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Since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the Soviet Union has maintained a sizable naval force in the Mediterranean as a political counterweight to the 6th Fleet. Although the Western Powers control the narrow entrances to that sea, the restricted geography of the area offers many possibilities for a mixed force of submarines, land-based bombers, and missile ships. Russia and the West both have legitimate interests in the Mediterranean area, and their naval rivalry will probably become the dominant feature of those waters in the coming decade. The greatest danger presented by the new situation, however, is the possibility that a dispute over secondary issues, largely out of the control of the major powers, may nevertheless escalate into a nuclear confrontation.

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN THE MEDITERRANEAN PERSPECTIVES FOR THE 1970'S

A research paper prepared

by

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Background. The Mediterranean Sea has always played an important role in European strategy. Since the days of Homer, it has provided an invaluable highway for the movement of goods, ideas, and invading armies. Although the sea itself has remained essentially unchanged over the centuries, it has assumed a variety of forms in men's eyes, depending on their vantage point and ambitions. Thus, with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the subsequent occupation of Egypt, the Mediterranean came under the domination of the British, who saw it as a vital segment of the maritime highway which stretched from England to India and beyond. This view of the Mediterranean as the gateway to the lands beyond Suez persisted through the Second World

War. Then the postwar decline of British power witnessed the transfer of dominant naval power in the area to the United States—the first wholly external power to command the Mediterranean.

The American view of the Mediterranean, as might have been expected, resembled that of the British, whose interests were subsumed under the rapidly expanding U.S. sphere of protective responsibility. The U.S. 6th Fleet became a potent and flexible instrument of U.S. power in the Mediterranean and played a major role in a variety of crises from Greece in 1947 to Lebanon in 1958. In addition, the nuclear strike forces of the two U.S. carriers, and later the Mediterranean patrols of *Polaris* submarines, added a new strategic dimension to the Mediterranean as a

link in the chain of military power surrounding the Soviet Union as part of the containment policy. The U.S. 6th Fleet was designated to become a NATO command in wartime, and the Mediterranean came to be viewed as the southern flank of NATO.

During the decade of the 1960's, the U.S.S.R. challenged Western dominance of the Mediterranean by introducing a permanent naval force into those waters. Although initially of modest proportions, this naval presence was important as a symbol of Soviet determination to establish its influence in a formerly Western preserve. It was a lonely and difficult business for the Soviet sailors who sailed their ships from one anchorage to another, always remaining in international waters under the intense scrutiny of Western surveillance and virtually never putting foot ashore, but the political dividends were large. The naval squadron was visible evidence that the Soviet Union could offer its Arab clients more than moral support, and the increasing boldness of Soviet naval operations in the Mediterranean paralleled the growing warmth and mutuality of interests between Moscow and Cairo.

By the end of the decade, especially in the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, the Soviet Union was emerging as a true Mediterranean power. No longer would the waters of the Mediterranean be considered hostile territory. The close political ties which the U.S.S.R. developed with the Arab States insured the availability of friendly ports, while at the same time the Western navies were finding themselves increasingly unwelcome in many Mediterranean harbors. Soviet influence in the Middle East was an established fact, and the Soviet Mediterranean squadron began to rival and even surpass the 6th Fleet in sheer numbers. By the end of 1969 it was clear that the attitudes developed over a century of British and NATO dominance were no longer

reliable guides. A reassessment was in order.

The purpose of this paper is to take a fresh look at the Mediterranean in light of the Soviet challenge. What is the nature of the Soviet naval presence? Is it a credible military force or simply a political showpiece? Has the Soviet naval incursion affected the ability of the Western navies to perform their traditional functions, and if so, how much? What are the Soviet objectives in the area? Are they compatible or incompatible with Western interests? All of these questions are central to an understanding of how the Mediterranean of the 1970's is very different from the familiar sea of the preceding decade.

The Naval Balance. The geographic and political realities of the modern Mediterranean establish the setting for the naval rivalry which will probably be a dominant feature of those waters in the coming decade. This rivalry, though frequently visualized in purely military terms, cannot be separated from the political and geographic environment in which it occurs. Navies are never truly isolated from the land. The logistic umbilical cord which pumps life-giving supplies to afloat forces is firmly tethered ashore, and for acceptable efficiency it should not be too long. Men, regardless of their equipment, cannot exist forever on a diet of salt water and steel decks. Therefore, to perform at top effectiveness over long periods of time, a naval force should have friendly ports within reasonable proximity. And this has been the fortunate position of U.S. naval forces in the Mediterranean.

At the end of World War II in 1945, the Mediterranean was a Western lake, surrounded on the north by Western Allies and on the south by their colonies and clients. The effect of this friendly environment was to enable the U.S. 6th Fleet to function in support of Western political objectives without serious

political or military constraints. It served equally to insure that Soviet naval forces would have to operate at a serious disadvantage in the same waters.

Within 10 years, however, this had begun to change. The nationalist rebellions along the southern rim of the Mediterranean eroded the base of Western power in that area, and when Egypt turned to the U.S.S.R. for arms in 1955 as an alternative to the arms embargo by the West, it became clear that Western predominance was not to go unchallenged. The conspiracy of Britain, France, and Israel to attack Egypt over Suez in 1956, the landing of United States and British forces in the Levant in 1958, and the prolonged bitterness of the Algerian war with France firmly established the Western nations as "enemies" in the eyes of the nationalist leaders of the southern Mediterranean littoral. At the same time, the U.S.S.R. identified itself with the nationalist regimes, providing arms and political support. This may have been an inevitable progression of events, but it was facilitated by Western policies and attitudes. Hans Morgenthau has pointed out that,

...in large parts of the world there exists today an objective revolutionary situation. This revolutionary situation would exist even if Communism had never been heard of, and is in good measure a response to the Western teachings and examples of national self-determination and social reform. That these national and social revolutions are largely identified with Communism is primarily the result of the West's failure to identify with them morally and to support them materially.¹

Whatever the reasons, it became increasingly obvious by the mid-1960's that the West no longer enjoyed a

predominant position among the nations on the southern rim of the Mediterranean and that the Soviet Union found itself increasingly welcome there. This change in the political environment coincided with the development of a large Soviet Navy capable of operating far from the coasts of the U.S.S.R., and it was not long before the Russian Fleet began regular deployments to the Mediterranean.

Soviet desires to become a Mediterranean power have been traced by some writers to the time of Peter the Great, and there were certainly ample evidences of such ambitions in the late 18th century. However, recent Soviet naval expeditions to the Mediterranean began only in 1958 when the U.S.S.R. established a submarine base in Vlone, Albania. This venture ended in 1961 when Albania sided with Communist China in the first public airing of the Sino-Soviet dispute. As a result, the U.S.S.R. lost the use of the base and left four of its submarines in Albania where they have remained ever since.² After retiring to lick their wounds for several years, the Soviets returned in 1963 to introduce modest forces of surface ships and submarines into the Mediterranean once more.

These early deployments were probably designed primarily to test Soviet naval capabilities as a self-sustaining force far from any friendly bases or ports. The cautious nature of this new departure for the Soviet Navy was shown by its seasonal fluctuations, for the Soviet ships filtered in during the spring, reached a peak in the summer, and by Christmas had mostly returned home.³ In the earliest days, Soviet ships and submarines remained almost entirely in anchorages in international waters, mostly off Tunisia and in the eastern Mediterranean, with only occasional timid sorties. As their self-confidence increased, they expanded their operations, with submarines beginning to conduct longer submerged

patrols and surface ships trailing U.S. forces. Intelligence collection ships became familiar companions to the 6th Fleet sailors. Still the overall numbers remained small, and, despite occasional port calls, the Soviet presence was more a nuisance than a threat.

In 1967 the implied challenge to Western navies became a reality. During the Arab-Israeli war and thereafter, the Soviet force rose to unprecedented numbers. In mid-1967 the Soviet force included two cruisers, 15 destroyers, and 12 or more submarines with a large body of support ships and even a few amphibious ships.⁴ Although the numbers have varied and the composition of the force has taken various forms, the Soviet Navy has remained in strength ever since, and it must be assumed that it is now a permanent feature of the Mediterranean scene.

In its periods of peak deployment, the Soviet squadron is not dissimilar in numbers and composition to the 6th Fleet, with two exceptions: the Soviet lack of carriers and the presence of a very large Soviet submarine force. These two variations are interrelated and instructive.

The Soviet Union has no aircraft carriers. There is evidence to suggest that the construction of aircraft carriers was favored by at least some elements of the Soviet power structure at one time, but the notion was abandoned, possibly for economic reasons, at an early stage in Soviet post-World War II planning.⁵ Whatever the desires of the Soviet Navy may have been, however, the decision (1956-1960) to rely on submarines as the principal striking force of the navy, supported by missile-equipped surface and air forces, clearly rejected the concept of a carrier navy. The appearance of the *Moskva* class helicopter carrier does not indicate a change of philosophy, for this ship appears to be designed not as an attack carrier, but as an antisubmarine command ship.⁶ Although this class of ship

might also be used as an assault ship for helicopter-borne troops or provide a platform for vertical takeoff and landing aircraft, thus endowing it with a limited strike capability, employment to date indicates that this type of ship probably represents the logical end result of Soviet recognition in 1964 that the U.S. *Polaris* submarine constituted the primary naval threat to the Soviet Union.⁷ This evaluation is borne out by the activities of the *Moskva* during its various deployments to the Mediterranean.⁸

Following the Egyptian sinking of the Israeli destroyer *Eilat* by missiles in October 1967, Soviet ships moved into Port Said and Alexandria on a permanent basis, ostensibly to interpose themselves between the Egyptians and Israelis and thus ward off the expected retaliation.⁹ Presumably this rationale was sufficient to overcome President Nasser's long-standing antipathy toward foreign bases on Arab territory, for the Soviets have, in fact, enjoyed the use of Egyptian ports ever since. They do not have a land base in the traditional sense of the word; but they have imported a complex of support ships, some of which are not even self-propelled, and have established them as a floating support complex in Alexandria Harbor where their ships and submarines may come and go at will, including visits of nuclear submarines.¹⁰

This has transformed the nature of Soviet submarine operations in the Mediterranean. Whereas in the past Soviet submarines were almost constantly in rotation from their home fleets in the Baltic and North Seas with relatively short tours in the Mediterranean, the ability to put into Alexandria for rest and essential repairs now permits much longer deployment periods with a correspondingly greater percentage of the deployment spent on patrol. The net effect for the Soviets is to reduce their scheduling complexities while significantly increasing their readiness and flexibility. Thus, at any given

time, and particularly at a time of crisis, the Western navies should expect to find themselves confronted in the Mediterranean with a large force of Soviet submarines on patrol stations.¹¹ In a true crisis which had been preceded by a visible escalation for several weeks, the submarine population in the Mediterranean would simply be a matter of choice for the U.S.S.R. and could easily go as high as 20 submarines, including nuclear-powered attack and missile-equipped boats, all of which would be operating in waters familiar to them from previous deployments.

Of potentially equal significance has been the introduction of Soviet long-range bombers operating out of Egypt with Egyptian insignia.¹² To date these aircraft have limited their operations largely to reconnaissance of the 6th Fleet, but nothing would be more shortsighted than to ignore the capability of the U.S.S.R. to augment this force with a squadron of missile attack bombers. Such a capability was clearly demonstrated by the U.S.S.R. in December 1967 when 10 Soviet TU-16 bombers flew to Egypt and Syria on a "goodwill mission" which included live bombing exercises in the Egyptian desert.¹³

Soviet naval doctrine calls for attacks by submarines, aircraft, and surface ships against an enemy naval force.¹⁴ All of these units are considered primarily as delivery systems for a variety of antiship cruise missiles which can be launched from various distances up to 450 miles from a target.¹⁵ Maximum effectiveness is obtained in a mass missile attack employing submarines, aircraft, and surface units which can attack simultaneously from various ranges and azimuths with missiles employing a variety of flight profiles. In the past, primarily because of limited shore-based aircraft ranges, the Soviet Navy has had the capability to mount this type of massed attack only in the sea areas relatively near its own coasts, such as the North Atlantic. But today,

with the potential addition of missile attack bombers operating out of Egypt, the Western navies face the same type of threat in the eastern Mediterranean. In fact, the dangers of such an attack may be even greater in the Mediterranean due to the restrictive geography. There is no point in the Mediterranean which is more than 200 miles from land, making it difficult to conceal the location of a large naval force, and the profusion of straits and channels which separate the major sea basins favors the use of submarine warfare.

The effectiveness of such an attack must also, of course, depend on the nature of the opposition, which in this case would presumably include the enormous concentration of firepower embodied in the modern attack carrier force. There has never been a naval battle between massed missile striking forces and an attack carrier force, and the outcome of such an encounter would revolve about such factors as missile reliability, readiness condition of the two forces, and the whole panoply of electronic warfare. The point here is simply that the Soviet forces in at least the eastern end of the Mediterranean represent a military threat which cannot be lightly discounted.¹⁶

Having briefly enumerated the sinews of Soviet naval strength in the Mediterranean, a distinction must be made as to how that strength might be used. It should be evident that in a protracted shooting war the vast naval power available to the NATO Allies in the Mediterranean, together with their strategic advantages of geography and enormous industrial potential, would eventually prevail over almost any force which the U.S.S.R. might choose to throw against them in those restricted waters. However, in such a war, which would presumably involve a nuclear exchange, the Mediterranean would be of only marginal significance. The battlegrounds for such a war are elsewhere, and the true importance of the

Soviet presence must be assessed in situations short of general war. In times of peace or at least "peaceful coexistence," the Soviet Navy in the Mediterranean must be viewed primarily as an instrument of Soviet foreign policy, and to be successful in such a role it must offer a credible counterweight to Western power.

The 6th Fleet is not the only Western navy in the Mediterranean, but in situations short of general mobilization, it is the unquestioned military representative of Western policy in those waters. In a long series of crises, its ability to make its presence felt on shore has had a stabilizing effect which permitted Western diplomacy to function more effectively. In 1946 the battleship *Missouri* was used to return to Istanbul the remains of a Turkish Ambassador at a time when Soviet pressure on Turkey over the straits was particularly intense, and shortly thereafter a large naval contingent was moved into Greek waters in what was considered to be a successful show of force.¹⁷ The presence of the fleet and its ability to react rapidly played a significant role in a series of crises in the years that followed, including the dramatic intervention in Lebanon in 1958.

It might be instructive to examine the 1958 Lebanese intervention within the context of another scenario. Let us assume that at the time President Eisenhower was making the decision for the 6th Fleet to land marines, he was informed that a Soviet cruiser, two destroyers, and an unknown number of submarines were operating off the Lebanese coast, and the Soviet Ambassador to the United Nations had announced that any outside interference in the internal affairs of an Arab State would be considered prejudicial to the stability of the entire region. The point is not so much that the decision would be different, but rather that the decision would be taken on entirely different grounds. The actual decision to intervene in 1958

was presumably based on the determination that it would promote stability and Western influence in the area. A similar decision today would have to be based on a determination as to whether or not the stakes in Lebanon were sufficiently important to justify a head-to-head confrontation with the U.S.S.R.

Thus, during the confrontation between the Government of Lebanon and the Palestinian guerrillas in October and November of 1969, the United States was constrained to limit its role to that of a concerned outside observer. While officially expressing "great concern" that the independence and integrity of the country be maintained,¹⁸ the United States took pains to discount any intentions of intervention or other interference in the events as they progressed.¹⁹ The Soviet Union, on the other hand, made political capital out of the event. A statement by Tass took a strong stand against possible outside interference in Lebanon and attacked even the mild American statement as "reminiscent of the old colonial practice" of intervention.²⁰ Meanwhile, the Soviet Ambassador to Beirut was actively involved in negotiations and in furthering the desired image of the Soviet Union as the protector of the Arabs against the West. After a long meeting with Ambassador Azimov, erstwhile Premier Rashid Karami was quoted as saying, "The Soviet Ambassador emphasized to me that the Soviet Government not only will not intervene here but will also forbid others from intervening in our affairs."²¹

This decline of American ability to influence events in the Middle East is obviously the result of a complex of events which transcends the change in naval balance in the eastern Mediterranean; yet, the loss of leverage experienced by U.S. policy in this area is at least partially due to the inherent dangers of provoking a confrontation with the U.S.S.R. over a nonvital issue, and this fact was recognized by U.S.

officials in the 1969 conflict between the Lebanese Government and Arab guerrillas.²² These events, in fact, marked the end of the Western monopoly of power in the eastern Mediterranean and illustrated some of the dangers and constraints to be encountered by Western diplomacy as it operates within the new balance of forces there.

The presence of the Soviet Fleet also inevitably adds a new dimension to the conduct of international relations in the region. The Soviet naval factor has appeared as a bargaining counter, as a stimulus to the incipient neutralism of some Mediterranean nations, and as a cause for high-level concern among those nations who have traditionally relied on the 6th Fleet for Western military support. In November 1968, in a conversation with Secretary of State Rusk during negotiations of U.S. base rights in Spain, the Spanish Foreign Minister proposed that both the United States and the Soviet Union withdraw their fleets from the Mediterranean.²³ This remark paralleled a similar proposal made by President Tito of Yugoslavia during an interview the previous month.²⁴ The Spanish proposal was seconded in February 1969 by Foreign Minister Debré of France who, during a visit to Madrid, agreed that it was "excellent in principle" but added that "the current crisis [in the Middle East] makes it difficult to put into practice immediately."²⁵ President Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia stated during an interview in Washington that the Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean was undermining the "balance of . . . forces" which he felt was the basis for peace in the area.²⁶ In short, it is apparent that the permanent presence of Soviet naval forces has introduced a new dynamic factor into political relationships in the area which will provide a continuing challenge to Western diplomacy. By the establishment of a political alternative to U.S. power in the Mediterranean, it

has already altered the way in which many statesmen in the area view the 6th Fleet.

The 6th Fleet currently finds all of the Arab ports in the eastern Mediterranean closed to it. There have been no visits by any U.S. naval units to any of the Arab States in this area since the 1967 war. This is in contrast to regular visits to Beirut prior to that time and even a visit by two destroyers to Port Said in September 1966. The situation in Turkey is even more significant. In the period following World War II, when Soviet policy toward Turkey was one of threats and demands, Turkey became one of the staunchest Western Allies in the Mediterranean as a member of NATO and as the catalyst for the creation of the Baghdad Pact. Subsequently, as the U.S.S.R. modified its policy toward Turkey to stress cooperation and "peaceful coexistence," Turkey reciprocated by softening its own position. At the same time, Soviet naval power was growing in the eastern Mediterranean, leaving Turkey as the only member of NATO with sizable Soviet military forces on more than one of her borders. One of the effects of this new combination of factors was the change in Turkish attitudes toward visits of the 6th Fleet. During a fleet visit to Istanbul in 1968, anti-American demonstrators attacked U.S. sailors on shore leave, and a subsequent visit in February 1969 had to be carried out under extremely heavy security precautions.²⁷ Under these circumstances, the capability of the 6th Fleet to perform its useful functions of personal diplomacy has been seriously impaired.

The other eastern Mediterranean nation, Greece, continues to welcome U.S. Fleet visits, which the military rulers interpret as tacit U.S. approval of their legitimacy. Despite U.S. disclaimers of any such intentions, the fleet visits to Greece have been exploited as ammunition against the official U.S. policy of disapproval toward

the military government.

The increasing hostility of the eastern Mediterranean has also heightened the dangers of miscalculation—not only the danger of confrontation with the Soviet Union, but also the political danger of being misunderstood. The events of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war provide a case in point.

As the crisis began to develop in the spring of 1967, a reporter asked Israeli Premier Levi Eshkol whether or not he could expect Western help in the event of an Arab attack. He replied,

I would surely expect such help, especially if I take into consideration all the solemn promises that have been made to Israel. We get these promises when we ask the United States for arms and are told: "Don't spend your money. We are here. The Sixth Fleet is here." My reply to this advice is that the Sixth Fleet might not be available fast enough for one reason or another, so Israel must be strong on its own.²⁸

This statement was never officially contradicted by the U.S. Government and was later reflected in Arab statements.

In mid-May the Syrian delegate to the United Nations charged that a "Suez type" crisis was brewing and that the 6th Fleet was involved.²⁹ On 18 May the U.A.R. and Lebanon refused to accept port visits of 6th Fleet units.³⁰ On 24 May, as the crisis became acute after the closing of the Tiran Strait, the carrier U.S.S. *Saratoga* and other 6th Fleet units were moved into the eastern Mediterranean.³¹ On 25 May the United States reportedly issued a private warning to the U.A.R. that the closing of the Strait of Tiran was an "act of aggression" and that the United States would consider the use of force to break it if other means failed.³²

On 29 May President Nasser replied to these moves by stating that the

U.A.R. was prepared to face eventual military intervention by the United States over Aqaba and specifically referred to the possibility of 6th Fleet assistance to Israel.³³ On 31 May a second U.S. carrier, the U.S.S. *America*, joined the *Saratoga* in the Sea of Crete after sailing from an exercise area off Spain.³⁴ On 1 June it was reported that the United States was attempting to form a naval force to contest the closing of the Strait of Tiran.³⁵ On the same day, the U.S.S. *Intrepid*, a third carrier, transited the Suez Canal en route to Vietnam after having been retained briefly in the Mediterranean on a contingency basis.

On 3 June the British carrier H.M.S. *Victorious* and a group of escorts were reported conducting maneuvers off Malta where a battalion landing team of U.S. Marines were on shore leave,³⁶ while the *America* was reported to have moved closer to Egypt south of Crete and a U.S. destroyer transited south through the canal.³⁷ On the morning of 5 June the war broke out with a sudden air attack by Israel. The only U.S. plane in the vicinity was a carrier-based A-3 aircraft which was conducting reconnaissance at a distance of 100 miles from the Egyptian coast.³⁸ On 6 June President Nasser announced that "events and conclusive evidence proved the participation of the United States and British Governments . . . through spreading a strong air umbrella over enemy territory and actual participation in air operations against Jordan on a large scale, using U.S. and British aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean . . ." and simultaneously broke diplomatic relations with the United States.³⁹

There was, of course, no U.S. participation in the June war, a fact which has subsequently been conceded by the Arab leaders. However, the available evidence indicates that the Arabs believed that such intervention had occurred, and the chronology of events serves to demonstrate why they were so

quick to jump to conclusions. American policy was designed to use a military show of force to convince Nasser that he should reopen the Strait of Tiran and defuse the mounting tension in the area. This was to be accomplished by a series of careful moves and "signals" to the Egyptian Government.⁴⁰ The moves were indeed observed by the Arab governments, but the signals were misinterpreted in the atmosphere of tension and distrust. As shown by the Syrian statement early in the crisis and by President Nasser's reference to the 6th Fleet, the Arabs strongly suspected an attack by U.S. forces and tended to disregard relatively subtle evidence to the contrary. Thus, the American policy did not succeed and, in fact, provided the grounds for making the United States the scapegoat for a situation it had tried desperately to prevent. It is very doubtful that such an eventuality could have been foreseen by American policymakers, but it does provide a tragic example of the dangers of pressure diplomacy in the eastern Mediterranean today.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this analysis. First, the Soviet Union has introduced an important new force into the politics of the Mediterranean region. Taking advantage of the nationalist forces at work on the southern rim of the Mediterranean and the desires of Arab nations for political and military support by a great power, the U.S.S.R. has established itself as a major influence in a region which was once a Western preserve. The most important symbol of this new dynamism is the Soviet Navy. By combining a large submarine force with missile ships and aircraft, the U.S.S.R. has created a credible counterweight to Western power in the area. Although this power would not be able to command the Mediterranean in a prolonged conflict, it is capable in situations short of general war of supporting Soviet policy objectives in the region. This

change in the naval power equation has introduced a new dimension into Mediterranean politics, especially in the Middle East. By providing an alternative to the former Western monopoly of power, it has fostered a tendency among some of the Mediterranean nations to adopt a more neutralist stance. The Soviet counterweight also provides a powerful lever which may be used by third parties seeking U.S. military assistance. These phenomena are direct outgrowths of the Soviet presence and will remain for as long as that presence is sustained.

The second broad observation is that Western ability to act decisively in the Mediterranean region has been seriously impaired by the shift in comparative naval power. Whereas in the past the United States operated in a friendly environment with an assured monopoly of power, today the eastern Mediterranean can only be considered hostile to the West, and the exercise of power has been reduced to what Marshall Shulman describes as the limited adversary relationship.⁴¹ In such a relationship, action is not forsaken, but it must be preceded by a careful examination of one's own interests and a realistic appraisal of the objectives and intentions of one's adversary.

The Strategic Interests. In his foreign policy report to the Congress in February 1970, President Nixon stated:

Our objective . . . is to support our *interests* over the long run with a sound foreign policy. The more that policy is based on a realistic assessment of our and others' interests, the more effective our role in the world can be. . . . We will regard our Communist adversaries first and foremost as nations pursuing their own interests as *they* perceive these interests, just as we follow our own interests as we see them.⁴²

There is probably no area of American foreign policy where such an approach is more appropriate or more critical today than in the Mediterranean and Middle East.

The resources of the Middle East and North Africa, particularly oil, are essential to Western Europe. At the present time, Western Europe absorbs more than half of the total oil output of the Middle East and nearly all of the north African production, and European demand has been increasing each year. In 1963 European demands for petroleum products increased by over 14 percent. By 1966 this rate had diminished to approximately 8.5 percent, indicating that the increase in demand has been leveling off.⁴³ However, the combination of steadily increasing energy requirements and the proximity of relatively inexpensive Middle East and north African oil supplies suggests that Western European nations will continue to rely on these sources for many decades to come. Conversely, any prolonged denial of these resources would probably result in serious economic dislocations in Europe.

The stake of the United States in Middle Eastern oil is far less and revolves about two issues: American investment and concern for European security. Private American companies have investments of about \$2.3 billion in Middle Eastern and Libyan petroleum.⁴⁴ This investment, when taken together with shipping and other allied interests, is very substantial; however, when compared to a total U.S. overseas petroleum investment of nearly \$19 billion, it is not of critical proportions. This is not to deny the significance of a source of revenue which contributes up to \$1.5 billion each year to the U.S. balance of payments in the form of gross income on U.S. investments. However, from a strategic viewpoint, the United States is primarily concerned with insuring an uninterrupted flow of petroleum to its allies in Western

Europe. Even this concern, however, is first and foremost a European problem; it is an American interest by proxy, and its importance lies in the degree of interdependence between European and American security.

The relationship between Western Europe and the oilfields of the Middle East and north Africa is a symbiosis. Not only is Europe dependent on Middle Eastern oil, but, even more importantly, the oil-producing nations derive 90 percent or more of their foreign exchange earnings from the sale of oil. The energy demands of Europe and Japan establish oil production quotas and thus indirectly determine the size of the national product in such one-product economies as Kuwait and Libya. The abortive Arab boycott of oil to the West in 1967 threatened to change the shape of marketing patterns and thus deprive many Arab nations of their very lifeblood. It was a lesson in economics that will not soon be forgotten. There are only two ways, in fact, that Middle East oil can suddenly be denied to Western Europe: either by economic strangulation and virtual national suicide on the part of the oil-producing states, or by a massive shift in marketing patterns that would establish new clients for Arab oil. Thus, if a third nation such as the U.S.S.R. should find itself able and wish to conduct economic warfare with the West while avoiding financial destruction of its client states, it would have to be prepared to pick up the bill for such a venture, the cost of which could run as high as \$1.5 billion per year. In such an event, it is doubtful that the damage done to Western Europe would be any greater than that inflicted on the Soviet economy itself. The interdependence between oil producers and consumers therefore suggests that any radical transformation in the pattern of petroleum marketing is likely to occur in incremental readjustments rather than sudden massive shifts in direction or quantity.

Western interest in Middle Eastern oil centers primarily on the *availability* of petroleum products, not on the concessional arrangements attendant to production. Western investment in Middle Eastern and north African oil, as indicated above, is very great, and the economic benefits are not to be lightly dismissed. But, however desirable these concessionary arrangements may be from an economic point of view, they must ultimately be viewed as private undertakings which are subject to the fluctuating environment of national aspirations and economic development in which they exist. Changes in the pattern of concessionary investments are probably inevitable, and such changes are a matter of legitimate concern in the formulation of American policy; but viewed from the broader perspective of Western security interests, such changes constitute a threat only insofar as they affect the continued availability of essential resources.⁴⁵

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In 1951 General Eisenhower was able to remark of the Middle East that, "So far as the sheer value of territory is concerned there is no more strategically important area in the world..."⁴⁶ Time and technology have served to qualify that judgment. The development of intercontinental missiles has obviated the need for Western airbases on the southern flank of the Soviet Union. The strategic mobility of the Soviet Navy and the success of Soviet political initiatives in the area have neutralized Western hopes of a political containment of the U.S.S.R. through such devices as the "Northern Tier" concept of the Baghdad Pact. The development of supertankers and the increasing reliance on giant container ships have greatly reduced the importance of the Suez Canal. British withdrawal of their military presence east of Suez will

further reduce the importance of the area as a vital line of Western communication. And military planners have already had to face the very real possibility that overflight rights of the area for military aircraft may be denied in times of crisis. Nevertheless, so long as the Western nations retain significant commercial and political interests in South Asia, the lands of the eastern Mediterranean will retain their importance as real estate, for the shortest and most efficient routes to the lands of the Indian Ocean will always lie across the Arab land bridge.

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Prolonged naval contact between the U.S.S.R. and the West in the Mediterranean is made extremely dangerous by the polarization of the Arab-Israeli dispute, in which the great powers tend to support opposite sides of a bitter conflict among third parties in a highly unstable environment. This same polarization is evident in the contest for political supremacy in the nations of the Third World along the southern rim of the Mediterranean and within those nations such as Turkey and Iran who once ~~were~~ were strongly oriented toward the West. All of these states now find themselves increasingly attracted by the opportunities of détente and cooperation with the Soviet Union.

The entire area of Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia is in a state of flux, and any Soviet foreign policy designed to increase the level of Soviet influence in these areas is destined to clash repeatedly with Western policies as the emerging states grope for a new political balance in the postcolonial world. Such clashes are inevitable, and not all will be resolved in favor of the West. However, both Western and Soviet leaders have made it clear that they wish to avoid the kind of head-to-head confrontation which risks escalation to nuclear war over issues that are of only

secondary importance. The most important task of Western diplomacy in the coming decades will be to devise methods of competing with the U.S.S.R. for political influence and advantage at a level which minimizes the risks of nuclear confrontation.

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An analysis of Soviet objectives must always be undertaken with a large measure of humility. Soviet leaders are not given to introspective commentary on the motivating factors in the formulation of their foreign policy, and policy pronouncements are often so obscured by ideological jargon that any non-specialist must approach them with trepidation. Still, policy demands action, and by measuring observed actions against printed ambiguities it should be possible to discover those underlying themes which establish the direction of foreign policy.

The determination of the Soviet Union to be recognized as a Mediterranean power is one of the least ambiguous aspects of its foreign policy. When Tito and the Spanish Foreign Minister advanced their recommendations in November 1968 that both the United States and U.S.S.R. withdraw their fleets from the Mediterranean, the Soviet Union responded with a veritable barrage of statements which said, in effect, that it was all right to ask the Americans to withdraw, but that the U.S.S.R. had an inalienable right to operate there as a Mediterranean power in its own right. Vice Admiral Smirnov wrote in *Red Star*, "Our state is, as is well known, a Black Sea, and therefore a Mediterranean power. . . ." ⁴⁷ The deputy editor of *Pravda* wrote, "As a Black Sea, and in this sense, a Mediterranean power (the U.S.S.R.) is closely connected with all problems involving the interests of the peoples of this area of Europe, Africa and Asia." ⁴⁸ There is also no doubt that in the eyes of

Moscow the principal guarantor of Soviet regional influence is to be the new Soviet Navy.

The corollary to this Soviet view of their manifest destiny is the drive to reduce the influence and effectiveness of the U.S. 6th Fleet and thus end the predominance of American power in the area. Prior to the buildup of the Soviet Fleet in the Mediterranean, the U.S.S.R. was limited to making periodic demands for the withdrawal of the 6th Fleet. After the Soviet Fleet had arrived there in strength, however, this position changed from sterile demands for withdrawal to an attitude of increasing self-reliance on their own abilities to counter the influence of the 6th Fleet. In late 1968 Admiral Smirnov could remark that,

Until the Soviet ships appeared the American Sixth Fleet constituted the only "balance of forces" . . . Already the very presence of the Soviet ships in the Mediterranean does not allow the American Sixth Fleet to carry out the aggressive ideas of the Pentagon with impunity. They cannot throw their weight around so unceremoniously as before. The presence of our ships serves as a definite guarantee of peace and security in that area. ⁴⁹

This sense of purpose and confidence in the Soviet Navy as an effective instrument of Soviet foreign policy is a new phenomenon. It makes an interesting contrast with the situation in 1948 when Stalin reportedly remarked,

The uprising in Greece has to fold up . . . What do you think, that Great Britain and the United States—the United States, the most powerful state in the world—will permit you [Yugoslavia] to break their line of communication in the Mediterranean Sea! Non-

sense. *And we have no navy.* The uprising in Greece must be stopped, and as quickly as possible.⁵⁰

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If it is true that "trade follows the flag," it is equally true that the flag accompanies trade; and the Soviet Union has become a significant commercial power whose maritime trade routes lie across the Mediterranean. On any given day there are at least 250 Soviet merchant ships in the Mediterranean in addition to a large number of fishing vessels.⁵¹ This represents approximately 10 percent of all shipping in the Mediterranean. Clearly, the U.S.S.R. has a legitimate interest in the Mediterranean as its primary maritime outlet to Asia, Africa, and southern Europe.

The Suez Canal has a very special importance for the U.S.S.R.⁵² Between 1960 and 1966 (the last year for which complete figures are available), the Soviet Union was the fastest growing customer of the Suez Canal except Japan. During that period, the U.S.S.R. rose from 13th to seventh place among canal users; Soviet tonnage through the canal increased fourfold, while that of all other nations rose by only 44 percent. In 1966 Soviet cargo ships represented 7 percent of the total cargo tonnage through the canal, reflecting an increase of nearly 300 percent in 7 years, compared to an increase of only 22 percent for all other nations.

These enormous growth rates are generally consistent with the overall increase in the size of the Soviet merchant fleet which increased by 295 percent in the same period; and very reliable data indicate that Soviet merchant tonnage will continue to rise very rapidly through at least 1980, when the Soviet merchant fleet is expected to be among the largest in the world. It is therefore reasonable to expect that Soviet usage of the Suez Canal would

also have continued to rise proportionately over the same period. Also, the Soviet Fleet tends to be composed of small ships which are ideal for canal use, while much of the rest of the world's shipping is turning increasingly to very large bulk and container ships which cannot transit the canal even when empty. Thus, total Suez Canal transits by Western nations would not be expected to grow very rapidly and could even reach a point of decline unless the size of the canal were increased enormously, whereas Soviet commitments to South Asia and the Far East could logically be expected to continue to expand.

If we accept that Soviet shipping through the canal would have continued to rise had the canal remained open, it is then important to ask what price the U.S.S.R. is being forced to pay as a result of the closure of the canal. In order to estimate this cost, a simple model of "typical" Soviet shipping has been adopted which assumes average-size freighters of 6,000 tons making a series of round-trip voyages between Odessa in the Black Sea and Bombay, India. This voyage, which represents a useful midpoint between the nearer east African ports and the more distant ports of the Far East, can be measured in at least two ways: voyage days or operating costs. In terms of voyage days, it requires 16 days for a ship to travel from Odessa to Bombay via the canal and 41 days via the Cape of Good Hope when the canal is closed, i.e., an additional 25 days in transit time, excluding any port visits en route. American shipping concerns estimate that it costs approximately \$2,500 per day to operate a cargo ship of this size. No comparable figures are available for Soviet merchant shipping, but a comparison of wages on Soviet and Western ships of approximately the same size shows that Western wages are approximately 2.5 times higher. If this differential is applied to the total operating

TABLE I—ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST OF CANAL CLOSURE TO U.S.S.R. 1966-1980
(excluding tankers)

	1966		1973		1980	
	Voyage Days	\$ million	Voyage Days	\$ million	Voyage Days	\$ million
Canal closed	32,800	33-82	131,200	132-330	369,000	370-925
Canal open	12,800	18-40	51,200	70-150	144,000	200-360
Differential	20,000	15-42	80,000	62-180	225,000	170-565

costs of a ship, it would indicate a daily operating cost of \$1,000 for a Soviet merchant ship. This latter figure is considered to be quite conservative, but, nevertheless, it should be useful in providing a lower limit. The effects of the canal closure are summarized in table I.

The great increase in voyage days with the canal closed is, of course, directly related to ship availability. At shipping levels equal to that of 1966, for example, the Soviet commitments south of Suez could theoretically have been fulfilled by operating full-time with 57 ships; to do the same job with the canal closed would require the full-time services of at least 133 ships. At projected 1973 requirements, 229 Soviet ships would be required with an open canal and 533 ships with the canal closed. By 1980 it could take an estimated 643 ships if open and 1,500 ships if closed to fulfill Soviet shipping needs south of the canal. At the beginning of 1967 the U.S.S.R. merchant fleet consisted of 1,343 ships of all types. Thus, over a period of time, the effect of the Suez closure will be either to force a much higher proportion of the Soviet Fleet into the South Asia trade or else to reduce commitments as the pressure on ship availability becomes too intense.

The dollar figures in table I measure only the operating expenses of Soviet cargo traffic. They do not include any estimate of the added costs incurred by reduced ship availability, and there is no estimate of the port fees and expenses for necessary port stops on the longer route. Suez Canal tolls have been added

to the transiting units, thus raising their operating costs and reducing the differential figure accordingly. However, it is very probable that the U.S.S.R. is able to discount its canal tolls against the enormous debt which Egypt owes to the Soviet Union, thus increasing the attractiveness of the Suez route beyond that shown. Moreover, the table does not include any of the Soviet tanker traffic which has been virtually eliminated by the canal closure. This traffic was largely conducted by small vessels on relatively short runs and cannot be sustained economically with the canal closed. Although impossible to measure with any degree of accuracy, many of these hidden costs are more significant than the mere operating costs of the ships themselves. Therefore, at a conservative estimate, it seems probable that the closure of the Suez Canal cost the U.S.S.R. \$50-\$150 million in the first year; that by 1973 the cost will have risen to \$150-\$400 million annually; and by 1980 the cost could theoretically have grown to well over half a billion dollars per year. Although the peculiarities of Communist market economies may well conceal the magnitude of these figures from even Soviet economists in the early years of the canal closure, the pressure on shipping resources and the rapidly growing costs of South Asian commerce will eventually be felt in the form of unpleasant economic decisions.

The conclusion to be drawn from this analysis is very simple. Whereas Western requirements for the canal are declining as a result of the massive shift

to very large tankers and cargo ships, Soviet needs are growing. The U.S.S.R. is already paying a high price both in monetary terms and in terms of pressures on its merchant fleet as a result of the closure of the Suez Canal. This price will increase rapidly over time, and by the end of the decade it could assume proportions which might be decisive in the determination of Soviet policy toward South Asia.

One side effect of the Soviet dilemma which should be considered in Western policy is that when the canal eventually opens, Soviet shipping requirements to South Asia will immediately be halved. This will, in effect, increase the effective size of the Soviet merchant fleet by a significant percentage. This sudden idleness of a large number of ships will be a strong incentive for the U.S.S.R. to enter the world shipping markets on a large scale at cutrate prices—a phenomenon which has already alarmed Western shipping concerns. The longer the canal remains closed, the greater will be the effects of its reopening in terms of Soviet competition.

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At the present time the U.S.S.R. does not rely on the resources of the Middle East or Mediterranean to any significant degree. The Soviet Union is self-sufficient in oil and in the past few decades has functioned more often as a competitor than as a potential consumer of Arab petroleum. Soviet trade with the Middle East nations, with the single exception of Egypt, comprises only a tiny fraction of the total volume of regional trade, and the Soviet share does not appear to be increasing very rapidly if at all.⁵³

This situation, particularly as regards petroleum products, may change in the coming decades. Soviet oil production is scheduled to reach 630 million tons by 1980, while internal consumption may

rise to 613-700 million tons, thus potentially transforming the U.S.S.R. from a net exporter to a nonexporter or even limited importer of oil.⁵⁴ Moreover, as Soviet oil production moves from the Volga-Urals fields to the new Siberian fields, the ability of the U.S.S.R. to provide oil to its Eastern European allies will decrease, a fact which has prompted the Soviets to recommend that Eastern Europe begin to look to the Middle East and North Africa for its supply of crude oil.⁵⁵ Thus, quite apart from political considerations, it appears likely that the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies will develop an increasing interest in Middle Eastern and north African oilfields as a source of crude oil and petroleum products in the coming decades.

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The U.S.S.R. has the same interest in preventing a nuclear confrontation over the Middle East as does the United States. Soviet policies since 1967 have seemed to reflect an awareness of that fact, and Soviet diplomacy in the highly charged atmosphere of the Arab-Israeli conflict has generally been characterized by caution, counsel of moderation to its Arab clients, and continuing emphasis on the need to find a political rather than a military solution to the Middle East dilemma.

The margin of maneuverability available to the U.S.S.R. in the Middle East conflict is limited by the intransigence of its Arab proteges, and each effort to lower the temperature of the crisis has cost the Russians a political price. Soviet willingness to participate in the Four Power talks was harshly denounced by the Palestinian guerrilla organization Al-Fatah: "The U.S.S.R. has been maintaining an incorrect attitude on the Palestine question and disregarding the Palestinian people's right to the whole of Palestine and their sacred right to liberate their home-

land. . . ."⁵⁶ The Soviet Union, no less than others before it, is a victim of the uncompromising extremes of Middle Eastern politics, and its evident desire to avoid full-scale military conflict in the region must be viewed only as a desirable moderating influence, not as a guarantee of success.

One aspect of Soviet policy which may become increasingly important is its rivalry with China. In fact, one explanation for Soviet strategic concern in the Middle East and Mediterranean is the importance of the region as a route to the Indian Ocean and Far East where the Soviet Union is locked in an ideological and power struggle with Maoism. In June 1969 the U.S.S.R. proposed "a system of collective security in Asia"⁵⁷ which was immediately interpreted by the Chinese as "... a general anti-China system . . . suppressing the revolutionary struggle of the Asian people."⁵⁸ The ultimate shape or intention of a Soviet-sponsored system of collective security in Asia is far from clear. But the fact that such a proposal was made at all is indicative of increased Soviet interest in the area of South Asia and perhaps an indication of the direction of future Soviet efforts to combat Chinese influence in the nations along its southern boundaries.

Analysis and Conclusions. From this examination of the strategic interests of Russia and the West in the Mediterranean, it should be clear that the long-term objectives of the major protagonists are not necessarily incompatible. It is possible, however, to identify several areas of potential conflict where the dangers of miscalculation on the part of either party could risk serious confrontation.

The development of Soviet lines of communication across the Mediterranean is inevitable as the U.S.S.R. establishes itself as a major world power with global economic and political interests, and it poses no direct threat to

Western interests. However, the Soviet Fleet, as it accompanies Soviet maritime expansion, will find itself in the same waters as Western navies with increasing occasion for physical contact. Each fleet can be expected to remain suspicious of the other, with a consequent high level of intelligence surveillance; and repeated encounters of potentially hostile military units will necessarily risk accidental conflict. This risk can be minimized, however, by the exercise of intelligent restraint by both parties.

As Soviet interests in the Mediterranean and South Asia increase, the restrictions of the Montreux Convention are likely to become increasingly irritating and perhaps prompt a new Soviet drive to revise the 1936 agreement. Preservation of the status quo in the Turkish Straits has long been the *sine qua non* of Western policy in the eastern Mediterranean, but the new naval power of the Soviet Union and the new atmosphere of détente between Ankara and Moscow could create a set of circumstances which would sorely test the unity and resolve of the Western Allies.

The prolonged closure of the Suez Canal is damaging to Soviet interests; the pressure on the U.S.S.R. to find a means to reopen it is increasing and may become intense within the next few years. Although this problem could provide the grounds for serious dispute or even military confrontation, it is also a factor which can work to the advantage of the West. For the Soviet desire to reopen the canal, together with the obvious Egyptian interest in regaining the hard currency income of canal tolls, could provide the West its most important bargaining counter in the diplomatic search for a Middle East solution.

The Sino-Soviet dispute, although not of central importance in the development of events in the area, is nonetheless a significant element in Soviet strategic concerns. Its most important effect may be to rivet Russian attention to the east and make them less

likely to risk a simultaneous confrontation in the west over less vital issues. On the other hand, the Chinese offer a radical, non-Western alternative to Soviet influence which may prove attractive to Third World Nations or parties who might come to feel that Soviet policy was too confining. This is true to some extent today in the ranks of the Arab guerrillas and is a sub rosa factor in the development of political groups within a number of Arab states. It is not likely to prevail over Soviet geographic and economic advantages in the area, but its radicalizing effect could have an influence on Soviet policy which would probably be undesirable from the Western point of view. It is also possible that Chinese competition could be exploited by the West in certain circumstances to thwart Soviet ambitions, but this would be a risky business at best.

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If the Russians are willing to compete for influence on the diplomatic level within a framework of limited detente, they pose no real threat to vital Western interests. The imperatives of economics will tend to insure continued Western access to Middle Eastern oil, even presupposing a much larger degree of Soviet influence in the oil-producing states than is now present. Western strategy, however, will have to deal with two unpleasant facts which may dominate the evolution of events in the 1970's: the permanent presence of Soviet naval forces in the waters of the Mediterranean, and the possible hostility of nationalist Middle Eastern states whose foreign policies could well coincide with those of the U.S.S.R. Of the Soviet presence, as mentioned previously, there is no remedy short of general war. Of the political hostility of the Arab states, the postulated environment of diplomatic competition would provide the most favorable circum-

stances for Western maneuver and could permit neutralization of Arab hostility by diplomatic means. Thus, the security of Western interests in the area may be determined by the wisdom and success of Western diplomacy in mending relations with the Arab States.

The expressed Soviet desire to avoid nuclear confrontation with the West is the obvious precondition for any extended diplomatic competition in the Third World. It is not, however, any guarantee that conflict will be avoided. On the contrary, the accelerating rivalry between East and West in the post-colonial world will undoubtedly strain the diplomatic abilities of all parties and will occasionally risk conflict. The limits of diplomatic competition under the nuclear umbrella have yet to be fully defined, and the process of exploring this new territory of international relations may be precarious. The only ground for optimism in fact, is the mutual desire to avoid self-destruction.

It is also possible, of course, to postulate a highly aggressive Soviet policy wherein the U.S.S.R. would attempt to impose its domination on the states of the Middle East and Mediterranean. Such a "forward strategy" would require the introduction of Soviet military forces into those nations and would probably involve direct Soviet intervention in their internal affairs. The adoption of such a policy by the U.S.S.R. would pose a direct and dangerous threat to Western interests and would create a high risk of nuclear confrontation.

Of the two possibilities, the former strategy of diplomatic competition bears the closest resemblance to Soviet policy of the recent past and is considered to be the more probable of the two extremes. In practice, Soviet policy can probably be expected to incorporate elements of either diplomatic competition or a high-risk strategy in accordance with the degree to which they feel their vital security interests are

threatened by developments in the region.

In the political arena of the Mediterranean, there have been weaknesses and lapses of judgment on the part of all participants. The West, as a result of its traditionally preeminent position, was frequently able to overcome its faults by smothering them in a cloak of unchallenged power, but that day has passed. One need only examine the political price which has been exacted from the United States as a result of its miscalculation prior to the latest Arab-Israeli war to realize that a show of force may no longer be the most appropriate response to the quarrels of the eastern Mediterranean. And the declining influence of American power and prestige in the region should be evidence enough that the conventional wisdom of the past is no longer a reliable guide.

The Soviet Union, as a newcomer to the region, was not burdened with the colonial stigma which has so bedeviled the West in its relations with the nationalist regimes, and by offering an alternative to Western domination it was able to achieve a position of considerable influence within less than two decades. The U.S.S.R., however, came to the area equipped with its own peculiar set of ideological blinders. Although Soviet tactics tend to be eminently pragmatic, broader strategy is often distorted by the philosophical astigmatism of traditional Marxist-Leninist doctrine. Unfortunately for those leaders in the Kremlin who perceive their nation's destiny in terms of old-fashioned Russian imperialism, Marx did not take into account the national interests of the modern Soviet state when formulating his theories of communism, and that oversight has plagued the Soviet bureaucracy almost from the start.

The Arab nations are not hospitable to communism, as demonstrated by the almost total absence of Communist

Parties in even the most radical Arab States. The personal values of the Arab leaders reflect their middle-class origins, and their vaguely formulated socialist-reformist schemes must seem quaint indeed to a generation of Soviet leaders raised on the notion that all power resides in highly disciplined revolutionary cadres. Soviet theoreticians have devised the formula of the "national-democratic state" to explain away the Arab phenomenon by identifying it as an intermediate step between colonial rule and the practice of true socialism. But no doctrine is likely to conceal the fact that the Soviets are ideologically uncomfortable with the Arabs.

The Soviet Union has other problems as well. No less than the West, it finds itself on the horns of the Arab-Israeli dilemma. It has legitimate interests in the Mediterranean and is anxious to protect its economic and political in-

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Intelligence Center located in Morocco, and as an assistant intelligence officer for the 6th Fleet in Naples. A graduate of the Defense Intelligence School, Lieutenant Commander Sick has a knowledge of French, Italian, and Arabic and served from 1965 to 1967 as an assistant naval attache in Cairo. His undergraduate degree was taken at the University of Kansas, and it was followed by a year's study in France as a Rotary Scholar. He is currently completing his studies at the School of Naval Command and Staff at the Naval War College and a master's degree in international affairs from The George Washington University. He has been selected for the Navy Doctoral Program and plans to enter Columbia University in the fall as a Ph.D. candidate in political science.

vestments in the area. To accomplish this it has established a considerable military force in the region and has adopted an unequivocal posture in support of its Arab clients. Yet it does not exert control over regional events. The Arab guerrillas, who are emerging as the most important political influence in the region, refuse to subordinate themselves to Soviet constraints, and the U.S.S.R. finds itself in the uncomfortable position formerly reserved for its Western rivals of paying the piper but seldom being able to call the tune.

This is the environment of the 1970's. The two superpowers of the 20th century are engaged in a rivalry for political and economic influence in the Mediterranean. Both parties have legitimate interests in the area and have deployed significant military forces to protect those interests. Yet neither is master of the situation nor can expect to become so in the near future. Today, no one can "command" the Mediter-

anean, and no one state can reasonably expect to assert its exclusive domination in the region. Rather, both powers must be prepared to compete on essentially equal terms over a long period of time, realizing full well that in such a competition there are no "winners." There may, however, be losers; for military forces will be operating side by side in a confined area in the presence of a volatile conflict which is out of their control.

Ambassador Yost, in his evaluation of the origins of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, observed that, "the control of events slipped from everyone's hands and limited decisions hastily taken had sweeping consequences no one desired."⁹ Given the new realities of the power balance in the eastern Mediterranean, the consequences of such an accidental conflict could indeed be devastating. And unfortunately there is no guarantee that it will not happen again.

FOOTNOTES

1. Hans Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy for the United States* (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 149.

2. A good discussion of this episode is included as part of the historical summary of Soviet naval activity in the Mediterranean in Philippe Masson and J. Labayle Couhat, "La Présence Navale Soviétique en Méditerranée." *Revue de Defense Nationale*, May 1968, p. 863.

3. Laurence W. Martin, "The Changing Military Balance," Jacob C. Hurewitz, ed., *Soviet American Rivalry in the Middle East* (henceforth referred to as Hurewitz, *Rivalry*) (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 62-63.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

5. Robert W. Herrick, *Soviet Naval Strategy: Fifty Years of Theory and Practice* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1968), p. 58, 61, 68.

6. Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Soviet Sea Power* (Washington: 1969), p. 43, 46.

7. Herrick, p. 96-97.

8. William Beecher, "U.S. Fears Threat to Polaris Craft," *The New York Times*, 20 November 1968, p. 1:4.

9. Martin, p. 67; Cf. Georgetown University, p. 59.

10. Eric Pace, "Visit by a Russian Submarine to Egyptian Port is Reported," *The New York Times*, 17 March 1969, p. 3:1.

11. Georgetown University, p. 57.

12. This fact has been widely reported. See Jacob C. Hurewitz, "Origins of the Rivalry," Hurewitz, *Rivalry*, p. 3; "Soviet Is Said to Use Air Bases in Egypt to Spy on U.S. Fleet," *The New York Times*, 26 August 1968, p. 6:1; Robert D. Archer, "The Soviet Bombers," *Space/Aeronautics*, April 1969, p. 52-59.

13. William Beecher, "Egypt Dispersing Planes and Building Airfields," *The New York Times*, 29 December 1967, p. 6:3.

14. See the statement by Admiral Gorshkov, Commander in Chief of the Soviet Navy, *Morskoi Sbornik*, 1967, no. 2, p. 20-21, quoted in Joseph J. Baritz, "The Soviet Strategy of Flexible Response," *Bulletin, Institute for the Study of the USSR*, April 1969, p. 32.

15. See the statement by Soviet Adm. L. Vladimirkii, "Novaia Tekhnika na Korabliakb," quoted in Herrick, p. 76; and Georgetown University, p. 31.

16. This view is shared by many military analysts. See Lyman L. Lemnitzer, "The Strategic Problems of NATO's Northern and Southern Flanks," *Orbis*, Spring 1969, p. 104, and Hanson W. Baldwin, addendum to Georgetown University *Soviet Sea Power*, p. 110. There are others who strongly disagree, the most outspoken example being Denis Healey, the British Defense Secretary, who has been quoted as saying that the entire Soviet Fleet in the Mediterranean would be sunk within minutes in the event of war and would not have time to fire its missiles. ("Soviet Naval Threat Discounted by Briton," *The New York Times*, 11 February 1969, p. 6:6.) It should be pointed out, however, that such optimistic observers tend to concentrate only on the surface threat and ignore the much more dangerous menace of the large submarine force and potential Soviet airpower in the area.

17. Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 195-196.

18. Peter Grose, "U.S. Officials Express Concern over Lebanese Clashes," *The New York Times*, 24 October 1969, p. 15:1.

19. "U.S. Bars Intervention," *The New York Times*, 26 October 1969, p. 2:6.

20. Bernard Gwertzman, "Soviet Says Crisis Is an Arab Issue," *The New York Times*, 26 October 1969, p. 1:7.

21. Peter Grose, "U.S. Aides Feel Soviet May Gain in Beirut," *The New York Times*, 28 October 1969, p. 3:4-6.

22. Richard Halloran, "U.S. Aides Fear a 'Major Tragedy' in Lebanon," *The New York Times*, 25 October 1969, p. 10:5.

23. Benjamin Welles, "U.S. Cool to Spain on Fleet Proposal," *The New York Times*, 22 November 1968, p. 21:1.

24. Josip Broz Tito, "Tito Vous Parle," Interview with Raymond Tournoux, *Paris-Match*, 16 November 1968, p. 104.

25. *Le Monde*, 9 February 1969, quoted in "Spain Foreign Relations," *Deadline Data on World Affairs*, 8 February 1969, p. 44.

26. "Bourguiba Charges Soviet Upsets Balance in Mideast," *The New York Times*, 20 May 1968, p. 59:1.

27. Anthony Lewis, "Turkey Curbs Protesters as Ships of Sixth Fleet Visit Istanbul," *The New York Times*, 11 February 1969, p. 6:6.

28. "Troubles for Israel in Hostile Mideast," *U.S. News & World Report*, 17 April 1967, p. 76.

29. "U.N. Warned on Mideast," *The New York Times*, 16 May 1967, p. 16:4-7.

30. "Fleet Visit to Egypt Called Off," *The New York Times*, 19 May 1967, p. 3:2.

31. "Johnson Calls on Cairo to Abandon Blockade Moves," *The New York Times*, 24 May 1967, p. 1:8.

32. Eric Pace, "U.S. Warns U.A.R. against Blockade," *The New York Times*, 25 May 1967, p. 1:6.

33. Eric Pace, "Nasser Stresses Palestine Rule," *The New York Times*, 29 May 1967, p. 1:7.

34. Neil Sheehan, "Soviet Watching U.S. Fleet," *The New York Times*, 31 May 1967, p. 16:7.

35. John W. Finney, "Backing Reported for Aqaba Test," *The New York Times*, 1 June 1967, p. 1:8. In the final analysis, however, the only nations willing to join in a possible show of force were Israel and the Netherlands, while the United Kingdom was equivocal. The plan was a dead issue by 4 June. *The New York Times*, 4 June 1967, p. 3:1.

36. "Soviet Destroyer off Malta," *The New York Times*, 3 June 1967, p. 31:1.

37. "Two U.S. Carriers Continue Air Exercises Near Crete," *The New York Times*, 3 June 1967, p. 12:6; and Thomas F. Brady, "Canal Reprisal Hinted by Egypt," *The New York Times*, 3 June 1967, p. 8:6. The destroyer was the U.S.S. *Dyess*.

38. "Navy Says One Plane Flew Near War Zone," *The New York Times*, 10 June 1967, p. 22:1.

39. "The Cairo Communiques," *The New York Times*, 7 June 1967, p. 19:7.

40. For an account of this episode as viewed by U.S. policymakers, see J.C. Wylie, "The Sixth Fleet and American Diplomacy," Hurewitz, *Rivalry*, p. 58-60.

41. Marshall D. Shulman in Kermit Gordon, ed., *Agenda for the Nation* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1968), p. 374.

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44. U.S. Dept. of Commerce, *Survey of Current Business* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1969).
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48. Vladimir Yermakov, *Pravda*, quoted in "Soviet Says Navy Guards Interests in Mediterranean," *The New York Times*, 28 November 1968, p. 1:6.
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50. Joseph Stalin, 10 February 1948, quoted in Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), p. 181-182 (emphasis added).
51. Georgetown University, p. 73.
52. The figures below are based on the author's calculations, using figures and information from a wide variety of documents and publications which include: *The Middle East and North Africa* (London: Europa, 1962, 1966, and 1968 editions) for Suez Canal transit figures; *Lloyd's Register of Shipping 1968-69* (London: 1968); F.S. Campbell, ed., *Port Dues, Charges and Accommodations* (London: Philip, 1968) for details of Suez Canal charges; Rodney M. Elden, *Ship Management* (Cambridge, Md.: Cornell Maritime, 1962) for figures on Western shipping costs; U.S. Library of Congress, Legislative Reference Service, *The Growing Strength of the Soviet Merchant Fleet* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1964) for figures on Soviet shipping costs; and *Soviet Merchant Ships 1945-1968* (Havant, Eng.: Mason Publications, 1969).
53. Charles Issawi, "Regional Economies in the 1970s." Hurewitz, *Rivalry*, p. 132.
54. *Ibid.*
55. "Soviet Tells Bloc to Buy Crude Oil in Middle East," *The New York Times*, 24 November 1969, p. 6:1.
56. "Voice of Fatah" radio broadcast, 19 April 1969, *Mizan Supplement A*, March-April 1969, p. 8.
57. Leonid I. Brezhnev, "For Greater Unity of Communism," *Vital Speeches*, 15 July 1969, p. 592.
58. New China News Agency, 18 June 1969, *Mizan Supplement B*, no. 3, May-June 1969, p. 20.
59. Charles W. Yost, "The Arab-Israeli War: How it Began," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1968, p. 313.



Circumstances have caused the Mediterranean Sea to play a greater part in the history of the world, both in a commercial and a military point of view, than any other sheet of water of the same size. Nation after nation has striven to control it, and the strife still goes on.

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