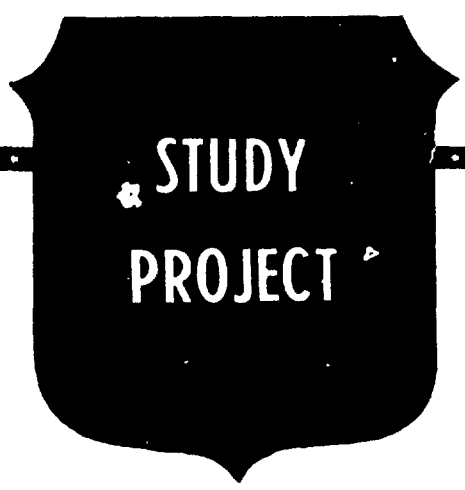


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THE U.S. PRESENCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA  
AS A RESULT OF NATIONAL INTERESTS IN THE  
AREA AND NATO INVOLVEMENT

BY

COLONEL ROCCO VIGLIETTA, FA ITA

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In this troubled area, the United States has a significant military presence and declared political and economic interests.

This essay analyzes the situation in the area, focusing on the elements of tension, and examines the possibility that a conflict could arise for the U.S. between NATO defense needs and U.S. national interests.

The analysis concludes that, event with periodic disagreements with its allies, the U.S. can achieve its objectives while the NATO countries of the area will continue to receive full benefit from the U.S. presence and actions. The United States should work to improve its coordination and consultation with its partners, within the NATO organization and on a bilateral basis.

The European NATO countries, at the same time, are invited to cooperate more and coordinate their involvement to help the U.S. in resolving the various conflicts in the region.

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THE U.S. PRESENCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AS A RESULT OF  
NATIONAL INTERESTS IN THE AREA AND NATO INVOLVEMENT

AN INDIVIDUAL PROJECT

by

Col. Rocco VIGLIETTA, FA ITA

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THE U.S. PRESENCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AS A RESULT OF NA-  
TIONAL INTERESTS IN THE AREA AND NATO INVOLVEMENT.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION.

The United States of America, as a global power, has relations all over the world that range from formal treaties and alliances (i.e., NATO, ANZUS, Manila Pact), to economic relations, to security and economic assistance, etc..

In the Mediterranean area there are nations which belong to NATO, others which have special bilateral agreements with U.S. and others with which the U.S. has good economic ties, while a few nations have major differences with the U.S. in political system, ideology, and national objectives.

This study is intended to examine the situation in the mentioned area, to analyze the main issues, to review the position of the United States and to find if there is any conflict between the national interests of the U.S. and the interests of the various nations that border on the Mediterranean Sea, including interests related to NATO.

The study will cover mainly the political-military aspects,

but some considerations will be formulated also for the economic, cultural and social elements that influence in one way or another the relations among nations.

### Assumptions

This paper will cover the riparian countries of the Mediterranean, but, in some cases, the situations of other more distant nations will be taken into account, as they can influence directly or indirectly the stability in the area.

It will assume that no significant changes will occur in the relations existing between the U.S. and the NATO and non-NATO countries, including special relations and other bi-lateral treaties and agreements that the U.S. has with several of them. No major economic modifications or crises are envisioned.

But it is necessary to point out also that, at the moment this paper is prepared, there are the beginnings of significant modifications in the international arena that might influence future developments in the area. For example, many available sources are now somewhat outdated because of the new course of Soviet policy under the direction of the USSR Communist Party General Secretary Gorbachev, as well as possible new relations between the Palestinians and Israel. It is not yet clear what will be the impact of the Soviet declared intention to reduce its conflict with the West and the different situation that could originate in the Middle East if a period of real peace will start after forty years of struggle between Israel and the Palestinians.



In this paper the term "national interest" for the U.S. is used in the general meaning adopted by Donald E. Nuechterlein in his book America Overcommitted : "country's perceived needs and aspirations in relation to other sovereign states constituting its external environment." Therefore, the U.S. national interests will be taken as "the product of a political process in which the country's elected national leadership arrives at decisions about the importance of specific external events that affect the nation's political and economic well-being."<sup>1</sup> This means that no distinction will be made among the four different categories of national interest listed by Nuechterlein (defense of homeland, economic well-being, favorable world order, promotion of American values abroad), and no attention will be given to the scale of priorities assigned to the national interest (survival, vital, major, peripheral/minor). It should be kept in mind also that in this paper the different factors that, at times, influence the determination of national interests (economic stake, sentimental attachment, type of government and human rights, national prestige, support of allies, economic cost of hostilities and connected risks, etc.) will be considered equally important, without any specific priority.<sup>2</sup>

#### ENDNOTES

1. Donald E. Nuechterlein, America Overcommitted, p. 7.
2. Ibid., pp. 8-28.

## CHAPTER II

### GENERAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Mediterranean area and its periphery have undergone significant evolution in the past forty years.

At the beginning of the 1950s there was a strong NATO air and naval presence, while Soviet presence was insignificant. The bordering countries of North Africa and the Middle East were generally under control of Western countries. From this situation derived a condition of relative stability, while in Central Europe and in the Far East a direct confrontation of the two Blocs was under way.

This situation unfortunately started to change quite rapidly with the end of the colonization, in some cases violent and bloody, the beginning of the Arab-Israel conflict, and the extension to the Mediterranean area of the East-West confrontation. Elements of this changing situation included the new intent of the USSR to act as a world power through a careful policy of expansion and influence, performed with methods tailored to the different internal situations of the "objective-nation" but aimed at the political, economic, and, under certain circumstances, military control of the various countries.

This penetration has proceeded with varying results, failing completely in some cases, and succeeding significantly in other countries.

As a military instrument to support this policy, the USSR started to develop a new, strong, ever-expanding navy, with special emphasis "on the ability to project and support military power in areas remote from national territory. An additional factor was the supporting role played by the Soviet merchant navy."<sup>1</sup> In the Mediterranean Sea the Soviet Navy has been represented by the V Eskadra (referred to within NATO as the "Soviet Mediterranean Squadron" or 'Sovmedron'), which has increased at the same speed as efforts toward political and economic penetration. From an initial phase of simply "showing the flag", Soviet naval presence has become a constant element of military support. This presence reached its peak during the Israeli-Arab Wars of 1967 and 1973, and has stabilized at an average of seven combatants, six submarines and thirty-one auxiliaries (an average total of forty-four vessels) on any given day.<sup>2</sup>

As a result of this evolution, the Mediterranean has become an area of direct East-West confrontation, both at the political level with direct Soviet penetration of some bordering countries, and at the military level with the aero-naval power that has joined the traditional land power that the Warsaw Pact could exploit through the Balkans.

This confrontation is also the result of the interaction of the East-West conflict with the various political-military,

economic, social and religious "realities" which historically exist in the area, and which will now be briefly described.

### Historical Realities

Historically, this area is a crossroad of different races, religions and civilizations, struggling for hundreds of years for supremacy. The fall of the Ottoman Empire and the end of the colonial period have made this struggle even more complex. Without a deep historical analysis, it seems sufficient to recall some elements that have contributed to regional instability: the creation of Jordan, Iraq, Israel, and Lebanon as independent states; the territorial claims that create tension between Libya and Algeria, Libya and Chad, Algeria and Morocco, Syria and Turkey, and Greece and Turkey; the problem of ethnic groups such as the Armenians, Kurds, and Palestinians, without their own independent homeland, etc..

The political-military aspects, tightly interacting with the historical evolution, are characterized by the presence of many intrinsically fragile states which were created at the end of the colonial period, without gradual passage of power from the dominating country to the new national entity. In some of those states the power has been seized by charismatic leaders, managed with dictatorial methods and supported more by the military establishment than by the people. Consequently, a significant arms race has been generated, and, with it, the seed for potential conflict situations.

The social and economic aspects are even more complex and

represent further elements of instability, given the significant existing differences in the social-economic development level and the weakness/vulnerability of the economic systems of the involved countries. The main difference is found in the so-called North-South axis: along the northern tier there are nations with high social-economic development (even with some relatively different levels), while the southern tier includes nations whose economic level is in some cases very limited. But this advantage of the countries of the northern tier is countered by the availability within the southern countries, though not in the same abundance for every country, of natural resources. Among the North African countries a further difference is represented by the population level: while some nations with significant economic resources have very limited population, others have high and increasing population density, with limited or no natural resources at all.

The extension of the territorial sea waters and the delimitation of the continental shelf, with the related rights to explore and to exploit, are further elements of instability and potential crisis, due to the significant differences in applying the limits internationally defined, and the consequent difficulty to demarcate clearly areas of exclusive economic influence within the Mediterranean boundaries.<sup>3</sup>

Religion is the last but not the least important element of difference in the area. There are three monotheistic faiths (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and religion has been a major supporting factor for the various current political struggles.

The Islamic fundamentalist movement, in particular, uses religion as an instrument to influence the population and to achieve its political-economic objectives. As the situation has developed, "the willingness of outside nations to support various religious groups in their struggle against each other has from time to time led to large scale confrontation."<sup>4</sup>

To summarize, it seems evident that the Mediterranean contains several elements of potential conflict, over which the East-West confrontation contributes to intensify or ameliorate the existing tensions. Furthermore, from the strategic aspect, a thorough examination of the physical, political, and economic situations reflect: the importance and extreme vulnerability of many coastal infrastructures (harbors, military installations, industrial plants, etc. ); the vital role of Morocco, Algeria, and Egypt for the relationship between Middle Eastern and African countries; the important function of Turkey, Egypt, Morocco and Spain in controlling critical choke points that constrain maritime transit in the area; and the position of Israel, Jordan and Syria in linking the Middle Eastern oil fields and the Mediterranean basin. (Appendix 1 A, B, C, and D)

These elements, which will be analyzed in further detail in the following chapters, should also be kept in mind when assessing the perception of the threat to national interests by the U.S. and by the NATO countries, as they could be different and could lead to determination of different objectives to be achieved and actions to be taken.

## ENDNOTES

1. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization - Facts and Figures, p. 143.

2. John Chipman, "NATO and the Security Problems of the Southern Region: From the Azores to Ardahan," in NATO's Southern Allies: Internal and External Challenges, ed. by John Chipman, p. 25.

See also: Otto P. Chaney, "The Soviet Threat to Europe: Prospects for the 1980's," in The Defence of the West - Strategic and European Security Issues Reappraised, ed. by Robert Kennedy and John M. Weinstein, p. 273.

The figures provided by this source are slightly different but support the concept. In fact, the author says that

"In mid-1964, the Soviets established a continual presence in the Mediterranean, and an average of five Navy ships were maintained on station in the Mediterranean that year. Subsequently, an average of at least 40 to 50 ships have been maintained on station (although the number rises sharply in period of crisis - 70 ships in June 1967, 96 in November 1973.)"

The same source highlights the problem of the base facilities faced by USSR, which needs to be improved if it wants to maintain the efficiency of the Sovmedron.

3. On this subject, see the historical review of the sea-related dispute between Greece and Turkey in: S. Victor Papacosma "Greece and NATO," in NATO and the Mediterranean, ed. by Lawrence S. Kaplan, Robert W. Clawson, and Raimondo Luraghi,

pp. 189-213.

4. W. B. Fisher, "The Middle East and North Africa: An Introduction," in The Middle East and North Africa, p. 11.



## CHAPTER III

### POLITICAL-MILITARY SITUATION AMONG THE BORDERING COUNTRIES

The Mediterranean "is a geographical entity, yet it does not make it either a political or a strategic whole. The Mediterranean is, after all, the only area in the world where Western democracies, communist regimes, nonaligned states, rich oil producers and poor developing countries live side by side."<sup>1</sup>

For a better understanding of the political-military situation, the riparian countries of the Mediterranean have been grouped according to their geographical location: European countries (to which Turkey has been associated because of its membership in NATO), North African and Middle Eastern.

#### European Countries

These countries are linked by different ties which originate from historic, cultural, linguistic, political, and economic factors. Some of them were allied during the two World Wars and from that experience they have derived the basis for a common political, economic and military association. Their political regimes vary from parliamentarian to presidential republics to constitutional monarchies, and to various forms of communist and so-

cialist regimes. In general terms, it can be said that the Mediterranean European countries do not constitute either a geographic or a political whole. On the contrary, they present "a heterogeneous picture. Not only are there large differences in the size of population, in the level of health and in the state of economic development, but also in the perception of national security."<sup>2</sup>

In fact, within the European nations it is possible to distinguish two sub-systems: the first includes Spain, France and Italy; the Balkan countries are in the other.

Spain, France and Italy are all neo-latin and catholic countries, which have had, especially in the past, a leading role in the cultural and political development and in the history of the Mediterranean. All are democratic regimes with pluralistic economies and the common ties of NATO alliance and European Community. Militarily, they have strong defence organizations.

Notwithstanding these positive elements, there are also some specific problems that interfere with the achievement of a common political and stabilizing position.

Spain has at least three elements of tension: the unresolved question of Gibraltar, under British sovereignty but claimed by Spain; the "enclaves" of Ceuta and Melilla, located on Moroccan territory; and the indomitable Basque terrorists, who have conducted several bloody actions, with alternating active and dormant periods. Spain's military organization is not integrated with the NATO military structure, and, generally, it can be assessed that Spain is more concerned with limited

regional issues than with the major East-West competition.<sup>3</sup>

France, on the other side, has a "wide range" of foreign interests, based on the combination of historical heritage, economic activities and strategic views. In particular, it has been a strong supporter of the Spanish candidacy to the European Community and has kept close contact with its former colonies.

Even with some "cloudiness" in its foreign policy in the Middle East, France generally provides now and will most likely continue to provide in the future a stabilizing and peaceful influence in the area.

The French military structure is not integrated with NATO but its Navy operates with the "Naval On Call Force in the Mediterranean" (NAVOCFORMED). France has also formed a significant and efficient "Force d'Action Rapide" (Rapid Deployment Force), to be used for a rapid projection of force abroad, and has taken part in peacekeeping operations in Lebanon along with United States, Italy and Great Britain, and, more recently, in the Persian Gulf. All these are clear signs of French concern and involvement in the NATO arena and out-of-area (non-NATO) defence.<sup>4</sup>

Italy has a central geographical position in the area, a firm commitment to NATO and to the European Community, and long standing good relations with several states of the Mediterranean. It has undisguised positive attitudes toward the U.S., hosts "more than forty American facilities" and "provides a friendlier and more cooperative environment than exists for United States forces stationed elsewhere in Europe."<sup>5</sup> Without territorial

claims or other elements of tension with the riparian countries (having concluded in a peaceful way its dispute with Yugoslavia), Italy represents, consequently, an important element of stability and balance for future developments in the region.

From the military point of view,

"although the Italian front is not particularly sensitive at first glance, given the buffer states around it and the nature of its terrain, it is still vitally important to NATO's role in the Mediterranean. In fact, it is so central to the alliance's survival in the area that weakness and disarray of NATO forces could induce an enemy to strike here..."<sup>6</sup>

In recent years, Italy has played an important role, taking political and military decisions consistent with its real capabilities, but seeking constantly the basis for negotiation and agreement. Examples of this behavior are the acceptance of cruise missiles on its territory, the participation in United Nations peacekeeping forces, the coordinated action in Lebanon, the presence of Italian Navy personnel among the Multilateral Force (MFO) in the Sinai and the recent naval deployment in the Persian Gulf. On the political and diplomatic side, Italy has sought to mediate conflicts existing in the area, due in large part to its economic dependence from abroad for the bulk of its raw material requirements. This role has been correctly perceived and recognized by many states in the area, which have often asked for Italian advice and cooperation in the search for stability.

In general terms, France, Spain and Italy, with their good economic, political and military relations and their awareness of

a common heritage, have the potential to perform a leading role in the area.

The Balkan sub-system, on the contrary, is characterized by everlasting ethnic conflict. The area is a sub-system only geographically, while its history, culture, language, religion, ethnic groups, and political and economic systems are significantly different. At the present time, it represents no more than a "powder-magazine," just as it has been in the past, and has high potential for disintegration due to the numerous existing problems among the states.

Each state has a different level of development, and their political systems vary from a socialist self-managed republic (Yugoslavia) to pluralistic democracies (Greece and Turkey) to a communist Marxist-Leninist regime (Albania). A separate problem is also represented by the Cyprus question.

The state boundaries in many instances include territories and populations that geographically and ethnically are more closely linked to other states, with consequent continuous struggle for independence or at least for some autonomy.

The economic development is well behind the countries of the other sub-system. Consequently, social conflicts are endemic and often endanger the states' stability, as is happening currently in Yugoslavia. In the sub-system there are two Western oriented countries (Greece and Turkey) which are well aware of their geographical and strategic importance and of the extreme need for good cooperation in order to face the threat. Both countries show strong Western attitudes, but there are serious bilateral

issues between them as well.

"Greece's geostrategic position is important to the security of the Southern Region and to the entire Mediterranean area. Greece's strategic situation includes borders with the Balkan countries - Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria."<sup>7</sup> The country has links with United States, which have remained fairly stable, notwithstanding the anger and frustration generated by the Greek Prime Minister in the White House, the State Department and Congress.

Turkey, on the other side, "controls the East-West and North-South axes and constitutes an intercontinental passage between Europe, Asia and Africa; it has been a crossroads of different civilizations, cultures and international relations. As a member of NATO, with its geographic shield for the Middle Eastern and North African countries, it has become a deterrent factor which also should be considered by any threat directed to the region."<sup>8</sup>

Turkey has also tried to play a larger role within the Islamic world, given its special position as a predominantly Muslim country in addition to being a member of NATO and of the Council of Europe.<sup>9</sup> Its present dispute with Greece about the status of Cyprus and the exploitation rights in the Aegean Sea is a major element of instability that endangers the effectiveness of NATO in the area. The U.S. must find a way to maintain balanced relations between the two countries.<sup>10</sup> In fact, referring to the dispute between Greece and Turkey, it has been correctly stated that "NATO, and particularly the United States, can play a

role, as it seeks to limit and ultimately control the confrontation, for the sake of all parties concerned."11

As a general consideration of European countries, it can be assessed that:

"...those countries facing south (are) directly concerned by the events in the Mediterranean and North Africa. Many of the non-NATO countries that lie along or near the Mediterranean are particularly susceptible to political drama and outbreaks of violence on (a) continuous basis. The quickly changing politics in the Middle East are difficult to control and inevitably spill over to other, essentially more stable, countries in the Mediterranean region. Even when there is no immediate prospect of violence in the area, the wide perception of regional volatility conditions the policies of the more stable countries and makes their leaders highly sensitive to the vicissitudes of local politics. Moves towards crisis prevention or attempts to regulate nascent conflicts are often considered counterproductive, and a degree of instability is generally thought unavoidable."12

#### North African Countries

The countries of Northern Africa belong to the Mediterranean civilization group and represent a mixture of European and Asian components. The desert, in effect, has separated North Africa from the rest of the African countries, while the proximity to the Arabian Peninsula and to the rest of the Middle East has created historical, cultural, religious, and racial ties with the Middle Eastern populations. In particular,

"the incorporation of North Africa into the Muslim world created special bonds among their respective people, bonds derived from shared aspects of Islamic culture and civilization, trade and urban life, religious belief and practice, government, and military activity. The east-west movement of Arabic-speaking peoples and dynasties as well as the west-east Muslim pilgrimages reinforced these ties."13

The sea, at the same time, has not separated but has helped

for centuries to establish relations, sometimes violent, with the European countries, with which, even after the colonial period, they have maintained their cultural, political and economic linkages.

Considering the geographical features and the general characteristics of the countries of North Africa, there are differences between Egypt and the western part of this region (or 'Maghreb' as defined by the Arabic word), with Libya considered the "clasp" because of its central location.

The Egyptian area is linked more closely to Middle Eastern events, while the Maghreb, with its greater distance from Arabia, has avoided the influence of certain negative features of the Arab world. The countries of this area (Egypt, Sudan, Libya and Chad) have a particular attitude toward African problems and European culture. In fact, even though all these countries belong to the Organization for African Unity (O.A.U.), pan-Africanism has a minor influence, while the linkages with the European community are stronger. Pan-Islamism is also more widely spread than pan-Arabism, at least after the assassination of the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who had played a leading role in the pan-Arabic cause.

Egypt is the country that represents the major element of stability in this sub-region. The turning point for this country has been the settlement of its conflict with Israel as a result of the Camp David agreements, which "represented a landmark in Egyptian-Israeli relations."<sup>14</sup> Since then, Egypt has committed itself to try to achieve a general peace in the Middle East,



exploiting its influence with the other Arab countries and the Palestinians. It has special political, military and economic relations with the United States and "stands second only to Israel in the amount of economic and military aid which is received from the U.S.A."<sup>15</sup>

The Maghreb area includes Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. It has a serious problem in the unresolved western-Sahara question, but the potential impact of this controversy on regional or worldwide events is lower than the Arab-Israeli conflict, the tension in the Gulf and the Lebanese problem.

Libya is the major element of turbulence and destabilization in the entire area. Its southward aggression threatens Chad and other sub-Saharan countries. "Libya has also used the threat of restricting or denying oil shipments to blunt West European response to state-sponsored terrorism, while simultaneously training terrorists on Libyan soil."<sup>16</sup> Consequently, freedom of action for some U.S. allies is limited because of their economic ties with this country. It also used to have claims against Egypt, but this issue is currently in a dormant stage.

For a better understanding of the relations existing among countries in the various fields, it must also be kept in mind that: all are members of the League of Arab States, and of the Organization of the Islamic Conference; all but Morocco belong to the Organization of African Unity; and, from the economic aspect, all are listed among the developing countries.<sup>17</sup>

These relations create occasions of unity but also of conflicts or tension, such as the exclusion of Egypt from the

Arab League for the Camp David agreements with Israel, and they must be considered in dealing with this group of states.

The United States and the Soviet Union have bilateral agreements, including military and economic support, with some North African nations: the U.S. with Egypt and Morocco; the USSR with Libya, Algeria, and, to a limited degree, with Morocco.<sup>18</sup>

However, at present and in the foreseeable future, the East-West confrontation in North Africa is less complex and influential than in the Middle East. It seems likely that, only with exceptional and unpredictable events or significant policy modifications, tensions between Morocco and Algeria and the conflict between Libya and Egypt would result in armed confrontation between these states. It will also be interesting to follow the future of Soviet support and its activities in the area, as this could change the current attitude of some of the countries in the international arena.

In summary, although elements of crises exist in North Africa, such as boundaries disputes, different ideologies, instable relations among nations and support for international terrorism, these crises are of less significance than those in other areas of the Mediterranean.

#### Middle Eastern Countries

The Middle East includes the 'Mashrak' (literally 'land of the East' in Arabic), comprising Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Persian Gulf with Iran and Iraq as the most significant countries.

It is the linkage point of three continents and a zone of fusion/struggle of races, cultures, political regimes, and religions. Strategically, it connects the Middle East oil producers and the Western developed countries, and it has increasingly profited from its favorable geographically central position.

The political aspects of the situation in the Middle East has been presented in the following terms:

"...uncertain of their own strength, Arab governments have increasingly turned to the USSR for support against Zionism and its patrons. At times, too, it has been possible to take advantage of American divergence in policy from that of Britain and/or France and the USA's other European allies (e.g. over oil concessions, Algeria, Cyprus, Suez, and the Western response to international terrorism). Moreover the Middle East may offer a counterpoise to the forces balanced within the other southern extremity of Asia. Thus, the present situation in many ways resembles that of the pre-1914 Balkans, with a number of small and antagonist states maneuvering between independence and 'protection' from a great power in the background. But the Balkans never possessed more than half the world's oil, or had large groups of their nationals as sympathetic, involved minorities living inside the antagonistic super-states."<sup>19</sup>

Expanding from this quotation, it can be assessed that elements of tension in this area are: the rigidity of Israel in its relations with the Arab countries and the Palestinians in particular; the Iran-Iraq conflict (for which the current truce stage does not offer much hope for a final settlement); the difficult situation in Lebanon and the other "minor" problems existing in the African Horn.<sup>20</sup>

The probabilities of a new direct confrontation between Israel and the Arab countries seem now lessened, after the already mentioned Camp-David agreements and the new attitude of Egypt,

but tension between Israel and Syria is always present. The new declared intentions of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) to proceed toward a pacific solution of its conflict with Israel has to be matched with the behavior of the Palestinian population living in the Israeli occupied territories, who are continuing their uprising with renewed fury.<sup>21</sup> The acceptance of these proposals by the other more radical Palestinian groups, who seem to intend to continue their past policy of terrorist attacks against Israel, is uncertain, and without such agreement, the current moderation displayed by the PLO is threatened.

Economically, the area is characterized by different levels of industrial and technological development and a non-uniform availability of raw materials. Israel is the only country with significant industrial development, including the more advanced technologies. The major oil producers, on the contrary, do not have much potential for immediate development, considering the variation in oil prices and their high military expenses, which prevent them from making significant investments in other productive domestic sectors. For the non-oil producer countries, the situation is obviously worse. The area needs financial and technological investment, and the West European countries and Japan, in addition to the U.S., can offer them.

To summarize, the crises and potential conflicts in the Middle East call for sustained coordination from outside to create conditions for peace and stability, to mediate the currently unresolved tensions and to support a definite improvement in internal development.

## Considerations

The political-military situations presented for these separate groups of nations and their interconnected economic, cultural, religious and political factors, which have been briefly examined, provide the basis for some understanding of possible regional evolutions and to the likely increase/decrease of the interrelationships among the various groups and sub-systems.

The countries of the West European subgroup (Spain, France, and Italy) have not completely developed all their combined potential influence during crisis situations, such as wars, tensions, or terrorist actions, because of a lack of political coordination and the greater tendency to seek the protection of their own short-term national interests rather than to take common, unified action. Yugoslavia is also currently at a turning point for its political and economic development, which will be affected by its internal ethnic and economic problems. The assistance that might be provided by either the West or the Eastern bloc could change permanently its current attitude of nonalignment.

The Greek-Turkish dispute, along with the limited level of internal development (military, economic, and social) of these countries, call for significant Western intervention, from every institution that this is possible (NATO, Economic European Community, Western European Union, etc.), to redress their attitudes and influence their future development.

The West European countries could also play a positive role

toward the North African countries, given the special relations and mutual interests they share with some of the countries (mainly Tunisia, Egypt and Algeria), and could effectively support initiatives sponsored by the U.S., if timely coordination would be sought.

At the same time, the solution of existing conflicts and the search for stability in the Mediterranean area are vital elements for a balanced economic structure, both regionally and globally, given also the very high dependence of the majority of Western countries on the oil produced in the area and on the maritime flow of traffic for their import/export activities. (Appendix 1 - E )

Obviously, there are some factors and differences that cannot be eliminated, such as those related to culture, religion, and the "attitudes" toward better conditions of life, but it is critically important to try every way for a positive modification of the current situation.

The newly declared Soviet support for U.N. intervention in the area, continued but reduced military support to some countries or groups and the coordinated action of the European Community represent elements to be carefully examined for future improvement. In particular, it has been correctly forecasted that the Soviets "will broaden their cooperation on oil matters with the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), opening a new door for relations with the Arab Gulf states and Iran. And they will continue to push for a significant role in any future Arab-Israeli international peace conference".<sup>22</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1. Chipman, p. 3.
2. Rainer W. Rupp, "Burden Sharing and the Southern Region of the Alliance," in Politics and Security in the Southern Region of the Alliance, ed. by Douglas T. Stuart, p. 27.
3. See Angel Vinas, "Spain and NATO: Internal debate and External Challenges," in NATO's Southern Region: Internal and External Challenges, ed. by John Chipman, pp. 140-194.
4. The expression "out-of-area" means all regions and locations (no matter how important they are) which are external to the "area of responsibility" (AOR) of any NATO Commander. Because of the defensive character of the Alliance, the limits of the AOR coincide with the national borders of the NATO members and the Mediterranean basin.
5. Mark L. Shwartz, "Italy's Role in NATO: Can It Swim With the Big Fish?", The Atlantic Community Quarterly, Fall 1987, p. 299.
6. Alberto Li Gobbi, "NATO's Southern Flank: Land Forces", in NATO and the Mediterranean, ed. by Lawrence S. Kaplan, Robert W. Clawson, and Raimondo Luraghi, p. 63.
7. Arthur S. Moreau Jr, Admiral, "The Defence of NATO's Southern Region," NATO Review, August 1986, p. 18.
8. Izzettin Gurdal, LTC, NATO and Turkey, pp. 10-11.
9. Admiral W. J. Crowe, former Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces Southern Europe, in a lecture given at the Royal United

Services Institute for Defence Studies on 24 March 1982, declared that

"Turkey is the only NATO nation that is Moslem, has ties with the Arab world, strong ties, and is on the flank of any possible thrust into Iran. Turkey's facilities, forces, political orientation, air space and transportation systems all assume a large role and significance in today's political-military environment, particularly if we are concerned with oil, the Middle East or Near East. In other words, Turkey's position demands our attention and our understanding of her unique internal problems as well as the fact that she is important to us strategically."

W. J. Crowe, Admiral, "American Power: Support to NATO's Southern Flank", Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, March 1983, p. 13.

10. Interesting and diverging analyses of the existing contrasts between Greece and Turkey and its consequences for the cohesiveness and the credibility of NATO defense in the area are found in the thesis of LTC Gurdal (see Note No. 8) and in: Robert J. Davis, COL, Cyprus: The Key to Stability on the Southern Flank of NATO.

11. Lawrence S. Kaplan and Robert W. Clawson, "NATO and the Mediterranean Powers in Historical Perspective," in NATO and the Mediterranean, ed. by Lawrence S. Kaplan, Robert W. Clawson and Raimondo Luraghi, p. 17.

12. Chipman, p. 2.

13. Lois A. Aroian and Richard P. Mitchell, The Modern Middle East and North Africa, p. 2.

14. Ibid., p. 367.

15. W. B. Fisher, "Egypt - Physical and Social Geography,"



in The Middle East and North Africa, p. 347.

16. Ronald Reagan, National Security Strategy of the United States, p. 34.

17. Atlas of United States Foreign Relations, pp. 34-36.

18. Ibid., pp. 89-93.

19. W. B. Fisher, "The Middle East and North Africa: an Introduction," in The Middle East and North Africa, pp. 18-19.

20. The already quoted The Modern Middle East and North Africa contains an interesting and exhaustive review of the situation in the Middle East, its historical background and its likely development, from which some of the considerations contained here are taken

21. Johanna Mc Geary, "Breakthrough," and Ed Magnuson, "A Dance of Many Veils," Time, 26 December 1988, pp. 18-27.

22. Warren Richey, "Gains in Gulf Look Less Certain for Gorbachev", The Christian Science Monitor, 24 January 1989, p. 1.

## CHAPTER IV

### NATO SITUATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

#### U.S. Presence in the Mediterranean

In order to assess the possible existence of conflicts for the U.S. between its involvement with NATO and other national interests, a brief analysis of U.S. forces deployed in the Mediterranean area with a NATO mission will be conducted, along with a review of the major military issues to be faced in the Southern Region.

When the media and the population of the United States refer to NATO and to its problems, they usually refer to the Central Region, and the Southern Region is seldom mentioned. This situation, in my view, is abnormal, in consideration of the significant U.S. units deployed in the Mediterranean area.

In fact, as of June 1988, the U.S. military personnel in the Mediterranean totalled about 51,000, with more than 20,000 afloat. These forces were based mainly in Spain (8384), Italy (14,732), Greece (3,369), and Turkey (4,884).<sup>1</sup>

In terms of operational units and capability of power projection, the Navy is the most significant component. In fact, the Sixth Fleet, in its normal configuration, is deployed

in the Mediterranean Sea with

"ships and aircraft capable of warfare across the entire spectrum of potential conflict. It is independent of land bases and can operate indefinitely at sea...Airpower is the principal strength of the Sixth Fleet. Jet aircraft from the modern aircraft carriers can reach any corner of the Mediterranean. Supporting the carrier in the overall Sixth Fleet role are cruisers, destroyers, submarines, amphibious ships with an embarked reinforced battalion of U.S. Marines, replenishment ships and maritime patrol aircraft. All together, an average of 30 ships, 100 aircraft and 20,000 men and women make up the Sixth Fleet. When it operates under the direction of NATO during hostilities, the fleet is a major element in the combined naval forces charged with the defense of Southern Europe".<sup>2</sup>

In this event, the commander of the fleet comes under command of the Commander in Chief of Southern Europe (CINCSOUTH) with his designation as Commander, Naval Striking and Support Forces, Southern Europe (COMSTRIKEFORSOUTH). In peacetime, he reports through the normal U.S. naval chain of command.

The U.S. air forces deployed in the Southern Region are grouped under the Sixteenth Air Force, whose Headquarters is located in Spain while its subordinate wings and groups are deployed in Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey.<sup>3</sup>

This air arm represents a formidable element of power, which can be immediately projected wherever an emergency may occur. Its employment under the "NATO flag" is therefore extremely important. At the same time, under circumstances that will be described in the next chapter, these air forces are also the first element that the U.S. National Command Authority could use to achieve its own national goals.

The Army is more limited as far as current total force

deployment is concerned. Plans exist, however, to increase significantly the Army's presence in an emergency, with a National Guard Brigade to be deployed in Italy, the 24th Infantry Division in Turkey, etc..<sup>4</sup>

The U.S. presence in the Mediterranean is not without problems. There are current discussions about the possible reduction of U.S. forces deployed abroad, which might include U.S. forces from this area. It is true that on several occasions some states of the Southern Region have called for withdrawal of the U.S. presence in their countries. Most recently, because of a lack of perfect alignment between U.S. and local interests and the pressure of dissident groups and popular demonstrations, Spain and Greece have been active in this regard. In the case of Spain, in particular, its request for the withdrawal of U.S. airforces deployed at Torrejon resulted in the NATO decision to redeploy a Tactical Fighter Squadron from Torrejon to Italy.

But, despite these problems, it is my opinion that the U.S. presence in the Mediterranean should not change. The United States should resist reacting emotionally to similar demands. Its role as a guarantor of peace and stability should give it the political and diplomatic firmness to resist these pressures and look more for the "continuity of dedication" from these governments than responding to some limited pressure groups and/or "noisy" minorities.

#### NATO Structure in the Area and Current Issues

The NATO chain of command, existing partly in peacetime and

to be fully activated in the emergency, consists of the Southern European Command (AFSOUTH) as a Major Subordinate Command (MSC) of the Allied Command Europe (ACE), with its Principal Subordinate Commands (PSC) consisting of Command of Land Forces South (LANDSOUTH) located in Italy, Command of Land Forces in South East (LANDSOUTHEAST) located in Turkey, and Command of Naval and Air Forces South (NAVSOUTH and AIRSOUTH respectively) located in Italy.<sup>5</sup>

When (and if) a positive solution to the current issues with Greece will be found, hopefully the Greek forces will be reintegrated within the NATO military structure; at that moment, a Command of Land Forces South Center (LANDSOUTHCENT) will be formed in Greece, and the forces currently attached to AIRSOUTH will also increase, with the formation of another Air Subordinate Command (7th ATAF), which will join the already existing 5th and 6th ATAFs.

In case of emergency, the responsibility of CINCSOUTH includes the direction of land, naval, and air operations within his Area of Responsibility (AOR).

In peacetime, the mission of CINCSOUTH and of his subordinate commanders is: to check organization, training level and equipment of the assigned or earmarked forces; to study, plan and keep updated the defense plans within the AOR; and to standardize the operational procedures. They do not have forces available, with the exception of the air defense assets, which are under the operational control of AIRSOUTH during peacetime, as air defense represents a "continuous" task to be performed without distinc-

tion between peace and war.

CINCSOUTH also plans and exercises, when so directed, the employment of the Europe Mobile Force (Land) (AMF), for contingency areas in Italy and Turkey.

The coastal and internal defenses remain under national responsibility, both in peace and wartime, but are to be maintained in close coordination with NATO authorities.

The area of responsibility of CINCSOUTH is the widest among all the European regional NATO commands. From West to East, it ranges for about 2,500 miles from Gibraltar to the Eastern border of Turkey; from North to South, it is about 900 miles from the Alps to the shores of North Africa. Other elements of difference from the other NATO Regions are: the aforementioned political, ethnic, social and economic heterogeneity among the members; the instability of some local situations; the geographic separation from the NATO Central Region and the existence of separate operational land theaters (North-East of Italy, Greek-Turkish Thrace, Eastern Turkish border). As far as the strategic aspects are concerned,

"the general NATO problem in the area has long been recognized as deriving from the natural difficulty in defending four separate theatres: Italy, Greece and Western Turkey, Eastern Turkey and the Mediterranean sea. Communications over this area are extremely thin, partly because national systems remain inadequate and also because those that exist are not perfectly compatible. Geographically, NATO is at a disadvantage in so far as its ability to move ground troops throughout the area is lower than the Warsaw Pact's ability to present a significant threat to them."<sup>6</sup>

The internal situation of North African countries is not officially included in any plan of intervention. But it is obvious

that political, military or economic events in these countries are carefully monitored by CINCSOUTH. The countries of the area do not represent any significant threat to NATO as a whole; at the same time they can be serious elements of instability, especially if there are interventions from the USSR, directly or through a third country. This threat could be rather indirect, aimed at the political or economic systems as well as a sort of blackmail by terrorist-type actions.

The Middle East and the Persian Gulf areas, whose strategic and economic importance have been extensively highlighted in Chapter III, are also outside the CINCSOUTH's area of responsibility.

Even though both those regions are included in the "area of interest" of the Alliance, CINCSOUTH's possible courses of actions are drastically limited. Actually, he is not allowed to take or even to plan any intervention with his assigned or earmarked forces because it would be "out-of-area". This situation represents the main element of potential conflict between the United States and NATO, due to existing U.S. relations and interests with countries other than NATO. This potential conflict will be extensively examined in the next chapter, but it is fully recognized within the Alliance, and has been assessed by Admiral Moreau, former CINCSOUTH, in the following terms:

"the Southern Region is today, and will be in the future, an area in which the Alliance could face some of its most serious challenges. Southern Region nations are adjacent to an area that has captured the attention of the world, from Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq war, the Persian Gulf, the Middle East, Libya, Chad, to many other regional conflicts and sources of tension."<sup>7</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1. Department of Defense, Worldwide Manpower Distribution, 30 June 1988, pp. 19-21.
2. Navy Fact File, October 1987, p. I-25.
3. "Air Force Almanac", Air Force, May 1987, pp. 133-136.
4. Referring to the Army component, Gen. Crosbie E. Saint, Commander in Chief, U.S. Army, Europe and Seventh Army, has stated that:

"In the Southern Region, USAREUR is assigning ever increasing responsibilities to its major subordinate command on the scene, the Southern European Task Force (SETAF), Headquarters in Vicenza, Italy. SETAF has planning and support responsibilities for all U.S. Army Forces in the Mediterranean area. Given a monumental task and minimal resources, SETAF does a magnificent job. Its support to the 24th Infantry Division's 1987 deployment from the continental United States to Turkey for participation in exercise 'Display Determination' is a good example.

SETAF also commands 3rd Battalion, 325 Infantry Airborne Combat Team, USAREUR's only airborne unit aside from our Special Forces at Bad Tolz. This unit is the Army's major contribution to the ACE Mobile Force, a multinational Brigade-size unit designed to show NATO solidarity in times of crisis. This reinforced airborne battalion regularly trains with our allies and other U.S. forces throughout the Mediterranean area and in West Germany...".

Crosbie E. Saint, "Changes Pose Challenges for Army Forces, Europe", Army - The 1988-89 Green Book, October 1988 , p. 70.

5. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization - Facts and Figures, pp. 105-112.
6. Chipman, p. 38.
7. Moreau, p. 14.



## CHAPTER V

### US INTERESTS AND RELATIONS

The United States is linked to the countries of the Mediterranean and the Middle East with long-standing ties, which range from political agreements to economic relations to military commitment. There are historical, political, ideological, and cultural reasons for this linkage, but there are also significant political-military and economic interests to be defended.

The United States has special relations with France, Italy, Spain, Greece and Turkey and is committed to their defense within the terms of the Atlantic Treaty. The tasks derived from its commitment to NATO can be performed due to the aforementioned significant presence of the U.S. military forces.

Beyond the military commitment, however, the political and economic relations are not always smooth: differences exist between those countries and United States, even if there are no immediate crises or foreseeable elements of serious disruptions. To list only the most recent cases, there are the already mentioned continuous discussions on base rights, controversies over the ways that terrorism should and could be faced, and the constraints on the commitment of European forces for "out-of-

area" interventions.

But there are no doubts that the U.S. considers the Mediterranean area strategically important in itself and for its proximity to the Middle East and Persian Gulf. In the words of Admiral Crowe, former CINCSOUTH, the Mediterranean "is important not only to Italy, Greece and Turkey but also to all NATO - the United Kingdom, United States, Western Europe."<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, it is in the U.S. interest to provide regional countries with political, economic, and military assistance, which it does under economic and military assistance programs. In these ways, the assisted nations may strengthen their own independence and viability and will be able to counter effectively the threat directed against the crucial regions outside the NATO area.

The U.S. has also political and economic linkages with Northern Africa. The import/export balance is not meaningful for the U.S., due to its extremely high level of production and wealth, but for countries of North Africa, such as Egypt and Algeria, commercial trade with the United States is of extreme importance. (Appendix 2) It is obvious that these economic ties generate political and diplomatic influence.

Similarly, "North Africa is an important oil and gas supplier to European countries (by comparison with the Gulf, its supplies have the advantage of coming from a nearer and much safer region.... Algeria supplied 25-30% of European gas imports in 1983).<sup>2</sup> In turn, the stability of those countries becomes important for the U.S. because, in supporting the security of

those countries, the economic prosperity of its European allies is assured and the export of American products to Europe can be maintained.

In the Middle East, the main U.S. ally is Israel, and its security represents a vital interest for the U.S.A.. Even without any formal treaty, as in the case of NATO, there is no doubt the U.S. will never permit Israel to be destroyed. There are various reasons for this firm commitment: some are very clear, such as the strategic importance of Israel in the Middle East for its proximity to the Persian Gulf; others are more vague, such as the existence of a strong Jewish lobby with great influence in the U.S. Congress and the moral tie deriving from the action of the U.S. in 1948 when the Israeli state was first formed, along with the sustained political, economic and security support displayed since then.

The practical effects of this linkage have been seen in various situations: from the continuous support given to Israel within the U.N., where every resolution of the Security Council against Israel for its military actions towards its neighbors has been consistently opposed by the U.S., to direct support under forms of economic and military aid, and to the efforts of American diplomacy to settle its problems with Egypt and other Arab countries.

The U.S. also has strong and long-standing relations and vital interests with other countries of the region, among which are: the presence of oil; the importance of those states as U.S. export markets; and the desire to avoid an expansion of Soviet

influence in the region. The declared economic interests of U.S.A. in the area have been presented in the following terms by the Reagan Administration:

"We also pursue an integrated approach to secure our four long-standing objectives: maintaining freedom of navigation; strengthening the moderate Arab states; reducing the influence of anti-Western powers, such as the Soviet Union and Iran; and assuring access to oil on reasonable terms for ourselves and for our allies."<sup>3</sup>

Hopefully, the Bush Administration policy in the Persian Gulf will continue to be driven by the same elements.

Within the area, several U.S. associations and institutes support cultural ties, promote human resource developments, and maintain facilities for research, publication and dissemination of information. Beside the help given to the countries in which such institutions operate, they are also aimed at developing in the United States a more thorough understanding of the countries of the Middle East and North Africa.

However, according to Professor Cesare Merlini, a modification of the U.S. role in the area has occurred during the current decade: the U.S. has moved from the position of dominant mediator at the highest political level, to include efforts made personally by the President in the case of the Camp David agreements, to one in which the U.S. has played a role of "military presence and occasionally action, associated with a relatively low level of political and diplomatic activity."<sup>4</sup>

The necessity of stronger and more sustained action has been recently reaffirmed by former Secretary of States George Shultz,

who declared that the U.S. "cannot retreat into isolationism" or "reduce the commitment", as "world peace and prosperity depend mainly on the U.S."<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, the former Defense Secretary Frank C. Carlucci has highlighted that

"Israel, the Arab States, the Palestinians, the United States, and the Soviet Union all have a responsibility when it comes to peace. The U.S., on its part, has renewed its efforts to advance the peace process...We must all recognize that continuing unrest and violence benefits no one. Responsible action on the part of all parties is necessary to change a status quo that has clearly become untenable...."<sup>6</sup>

All these elements will be considered in trying to define the possible crisis situations, how the U.S. will likely respond and the probable agreement/disagreement of the regional allies on such likely responses.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Crowe, p. 16.
2. Alvaro de Vasconcelos, "Europe, the Middle East and North Africa: Part II", Adelphi Papers No. 230, Spring 1988, p. 48.
3. Ronald Reagan "National Security Strategy of the United States", The White House, p. 29.
4. Cesare Merlini, "Europe, the Middle East and North Africa: Part I", Adelphi Papers No. 230, p. 41.
5. Department of State, "Fundamentals of U.S. Foreign Policy", p. 97.

6. Frank C. Carlucci, "The Outlook for Peace in the Middle East", American-Arab Affairs, Fall 1988, p. 79.

## CHAPTER VI

### POSSIBLE CRISIS SITUATIONS AND LIKELY U.S. INTERVENTIONS

The environment described in the previous chapters could create crisis situations where incompatibility might exist between the U.S. reactions to protect its national interests and its commitment to NATO. But, before assessing the level of the U.S. commitment in a possible NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation and in other possible scenarios, it seems appropriate to conduct a quick examination of some recent events where the U.S. has expressed political evaluations different from its allies and has taken unilateral military measures.

#### Review of Recent Critical Events

During the Arab-Israeli War of 1973, when the U.S. started to provide major logistical support to Israel, the material and equipment were taken from U.S. stocks prepositioned in Europe. This action generated a major complaint from interested European countries, who did not want to give overflight permission because they feared possible Arab retaliation which would cut or reduce their oil supply.

In the recent crisis in the Persian Gulf, the U.S. deployed a major naval force in the area, projecting their power in South West Asia to protect U.S. reflagged Kuwaiti ships and to reaffirm international navigation rights. The United States redeployed a carrier group from the Mediterranean, apparently without formal consultation with NATO, as has usually been done by other nations on the occasion of significant national force modifications. This is not to say that the U.S. should not conduct its own policy, or that the U.S. action did not contribute to the termination of or at least a cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq War. The concern is with the apparent lack of consultation and on the situation of relative weakness that has been created in the Mediterranean with the repositioning of part of the U.S. ships.

Even if the final result was positive, as a new sense of solidarity was demonstrated among the NATO European allies (the Federal Republic of Germany, for example, decided to redeploy some of its ships to the Mediterranean to offset U.S. redeployments, which was an unprecedented decision), the temporary dispute between the U.S. and its allies could have been avoided.

Furthermore, when the United States began to apply pressure on the Libyan government because of its support for international terrorist activities, and, more specifically, when it decided to take active measures against Libya in retaliation for a clear Libyan link to a terrorist attack which produced losses of American lives and as a warning to that state to stop supporting terrorist groups, the action was taken unilaterally. This was



due in part to the need for operational secrecy and rapid action, but, in part, it was taken without consultation because U.S. policy diverged from the position of its European allies.

Referring to this action, the Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi declared that, "notwithstanding the concern expressed by the Italian Government and by all governments of the Atlantic Alliance and the European community, the U.S. government has maintained and realized its plan to attack Libya," and, furthermore, in regretting that the position taken by the European governments had been ignored by the United States, he argued that the decision "did not take appropriately into account the value of the European-American partnership in confronting of important issues."<sup>1</sup>

On the same subject it has been written that:

"...the April 1986 U.S. air attacks on Libya exposed the deep differences between the United States and several of its allies, as well strikingly dissimilar public attitudes in Europe and America over the wisdom of attacking Libya. U.S. media castigated Spain and France for refusing to let U.S. aircraft fly over their territories; European commentators expressed concern that disillusioned U.S. legislators might decide the time had come to bring home U.S. troops..."<sup>2</sup>

This clearly reflects the sometimes strongly different views held on the two sides of the Atlantic Ocean over particular issues.

Perhaps these examples are connected only to specific situations and do not reflect the intentions of the U.S. to proceed generally along a separate route in achieving its own objectives. But, because of the wide net of political, economic

and military relations that the U.S. has with other countries other than NATO in the Mediterranean area and out of it, these events could be taken as minor indicators of a general policy and could lead to the following question: if a major threat to U.S. political, economic and military interests is promulgated by a nation or a group of nations, will the United States respond unilaterally without coordinating or consulting with its allies?

#### NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation

Divergent evaluations have been expressed on the possibility of a direct NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation in the Mediterranean.

In fact, some sources consider the Southern flank of NATO the area where initial military operations could be conducted by the Warsaw Pact forces, either aimed at reaching the Middle East oil fields or as actions to disrupt the cohesion of the Alliance and to distract forces from the Central Region.<sup>3</sup>

Other sources, on the contrary, give more importance to the most recent USSR foreign policy developments and tend to exclude the possibility of a direct confrontation of the two Blocs in the Mediterranean. In particular, they consider likely that:

"the Soviet Union will not attempt to control the Southern Region totally except in circumstances of a direct and European-wide conflict between the two Alliances. At the moment, it is unlikely that a conflict could take place in the Mediterranean as the result of an aeronaval confrontation between the forces of the United States and USSR.

War may occur as an extension of military activity in other areas of Europe or as a result of a crisis that is initially external to the two alliances, (such) as a conflict in the Middle East...As long as it is absolutely clear that military activity in the Southern

Region by the Soviet Union, or any other power, will be met by Western forces, both European and out-of-area disturbances could be limited in their scope."<sup>4</sup>

It is my opinion that this second possibility is the most likely, at least in the foreseeable future.

But if, despite every evidence, a direct action is conducted by the Warsaw Pact forces, it is without doubt that the United States will play a crucial role in the Mediterranean, as it represents the principal external provider of security to the allies in the Southern Region. In this event, all the U.S. naval, land and air forces present in the area or earmarked for a deployment under CINCSOUTH will operate under the "NATO flag" and are expected to be completely available and committed, even if some doubts could be expressed on the timing and the level of U.S. reinforcements to the South, as Washington is more focused in the Central Region of Europe, where the bulk of its units are committed.

The benefits of these U.S. action are self-evident both for the U.S. and for its European allies: without an effective protection of the sea lines of communication through Gibraltar and Suez, the Mediterranean countries would be "economically checked"; without an effective defense of the Aegean Sea, Soviet naval and air power could exploit all their effectiveness toward the NATO forces deployed in the area, and, from there, they could expand north or west or southeast in the direction of the Middle East ; without efficient anti-submarine actions, vital replenishment and sustainment could not be performed.

### Other Possible Crisis Situations

Outside the NATO-Warsaw Pact scenario, crisis situations could originate from political-military actions, economic difficulties and terrorist actions.

Political-military actions are possible mainly in the Middle East, as the other disputes existing between Greece and Turkey, Algeria and Morocco, Libya and Egypt, etc., are unlikely to lead to direct armed confrontation. But the eventual initiation of such wars in areas other than Middle East would impact marginally on the United State. Unless such events would be perceived as Soviet backed actions against NATO, it is probable that the U.S. would not act directly.

The Middle East and the Persian Gulf, on the contrary, are areas where the possibility of future military action still exists. The Persian Gulf is one of the most important areas to the West and to the United States. With the current truce in the Iran-Iraq war, a moment of danger could arrive with the death of the Ayatollah Khomeini, which will leave a power vacuum in Iran, perhaps causing actions by Iranian minority groups or aggression by Iraq or both.

A direct war between Israel and the Arab countries is also still possible, but it is unlikely that it will be "triggered" by the Palestinian problem because of the Soviet Union's reduced support to the countries of the area and because of the new position that the PLO seems to have taken toward Israel.

Economic factors are other possible causes of potential

crises as the oil flow from the Middle East is vital to the Western economy, as is the investment of petrodollars. Any stoppage or significant reduction of that flow will impact directly on prices on the international market, and the international economic system could be disrupted by a crisis in the oil exporting countries.

The terrorist threat is another possible element of crisis. Terrorist actions will probably continue within the area, especially in Israel, Lebanon and other Arab countries but also outside of it. The situation sometimes seems to be in a state of lull, but, after short periods of terrorist inactivity, during which public opinion and the international arena begin to accept the illusion that it has stopped, there are sudden bursts that show all the tragic evidence of this danger. Although terrorism is unlikely to be a cause of direct confrontation, it can be the "trigger" for retaliatory actions, which could escalate beyond the level projected by initial planning.

In these described situations, will the United States act alone or will it seek cooperation and support from the European allies, proceeding with all the proper steps of NATO consultation? Which forces will it use?

Past examples seem to indicate that the decision to conduct national policy "at all cost" will prevail, thereby likely excluding desired consultations.

As far as the forces are concerned, it seems possible that the naval, air, and land assets immediately available in the area will be the sources likely to be used.

According to unclassified sources, it seems that already some forces currently in Europe are earmarked for transfer to the U.S. Central Command in case of an emergency in the Persian Gulf or elsewhere in the Middle East. Unless Congress is willing to expand the total size of the Armed Forces, which is extremely unlikely with the current budget constraints, the number committed to the defense of Europe will diminish if there is a serious military situation in the Middle East or in the Indian Ocean. In this situation, there is no doubt that the Mediterranean theatre will be weakened, even if only temporarily, as far as the NATO perspective is concerned.

From the U.S. perspective and in consideration of the geographical configuration, if the depicted diversion of forces occurs, it would be in the U.S. interest to achieve both or at least one of the following options: to try to have the Mediterranean NATO countries available for the use of their land as a "springboard"; to convince those countries to assume responsibility for wider sea control in the area, in order to lighten the heavy tasks assigned to the Sixth Fleet and the other U.S. forces, which, in turn, could be redeployed where needed.

Unfortunately, past experiences do not provide much hope that these options will be taken. The Southern Region allies have shown the will to collaborate completely, or at least not to disagree, only on NATO-related questions, and the use of U.S. assigned facilities on their territories for out-of-area contingencies will most likely continue to be discussed and decided on a case-by-case and national basis.

The undertaking of more extended sea control in the Mediterranean seems to be a relatively more viable solution: the Italian Navy, among the others, is increasing its capabilities (a light carrier will soon be committed); French involvement can be assumed to be quite possible, given the new attitude that the French government has shown toward NATO; and the NATO structure is efficient and well trained, especially on the naval side, due to the frequent exercises of NAVOCFORMED. In my view, these "technical" options are viable, if the requisite political decision is taken.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Maurizio Cremasco, "Italy: A New Role in the Mediterranean?," in NATO's Southern Allies: Internal and External Challenges, ed. by John Chipman, p. 212.

2. John A. Reed, Germany and NATO, pp. 192-193

3. According to Gen. Crosbie E. Saint, "...Many analysts believe that if a NATO-Warsaw Pact conflict were to occur, it would begin on the flanks rather than in the Central Region. In light of this possibility, USAREUR's growing involvement on NATO's flanks must be seen as an increasingly important part of our mission to deter war...", in Army - The 1988-89 Green Book, p. 70.

4. Chipman, p. 48.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis conducted in the previous chapters has shown how the existing internal tensions, the importance of the Mediterranean area, and the interests involved have influenced the political decisions, the economic evolution and the military actions. The general picture resulting from this analysis is very composite and resolution of the conflicts will be difficult.

The United States has stated its objectives and has maintained its firm commitment; but it has also taken unilateral actions to protect its own national interests, sometimes in opposition to or in disagreement with its allies and friends. The diversion of U.S. forces to achieve the mentioned objectives has been considered unjustified and beyond the terms of the Atlantic Alliance in the view of European NATO members and will continue to be a source of complaints as has happened in the past.

But is divergence of analysis, policy, commitment, and behavior of the U.S. from those of its allies real or apparent? Does there exist a complete separation of objectives? Where is the most dangerous threat located?



As former Secretary of State George P. Shultz has stated, referring to the Middle East:

"...We share long-standing friendship and mutual concerns with Israel and other pro-Western states in the region. The security, stability and economic health of these states is an important goal in its own rights, and it helps us achieve our objectives in the Middle East and elsewhere.

The economic well being of the free world is intimately tied to the continued availability of Middle Eastern oil....We have a strategic interest in insuring that this region does not come under a hostile power. The ascendancy in the region of either the Soviet Union or revolutionary Iran would be highly detrimental to U.S. interests."<sup>1</sup>

This firm commitment might change slightly, if we make a judgement based on the initial steps of the new U.S. Administration. But, if this stated policy will be pursued completely, it must be expected that the involvement of U.S. forces will be maintained at the current level and, if possible, increased.

As shown, the political, economic, cultural, religious, and moral elements of tension between East and West are not important enough to be a cause of direct confrontation between the two Blocs or of a major disruption of the international system, if they impact one at a time; their combination, however, could threaten regional, or even global, stability and peace. This has been true in the past forty years and is likely to continue to be true in the future.

For a tentative settlement of the East-West conflict, it is important to see if "the Soviet Union and United States can work in parallel, if not jointly". The finding of a viable solution "will depend partly on how Soviet and U.S. leaders conduct their

overall relationship", but it depends also "on how fully the big powers support the United Nations' peacemaking efforts."<sup>2</sup>

In the Persian Gulf, in particular, the declared interest of the U.S. in maintaining the security and the stability of the area is vitally important for Europe, because it is critical to the economic health of Western Europe and Japan to maintain free access to Gulf oil resources, as it is vital for the United States, because of the expected increase in dependency on Middle East oil in the future. The southern regions of Europe along with Japan will receive full benefit from this action, because of the stabilizing role performed by the U.S. presence in the area.

Therefore it can be concluded that there is no conflict between U.S. national interests and NATO involvement in the Mediterranean: in defending its own interests out-of-area, the United States will indirectly defend those of all the European states, as it will avoid the development of destabilizing situations.

The use of U.S. forces currently assigned or earmarked to AFSOUTH will not have a disruptive effect on the force balance, in the absence of immediate Warsaw Pact's action, only if carefully planned bilateral or NATO-wide steps will be taken. The involvement of the Southern Region allies should be sought by the United States through persistent political and diplomatic action, which should emphasize the benefits mentioned above.

The moderate North African countries can also be used as a vehicle to create a more stable situation and to isolate the more extremist countries and the "troublemakers". The recently initi-

ated contacts and the positive steps toward a full recognition of the PLO as a trustworthy and moderate representative of the Palestinians, even with the doubts expressed on them, represents another track that seems worthy to be followed.

It is my view also that the European riparian countries of the Mediterranean should do more, in terms of political action, economic assistance and military commitment, instead of continuing to blame the United States for its behavior.

They should be politically and socially more aware of the strategic importance of conducting an intensified cooperation on a bilateral and multilateral basis. The "separate but combined" naval intervention in the Persian Gulf is an initial example of how this objective could be achieved.

But the action of the European countries could be perhaps more effective in other sectors: economic aid to the moderate countries of North Africa and Middle East, to alleviate the major development problems that those nations have to face; careful political and diplomatic action to overcome existing disputes; and military assistance in the form of equipment sales followed by "in place" training, to be used as an instrument of self-defense and national development

The measures already taken by Italy in recent years and others planned for the future are "on the mark" to achieve the above objectives. In fact, Italy has conducted a careful, even though sometime over-criticized or underestimated, political and diplomatic action, aimed at resolving regional conflicts. The cooperation and mutual defense agreement with Malta, which has

excluded the USSR and Libya from expanding their influence on this small but strategically important island is one example. The constant dialogue with the PLO, begun well before any other country and in preparation of the recent new "attitude" of Arafat toward Israel and U.N. resolutions is another. These steps have provided Italy the "confidence" of many Mediterranean countries and have contributed toward limiting Soviet influence in the area.

All these are only some initial suggestions that I think are worthy to be examined for the future.

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1. "Fundamentals of U.S. Foreign Policy", p. 56.
2. John D. Steinbrunner, Restructuring American Foreign Policy, p. 250.

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APPENDIX 1

CHARTS

A : COASTAL ECONOMIC VULNERABILITIES

B : AIR CONNECTIONS

C : STRATEGIC CHOKE POINTS

D : ENERGY SOURCES AND OIL FLOW

E : DEPENDENCY ON MARITIME TRAFFIC.



# COASTAL ECONOMIC VULNERABILITIES

(Reproduced with modifications from  
"ATLANTE STRATEGICO DEL MEDITERRANEO")

**LEGEND:**

Refineries (barrels per day)

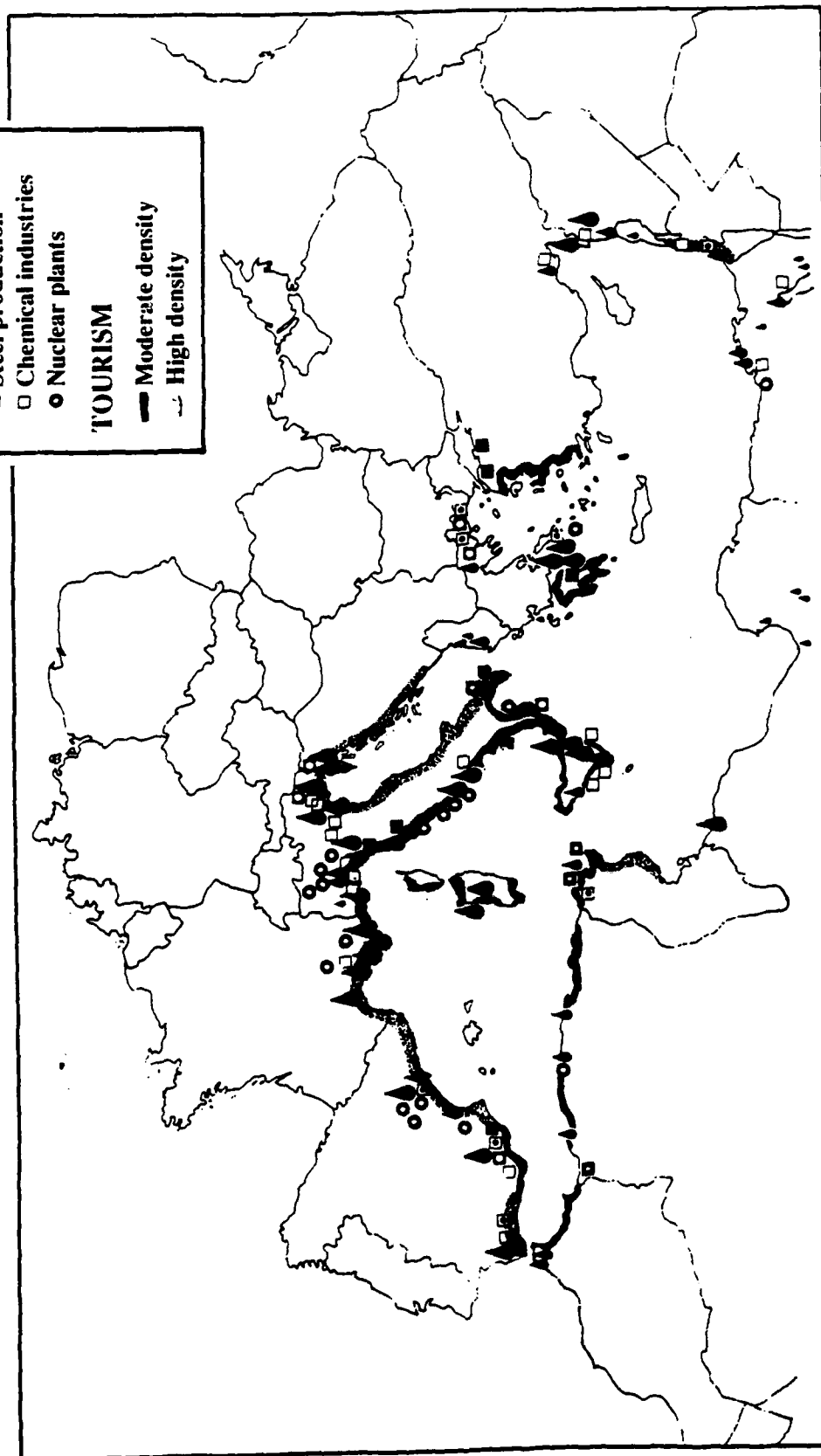
- ▲ Above 100,000
- △ 20,000/100,000
- Less than 20,000

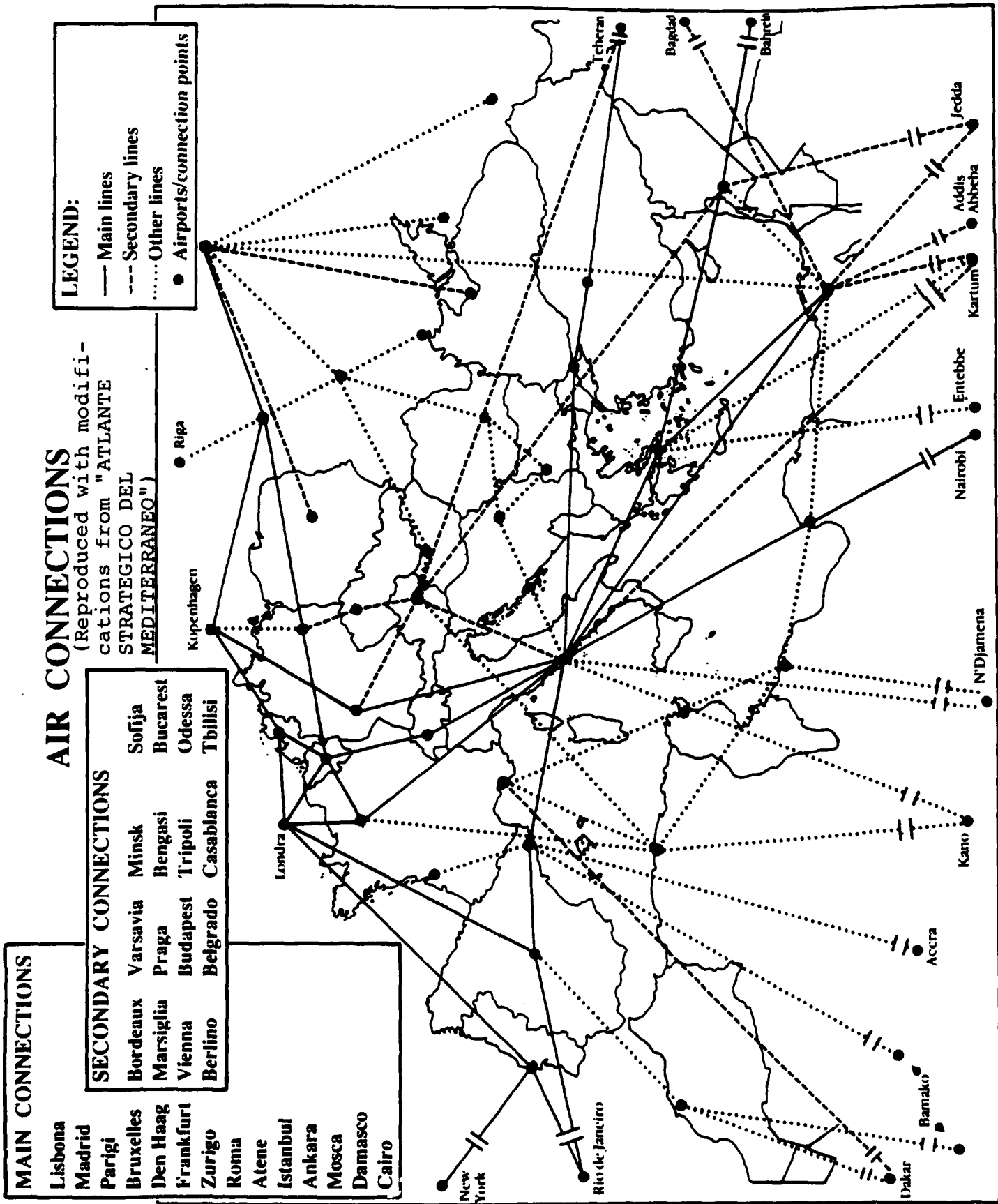
Industrial plant

- Zinc treatment
- ▣ Lead treatment
- Iron production
- Steel production
- Chemical industries
- Nuclear plants

**TOURISM**

- Moderate density
- - - High density



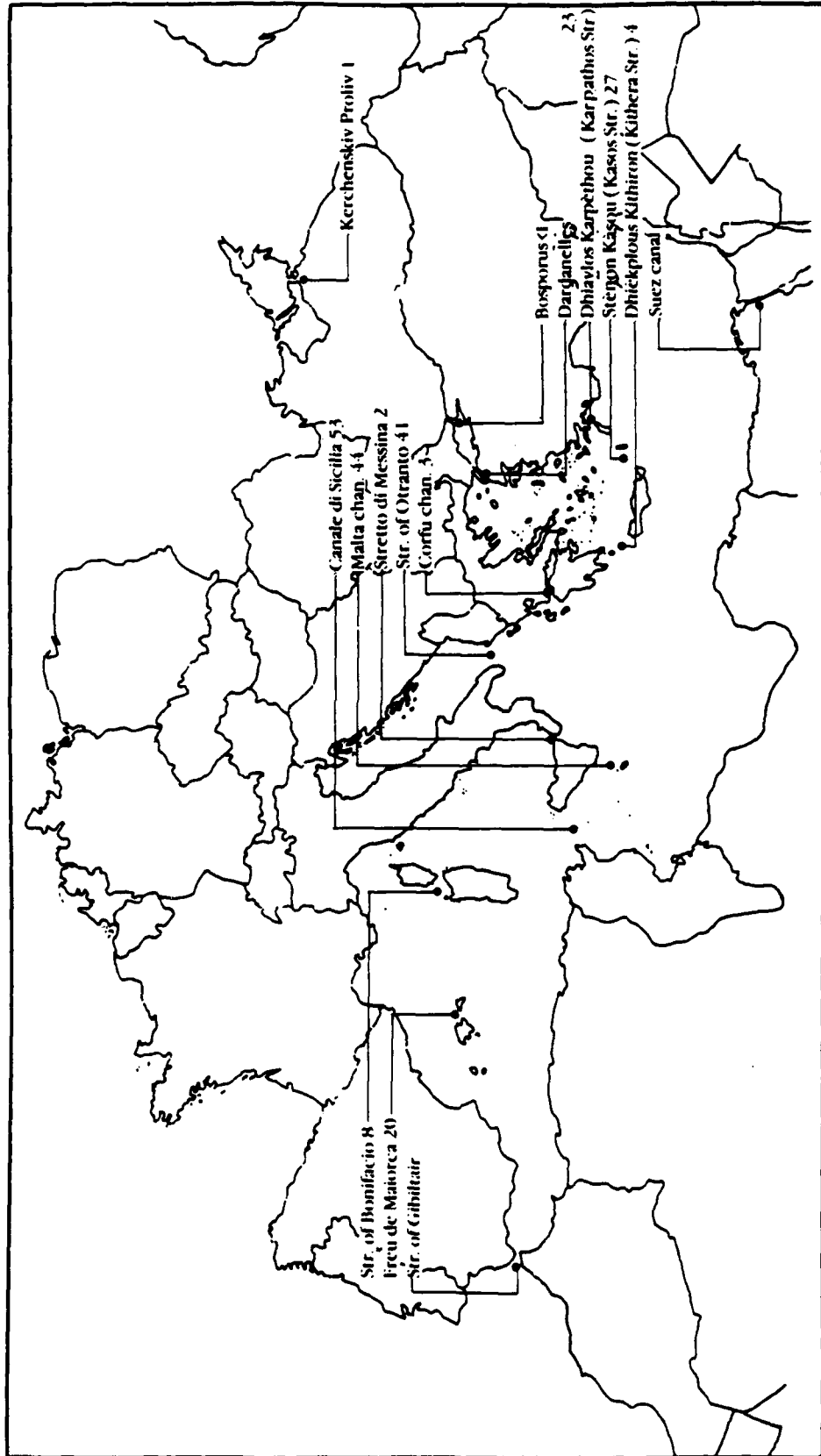


# STRATEGIC CHOKES POINTS

(Reproduced with modifications from "ATLANTE STRATEGICO DEL MEDITERRANEO")

**LEGEND:**

3 Minimum width in nautical miles

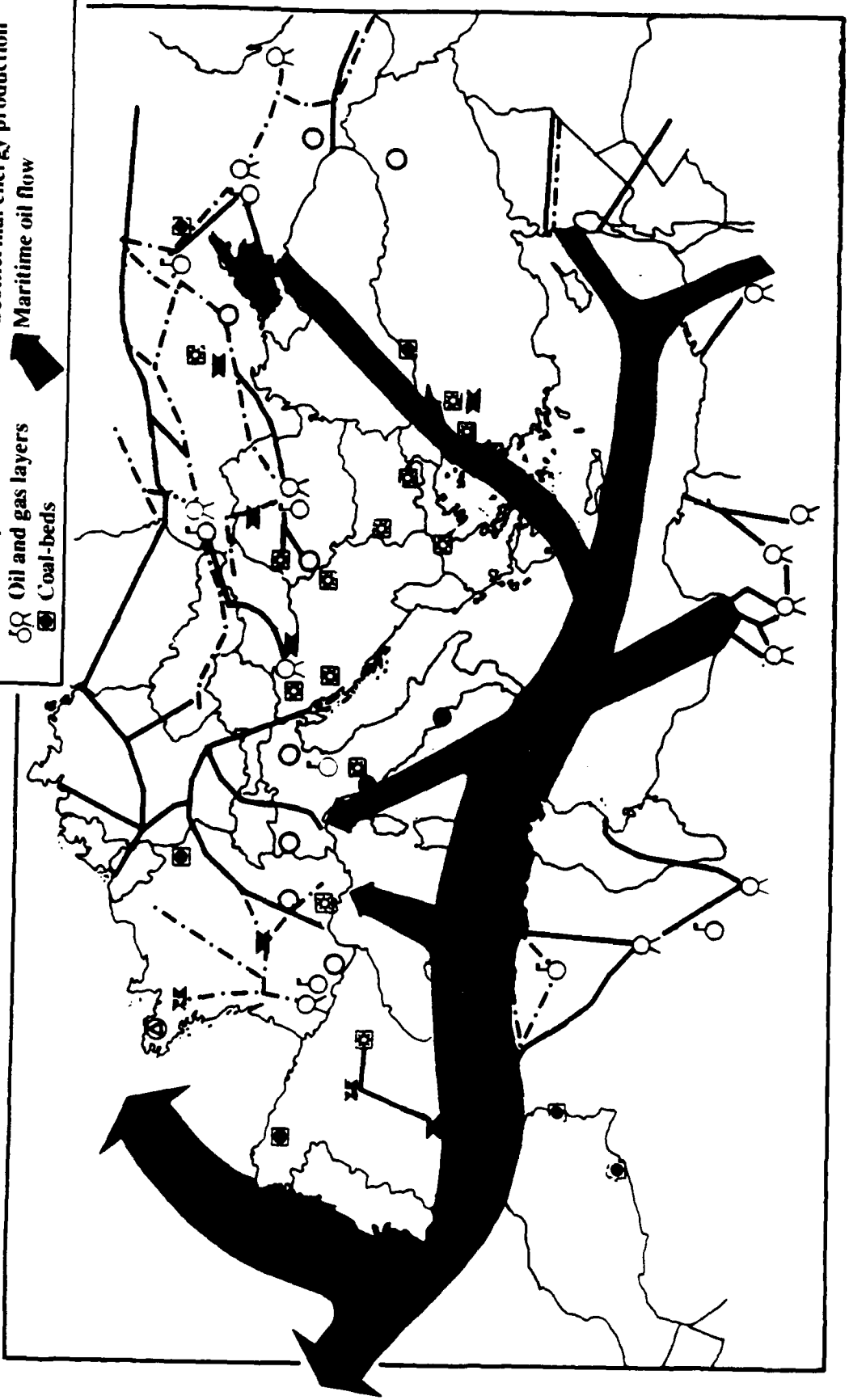


# ENERGY SOURCES AND OIL FLOW

(Reproduced with modifications from "ATLANTE STRATEGICO DEL MEDITERRANEO")

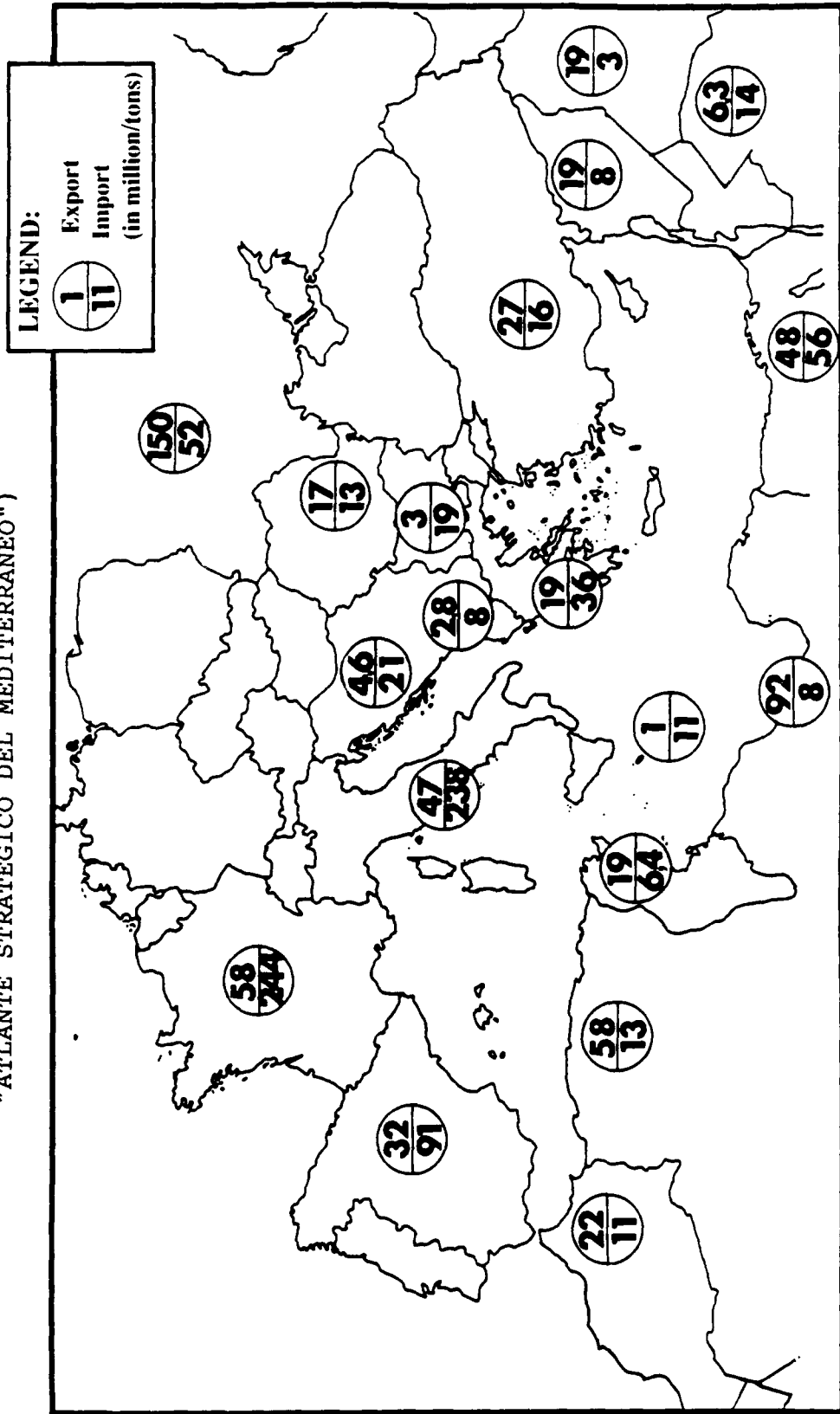
**LEGEND:**

— Pipelines	☒ Lignite-beds
--- Gas lines	⊠ Uranium-beds
⊗ Oil-layers	○ Hydroelectric energy production
⊘ Gas-layers	● Geothermal energy production
⊕ Oil and gas layers	➔ Maritime oil flow
⊞ Coal-beds	



# DEPENDENCY ON MARITIME TRAFFIC

(Reproduced with modifications from  
"ATLANTE STRATEGICO DEL MEDITERRANEO")



APPENDIX 2

U.S. ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH SOME MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES

TABLE 1 : U.S. EXPORT AND IMPORT RATE WITH SOME MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES.

TABLE 2 : POSITION OF U.S.A. IN THE ECONOMY OF SOME COUNTRIES OF MEDITERRANEAN AREA.

TABLE 3 : U.S.A. MILITARY DELIVERIES.

TABLE 4 : U.S.A. ECONOMIC LOANS AND GRANTS TO LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

**TABLE 1: U.S. EXPORT AND IMPORT RATE WITH SOME MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES**

COUNTRY	EXPORT		IMPORT		BALANCE		NOTE
	1985	1987	1985	1987	1985	1987	
MOROCCO	279	383	44	54	+235	+329	U.S. MILLION \$ SOURCE: Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook 1988
ALGERIA	430	426	2,426	2,144	-1,996	-1,718	
TUNISIA	256	119	14	73	+242	+46	
EGYPT	2,323	2,211	84	498	+2, 239	+1,713	
ISRAEL	2,580	3,130	2,201	2,724	+379	+406	

**TABLE 2: POSITION OF U.S.A. IN THE ECONOMY OF SOME COUNTRIES OF MEDITERRANEAN AREA**

(1987)

	MOROCCO	ALGERIA	TUNISIA	EGYPT	ISRAEL	JORDAN	NOTES
1ST PLACE		□		■	■ □		■
2ND PLACE	■						EXPORT
3RD PLACE		■		□		■	
4TH PLACE			■				□
5TH AND BEYOND	□ (14)		□ (8)			□ (19)	IMPORT

**TABLE 3: U.S.A. MILITARY DELIVERIES**

COUNTRY	1978	1980	1983	1985	1987	NOTES
EGYPT	57	209	1,037	669	1,166	U.S. MILLION \$ SOURCE: Handbook of Economic Statistics 1988
ISRAEL	948	853	459	717	1,511	
MOROCCO	99	69	67	55	46	
TUNISIA	2	11	26	161	434	

**TABLE 4: U.S.A. ECONOMIC LOANS AND GRANTS TO LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**

COUNTRY	1975	1980	1983	1985	1986	NOTES
MOROCCO	24	27	54	106	85	U.S. MILLION \$ SOURCE: Handbook of Economic Statistics 1988
TUNISIA	13	29	19	30	39	
EGYPT	370	1,166	1,005	1,292	1,293	
ISRAEL	353	786	785	1,950	1,898	
JORDAN	99	73	20	100	95	