE: *The Sixth Fleet and American Diplomacy*, Praeger, New York, 1969.

⁷ For a detailed discussion of the military aspects of the U. S. military presence in the Mediterranean, in the context of possible local crises see: JESSE W. LEWIS, JR.: *The Strategic Balance in the Mediterranean*, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D. C., 1976.

to NATO-Warsaw Pact conflict and to strategic or nuclear U. S.-U. S. S. R. confrontation.

If the escalatory threshold between NATO-Warsaw Pact conventional conflict and nuclear conflict is crossed, the political constraints placed by NATO allies on Sixth Fleet operations would be presumably set aside. Although the disaffection between Greece and Turkey in the Alliance might possibly create a possibility in the Eastern Mediterranean, it is difficult to envision a full-fledged U. S.-Soviet naval conflict in the Mediterranean that would not eventually involve other members of NATO; at minimum by U. S. use of facilities on their soil. The initial *casus belli* might be lost in the heat of the conflict. Sixth Fleet engagement with Soviet naval and air forces would lead consequently to the risk of involving other U. S. NATO forces in the Mediterranean, and elsewhere in the Alliance, directly relevant to the fate of the Sixth Fleet. U. S., and possibly allied, land-based air forces would come into play. This might, by itself, radically alter the military options and the potential outcomes for the U. S. Sixth Fleet and the Soviet Eskadra⁸. For example, interception and interdiction capabilities would tend to work in favor of the Sixth; perhaps even in the Aegean where it is most vulnerable to Soviet air power. The involvement of U.S., and allied, land-based air forces would concomitantly also affect the Soviet submarine threat and American A. S. W. (anti-submarine warfare) capabilities in the Mediterranean.

On the political side—even if this aspect is defined narrowly in direct relationship with military missions—a further distinction is illuminating, for it shapes importantly the character of the military missions. That distinction concerns contingencies within and between states in the Mediterranean region. Examples can be drawn from the Arab-Israeli conflict. If the Egyptian-Israeli agreements endure, the major threat to Israeli security is, *grosso modo*, removed. It is much less likely that the U. S. Sixth Fleet might be called upon to shore up the defense of Israel in an *in extremis* situation arising out of a military conflict between Israel and its other Arab neighbors. On the other hand, a situation resembling the 1970 internal conflict between Palestinians and Bedouins loyal to the King, in Jordan could arise which might engage the Sixth Fleet—minimally in a rescue mission, maximally in military support to a beleaguered pro-Western government. The kind of mission the Sixth Fleet would be called upon to perform in each case could be markedly different. One way to sum

⁸ The Soviet flotilla which is the permanent Soviet naval presence in Mediterranean waters.

up this point is to stress that combat environments are not static but are critically dependent on the political goals to be achieved and the numbers and political orientation of the countries involved. Possibly the only exception which cuts across the spectrum of scenarios lies in the area of technology, where increasing qualifications on geographic features of especially, but not only, the Mediterranean may yet cause a redefinition of military missions, political requirements notwithstanding. This has led the United States to search for alternative naval force structures.

The highest political value of the Sixth Fleet and its marine units is as a symbol of U. S. political commitment to its Mediterranean allies. The contingencies by which this commitment might be tested are those involving Yugoslavia (Austria) because of the NATO Italian north-east frontier region, and the Bosphorus-Dardanelles region, which includes Greek and Turkish Thrace. In coordination with U. S. land-based aircraft in Italy, Turkey (and Spain), the Sixth Fleet could fulfill this political requirement while making a military contribution of major military significance to the land battle, by assuming control of the air space above the battle zone—namely, helping to achieve air superiority. For NATO contingencies cannot be analysed for the U. S. Sixth Fleet and the Soviet Eskadra in isolation from other air and land forces in the Mediterranean area. And also how they explicitly relate to NATO's Central Front, and NATO's Northern Flank.

In non-NATO contingencies, on the other hand, the contribution of the Sixth Fleet, and particularly its Marines, could be much more critical in terms of political timing and battlefield impact—with or without Soviet actual or potential involvement. The technological factor becomes relatively more important here because emergent technologies may endow even local powers with telling capabilities to abort direct intervention ashore. Most important, whereas in the case of non-NATO contingencies the U. S. would probably not get European support, in NATO contingencies it is more expectable that our allies would commit their assets in the Mediterranean theatre. In NATO contingencies the Soviet Eskadra would have to cope with all NATO naval and air forces, including French Mediterranean forces.

Moreover, in non-NATO contingencies serious operational consequences arise from the political constraints placed on the Sixth Fleet, and corollary U. S. land-based air power, by Mediterranean allies of the United States during non-NATO contingencies. In such contingency situations, the Sixth Fleet must rely on itself, alone, for all

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operational requirements: airborne early warning; ship-based detection; combat air patrol; interception of attacking aircraft and missiles; A. S. W.; logistic resupply; and «bombs on target»⁹. Because of its high escalatory potential, U. S.-S. U. naval conflict in the Mediterranean is hardly separable from a potentially general NATO-Warsaw Pact conflict. In non-NATO contingencies, U. S.-Soviet conflict could be isolated and exclusively naval (including, however, naval aircraft), at least in the initial phase. It remains moot whether the Soviet Union would risk direct involvement in U. S. interventions to maintain, rather than upset, the *status quo* in non-NATO contingencies.

In the minds of American political and military leaders, the Sixth Fleet has been a palpable expression of the U. S. commitment to Mediterranean security both as a deterrent to the use of Soviet military force for diplomatic purposes and as a tool of crisis management in the Mediterranean region. They have become aware, nevertheless, that the Sixth Fleet's dual purposes as a component of NATO forces and an independent U. S. policy instrument in the conflicts of the Mediterranean region detracts from its role as a visible expression of U. S. commitment to European and Mediterranean security. They have accepted, without being persuaded, the political constraints on U. S. naval and air operations in non-NATO contingencies.

However, long before the Mid-East oil crisis, with its political and economic consequences, and the impact on world politics of turmoil in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the United States believed that escalation from regional conflict in the Mid-East and the Southern shores of the Mediterranean was a direct threat to the security of the Mediterranean, Europe and the United States. It has attempted, so far in vain, to convince its allies in Europe and the Mediterranean to release their constraints on U. S. military operations in the Mediterranean and its Atlantic approaches connected with conflictual contingencies in those areas.

This is another example of the frictions that can arise from the almost exclusively political perspectives of Mediterranean governments and American perspectives anchored in a geopolitical approach which emphasizes the dominance of security factors.

The disparities between American perceptions of the interactions between security and politics and those of Mediterranean countries, allied or not, with the United States are most sharply evident in regard

⁹ C. E. ZOPPO: *Arms Control in the Mediterranean and European Security*, California Seminar, Santa Monica, California, 1975.

to the United States' role as a crisis manager and mediator in Mediterranean regional conflicts: the Arab-Israeli wars and the Cyprus conflicts. The first is in the category of non-NATO contingencies, defined formally; the second, though not an immediate external threat to NATO, directly relevant to NATO's political cohesion in the Mediterranean.

From a U. S. viewpoint, neither the Arab-Israeli conflicts nor the Cyprus crises were purely regional problems. To the contrary, they were global issues and pertinent to East-west conflictual relations. From the viewpoint of America's allies in the Mediterranean, when not parties to the conflict, these conflicts have been regional and primarily political, not especially connected with their security. When Mediterranean countries have been parties to these conflicts, they too have defined them as threats to their national security, but with the exception of Israel, they have hardly recognized the role played by the Soviet Union, actually or potentially in the security threat to their nations.

Can it be said, persuasively, that the Arab-Israeli conflict was ever simply regional and did not affect vital Western interests? The 1973 oil embargo confirmed and intensified its global character, and the importance its resolution has for Europe and the West.

The United States has consistently played a mediating role, with the corollary function of crisis management, sometimes at the risk of direct threats to its national security, when a Soviet-American confrontation has been a component of the conflict as in 1973. Notwithstanding the divergence of assessments regarding the Camp David accords, the United States has been the only western power with the capability to achieve concrete results as mediator.

From an American perspective, it should be obvious to European countries that, beyond considerations tied directly to their internal politics, neither European countries singly, nor collectively as the Community, have the political capacity to replace the United States in this role. For example, it is the U.S. position that will be decisive in the resolution of the Palestinian issue. Because, among other things, it is only United States that can be interlocutor with both Arabs and Israelis—as the accords between Israel and Egypt demonstrate. It remains unlikely that Europe will have this capacity. While the Soviet Union has been able to deliver armaments but not agreements.

The Arab-Israeli conflicts, more recently complicated by the energy crisis and conflictual events in the Persian Gulf, have been the major

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catalyst for U. S. policies toward the Mediterranean since the late 1950's, supplanting the concerns about the Greek civil war. Only the threats to the cohesion of the Atlantic Alliance created by the conflicts between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus have approximated the impact of the Arab-Israeli conflicts on U. S. policies.

Eurocommunism has agitated U. S. Mediterranean policies¹⁰. However, it has led to ambiguous and vacillating definitions of the U. S. role, in limited and contingent form. Although relevant to the East-West aspects of U. S. relations with its Mediterranean allies, members of the Atlantic Alliance, U. S. policy has failed to define a role that can avoid direct intervention into the internal politics of these countries. An intervention against the modalities of the Atlantic Alliance, and awkward politically because of the formal acceptance of the Atlantic Alliance by the French and Italian communist parties. In this context also, U. S. perceptions and approaches diverge from those of its allies which do not endow participation of Communists in the governments of France and Italy with the same measure of political threat potential to the Alliance perceived by the United States.

In greatly simplified form, and because it is simpler and less is at stake, the Cyprus conflict can more easily illustrate the nature of the difficulties the United States faces as crisis manager, and how regional conflicts in the Mediterranean shape American policies. U. S. involvement in the Cyprus crisis also reveals the importance of U. S. internal politics (also present in the Arab-Israeli conflict situation) in the formulation and execution of United States policies in the Mediterranean.

The crisis manager role in the Cyprus conflict has not been without political costs to the United States¹¹. The 1964 Cyprus crisis marks the beginning of the deterioration in U. S.-Turkish relations that became palpably evident by 1974. Starting with the 1970 crisis, U.S.-Greek relations also deteriorated, seriously enough to cause Greece, in 1974, to withdraw from NATO, if not the Alliance. It has rejoined NATO only recently. U. S. base rights and operation, in both Greece

¹⁰ The issue is discussed in the context of NATO in: JAMES E. DOUGHERTY and DIANE K. PFALTZGRAFF: *Eurocommunism and the Atlantic Alliance*, Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Cambridge, Mass., 1977.

¹¹ GEORGE HARRIS: *Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American Problems*, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D. C., 1971; A. MANGO: *Turkey: A Delicately Poised Ally*, the Washington Papers, Sago Publications, 1975; and P. J. VATIKIOTIS, *Greece: A Political Essay*, Washington Papers, 1974.

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and Turkey, have been increasingly curtailed, and suspended periodically.

The first Cyprus crisis occurred in 1959. The U. S. played a role. But the significance of the U. S. role as crisis manager is most clearly seen in the 1964, 1970, and 1974 crisis; because in each of these crises Turkey had reached the decision to invade Cyprus. At the height of the 1964 crisis, Turkish troops had embarked in Mersin to invade. The United States unilaterally prevented the invasion by interposing the U. S. Sixth Fleet between the Turkish forces and Cyprus, and by informing Turkey that should a Turkish invasion create the opportunity for Soviet intervention, the U. S. could not be expected to automatically come to the aid of Turkey. This was a tough position to take inasmuch as it related directly to Article V, the most important commitment of the NATO treaty. The confidential letter from President Johnson to Premier Inönü, detailing the American position, was made public by Inönü, in the Turkish general elections of 1964, and marks a watershed in U.S.-Turkish relations.

In the 1970 Cyprus crisis the United States again intervened directly, this time as mediator. Former Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, was sent to Turkey as a special emissary from the U. S. president. Again, the United States acted to prevent a Turkish invasion of Cyprus. Mr. Vance had, at first, a difficult time in gaining access to Turkish leaders—who again were set to invade. By means of shuttle diplomacy between Athens and Ankara, he succeeded in averting a Turkish invasion. This time, however, it was the Greek side that had to make most concessions. Foremost among them, the withdrawal from Cyprus of thousands of Greek regular troops stationed there by Athens after the 1964 crisis.

In 1974, partly because of the changed U. S. outlook on involvement in local conflicts, following Vietnam and Watergate, and partly out of sheer diplomatic fatigue from the long involvement in the Cyprus conflict, the United States did not act forcefully to prevent military operations. The Turks successfully invaded Cyprus. Notwithstanding the rather imaginative accounts of the international press, the United States, for the first time, held back from playing a crucial role in the crisis.

This crisis also illustrates most saliently the inroads made by ethnic politics into the foreign policy decisions of the American Executive, through the use of Congressional prerogatives in the separation of

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powers that characterizes the American political system¹². The constraining impact of ethnic politics on U. S. foreign policy decisions have been particularly severe on U. S. policies pursued in the Arab-Israeli and the Cyprus conflicts, sometimes dominating other considerations of U. S. Mediterranean politics.

In relation to the 1974 Cyprus crisis, the tacit cooperation between the pro-Israeli and pro-Greek forces in Congress led to the imposition of a U. S. embargo on arms shipments to Turkey that greatly damaged U. S.-Turkish relations without improving U. S. relations with Greece. It turned out to be totally ineffectual in pressuring the Turks from withdrawing their military formations from the island, as Secretary Kissinger had maintained before Congress. With the diplomatic and economic help of West Germany, and after the lifting of the U. S. embargo, U. S. diplomacy eventually succeeded in reintegrating Greece into NATO, and normalizing U. S. relations with Turkey.

The United States has to date not seen the Sahara conflict, involving the Polisario, Morocco, and Algeria, as sufficiently threatening to U. S. interests and to security in the Mediterranean to warrant intervention by the United States as a mediator and possible crisis manager, partly due to the lack of direct Soviet involvement in the dispute.

The decisiveness of the U. S. role as crisis manager and conflict mediator in regard to the Mideast and Cyprus conflicts has been proven by the failures as much as the successes of the United States. The belief that the relinquishing of this role, by the United States in the Mediterranean region, would lead to the resolution of these conflicts is illusory to the point of appearing politically naive. It is explainable, of course, in terms of the internal politics in Mediterranean countries, especially the politics of opposition; a condition similar to that created in the United States by ethnic and oppositional politics.

A threat to U. S. interests in the Mediterranean does not have to come directly from the Soviet Union. Regional states can create political instabilities and crises affecting security on their own. These include revolutionary and inter-state conflicts that cause the U. S. concern¹³.

U. S. tolerance for the export of revolution or the use of confrontational tactics and conflict by Mediterranean antagonists is neces-

¹² How this affects U. S. security decisions is explained in RICHARD HAAS: *Congressional Power: Implications for American Security Policy*, IISS, London, 1979.

¹³ An analysis in regard to the Third World is in: SHAHRAM CHUBIN: "The United States and the Third World", *Third World*, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-33.

sarily limited in a region where a U. S.-Soviet collision is always possible, and where geography and politics link with possible threats to NATO and European security to the North and conflictual oil politics and Soviet expansion to the South.

III. DYNAMIC MILITARY TECHNOLOGY AND POLITICAL CRISIS IN THE GULF:
CHANGING INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS FOR U. S. MEDITERRANEAN POLICY

The tendency of the United States, as a superpower, to define Mediterranean politics and security in East-West and global terms is reinforced by developments in military technology and the turmoil of the adjacent Gulf region.

When in the decade following the Second World War, the U. S. military presence became a permanent feature of Mediterranean politics, the U. S. Sixth Fleet, and U. S. bombers stationed in riparian Mediterranean countries, had as their primary task strategic, nuclear missions. At the time, no U. S. intercontinental ballistic missiles were deployed. The Sixth Fleet and U. S. strategic bombers in the Mediterranean countries contributed, therefore, to the central U. S. deterrent mission. The time when U. S. forces deployed in the Mediterranean region played a crucial strategic role is, however, long past, because of changes in military technology. Strategic targets in the Soviet Union can now be covered from the United States or the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

This fact has increased the military utility of Turkey (Greece), Italy, and Spain (Portugal) for deterrence of conventional war in the Mediterranean, and their value for non-NATO conflicts in the Mediterranean, the Mideast, and Africa—for the Eurostrategic deterrence balance also, provided Mediterranean countries allow deployment of U. S. nuclear cruise missiles—but greatly diminished their global strategic significance in the East-West context.

In terms of nuclear war, there are no genuine strategic military targets in the Mediterranean nor weapon systems with strategic significance. Although there are U. S. military forces, with nuclear capability stationed in Mediterranean countries, and Soviet nuclear systems can target the territory of the Mediterranean countries, none of these forces, including those on French aircraft carriers, have strategic missions assigned to them. No American, Soviet, British, and French strategic launchpoints exist in the Mediterranean. Conse-

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quently, there is no military strategic balance in the Mediterranean and no strategic territories except as political objectives.

Technological development trends in weapons of the central deterrent system—like the U. S. Trident submarine and its Soviet counterpart, increased missile accuracies at intercontinental range from 0.2 to 0.8 fractions of nautical miles, circular error probable, that are driving land-based strategic forces to mobility and concealment¹⁴—continue to diminish the strategic importance of closed seas, like the Mediterranean and its riparian territories while increasing the value, as launchpoints, of superpower territorial and maritime peripheries.

At the same time when technology has been undercutting the military strategic significance of the Mediterranean for the United States, technology has also been blurring the boundaries between the Mediterranean and other East-West conflictual regions like the Gulf area. Most important so far as potential political consequences has been the fact that changing technology has been forcing a greater integration of sea-based and land-based airpower.

Changing aircraft and missile technology is shrinking the Mediterranean—whose North-South axis is already quite short—to the point where land-based systems may totally dominate the sea combat environment. The Backfire and related air-to-surface missiles are becoming an even more serious threat to the Sixth Fleet than Soviet submarines; particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean. Because of these technological developments, Soviet ships in the Mediterranean can also find themselves in a precarious situation. In the Western Mediterranean, without the support of airpower operating from the North African littoral, Soviet ships are potentially quite vulnerable to air attack. The day may not be far off when land-launched cruise missiles may do as well.

In addition to the severe access and redeployment constraints imposed on surface navies by the Straits, Gibraltar, the Suez Canal, and the «choke points» between Sicily and North Africa, no floating aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean can be a match for the unsinkable carriers represented by littoral states and Mediterranean islands with well-equipped airfields, and by the strategically placed Italian peninsula. Consequently, the trends of conventional war technologies seem bent on favoring Mac Kinder over Mahan. Who controls the

¹⁴ U. S. Department of Defense: *Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1982*, Washington, D. C., January 1981, pp. 109-129.

land, eventually controls the sea. In the Mediterranean, the control of land for purposes of naval warfare is invariably, and crucially, a political matter, whether for purposes of constraining military operations or of achieving political objectives.

For NATO contingencies, the credibility of the U. S. commitment, by way of the Sixth Fleet, is becoming as much a function of evolving technologies as of U. S. political will¹⁵. The Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean is, therefore, not solely or primarily, responsible for this condition. For non-NATO Mediterranean contingencies, the credibility and the military effectiveness, of the Sixth Fleet are also affected by the changes in the technological environment, which can be considerable even without Soviet involvement, and just as important as the political (hence operational) constraints imposed upon the United States by its European and Mediterranean allies. The Sixth must operate, however, under the shadow of Soviet naval and air power, even in non-NATO conflict situations.

The Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean region places the additional operational requirement on the Sixth Fleet of «neutralizing» by deterrence, possibly even by engagement, the Soviet Eskadra, in non-NATO contingencies. The well-established «shadowing tactics» of the Soviet navy, its doctrine, and the technical factors that generate Soviet incentives for preemption, place a considerable operational burden on the Sixth Fleet. However, with some qualifications for the area of the Dardanelles, the control of some of the coastal territory in the South and all of it in the North by formal, or tacit, allies of the United States creates a major potential air threat to the Eskadra which could seriously inhibit Soviet incentives to engage directly U. S. naval power in the Mediterranean.

These shifting relationships between land-based and sea-based air power have created, in the Mediterranean, an expanding battle area, on the surface and in the air space. This major consequence for the U. S. and Soviet naval and air forces of these emerging conventional technologies, is bound to have eventual political impact for U. S. relations with Mediterranean countries. Some have speculated that anti-ship cruise missile technology has increased, by itself, the battle area tenfold. Unlike the traditional fleet engagements which have been fought by opposing forces along a narrow corridor, missile armed ships and aircraft can attack from any quadrant at long ranges. The

¹⁵ STEFANO SILVESTRI and MAURIZIO CREMASCO: *Il Fianco Sud della Nato*, Feltrinelli, Milan, 1980, Ch. IV, pp. 116-138.

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Soviets are also aware. Admiral Gorshkov has written that in view of the increased vulnerability of surface ships to missiles, in battles on the high seas, he would place major reliance on submarines and long-range aircraft to fight major battles. Aircrafts, at least, must operate from air bases available at the time of combat engagements.

Technological developments of this kind will make it increasingly difficult for the United States to maintain the operational distinction between NATO and non-NATO contingencies of the U. S. Sixth Fleet, and isolate U. S. operations in the Mediterranean from U. S. operations on the territory of allies hosting U. S. naval and air forces. The political constraints placed on U. S. military operations in the Mediterranean region—especially in the Mideast—has constituted a cardinal divergence between the U. S. policy outlook and that of its Mediterranean allies. Will the political imperatives of Mediterranean countries in the Western sphere always prevail over U. S. military necessity? Even under circumstances involving regional states, clients of the Soviet Union, a U. S. military loss, in conventional combat, would have serious political consequences for all Western-oriented Mediterranean countries. If Soviet forces were involved, the political and security consequences would be grave indeed.

The political diversity of countries in the Mediterranean and the nature of the region's geography have made difficult the development of a strategic synthesis that can be operationalized politically and militarily by the United States. Nevertheless, the changes that have been wrought by military technology, particularly strategic and nuclear, to concepts about geography and military power have radically altered the strategic definition of the Mediterranean, and are beginning to impact on U. S. policies and on U. S. relations with Mediterranean states.

The changes in military technology which are tending to blur the distinction between the Mediterranean as a conflictual region and the East-West strategic deterrent system, also complicating the political requirements of separating non-NATO from NATO contingencies, have come at a time when radical changes in the political relations between resource-rich Third World countries and the industrial states of the West have tended to coalesce East-West and North-South conflictual politics into a single phenomenon not easily contained into a regional mold. Thus, the politically instrumental distinctions between economics and politics, and between internal politics and foreign af-

fairs—already quite tenuous in most countries of the Mediterranean—have also been rapidly disappearing.

The fusion of East-West and North-South conflictual factors in the Third World will not displace Europe as the most crucial and direct link between the central U. S.-Soviet system of deterrence and the Mediterranean regional conflict system. But it has tended to link the Mediterranean and the Gulf area directly and explicitly in American approaches to Mediterranean affairs. For the United States, already inextricably involved in Mideast conflicts, connecting the crises of the Gulf with European security by means of the Mediterranean was entirely logical, and created few contradictions in foreign policy.

The world energy crisis that has been reshaping the world economy, altering political outlooks and raising questions about international security, was born, after all, in the crucible of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. And, it is in potential Arab-Israeli conflicts that this threat continue to reside. In the U. S. policy outlook, the Mediterranean will continue to bridge, in politically and military conflictual terms, European security and the area where threats to the most vital resource for the functioning and growth of the economies of Western states is found. An expression of this U. S. foreign policy conviction appeared even before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

This was the basic rationale for the futile attempts by the United States to convince its European allies to develop a common Western policy on oil, and to expand the mandate of NATO to include consideration of threats to the Atlantic Alliance caused by the deterioration in the American political and military position in the Gulf. A corollary U. S. expectation has been the willingness of U. S. allies to facilitate, if not join, the deployment of American military power in the region to deter Soviet military and political expansion, in the Gulf.

From an American perspective, the world has become essentially a single strategic stage, its regional conflict systems inevitably linked. Consequently, the containment of Soviet military power and of anti-Western political radicalism by shoring up military balances and governments friendly to the United States have been priorities in U. S. policies toward the Mediterranean, within the explicit context of European security and stability in the Mideast and the Gulf.

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IV. THE FUTURE OUTLOOK FOR U. S. MEDITERRANEAN POLICIES

Throughout the postwar period there has been a constancy at the fundamental level of American foreign policy phrased as premises of an irreducible national interest and basic assumptions about world conditions. Succinctly stated, these have been: to contain Communism and to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear world war. In the minds of U. S. policymakers, they have been intrinsically related and of equal importance¹⁶.

In as much as these U. S. national objectives, although deeply rooted in the American political conscience, have been, by their very nature, imprecise guides to policy implementation, debate on foreign policy has focused on the means rather than the ends of policy.

The major criticism levelled against U. S. containment policy has been by its chief formulator, George Kennan, but has turned on its «militarization», the tendency to define security primarily in terms of military means¹⁷. No American with political responsibility, or influence in foreign policymaking, has ever attacked the premise of containment of the Soviet Union and Communism, itself, as the overriding U. S. foreign policy goal.

It would be surprising to find that U. S. policies toward the Mediterranean have differed, in kind, from the general thrust of U. S. foreign policy. They have not; being congruent with overall U. S. policy. Only once, during the Carter Administration but fleetingly, in regard to Eurocommunism did the American approach deviate. Even in this case, however, the change was in tactics not strategy. It was predicated on continued U. S.-Soviet rivalry, along East-West lines in Europe and the Mediterranean.

As intractable as the issue of Eurocommunism has been for American foreign policy, its resolution during the previous administration has clearly demonstrated the strength of the traditionalist outlook in U. S. policy toward the Mediterranean. The advent of the Reagan Administration has reinforced this conservative outlook which will strongly influence U. S. policies in the 1980's.

What prevailed, at the outset of the Carter Administration in the late 1970's, regarding Eurocommunism, shows the limits of latitude that can be realistically expected in U. S. policies toward the Medi-

¹⁶ SETOM BROWN: *The Faces of Power*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1968, p. 9.

¹⁷ STANLEY HOFFMANN: *The Primacy of World Order*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1978, pp. 19-20.

terranean and confirm their constancy with traditional American definitions of the military and political threat potential posed by the Soviet Union and Communism to the West.

The advocates for U. S. acceptance of Eurocommunism in France, Italy, and Spain, under Carter, were almost exclusively of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Hardly any civil servants in Congress and the Executive shared their position, and they certainly did not represent any significant percentage of the American electorate.

Those arguing for a relaxed U. S. policy toward Eurocommunists conceded that security considerations were important but insisted they were not the keystone of U. S. relations with Western European countries, or even of relations with the Soviet Union. Advocates of this view were preoccupied with the need to adapt U. S. policies and European institutions to the economic, political, and social changes in national societies and in intergovernmental relationships. Security was not defined by them in essentially military terms, but stress was placed on political, economic, and social factors.

This broader concept of NATO security, they felt, would help resolve the contradictions between domestic change and military stability so as to reconcile the logical requirements of the East-West military balance and the imperatives of political, economic, and social viability in European and Mediterranean national societies. Attempts to reduce, or moderate, defense expenditures by Europeans were not to be viewed as Communist-inspired plots to weaken Western defense, but as attempts to shift resources to other social priorities, because Eurocommunism was the result of insufficient resources devoted to improving social and economic conditions for the less privileged classes. This neglect and faulty political governance really explained the growth of Communist movements in Southern European countries. The return to parliamentary systems and democratic politics in Greece, Portugal and Spain, and their maintenance in Italy and Turkey—with the consequent growth of the political Left—would strengthen the West politically, hence also military in the long run. The United States was to help channel these tendencies into democratic processes, so that Eurocommunism would become a greater threat to the Soviet Union than the United States.

The rejection of this thesis, by the very Carter Administration that had supported it, swung U. S. policies back to a traditionalist approach.

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The traditionalist U. S. view of the East-West situation in Europe and the Mediterranean focused on the Soviet military and political threat, reluctant to believe that the Soviet Union had any genuine desire to moderate the objectives of expanding Soviet power and ideology into Europe, the Mediterranean and the Third World. Those who held this view now constitute all members of the Reagan Administration. They pointed to the qualitative and quantitative growth of the Warsaw Pact forces in Europe, and Soviet forces everywhere, and especially to the global growth of the Soviet navy that could threaten the Atlantic and Mediterranean lines of communications, vital to the defense of Western Europe.

Traditionalists in foreign policy who comprised the majority of Republicans and Democrats also underscored that Soviet political objectives were being furthered by the economic, social, and political changes occurring in the fabric of Mediterranean and Third World societies. The rise of Eurocommunism and the expanded influence of the Left was seen by them as a threat to the cohesion of the Atlantic Alliance in political and military terms. By weakening Western political strength and moving Mediterranean Europe away from the United States and toward possible neutralism, they argued, these trends worked to the advantage of the Soviet Union. They were prepared to consider qualifying some of the Western political and economic policies to rectify Western shortcomings in the East-West power balance.

The traditionalist view of U. S. foreign policy has been emphatically reasserted by the Reagan Administration and will guide the U. S. foreign policy approach to the Mediterranean. The tolerance of the political reality of Communist participation in the government of France must not be equated with the acceptance of Eurocommunism by the current U. S. administration.

The parameters of previous U. S. policy approaches to the politics and security of the Mediterranean can be, therefore, fully consonant with the philosophy and practice of the Reagan Administration. On the other hand, the changes that have occurred in the military and political factors governing Mediterranean affairs may frustrate American expectations by increasing the dissonance between U. S. policies and those of Mediterranean states. The test is likely to occur in that political space for decision where East-West and North-South conflictual interests intersect.

A projection of the Reagan Administration foreign and defense policies onto the Mediterranean is necessarily speculative and prema-

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ture, but can be attempted if the analysis is conditional, and cast in general terms.

The Reagan Administration is a firm believer that military power translates into political power and influence. The growth of Soviet strategic and conventional military strength is viewed, therefore, as a dangerous development that threatens Western security everywhere, the Mediterranean included.

The current administration's focus on the Soviet Union as the major threat to Western interests, together with its emphasis on the security aspects is consonant with the East-West orientation of traditional U. S. policies toward the Mediterranean, and the historic U. S. bilateral approach to countries in the Mediterranean region.

The Reagan policy has singled out Greece, Turkey, Portugal, Spain, and to a degree Morocco, in the U. S. foreign military assistance program. A renewed appreciation of Turkey's critical role in NATO has led to plans for sizable U. S. economic support as well. The traditional approach had also emphasized security relations with Mediterranean countries.

Foreign assistance policy is viewed as a means to maintain an open and accessible international economic system, and as going hand-in-hand with reconstituting America's defense capabilities. The basic rationale is that countries friendly to the United States, if supported by the U. S., can themselves help assure the United States of its most vital national interests. This rationale has underpinned the U. S. approach to Mediterranean security starting with the Truman Doctrine.

For example, many states receiving U. S. security assistance in the Mediterranean enjoy a geographic proximity to resources needed by the West in the Gulf and Africa. Others have timely knowledge of complex regional events and can assure that these events do not slip beyond responsible control, as in the Sahara. An interesting example, given by the U. S. Secretary of State, in March before the House of Representatives' Committee on Foreign Affairs, is that of a friendly country helped with air defense. Haig argued that the air defense system, the U. S. helps a friendly state to develop, could one day serve as a prepositioned shield under which Western military relief forces would move¹⁸. Not much imagination is required to envision Turkey, Israel, Greece, Egypt, and Spain in the Mediterranean region. It is within a renewed traditionalist approach also that

¹⁸ Secretary of State Haig's testimony before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, U. S. Congress, March 18, 1981.

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the U. S. government intends to extend military assistance to the Sudan and Tunisia to withstand pressures from Libya, a Mediterranean state politically close to the Soviet Union.

Also consonant with previous American policies toward the Mediterranean in the U. S. administration's strong focus on the Arab-Israeli contention in the Mideast, where the U. S. policy approach continues to be based on the Camp David accords. Seventy percent of the military aid program for fiscal 1982, a total of \$6.87 billion, is to be for countries in that quadrant of the Mediterranean; with Israel and Egypt as the largest recipients¹⁹.

Insofar as U. S. Mediterranean allies are concerned, the Reagan Administration will attempt to adapt its security relations with them to fit the major thrust of its defense policy of a «division of labor» rationale under which the NATO allies will be asked to contribute more to the common defense. This approach will probably be taken with Spain also. The Administration will propose joint cooperative efforts in the development and production of new weapons and high technology equipment to modernize allied forces. Also, it will promote greater commonality in doctrine, tactics, training, and procedure, through NATO and bilaterally when appropriate.

Of particular interest for the Mediterranean, and suitably fitting into the established U. S. security approach to this region, is the renewed concern with the size and readiness of the American Navy. The present American administration insists that because the United States is a maritime nation, with allies mostly across distant oceans, it must have naval superiority over the Soviet Union, a land power. Accordingly, a substantial naval budget has been submitted to Congress, \$3.8 billion in fiscal 1982, for cruisers, battleships, and aircraft carriers. Some ships are to be modernized, additional ones to be built²⁰.

Presumably, the Mediterranean will see the strengthening of the U. S. naval presence and the correspondingly greater use of U. S. facilities in that region.

The keystone and organizing principle of the Reagan Administration's foreign policy of the containment of the Soviet Union's military power and Soviet political influence throughout the world, is particularly focused on the Gulf region. The combat readiness and infrastructure for the U. S. Rapid Deployment Force, whose combat missions

¹⁹ Secretary of State Haig's testimony before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, U. S. Congress, March 18, 1981.

²⁰ H. KANTER: «The Reagan Defense Program in Early Outline», *Strategic Review* (Washington, D. C.), Summer 1981, pp. 27-38.

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are targeted on the Gulf²¹ has a priority that will tempt U. S. leaders to combine the requirements of this force, operationally and politically, with U. S. military and political assets in the Mediterranean.

The U. S. foreign policy outlook will continue to see, in the 1980 the key ingredients of policy as the proximity to the sources of Soviet or American power, the residual influence of European nations, and the presence or absence of locally dominant military powers. Soviet military power provides a massive security threat, in the years ahead, primarily to areas on the periphery of the Soviet Union.

The Mediterranean, itself in the shadow of Soviet power, bridges the two most critical areas, Western Europe and the Gulf. This will be a challenge to Mediterranean nations as much as the United States. The crucible will be, however, the nature of future relations between the United States and the countries of the Mediterranean.

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RESUMEN

EL MEDITERRANEO EN LA POLÍTICA EXTERIOR DE ESTADOS UNIDOS

I. ¿UNA POLÍTICA MEDITERRÁNEA DE ESTADOS UNIDOS?

El dinamismo en la política internacional y en la evolución de la tecnología militar está produciendo unos cambios estructurales en las relaciones militares y políticas entre los países más industrializados—Estados Unidos, Europa y Japón—y los países en vías de desarrollo ricos en recursos, que pone en peligro la estabilidad política y seguridad internacionales. El Mediterráneo ha venido siendo el escenario donde se han representado estos cambios políticos, económicos y militares internacionales por encontrarse en el cruce entre Este-Oeste, Norte-Sur.

Los Estados Unidos representan un papel principalísimo para la seguridad occidental en el Mediterráneo. Hasta ahora ha sido el único país occidental capaz de actuar como resolutor de conflictos y es el único que tiene la capacidad política para llevar a cabo una política de defensa coherente en esta zona. Entre los países del Mediterráneo

²¹ An analysis of its priorities and problems is in Jeffrey Record: *The Rapid Deployment Force and U. S. Military Intervention in the Persian*, Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Washington, D. C., 1981.

no existen mecanismos diplomáticos ni militares multilaterales viables que sean políticamente prometedores.

La presencia militar estadounidense y el interés diplomático en el Mediterráneo coincidió con la transformación de Estados Unidos en una superpotencia y el cambio en su política exterior del aislacionismo al internacionalismo. El primer acto de política mediterránea puede considerarse la declaración de la doctrina Truman en 1947, heraldo de la amenaza soviética en la región. Los primeros actos concretos que definieron tanto la política de contención de la Unión Soviética —clave de la política de Estados Unidos— como la práctica diplomática con los países mediterráneos (por acuerdos bilaterales) fueron la ayuda económica y militar prestados a Grecia, en su guerra civil, y Turquía, amenazada en sus fronteras por la Unión Soviética.

Los objetivos específicos de la política exterior estadounidense en el Mediterráneo siguen siendo esencialmente los mismos que los formulados después de la segunda guerra mundial: mantener un equilibrio de poder con la Unión Soviética; ayudar en la defensa de Grecia, Turquía, Italia y España contra presiones soviéticas militares y políticas, directas o indirectas; impedir la influencia soviética en Oriente Medio y el norte de Africa; garantizar la existencia de Israel y, posteriormente, la independencia de Egipto; asegurar el suministro de petróleo a Europa occidental; fomentar estabilidad en el Mediterráneo y regiones contiguas; mantener la cohesión política de la Alianza Atlántica y defender la democracia. Sin embargo, estas metas no definen una política independiente para el Mediterráneo porque la política mediterránea de Estados Unidos sólo se puede contemplar en términos de la rivalidad Estados Unidos-Unión Soviética y del conflicto Este-Oeste; no son centrales en su política exterior, sino una consecuencia de las amenazas que surgen de los conflictos en el área a la seguridad europea y estadounidense. El Mediterráneo es para los Estados Unidos una de tantas regiones que adquieren importancia por su conexión con la OTAN, con el desequilibrio militar y político en el conflicto Este-Oeste, y con conflictos regionales que podrían llegar a una confrontación estratégica Estados Unidos-Unión Soviética o a la guerra; pero los Estados Unidos no pueden apartar su visión global como superpotencia en sus relaciones diplomáticas con países mediterráneos.

II. CONFLICTOS EN LAS PERSPECTIVAS ESTE-OESTE: FOCO HISTÓRICO
DE LA POLÍTICA MEDITERRÁNEA DE ESTADOS UNIDOS

El interés de Estados Unidos en el Mediterráneo ha estado siempre dentro del marco de la seguridad militar, mientras que las presiones, generadas por los conflictos que los países mediterráneos mantenían entre sí sobre la diplomacia americana, han sido esencialmente políticas. El haber conseguido englobar a Italia (Portugal), Grecia y Turquía, además de a España, en un sistema europeo de seguridad no le garantizó a Estados Unidos la estabilidad Este-Oeste en el Mediterráneo a causa de las relaciones, deterioradas por la descolonización, entre las riberas norte y sur de dicho mar. El nacimiento de Israel y del conflicto árabe-israelí proporcionó a la Unión Soviética la oportunidad de aprovecharse del cambio histórico en favor suyo. Por último, los cambios radicales en la política interna de todos los países occidentales europeos del Mediterráneo han contribuido a estas presiones políticas.

A la vista de estas dificultades, la diplomacia americana ha interpretado dos papeles en el Mediterráneo: el de garante estratégico de su seguridad contra la amenaza soviética y el de resolutor de las crisis y mediador en los conflictos regionales que pudieran dar lugar a una escalada en el conflicto Este-Oeste. Estos papeles se han desempeñado esencialmente mediante una diplomacia bilateral con los países mediterráneos, poniendo todo el énfasis sobre la prioridad de la seguridad política (política occidentalista).

Desde los años cincuenta, la expresión concreta de la garantía estadounidense de seguridad para sus aliados en el Mediterráneo ha sido la presencia de la Sexta Flota, que ha jugado el doble papel de defensa del flanco sur de la OTAN y de fuerza de intervención inmediata de Estados Unidos en contingencias fuera del marco de la OTAN. Las funciones militares de la Sexta Flota han ido cambiando debido a la evolución tecnológica de ser una fuerza primordialmente estratégico-nuclear para la OTAN a ser un instrumento transportador convencional para utilizar en crisis locales o conflictos regionales. Los factores determinantes de la función de la Sexta Flota pueden servir de ejemplo para comprender la diferencia entre operaciones militares de los Estados Unidos dentro del marco de la OTAN y fuera de ella, distinción que tiene un significado político crucial. En lo que al tema militar respecta, una contingencia fuera de la OTAN no tiene que impli-

car necesariamente una confrontación directa con las fuerzas aéreas o navales soviéticas. En el ámbito político, se podría decir que los escenarios de combate no son estáticos, sino que están ligados en último término a los fines políticos y al número y orientación política de los países afectados. El mayor valor político que tiene la Sexta Flota es como símbolo del compromiso político de los Estados Unidos con sus aliados en el Mediterráneo. Pero la actuación de la Sexta Flota en asuntos que caigan dentro del ámbito de la Alianza no puede analizarse independientemente del papel que juegan las Fuerzas Aéreas y Navales de esta organización. Por otro lado, para las contingencias fuera del marco de la OTAN, la contribución de la Sexta Flota puede ser importante en cuanto a oportunidad e impacto en los campos de batalla. Además, en estos casos se dan serias consecuencias operacionales por presiones políticas impuestas a la Sexta Flota, así la Flota debe actuar sola, sin respaldo aéreo ni terrestre.

La disparidad entre las percepciones estadounidenses y europeas, aliados o no, de la interacción entre seguridad y política (los primeros recalcando los factores de seguridad; los últimos, en términos exclusivamente políticos) es evidente en cuanto al papel de los Estados Unidos como resolutor de crisis y mediador en conflictos regionales mediterráneos: las guerras entre árabes e israelíes y el conflicto de Chipre. Desde el punto de vista de Estados Unidos, ninguno de estos dos conflictos son puramente regionales, sino cuestiones globales que afectan al conflicto Este-Oeste. Desde el punto de vista de sus aliados, estos conflictos son fundamentalmente regionales y políticos; como mucho, comprometerían la seguridad de los países afectados, pero no reconocen, en cambio, la amenaza real o potencial de la Unión Soviética. Desde la perspectiva estadounidense, para los países europeos debería ser obvio que ellos no tienen, ni por separado ni en la Comunidad, la capacidad política para reemplazar a Estados Unidos en su papel de mediador.

Algunos ejemplos de los conflictos regionales mediterráneos que han podido influir y transformar la política de Estados Unidos en la zona son: la aparición del eurocomunismo; la disputa sobre Chipre entre Grecia y Turquía por la influencia que ha tenido en la Alianza Atlántica, y el conflicto árabe-israelí, que ha sido el factor catalizador de la política mediterránea desde los años cincuenta. En cuanto a estos dos últimos conflictos, también juegan un papel importante en la creación de la política exterior americana los grupos de presión étnicos dentro del Congreso de los Estados Unidos.

Sin embargo, una amenaza a los intereses de los Estados Unidos en el Mediterráneo no tiene por qué surgir directamente de la Unión Soviética, sino que los países de la zona pueden generar por sí mismos una inestabilidad política y crisis que afecten a su seguridad. La tolerancia de los Estados Unidos hacia la exportación de revoluciones o el uso de tácticas agresivas entre países mediterráneos está indiscutiblemente limitada en una región donde una colisión Estados Unidos Unión Soviética es posible, y donde la geografía y la política enlazan amenazas a la OTAN y a la seguridad europea por el norte y política petrolífera conflictiva y expansión soviética por el sur.

III. TECNOLOGÍA MILITAR DINÁMICA Y CRISIS POLÍTICA EN EL GOLFO:

EL CAMBIO DEL CONTEXTO INTERNACIONAL PARA LA POLÍTICA MEDITERRÁNEA DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS

Cuando se produjo la presencia de los Estados Unidos en el Mediterráneo y países ribereños, una década después de concluir la segunda guerra mundial, la Sexta Flota y los bombarderos norteamericanos tenían como objetivo principal una misión estratégico-nuclear. En cambio, ahora han dejado de jugar este papel crucial a causa de los cambios en la tecnología militar. Este hecho ha aumentado el interés militar de Turquía (Grecia), Italia y España (Portugal) para la disuasión de una guerra convencional en el Mediterráneo; pero ha disminuido su significación estratégica global en el contexto Este-Oeste.

En términos de una guerra nuclear no existe ningún objetivo estratégico militar en el Mediterráneo, ni ningún armamento estratégico importante. Por lo tanto, no hay equilibrio estratégico militar en el Mediterráneo; no hay territorios estratégicos, sino objetivos políticos. El desarrollo tecnológico armamentístico del sistema de disuasión central fomenta la pérdida de la importancia estratégica de regiones encerradas, mientras que estimula el valor de los territorios y costas de las superpotencias. Mientras que el avance tecnológico ha estado socavando la importancia estratégico-militar del Mediterráneo para los Estados Unidos, también ha estado desdibujando las fronteras entre el Mediterráneo y otras regiones conflictivas, como el área del golfo. El cambio tecnológico en aviones y misiles está encogiendo el Mediterráneo hasta el punto de que sistemas instalados en tierra pueden dominar perfectamente el combate marítimo. La relación cambiante entre fuerzas aéreas con base en la tierra y en el mar ha creado en

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el Mediterráneo un área dilatada de combate. A diferencia con la práctica de la flota tradicional, buques armados de misiles y aviones pueden atacar desde cualquier ángulo a larga distancia.

La diversidad política de los países del Mediterráneo y la geografía de la región ha impedido el desarrollo de una síntesis estratégica operable política y militarmente por los Estados Unidos. Sin embargo, los cambios producidos por la tecnología militar, especialmente en el campo estratégico y nuclear, en conceptos como geografía y poder militar han cambiado radicalmente la definición estratégica del Mediterráneo y empiezan a hacer huella en la política de Estados Unidos y en sus relaciones con los países del Mediterráneo. La fusión Este-Oeste y Norte-Sur en el Tercer Mundo no desplazará a Europa como el vínculo más crucial y directo entre el sistema de disuasión Estados Unidos-Unión Soviética y el sistema de conflicto regional en el Mediterráneo. Para los Estados Unidos, inextricablemente comprometidos en los conflictos de Oriente Medio, el haber conectado las crisis del golfo con la seguridad europea por medio del Mediterráneo resulta lógico, y creó pocas contradicciones en su política exterior. La visión de la política estadounidense es que el Mediterráneo seguirá vinculando, política y militarmente, la seguridad europea con las zonas amenazadas donde se encuentra el recurso más vital para el funcionamiento y crecimiento de las economías occidentales.

Desde la perspectiva americana, el mundo se ha convertido en un único escenario estratégico, con sus sistemas de conflictos regionales inevitablemente relacionados. Por lo tanto, la contención del poderío militar soviético y del radicalismo político antioccidental y el afianzamiento del equilibrio militar basado en Gobiernos aliados, ha sido el tema prioritario en la política de Estados Unidos hacia el Mediterráneo.

IV. LA PERSPECTIVA FUTURA PARA LA POLÍTICA MEDITERRÁNEA DE ESTADOS UNIDOS

El fundamento de la política exterior estadounidense después de la segunda guerra mundial ha sido contener el comunismo e impedir el comienzo de una guerra mundial nuclear. La mayor crítica hacia esta política de contención ha sido la tendencia a definir la seguridad en términos estrictamente militares. Solamente una vez se ha desviado este planteamiento durante la Administración Carter y refiriéndose al

eurocomunismo; pero la resolución expeditiva dada por esa misma Administración demuestra la solidez de la visión tradicionalista de la política mediterránea de los Estados Unidos.

Los parámetros de la política exterior estadounidense hacia la política y seguridad en el Mediterráneo están en perfecta consonancia con la filosofía y práctica de la Administración Reagan. Por otro lado, los cambios ocurridos en los factores políticos y militares que gobiernan los asuntos mediterráneos pueden frustrar las expectativas americanas, aumentando las diferencias entre la política de los Estados Unidos y la de los países mediterráneos. Una proyección, prematura, de la política exterior y de defensa de la Administración Reagan puede concretarse en seis puntos:

1.º La Administración Reagan cree firmemente que el poderío militar se traduce en poder e influencia política. Consecuentemente, el crecimiento de la fuerza militar soviética, convencional y estratégica, se considera un desarrollo peligroso que amenaza la seguridad en todo el mundo, incluido el Mediterráneo.

2.º La política Reagan ha escogido a Grecia, Turquía, Portugal, España, y hasta cierto grado Marruecos, para su programa de asistencia militar al exterior. El razonamiento básico es que si los Estados Unidos sustentan a sus aliados, éstos por si solos asegurarán los intereses más vitales norteamericanos. Este razonamiento ha existido en la política mediterránea estadounidense desde la doctrina Truman.

3.º También está muy enraizado en la política mediterránea norteamericana la percepción del contencioso árabe-israelí en Oriente Medio, donde la política estadounidense sigue basándose en los acuerdos de Camp David.

4.º En lo que respecta a los aliados mediterráneos, la Administración Reagan intentará adaptar las relaciones de seguridad para que encajen en las directrices principales de su política de defensa; en otras palabras, establecerá una «división del trabajo» que obligará a los miembros de la OTAN a contribuir más a la defensa común.

5.º De especial interés para los países del Mediterráneo es la renovada preocupación en el tamaño y efectividad de la Marina estadounidense. La Administración actual insiste en que los Estados Unidos es una nación marítima y, por lo tanto, debe superar el poderío naval de la Unión Soviética, una potencia terrestre.

6.º Para la Administración Reagan, la clave y principio organizativo de la política de contención del poderío militar y de la influencia política de la Unión Soviética se centra primordialmente en la región

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del golfo. La disposición para el combate y la infraestructura de la Fuerza de Intervención Inmediata, cuyas misiones de combate tienen como objetivo al golfo, tiene tal prioridad que inducirá a los dirigentes norteamericanos a combinar los requisitos de esta fuerza con activos políticos y militares en el Mediterráneo.

El Mediterráneo, a la sombra de la Unión Soviética, une las dos zonas más importantes para la política exterior de los Estados Unidos: Europa occidental y el golfo. Representará un reto tanto para los países del Mediterráneo como para los Estados Unidos. La prueba será, sin embargo, el carácter de las relaciones futuras entre los Estados Unidos y los países del Mediterráneo.

(Traducción de MARTA CABRERA OLARRA)

