

Military Roles for the Mediterranean

Regardless of how or where a limited US-Soviet conflict starts, the Mediterranean is likely to become a theater of military operations before hostilities cease. There are situations--a confrontation originating in a non-European, non-NATO context for example--where it is possible the Mediterranean would remain outside the scope of the immediate conflict. Nevertheless, even if fighting centered elsewhere, the chances still are good that military action would occur in the Mediterranean. A US-Soviet conflict actually beginning in the Mediterranean, while increasing the probability of some littoral states' involvement, would not necessarily mean that major military operations involving most or all littoral states would ensue. Should a limited US-Soviet conflict eventually escalate to general war, however, Mediterranean military operations probably would be both inevitable and extensive.

Shape of the Conflict

US-Soviet fighting from the outset is apt to take on East-West/NATO-Warsaw Pact overtones for a number of reasons. First, there are the Turkish Straits. Even a clash in a non-European setting (e.g. Angola) eventually could necessitate Soviet logistics movements through the Mediterranean to sustain their engaged forces. In such cases, to ensure passage from the Black Sea the Soviets would require unimpeded Straits access; without Turkey's consent, the NATO issue would be joined (The Mediterranean Feud, Andrew Borowiec, Praeger, 1983, p. 5). Next, if in the course of the initial US-Soviet fighting US territory were struck, US invocation of the NATO charter's "attack on one is an attack on all" provisions would throw the conflict into a NATO context. And, the US probably would not find itself battling the Soviet Union alone; other nations' international ties and commitments, linked in some fashion to worldwide European interests, quite likely would give events an East-West cast.

Additionally, US and Soviet perceptions of and preparations for conflict with each other have, since World War II's end, focused largely on Europe--in particular the Central Front--as the likely battleground. On the one hand, this means the Mediterranean would not necessarily provide the spark igniting US-Soviet hostilities; on the other, however, such prolonged concentration by both sides upon European terrain heightens the possibility the initial clash would have its genesis there, and thus be NATO-related. Again, it appears the Mediterranean could not escape some degree of military involvement because of NATO Southern Flank links and Alliance responsibilities flowing therefrom.

Finally, a limited confrontation by definition would mean that neither the US nor the Soviet Union would resort to nuclear weapons at the outset, and both sides, at least initially, would attempt to contain the conflict. This latter point could affect the dimensions of Mediterranean military operations. Realistically, however, attempts by either side to restrict the

fighting at some point probably would succumb to arguments of strategic necessity, and therefore would have little effect in preventing fighting from spreading to or from the Mediterranean.

The Mediterranean Connection

Both the US and the Soviet Union have considerable stakes in the Mediterranean, interests whose span transcends the Mediterranean basin, whose complexities prevent easy isolation and analysis, and whose neutralization or loss would strengthen the other side's hand. There are weaknesses in both camps whose successful exploitation could influence the scope and outcome of any Mediterranean fighting. Also, the Mediterranean's 17 littoral states have distinct interests which do not always coincide with either US or Soviet objectives, and which cannot be overlooked. Accordingly, military operations of whatever dimension amidst such Mediterranean dynamics quickly would become an integral part of the larger US-Soviet clash as opposed to a minor sideshow of negligible consequence.

Combatants' Mediterranean Interests

To the Soviets, the Mediterranean is both a commercial and a military lifeline to much of the rest of the world. It is, as well, a potential strategic vulnerability--successful Western penetration of the Black Sea from the Mediterranean in wartime could wreak industrial and agricultural havoc on Mother Russia (Borowiec, Mediterranean Feud, pp. 4-5). In addition, the Mediterranean and its periphery present opportunities for the Soviets to influence regional and world events through power projection efforts launched from eastern and southern Mediterranean littoral states hostile to the West. In recent years, military aid to and political support for Syria and Libya, for example, have gained the Soviets increased access to military facilities in both countries, springboards for injecting themselves into Middle Eastern and Persian Gulf affairs at US and European expense, a key Gorbachev objective (Soviet Military Power 1987, pp. 139-40). Regionally, they are increasingly well-positioned to undermine Western efforts to promote NATO cohesion and general economic prosperity. Of the Soviet military forces that could be brought to bear in furtherance of these wide-ranging interests, the Soviets' Mediterranean Squadron, the 5th Eskadra--composed of Black Sea Fleet elements and routinely numbering some 40-45 vessels--is the most visible reminder of Soviet Mediterranean concerns and inroads (Power, p. 17).

US Mediterranean interests challenge the Soviets' in scope, direction and importance. NATO's Southern Flank is the keystone for US Mediterranean involvement, and with this association comes a US defense commitment to the NATO nations along the Mediterranean's northern shore. Of strategic concern are the US military facilities positioned there, installations which represent everything "from basic logistics and supply operations to highly sophisticated communications and intelligence activities." Most of these bases in a NATO war would be controlled by NATO's military leadership and could be used by military forces assigned to NATO commands (US Military Installations in NATO's Southern Region, Report to the US House of Representatives' Committee on Foreign Affairs, 1986, p. 1). Complementing

Representatives' Committee on Foreign Affairs, 1986, p. 1). Complementing these military activities ashore is the US Sixth Fleet, whose presence both exemplifies NATO's forward defense strategy and represents a strategic risk in terms of vulnerability to Soviet land-based airpower, particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean. This US military presence carries with it concern as well for events outside NATO's traditional geographic envelope, developments in the Middle East and Southwest Asia which impact directly on European and NATO well being. Thus, the region's political stability, Western orientation and social cohesion are major adjuncts to US defense objectives in the greater Mediterranean area.

It is unlikely either major combatant's Mediterranean interests could be expected to change in a limited conflict. If anything, each would be drawn to the Mediterranean to protect them, and could be expected to pursue this goal despite any objections which might be raised by littoral states.

Littoral States' Interests, Reaction to Conflict

A US-Soviet conflict commencing in and centering on the Mediterranean would be guaranteed to capture all littoral states' and island nations' immediate and undivided attention. Sovereignty/territorial integrity and economic survivability would be paramount concerns to all littoral nations, and if threatened directly these considerations could be expected to hasten individual country decisions as to whether or not to adhere to peacetime-contracted defense obligations.

Uncertain reactions likely would be encountered, however, if a US-Soviet confrontation originated on the Mediterranean's perimeter, or ultimately were transferred to the Mediterranean from totally outside the region. Littoral states' national interests easily could take precedence over peacetime defense ties, much as they did in 1973 when only Portugal permitted the US to use its bases in conjunction with the Arab-Israeli dispute (US Military Installations, pp. 58-9). At the least, parochial interests could be expected to prompt deliberate and perhaps protracted reflection by littoral states generally over the merits of attempting to maintain a neutral stance, especially if territorial violation remained a remote possibility. This question of littoral states' "priorities" could be complicated further for the US by very real and deeply divisive intra-Mediterranean disputes, the most serious of which center on Greece and Turkey. Over the years, NATO defense planning for the Eastern Mediterranean has become almost painful, with Western goals often taking a backseat to contradictory Greek-Turkish objectives involving the Aegean Sea and Cyprus (Mediterranean Feud, p. 9). That this fruitless bickering swirls around a part of the Mediterranean crucial to the Soviets, and thus to the US, pinpoints the area as one ripe for Soviet meddling and fraught with frustration for US military planners.

Mediterranean littoral states' interests probably would have little or no influence in preventing the expansion of a US-Soviet conflict into the Mediterranean if either protagonist felt it necessary to move in this direction. Similarly, littoral states' interests probably would be of

secondary concern to the US and the Soviets if truly "limited" warfare and objectives could not be pursued in the Mediterranean.

Mediterranean Conflict Scenarios

The range of options for limited US-Soviet hostilities involving the Mediterranean embraces two broad categories--conflicts clearly of non-NATO origin, and those equally clearly having their genesis somewhere on NATO territory.* (At some point, the non-NATO/NATO distinction could become both difficult and potentially crucial to how Mediterranean military operations would develop.) At the extremes are the unlikely propositions that no military operations would occur in the Mediterranean proper or in adjacent states, and that the Mediterranean would be the sole military theater of US-Soviet conflict, a self-contained limited confrontation which spread no further.

1. No Mediterranean involvement. By definition, the conflict would originate elsewhere. In order to wholly exclude the Mediterranean from the fighting:

- All Soviet resupply would have to be carried out through other than Black Sea ports, and the US and Soviet Mediterranean fleets' proximity to each other would not be permitted to become a factor; or,
- The Soviets would make use of their traditional Black Sea-Mediterranean resupply routes and the US would refrain from interfering with such operations.

In the first instance, the fighting's locale would figure prominently in determining how Soviet logistical operations would be carried out. Soviet non-use of its Black Sea assets in certain circumstances would be a possibility. A decision to eschew Black Sea ports for whatever reason, however, would carry with it presumptions that Soviet naval and merchant marine assets were both adequate and properly positioned at the time to carry out the task, and any delays encountered in moving Soviet men and materiel overland to non-Black Sea shipping points would be acceptable to the Soviet military. An equally unpredictable component of this course of action would be whether or not the impetus behind the initial US-Soviet clash would carry over into the Mediterranean, if for no other reason than it is here the US and Soviet navies regularly cross paths in peacetime, perhaps moreso than anywhere else. (The unlikely possibility of a US-Soviet agreement to limit fighting to the area of the initial conflict would be one way to prevent Sixth Fleet-5th Eskadra encounters.)

*Although a limited US-Soviet conflict theoretically could take place anywhere in the world, realistically the Soviets' traditional fixation on homeland defense, combined with their disinclination to deploy substantial military assets abroad when surrogates can be used, would reduce sharply the number of locations where a "non-NATO" clash would be likely to occur.

In the second case, the fighting's locale also would be a major factor, especially if time were essential to the Soviet resupply effort and the Black Sea offered the shortest route. In such circumstances, it would be as illogical to expect the Soviets, already militarily engaged with the US, to stint on resupply (e.g. depend on whatever aerial resupply or surrogates could provide) or to redirect supplies over longer routes as it would be to expect the US to stand aside and permit the Soviets unrestricted Mediterranean access, thereby directly contributing to a possible US defeat elsewhere. Even if the Soviets were to gain all requisite access (Straits, Gibraltar, Suez) by peaceful means, the US would be impelled to challenge these Soviet reinforcements, ideally before they reached the high seas.

Thus, in times of extreme tension, such as could be anticipated with a limited US-Soviet conflict in progress somewhere in the world, the variables inherent in the first set of requirements and the imperatives associated with the second would make it highly unlikely that a Mediterranean without military operations of some kind could long exist. This argument pertains as well to the possibility of both the US and the Soviet Union assuming defensive Mediterranean postures: because it would be advantageous to the Soviets in some other military theater, the US could not permit such a situation to exist.*

2. Conflict of non-NATO, non-Mediterranean origin. Soviet Straits access for military resupply and a US need to intercept these forces would constitute the minimum level of Mediterranean fighting in a limited US-Soviet conflict, as outlined above. Conceivably, this could be restricted to naval and naval air exchanges as the Soviets attempted to enter the Aegean or tried to make headway into the Eastern Mediterranean. Soviet land-based aircraft would complement 5th Eskadra and Black Sea Fleet elements escorting supply and transport craft. Military operations would center in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the US rapidly could find itself in an increasingly exposed position requiring some form of outside reinforcement and certainly resupply.

In an effort to isolate the Sixth Fleet and the US effort generally, at some point the Soviets could be expected to launch a complementary campaign to convince world opinion, and particularly Turkey and Greece, that the

*Restraint and a defensive approach do not seem to figure prominently in contemporary US Navy planning, which stresses a more "venturesome," offensive use of its assets. At some point this apparently includes Marine amphibious operations in the Black Sea, as part of a "horizontal escalation" of conventional hostilities with the Soviet Union (Jack Beatty, "In Harm's Way," The Atlantic Monthly, May 1987, pp. 37-53). As much of what would happen militarily in the Mediterranean, as postulated in the various scenarios considered by this paper, would revolve around US Sixth Fleet and Soviet 5th Eskadra actions, the Navy's offensive strategy would have considerable impact on subsequent military operations once initial contact occurred.

conflict was strictly a bilateral affair between Moscow and Washington. The Soviets would disavow any intent to violate either Turkish or Greek territory, perhaps going as far as forestalling moves toward the Mediterranean by either Soviet or Warsaw Pact ground forces. The Soviets would respect Greek and Turkish territory (the latter only if Straits passage granted) and would not attack either country unless the US were permitted to use its bases, or US military aircraft/ships were permitted to recover/refuel at Greek or Turkish facilities. Faced with a carefully crafted and executed pitch of this sort, one which stressed the non-NATO, non-Mediterranean nature of the conflict and also played upon Greek-Turkish differences, strong incentives would exist for neither Greece nor Turkey to enter the fray. US entreaties/threats and overt attempts to use US military facilities in either country (assuming they were still in existence and functional) might encounter formidable opposition and the closest scrutiny. In such circumstances, neither the unrestricted use of US facilities nor ready Greek and/or Turkish subscription to the US position in the Mediterranean at that moment could be assumed.

Additionally, all the while others along the Mediterranean littoral and in Europe would be closely analyzing the Soviet approach, US countermoves and ultimately the Greek and Turkish responses. If the Soviets, in similar fashion, rendered appropriate assurances regarding European/Western Mediterranean commercial concerns, a desire to appease the Soviets could grow, particularly if either Greece or Turkey knuckled under.

Even if the Soviets infrequently display the degree of finesse necessary to pull off such a scheme, and recognizing that time constraints probably would blur events here deliberately measured, what is pointed up is the fact that from the minimum level of US-Soviet Mediterranean confrontation forward, Greek and Turkish cooperation--with each other and with the US--or lack thereof would have immense and lasting consequences for the US. If the Soviets could achieve Turkish and Greek neutrality, particularly Turkish, they could enter the Mediterranean relatively uninjured, challenged only by the Sixth Fleet and within range of support from Libya and Syria. In short, a limited US-Soviet conflict with no visible NATO or Mediterranean connection probably would be the most difficult situation for the US to confront militarily in the Mediterranean. Rebuffed by Greece and Turkey in the worst case, the US could find itself on the defensive in an unwinnable Eastern Mediterranean situation. This could continue uninterrupted until the US upped the ante, the initial conflict outside the Mediterranean engulfed some other area(s) and escalated to general war (with this scenario adding to the possibility of such an eventuality), or the differences prompting the original US-Soviet conflict were resolved.

3. Conflict of non-NATO, Mediterranean origin. Two general theses suggest themselves as reasons for an extra-NATO, limited US-Soviet conflict having its genesis in the Mediterranean:

- Either the US or the Soviets would decide their Mediterranean naval assets were the most appropriate means by which to force a settlement (i.e. limited conflict) on the other over some issue

Mediterranean-related or no. (The previously-noted peacetime proximity of the two sides' Mediterranean fleets would contribute to selecting this as a course of action.) Or,

- Spillover from another Arab-Israeli flare-up or some eastern/southern littoral state's adventurism would draw the US and the Soviet Union into direct confrontation in the Mediterranean.

Militarily, in either instance action would not necessarily focus on the Eastern Mediterranean, as the initiating force could select the attack location. Eventual Soviet resupply efforts (via the Straits) in support of the 5th Eskadra could force the Sixth Fleet to divide its attention between fighting the sea battle(s) and preventing 5th Eskadra replenishment. The further west in the Mediterranean the conflict occurred, the less opportunity the Soviets would have to employ land-based air assets. If no clear victor emerged almost immediately, at some point both sides would require port facilities to accomplish repairs and resupply not performed under way.

Theoretically, if one side were incisive enough a strictly US-Soviet naval encounter could be conducted and terminated without recourse to any Mediterranean littoral states. Nevertheless, the sequential nature of such fast-moving events would make it extremely likely that both sides would have the time, the ability and probably the need to seek reinforcements. Accordingly, previous political arguments regarding Straits access and Greek and Turkish neutrality would continue to be valid, particularly if the conflict were a spinoff from some Arab-Israeli dispute (witness 1973). Additionally, Italian, Greek and Turkish economic ties to the Arab world and the presence of citizens from all three countries in various Arab states, particularly in Libya, undoubtedly would influence any decision to side with the US. If the Soviets turned out to be scrupulous in observing northern littoral states' boundaries and offered solid assurances of intent (accompanied by equally clear warnings about what would happen if the US were allowed access to its bases), it would be by no means certain that the US would have the local support it required. Depending upon how these non-NATO events unfolded, less-involved Mediterranean/European onlookers also might be given all the incentive they needed to remain on the sidelines. Once again, then, Turkish control of the Straits, Greek cooperation in blocking the Aegean and US use of bases along the northern littoral would hang in the balance, a situation not dissimilar to the non-NATO, non-Mediterranean scenario and from the US perspective certainly one no easier to solve.

4. Conflict of NATO, non-Mediterranean origin. By definition, the initial US-Soviet clash would occur somewhere on the Central Front or the Northern Flank. (A confrontation which from the outset involved only US (or Canadian) territory, would display Soviet intent to carry hostilities beyond a reasonable definition of "limited" conflict because of the distances and scope of preparations such an undertaking would encompass.) Also by definition, at least one other NATO nation besides the US would be involved because its territory had been violated. Because the Soviets would have direct overland access to the scene of any Central Front--and possibly some Northern Flank--fighting for resupply purposes, they would not be obliged to use the Mediterranean to sustain their operations. Nevertheless, with Sixth

Fleet and 5th Eskadra elements undoubtedly at highest alert, and with palpable tension existing throughout both the Alliance and the Warsaw Pact, there would be a very good chance that fighting could spread spontaneously to the Mediterranean. Any 5th Eskadra or Black Sea Fleet movement to support the Soviet Northern Fleet, for example, would prompt a US response for the same rationale applied in former scenarios when Soviet resupply through the Straits was the issue.

Politically, the US would be somewhat better off in the Mediterranean than it was in previous scenarios:

- Although US leverage inherent in Article 5 of the NATO Treaty might be sorely tested, there would be from the very beginning definite and direct NATO linkage. At a minimum, this would mean all NATO Southern Flank members would be hard pressed to disallow US use of its bases and supplies on their territory. (While a unified NATO response is not ruled out, lack of agreement on the existence and extent of the threat could prompt foot-dragging by some Alliance members.) Even if a nation (e.g. Spain) were to reject the NATO linkage because it was not threatened directly, the US probably could exert enough pressure (unilaterally and through other NATO allies closer to the fighting) to be able to extract US forces and supplies in country and perhaps even covertly continue operations at selected installations in that country.
- Any hint of Bulgarian mobilization or Soviet Transcaucasus military activity would prompt greater Greek and Turkish attention to the events unfolding to their north. Depending upon how close the fighting was to the Eastern Mediterranean and whether a threat to Greece and Turkey seemed to be shaping up, at this juncture the hatchet might be buried between the two with voluntary cooperation with the US and NATO forthcoming from that point forward. Turkey, because of its Straits responsibilities and common border with the USSR, probably could be expected to react first to the threat. Although a recalcitrant Greece, holding out until the end before siding with the US, is a possibility, Turkish mobilization probably would prompt the Greeks to do likewise, if only to remain on an appropriate defensive footing vis-a-vis Turkey. A neutral Greece, also a possibility, would decouple Turkey from Italy, and depending upon how military action in the Mediterranean proceeded, could prove Turkey's undoing. So, yet again Greek and Turkish cooperation would be of primary importance to larger US goals.
- Assuming the US had the support of principal NATO players, especially France and Italy, its Mediterranean position would be strengthened as a result of the shore-based logistics infrastructure available and the non-US military forces that could be brought to bear should the situation warrant.

Certainly, in this scenario restraint by both the US and the Soviets would determine the extent of Mediterranean military operations. Nevertheless,

even if the Soviets sought to assume a defensive Mediterranean stance, any decision to move vessels out of the Black Sea to support the Northern Fleet or reinforce the 5th Eskadra could prompt a US response and render relevant previous arguments regarding Greek and Turkish cooperation. The timing of such a move, in terms of a threat developing from the north, could be crucial to Greece's and Turkey's decision either to remain neutral or to join the US.

5. Conflict of NATO, Mediterranean origin. By definition, the initial US-Soviet clash would occur somewhere along the Southern Flank, and, as in the previous scenario, at least one (Southern Flank) NATO member besides the US would be involved because its territory had been violated. (A unified NATO response is not precluded in this scenario, either.) Unlike a Central Front confrontation, however, where US and Soviet ground forces could clash directly and immediately, Soviet ground force action on the Southern Flank (as on the Northern) probably would come first against non-US troops--either Turkish (common border with USSR or through Bulgaria) or Greek (through Bulgaria)--before the US became directly involved. Otherwise, for a NATO-related clash to originate in the Mediterranean, the Soviets would have to employ 5th Eskadra units within the territorial waters, or against the naval forces, of at least one Southern Flank nation. Although some pretext undoubtedly could be found to challenge Portuguese, Spanish, French or Italian forces or interests, more fruitful ground would lie to the east, where previously-noted Soviet Mediterranean interests (the Straits) would suggest pressure against Turkey or Greece. Such Soviet action, however, would precipitate a Sixth Fleet response against the 5th Eskadra, with subsequent military action developing along the lines of previously-discussed scenarios.

In this instance, with Turkey or Greece being the primary focus for Soviet ground or naval forces, the threat to either would be direct and unambiguous. Traditional Turkish concern over long-term Soviet intentions, responsibility for control of the Straits and recognition of the developing threat would make Turkey's response equally unambiguous. Pronouncements by Athens regarding the "threat" from the East notwithstanding, in this situation, being militarily challenged through (or by) Bulgaria, Greece could be expected to abandon all pretense for non-cooperation with NATO. The Greek Armed Forces would vigorously defend the homeland and all territorial waters while actively seeking allied support. The Soviets surely realize that Greece, if provoked directly, probably would fall back upon its NATO ties to protect its territorial integrity. This could prompt the Soviets to work more indirectly, and even harder than they have been in recent years, to split Greece from the Alliance, to exacerbate Greek-Turkish differences and to play to Greece's current penchant to pursue its "independent, multidimensional foreign policy." The Soviets' hope would be that better peacetime ties between Athens and Moscow could make a Greek decision to depend upon NATO in wartime as difficult a choice as possible. Whatever issues the Soviets might choose to exploit, and regardless of the degree of success they might achieve, it once again shows how Greece and Turkey could dominate US and allied planning to respond to Soviet military initiatives against the Southern Flank.

6. Mediterranean as the sole military theater. Whereas fairly objective reasons can be advanced for some degree of Mediterranean involvement in any limited US-Soviet conflict, as well as for a limited US-Soviet confrontation eventually gravitating to or even starting in the Mediterranean, an equally clear-cut explanation why Mediterranean-originated fighting would not be able to be contained within the Mediterranean basin is not as readily apparent. These factors, however, would argue for expansion:

- The confluence of US, Soviet, European, North African and Middle Eastern interests that occurs in the Mediterranean, and the frequently contradictory objectives inherent in these competing goals, means it would be next to impossible to limit repercussions and reactions stemming from Mediterranean events to the Mediterranean itself. Peacetime pursuit of these conflicting interests by both major and minor Mediterranean players gives ample evidence of their worldwide and often essential character (e.g. oil); the dimensions of these ties would ensure eventual, if not immediate, conflict elsewhere.
- Limited military operations in the Mediterranean basin which appeared to be going against one of the major combatants would undoubtedly prompt an effort by the losing side to aid its embattled forces, or otherwise retaliate in a fashion relieving pressure in the Mediterranean.
- Southern Flank members' NATO membership makes it unlikely that a situation could evolve in the Mediterranean and involve at least one NATO nation, yet preclude some larger, NATO-wide response. Although the Southern Flank has been publicly identified as a weak link in NATO, the Soviets cannot count on a failure of that linkage should limited war break out in the Mediterranean.
- The fact that the US and the Soviet Union actually were fighting would do more to inflame passions than reduce them; accordingly, chances for added conflict elsewhere, either by design or by accident, would increase as the result of fighting in the Mediterranean. Emergence of a "winner" in a limited-conflict scenario could be expected to prompt military action, as well, by previously uninvolved parties for purely parochial reasons having little to do with either the original US-Soviet confrontation or the Mediterranean aspects of the conflict.

Limited Conflict expands to General War

It has been established from the foregoing representative scenarios that a limited US-Soviet conflict, regardless of where it originated, would involve the Mediterranean in some way, and probably would not be confined to that area. Subsequent Mediterranean involvement, assuming US-Soviet hostilities escalated to an all-out effort (including nuclear weapons) by each to defeat the other militarily, could be expected to include:

- Sixth Fleet and 5th Eskadra actions to render each other militarily ineffective;

- Soviet attempts to seize the Straits (if not already held) and US efforts to block or to breach same;
- US facilities along the northern littoral being attacked.

It is difficult to foresee whether any state which had opted for neutrality in a limited-conflict scenario would remain so; much would depend upon who was "winning" locally and how far into the Southern Flank fighting had spread. Assuming something less than total involvement by some Southern Flank member in the overarching US-Soviet, NATO-Warsaw Pact struggle, Mediterranean instability could give rise to attempts to settle old scores on anything from Spanish control of Gibraltar and reinforcement of its Moroccan enclaves to an adjustment of Greek-Turkish-Bulgarian borders and "resolution" of the Cyprus conflict. Breakdown of international discipline is foreseen as an adjunct to any US-Soviet general conflict. This effectively precludes quantification of Mediterranean involvement beyond the recognition that because it would be part of any limited US-Soviet conflict, the Mediterranean could not escape the larger conflagration that would follow.

Conclusions

A limited US-Soviet conflict, whatever and wherever its origins, would prompt some degree of Mediterranean military involvement.

Although compelling arguments can be made that irrespective of where it starts a limited US-Soviet conflict would quickly become NATO/Warsaw Pact- or East/West-oriented, conflicts arising from clearly non-NATO causes, if properly handled by the Soviets, could put the US at a severe disadvantage when conducting military operations in the Mediterranean. A corollary to this is the more NATO linkage there is to the initial limited US-Soviet conflict, the greater the likelihood Southern Flank members would support the US and the more leverage the US would have to ensure it would not face the Soviets alone.

Military operations in the Mediterranean would be more likely to begin as the result of naval activity from which military action ashore would flow, not vice versa.

Turkey and Greece would figure prominently in every limited-conflict scenario postulated for military operations in the Mediterranean. Satisfaction of US Mediterranean goals would depend upon these nations' unstinting cooperation. A corollary to this is that while resolution of Greek-Turkish differences could facilitate such cooperation, non-resolution plays to long-term Soviet advantage.



United States Department of State

Foreign Service Institute

1400 Key Boulevard

Arlington, Virginia 22209

May , 1987

Dear :

This letter confirms our recent telephone conversation about the Workshop/Seminar I am organizing here at the Foreign Service Institute the morning of Thursday, May 28, on the subject, "NATO's Achilles Heel: Is the Southeastern Flank Beyond Repair?" To facilitate productive discussion I am limiting participation to about twenty-five experts, in and out of government, and look forward to your being one of them.

The focus of the Workshop will be on the effect that Greek-Turkish differences have on NATO's military posture and what the alliance can do to address underlying problems. There will be two papers, one by Colonel Dwight Beach, U.S. Army, setting forth key military factors, and the other, which I am preparing, on diplomatic aspects. These will be sent to you in the next two weeks. Colonel Beach and I will make brief oral presentations to get discussion underway.

The Workshop will convene at 08.45am on May 28 and will last until 12.30pm. It will be held in Room 210 at FSI's main building at 1400 Key Blvd. in Rosslyn. Although the Workshop is unclassified, its restricted size and the special qualifications of the participants should enable us to discuss a wide range of related issues and come to some constructive conclusions.

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We do not intend to publish anything based directly on the Workshop, although I hope that all of us will find that it has sharpened our thinking on Greek-Turkish problems and their implications for NATO. We will tape the proceedings and thus have a permanent record of our discussions on file at FSI.

If you have any questions, please give me a call on (703) 235-1848. Questions on administrative arrangements for the Workshop can also be addressed to Ms. Deborah Chambers, (703) 235-2109. Thanks for your interest and I look forward to seeing you on May 28.

Sincerely,

Monteagle Stearns

NATO's ACHILLES HEEL: IS THE SOUTHEASTERN FLANK BEYOND REPAIR?

by **Monteagle Stearns**

A Workshop Discussion Paper

**Place : Foreign Service Institute, Center for the Study
of Foreign Affairs, 1400 Key Blvd., Room 210, Rosslyn, Va. 22209**

Time : 08.45 a.m., May 28, 1987

Monteagle Stearns is a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs at the State Department's Foreign Service Institute. The views in this paper do not necessarily represent the views of the State Department or the United States Government

NATO's ACHILLES HEEL: IS THE SOUTHEASTERN FLANK BEYOND REPAIR?

Discussion Paper for Workshop May 28, 1987

An inherent paradox of NATO seems to be that the more successful the Alliance is in containing the Soviet threat that brought it into being the more vulnerable it becomes to internal antagonisms unrelated to its original purposes. A case in point is the confrontation between Greece and Turkey which paralyzes the southern flank of NATO and sharply limits its ability to counter Soviet military deployments in the Mediterranean. While Greek-Turkish differences have vexed NATO councils almost from the time the two states joined the Alliance in 1952, the situation has deteriorated markedly in the past decade: since the Cyprus crisis of 1974, military cooperation between the two allies has been non-existent; since the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by Turkish Cypriots in 1983, Greece has refused to participate in NATO exercises in the Aegean. Viewed from this perspective, if the central front of NATO represents the heart of the Alliance, its Achilles Heel is unquestionably located in the southeastern sector.

NATO's political leadership has consistently taken the position that, despite the damage inflicted on the Alliance's military posture by Greek-Turkish differences, NATO itself is powerless to resolve them. The memory of futile interventions by third parties--ranging from the Dulles parallel letters to Greece and Turkey in 1955 to the Geneva conference of guarantor powers in 1974--has doubtless contributed to the general impression that the Greek-Turkish confrontation is a problem that time alone can solve and that the Alliance's principal obligation is to limit the damage. Accordingly, NATO has confined itself to empowering senior allied military commanders--usually SACEUR himself and CINCSOUTH in Naples--to resolve, if possible, purely military differences, such as those arising regularly over the modalities of NATO exercises, while refusing to address the political context which produces disagreements in the military sphere. Not surprisingly, as the political problems fester, the military ones become more intractable and NATO's southeastern flank less defensible.

At present no dialogue exists between Greece and Turkey. Continuing talks between the Secretaries General of the two Foreign Ministries were broken off by the Papandreou Government in 1981 on the grounds that there was

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"nothing to negotiate". This, however, has meant that communications, to the extent they have been carried on at all, have been largely conducted through the Greek and Turkish press. When Turkish military exercises in the Aegean result in Turkish aircraft penetrating the ten miles of air space that Greece claims around its islands--something that has occurred frequently--Greek aircraft are scrambled and the risk of a dog fight between NATO allies becomes palpable. In effect, the responsibility for avoiding an incident with irreversible consequences rests with young TACAIR pilots on both sides. Nor are the dangers of a Greek-Turkish clash confined to disputed Aegean airspace. On December 19, 1986 one Greek and two Turkish soldiers were killed in an exchange of fire that occurred along the Evros River, which delineates the borders of Greek and Turkish Thrace.

Military Effects of Greek-Turkish Confrontation

If the most obvious benefit NATO gained when Greece and Turkey joined the military organization in 1952 was a coordinated defense of its southeastern flank, the most obvious liability that NATO incurs from the present situation is a lack of coordination that loudly calls attention to itself in every forum where the two allies are represented. Greek and Turkish armed forces have not exercised together regularly in 15 years. The last NATO military exercise in which the two governments permitted their forces to cooperate directly, even on a limited basis, was in the spring of 1982. Most of the exercising that Greece and Turkey have done in the Aegean since 1974 has not been directed against a common foe but against each other.

The damage to NATO's preparedness, however, goes well beyond this. Greek-Turkish antagonism also disfigures the military structure of the alliance. When Greece withdrew from the military organization of NATO in 1974 its forces were withdrawn from NATO's Izmir headquarters which accordingly, in 1978, became an entirely Turkish command subordinate to CINCSOUTH in Naples. The

reintegration of Greek forces into the military structure of NATO in 1980 envisaged, not the return of the Greeks to Izmir, but the creation of a separate "Greek NATO headquarters" in Larissa in central Greece. Due to disagreements between Athens and Ankara over the interpretation of the reintegration agreement, this Larissa headquarters, and its projected air arm, the 7th Allied Tactical Air Force, has never come into being. As a result there are no agreed command-and-control lines between Greek and Turkish forces in the Aegean; no mechanism to assure coordinated air defense if hostilities were to break out between NATO and the Warsaw Pact; and no provision for joint planning in any sector by

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Greek and Turkish forces whose national and NATO military missions are clearly contradictory.

Even if the alliance can manage to keep Greece and Turkey members of NATO and nominal allies in the years ahead, it is painfully clear that the vulnerabilities of the southeastern flank are too deep and far-reaching to be eliminated by improvised crisis management after hostilities with Warsaw Pact forces have broken out. Either NATO begins to face the military implications of Greek-Turkish antagonism or it must risk having to abandon the eastern Mediterranean theater - and perhaps also the western - in the event of general hostilities. The effect of such a decision would of course affect not only Greece and Turkey, but Italy, France and Spain, as well. As Edward Luttwak has observed, in a general war "Redeployment of the Sixth Fleet from the narrow seas of the Mediterranean into the broad expanse of the Atlantic could be at once an act of tactical wisdom and political folly" (Sea Power in the Mediterranean. CSIS, Georgetown University, 1979).

What is the Military Value of the Mediterranean?

According to Admiral William H. Rowden, Sixth Fleet commander from 1981 to 1983, "one half of the oil consumed by France, Spain and West Germany, and all that of Italy, Switzerland, and Austria, arrives through Mediterranean ports" (NATO and the Mediterranean, edited by Kaplan, Clawson, and Luraghi, Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1985). Western Europe's dependence on the Mediterranean trade route for other important commodities is comparably heavy. The question for NATO planners is, therefore, how best to keep that trade route open in the event of hostilities.

Viewed purely in geostrategic terms it could be argued that from the standpoint of NATO and of the Warsaw Pact alike a neutral Mediterranean would protect the vital interests of each alliance as well as, or better than, a belligerent Mediterranean. Assuming the continued membership of Greece and Turkey in NATO, and thus the continued availability of US/NATO facilities located there, a neutral (or effectively neutralized) Mediterranean would appear to serve the logistic needs of the western allies without imposing on them the need to engage naval forces in an area where they would be at a tactical disadvantage due to the proximity of Soviet airpower.

For the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact the Mediterranean stakes are lower, but by no means negligible. It has been estimated that 70-80% of the Soviet Union's supplies to Vladivostok are shipped via the Mediterranean, which is also the

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principal Soviet trade route to its Arab and African clients and customers. If the Soviet Union is better positioned than the United States to interdict maritime LOCs by means of air assets based in the Crimea, Moscow nevertheless has its own tactical disadvantages if it seeks to turn the Mediterranean into a major theater of war. All of the Mediterranean choke points, from the Bosphorus to the Straits of Gibraltar, are in hostile hands, and NATO air assets operating from Turkish and, to a lesser extent Greek bases would represent a significant threat to the Soviet Black Sea fleet and to Warsaw Pact facilities in the Balkans.

The Soviets and the Warsaw Pact, therefore, have military and logistic reasons almost as compelling as those of the United States and NATO for seeking to limit the level of hostilities in the Mediterranean. The factor that might tempt them not to do so is political rather than military: the Greek-Turkish dispute and the opportunity it provides to drive a wedge into NATO's southeastern flank that could turn into a mortal wound for the alliance.

How Greece and Turkey Joined the Club

In fact, until North Korean forces crossed the 38th Parallel to attack South Korea on June 25, 1950, there was relatively little enthusiasm among NATO's founding members for extending the alliance beyond its original boundaries. Even the implications of inviting Italy to join the organization had been debated, and it was U.S. pressure (inspired by our dependence on the Azores as a stepping stone to Europe) that proved the determining argument for bringing in Portugal.

The arguments against including Greece and Turkey in the alliance, at a time when both countries were pressing for admission, were summarized by U.S. officials in London to the Permanent Under Secretary of the British Foreign Office, Lord Strang, in the spring of 1951 (Aide-Memoire from Ambassador Gifford and NAC Deputy Representative Spofford to Strang, May 15, 1951): (a) the conception of an alliance composed of socially and economically homogeneous countries did not "readily lend itself to the thought of Greek-Turkish participation"; (b) "most parties to the North Atlantic Treaty would probably be reluctant to see a broadening of their security commitments, the immediate benefits of which they (could) not perceive"; and (c) there would be "obvious complications resulting from enlarged membership".

In fact; these arguments would probably have been more prevalent in the alliance the year before. By May, 1951 they had been overtaken by events in Korea, and at the next meeting of the North Atlantic Council, in Ottawa in September, the members unanimously invited Greece and Turkey to join NATO, with only Norway and the Netherlands still expressing reservations.

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At a time when NATO strategists and opinion-leaders in Europe and the United States saw Korea as the Soviet Union's opening gambit, perhaps to be followed by military pressure on Kars and Ardahan in eastern Turkey, or a refueling of the Greek Civil War as a preparation for moves on Thrace and the Dardenelles, the immediate advantages of admitting Greece and Turkey far outweighed other considerations. Confronted by what looked like an imminent Soviet threat, no one, least of all the United States, was disposed to dwell on the longer term implications of admitting two states with historic bilateral differences and little inclination to resolve them.

When the British Embassy in Athens, a month before the Ottawa meeting, raised with U.S. Ambassador Peurifoy the desirability of warning the Greeks "to refrain from stirring up issues (i.e. Cyprus) that might cause difficulties with fellow members", Peurifoy "pointed out Dept's reluctance appear to attach conditions of any kind to Greco-Turkish adherence to NATO and presumed this would apply to any formal change of Greek policy re Cyprus" (Telegram from EmbAthens to SecState, August 31, 1951. Archives).

The Worst of Two Worlds

Greek and Turkish willingness voluntarily "to refrain from stirring up issues" lasted only two years beyond the end of the Korean War - until the beginning of September, 1955, when Turkish nervousness about diplomatic developments in London affecting Cyprus resulted in anti-Greek riots in Istanbul and the virtual elimination of the historic Greek minority there. Since that time there has been scarcely a year when Greeks and Turks were not more preoccupied with their bilateral differences than with the Soviet threat. Since 1974 there has been scarcely a day.

From the strategic standpoint NATO has the worst of two worlds: the political commitment to defend Greece and Turkey without the military capability to do so. It is true that both countries provide important facilities which enable NATO to operate more effectively in the eastern Mediterranean and to monitor Soviet military activities more accurately than would otherwise be the case. Whether these facilities would be defensible in the event of hostilities with the Warsaw Pact is doubtful, however, in the absence of wholehearted and efficient Greek-Turkish military collaboration. Furthermore, as we have seen, antagonism between Greece and Turkey is an open invitation to the Soviets to exploit their differences diplomatically in peacetime and militarily in time of war.

As Henry Kissinger wrote twenty years ago, "Of course no alliance can perfectly reconcile the objectives of all of its members. But the minimum condition for effectiveness is that the

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requirements of the alliance not clash with the deepest aspirations of one or more of the partners" (The Troubled Partnership, by Henry Kissinger, published for the Council on Foreign Relations by McGraw-Hill, 1965).

For over a decade this minimum condition has not been met on NATO's southeastern flank. The alliance, ever wary of involving itself in "political" issues, has tended to look the other way whenever the Aegean pot has boiled over. NATO's initiatives have been confined to the military sphere, as though military problems existed in a political vacuum. Generals Haig and Rogers conducted intensive diplomacy to find a basis for the reintegration of Greece into the military structure of NATO. Much time and imagination have been devoted to constructing scenarios for military exercises that both Greece and Turkey could accept as not prejudicing their legal positions on Aegean airspace, shelf and related issues. Yet the result of all this effort has been fewer joint exercises in the Aegean, a Greek reintegration agreement inoperative in its essential provisions, and a steady deterioration of Greek-Turkish relations.

From fear of jeopardizing existing facilities in Greece and Turkey, and the silhouette of an allied military structure in the northeastern Mediterranean, NATO has failed to take any serious initiatives to resolve underlying Greek-Turkish problems. It is now time to consider whether the risks of a more active diplomacy, and a willingness to address the substance of their bilateral problems, outweigh those of continuing to close our eyes to the disintegration of the southeastern flank.

A History of Failed Diplomacy

Since, for differing reasons, NATO, the Cyprus guarantor powers, and the United Nations, have all been equally helpless to redress a worsening situation, the United States has repeatedly found itself taking initiatives it would have preferred to forgo to resolve crises no one had been able to avert. Whether it was the Dulles demarche of 1955, the Johnson letter and the Acheson Plan of 1964, the shuttle diplomacy of Ball in 1963, Vance in 1967, Sisco in 1974, or Nimetz in 1978, these initiatives have failed to produce a lasting settlement and have usually resulted in a worsening of U.S. relations with both Greece and Turkey.

One characteristic of all these diplomatic interventions is that they were fire-fighting operations designed primarily to prevent general hostilities between Greece and Turkey and only secondarily to resolve underlying differences. It is true that settlements can sometimes be negotiated under pressure of a crisis that would be impossible to achieve otherwise -- the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, to which Greece and Turkey were signatories, is one example. It is doubtful however that issues as complex as Cyprus, the Aegean shelf, territorial seas and airspace, and the

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interpretation of treaties affecting the Aegean islands, combining as they do political, economic and legal factors, bristling as they are with ancient animosities, can be settled in crisis conditions. Agreements hastily pieced together to avoid or terminate hostilities would be likely to last no longer than the London-Zurich accords of 1960.

There is therefore a case to be made for attempting to find durable solutions before the next crisis rather than during or immediately after it. There is also, from the standpoint of the United States, every reason to share with other NATO members, and, if possible, with NATO itself in the person of the Secretary General, the responsibility for assisting Greece and Turkey to resolve their differences. This, in turn, entails amplifying NATO's scope in ways not envisaged, indeed specifically discountenanced, by the founding fathers.

NATO's Mandate

There is no doubt that NATO's mandate, as conceived by the original signatories, did not include a responsibility for addressing internal disputes among the members. According to Sir Nicholas Henderson, in 1948 Second Secretary of the British Embassy in Washington and a member of the NATO Working Party, when the French suggested that an "article of conciliation" be introduced into the draft treaty, the other representatives rejected the idea as duplicating existing mechanisms, notably those provided by the United Nations and the International Court of Justice. Henderson comments, "Furthermore, the possibility of disputes between parties to the Pact of such serious nature as to defy solution by these existing agencies or under existing treaties seemed to some members of the (Drafting) Committee so remote as to make it unnecessary to establish a further agency of conciliation as between the parties" (The Birth of NATO, Sir Nicholas Henderson, Westview Press, 1983).

The point was underscored later when plenipotentiary representatives agreed that in public statements all signatories would define the primary purpose of the Treaty as collective self-defense, under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, but would not term it a "regional arrangement" under Chapter 8. This was thought to avoid any implication that the Treaty aimed at regional conciliation and therefore encroached on U.N. prerogatives. The parties did however reaffirm "their existing obligations for the maintenance of peace and the settlement of disputes between them" (Henderson, Agreed Minutes of Interpretation, Birth of NATO, p. 104).

The present Greek Government's position, first enunciated by Prime Minister Papandreou at the meeting of NATO Defense Ministers in Brussels in December, 1981, is that the Treaty must be elaborated by a Resolution of the members affirming that its

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provisions cover not only an attack on a member by a non-member, but on a member by another member. This Greek proposal, repeated on many occasions since, has been consistently rejected by the other members on the grounds that it is redundant, not envisaged in the Treaty, and gratuitously insulting to another member, Turkey, which asserts it has no aggressive intentions toward Greece.

That such a contingency was not envisaged in the original Treaty we have already seen. It is not true, however, that NATO has always taken the position that internal disputes between the members are beyond its purview. On the contrary, in the period 1957-1958 two NATO Secretaries-General, Ismay and Spaak, acted as mediators in successive attempts to restore harmony to Anglo-Greek-Turkish relations in the face of mounting violence in Cyprus and the expulsion of the Greek minority from Istanbul in 1955. Unsuccessful though they were in achieving a settlement, these efforts did bring about a resumption of talks between Greece and Turkey which eventually made possible the London-Zurich accords of 1959-60.

The Ismay-Spaak initiatives provide a precedent, if one is needed, for a more energetic diplomatic role by the present Secretary General, Lord Carrington, who has already offered his good offices to the Greeks and Turks following their confrontation over oil exploration and drilling rights in the Aegean in March of this year. This offer, which the Secretary General says still stands, was accepted by the Turks but rejected by the Greeks, a response that seemed to bear out the fears of those uneasy about a more active NATO diplomacy.

NATO's Diplomatic Disabilities

It is assumed by many NATO officials, and has become holy writ to their governments, that undertaking to resolve Greek-Turkish differences is a no-win proposition for the alliance, which has as much as it can handle keeping the countries of the central front marching in the same direction without trying to call the tune for those of the southeastern flank, which are considered to be less schooled in team play. If NATO proves its impartiality with an attitude of detached concern, it is sometimes argued, Greece and Turkey will eventually realize that the alliance is not going to bail them out. Only then will they accept the responsibility for resolving their own differences.

This reasoning ignores the fact that neither Greece nor Turkey presently believes that NATO is impartial. Each is convinced that the alliance tilts in favor of the other. The Greeks believe that strategic considerations - the notorious realpolitik - invariably give Turkey more weight in NATO councils because of its larger population (50.7 versus 9.8 million), troop strength (560 versus 210 thousand), and 600 km. border with the

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Soviet Union. The Turks, on the other hand, believe that the weight of their membership is limited by its purely strategic character: whenever Turkish and Greek interests collide, they contend, NATO tends to side with Greece for historic and cultural reasons. Greeks and Turks both, in other words, consider that NATO undervalues their membership, albeit for different reasons.

Paradoxically, NATO's present hands-off policy, although intended to project the alliance's impartiality and encourage Athens and Ankara to settle their own differences, is more likely to be having the opposite effect. Both capitals are apt to interpret this attitude as proof that NATO does not take them seriously and, accordingly, to see less prospect for compensation from the alliance if they adopt more flexible policies. It is also logical to suppose that what Greeks and Turks alike see as the relatively low priority accorded by NATO to the southeastern flank gives them little reason to place NATO priorities before their own when it comes to force planning and deployment.

And Its Advantages

From the standpoint of the United States, sponsorship of Greek and Turkish membership in NATO was really a way of institutionalizing, and at the same time sharing the responsibility to implement, the commitment to defend them undertaken in the Truman Doctrine. For their part, Greece and Turkey initially regarded their NATO membership as essentially a reinforcement of American guarantees.

Since 1952 the significance of the NATO link has changed perceptibly for both countries. Greece has come to regard its NATO membership as a buffer not primarily against the Warsaw Pact but against Turkey, and as a reinforcement of its ties not to the United States but to Europe. Indeed one of the significant benefits of NATO membership to the Greek Government is that it "Europeanizes" to some extent the small but conspicuous U.S. military presence in Greece. While NATO has not been popular in Greece since 1974, its security policies are less suspect than those of the United States, which are believed by many Greeks to be unduly influenced by Turkey and by internal Greek political considerations. Thus when the two governments have discussed the question of shared military facilities in Greece, it has usually been easier to discuss their NATO than their bilateral aspects.

Turkey has also come to look on NATO to some extent as a buffer against over-reliance on the U.S., but in its case against the uncertainties of doing business with the United States, whose security policies, in Turkish eyes, are unduly influenced by Greece and by internal American political considerations. During the period of the U.S. arms embargo between 1975 and 1978, Turkey relied heavily on the continuing flow of military assistance from another NATO partner, the Federal Republic of Germany, to

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compensate for the interruption of supplies from the United States.

To offset its diplomatic liabilities, NATO enjoys therefore at least two important assets: it can offer its good offices to Greece and Turkey with the assurance that extraneous political factors can be kept to a minimum, and that whatever settlement is reached will be backed by states allied to both Greece and Turkey but with varying degrees of intimacy, based on political complexion, historic links and the chemistry of their leaders. As mediator NATO can employ a combination of flexibility and leverage unavailable to any single member, including the United States.

To employ these assets effectively will require convincing both states that the potential diplomatic and economic advantages of a NATO-sponsored settlement are more important than the political risks. The very complexity of their differences, and the consequent array of trade-offs available to a mediator, can be helpful here. In addition, NATO must demonstrate that it takes Greek-Turkish differences seriously enough to devote full attention to resolving them and that it recognizes that no settlement can be reached which causes one state to bear disproportionate political or economic costs, or which does not serve the security interests of both to the same degree.

How To Get Started

The Greek Government's rejection of the Secretary General's offer of good offices following the March crisis need not be considered its last word on the subject. As we have noted earlier, NATO has some diplomatic disadvantages to overcome in Greece -- notably resentment that the alliance did not prevent Turkish landings on Cyprus in the summer of 1974 and has not brought about the removal of Turkish troops in the years since -- but there is reason to believe that if a NATO initiative were presented in a politically favorable light, the Greek Government would not rebuff it.

The best way to do this would probably be for NATO to explore in Athens and Ankara the feasibility of the two powers concluding a pact of non-aggression, to be guaranteed by the alliance. The Evros border incident in December and the recent Aegean confrontation over petroleum rights make this a logical subject for the Secretary General or his designated representative to address. Furthermore, since Greece has been seeking a NATO guarantee of this very kind, the Greek Government would presumably be willing to discuss it. Turkey, for its part, would enter such discussions on the same footing as Greece, not as a presumed aggressor, and would have no prima facie reason to object to NATO guaranteeing an agreement of the kind that the Turks themselves have publicly proposed.

A concomitant of NATO-sponsored negotiations could be

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development of confidence-building measures and improved bilateral communications to replace those the alliance's military organization would provide if the armed forces of both sides were fully integrated and it was functioning normally: observers at national military exercises, hot lines, advance notification of unusual military deployments, and so on.

While it is true that the Papandreou government, which pursues what might be called a non-aligned policy within NATO, has an inherent reluctance to associate itself with NATO in any but the most discreet and inescapable ways, an initiative of this kind could be accurately depicted as one which seeks to achieve an avowed Greek objective -- an alliance guarantee against aggression "from any quarter". From the Turkish standpoint, it does so without making political assumptions disobliging to either side.

If this approach were adopted it would focus NATO diplomacy on the most urgent aspect of the Greek-Turkish confrontation in the most politically neutral way. It would be a valuable test of NATO's ability to treat differences between its members that are not of an exclusively military nature but have direct bearing on the alliance's military posture. If successful, it might embolden NATO to address the more complicated and far-reaching issues that regularly generate military tension between the two states.

Is Cyprus a Greek-Turkish Problem?

This is not the place to construct the model of a possible settlement of all the issues dividing Greece and Turkey. We can however analyze the minimum objectives that each would seek to achieve, see how they might balance out, and whether an overall or partial agreement -- including or excluding Cyprus, for example -- offers the greater chance of success.

The obvious drawback in trying to exclude Cyprus is that no issue has provoked greater Greek-Turkish acrimony in the past twenty-five years and none has a more dangerous potential for disrupting peace in the future. Nor is any of their other differences harder to insulate from external factors, since Cyprus itself is independent and non-aligned, the subject of numerous U.N. resolutions, and the object of almost as much attention from the Soviet Union as from the United States. The difficulty of excluding Cyprus is however the best reason for trying to do so.

The human side of the Cyprus problem - the displaced and missing persons, the violence and the threat of violence, the frustrations involved in uniting peoples in a modern state who are divided by so much history -- all this is agonizing and enough to baffle the will of the most resolute mediator. By contrast, the bilateral - the Greek-Turkish -- aspects of the problem need not be so complex.

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Turkey's principal interest in Cyprus is to protect the Turkish Cypriot minority and its own southwestern flank. To secure this interest Turkey has a geostrategic advantage that is decisive, as it proved most recently in 1974 when Turkish troops crossed the forty miles from Anatolia to the north coast of Cyprus without any effective military response from Greece, five hundred miles away. No treaty reaffirming Turkey's links with the Turkish Cypriots or its legitimate concern for international developments affecting Cyprus could constitute a guarantee remotely as reliable as the one revealed by any map of the region. By the same token, whatever diplomatic restraints on future Turkish intervention Greece might obtain in a treaty would be feeble compensation for its strategic disadvantages.

If the military imperatives are virtually unalterable, so are the political and economic factors. The de facto partition of Cyprus resulting from the Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence in November, 1983, is not regarded as a permanent solution to the problem of the Turkish minority, even in Ankara, which almost certainly seeks by its support of the "Turkish Federated State" to enhance the bargaining position of the Turkish Cypriots rather than to annex northern Cyprus, a move that would create endless international problems for Turkey. Furthermore, the economic partition of the island has been no more successful than the political. Northern Cyprus has no trading partners or sources of foreign investment other than Turkey, and the backwardness of its economy, despite the traditional richness of the land, contrasts sharply with the prosperity of the rest of the island.

The very immutability of the strategic, political and economic factors affecting Cyprus is reason enough to treat it, if possible, as a discrete problem. Another, and more fundamental reason is that no solution, even one acceptable in Athens and Ankara, can endure unless it conforms to the wishes of the Cypriots. Cyprus is their island and they, more than the mainland Greeks and Anatolian Turks, will have to live with the solution. It is almost certainly in the longterm interests of Greece and Turkey that this should happen. The Cyprus problem costs them resources they can ill afford, needlessly engages their national prestige in an area which neither controls, and makes it harder for them to resolve their differences in the more sensitive areas they do control.

Athens and Ankara have not facilitated settlement of the Cyprus problem because they have had less to lose at home by backing the maximum demands of the two communities than by urging compromise. This will not always be the case. It may not be the case at the present time. If de facto partition of Cyprus hardens into something more permanent, and permanently divisive, Greece and Turkey could find themselves drawn into a confrontation which would be costly and destabilizing whether they advanced or

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retreated. Their military forces on the island would become hostages difficult to reinforce or remove. Logistics would favor the Turkish position, but all other factors, not least that of international legitimacy, would favor the Greeks.

If Athens and Ankara can be induced to recognize how damaging to their interests it would be if they crossed this point of no return, it may not be too late to persuade them to work for a settlement between the communities rather than to obstruct it. While the non-aligned status of the Republic of Cyprus precludes any NATO role in bringing about a resolution of communal differences, the alliance can certainly use its influence more effectively with Greece and Turkey to reduce their obstructionism and increase their support for the efforts of the United Nations Secretary General. NATO's own diplomacy, and the proven skills of Lord Carrington, are better reserved for problems like airspace, territorial sea, the Aegean shelf, and the multitude of military disputes to which they give rise. Difficult these problems may be, but a serious attempt to eradicate them is overdue and, in any case, less dangerous than permitting them to continue gnawing away the foundation of NATO's southeastern defences.

Aegean Problems

Andrew Wilson, whose Adelphi Paper, The Aegean Dispute (Adelphi Papers, #155, Winter 1979/1980, IISS), is a meticulous and dispassionate analysis of Aegean problems, concludes, "The more one studies the (Greek-Turkish) dispute and talks with those involved, the more one realizes that what is often largely at issue, apart from lack of confidence, is national pride."

Anyone who has had occasion to discuss these matters with Greeks or Turks will agree. It is for this very reason that an outside mediator is needed. Where national pride interprets flexibility as weakness and concessions as defeats, the mediator can sometimes assume enough of the short-term political risk to enable the parties to reach a settlement that serves their longer-term interests. In assuming the risk himself the mediator of course may endanger his own interests -- NATO, for example, could alienate either Greece or Turkey to the point where one of them left the alliance. The danger is only worth running if there is reason to believe that the parties, once relieved of a portion of the political risk, are capable of agreement. In the case of Greece and Turkey there are arguments for and against this proposition.

On the negative side are the strongly nationalist and ambiguously non-aligned policies of the Papandreou government, which little dispose it to compromise with Turkey and even less to do so under the auspices of NATO. The Ozal government, for its part, has reacted to Papandreou by adopting a tougher line towards Greece. To make matters worse, there are those in both

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countries who argue that the status quo works in their favor.

There are also positive factors however. Of these, perhaps the most significant is that Greece and Turkey have repeatedly shown by their prudent handling of past Aegean crises that they do not want hostilities. Their words rather than their actions have been intransigent. Strong language on national issues reduces political risks in all countries; the most audible Greek and Turkish voices -- government leaders and the press -- are those which are most sensitive to such risks. Other elements have shown by their actions that they would support attempts to improve relations and thereby lift a threat which distorts the defense posture of both countries, stifles trade, and discourages Aegean tourism, a key source of foreign exchange earnings for Greece and a growing one for Turkey.

If the element of national pride is put aside, and with it the heightened sensitivity to political risk that national pride entails, it is clear that the status quo works in no one's favor. The petroleum resources, if any, of the Aegean shelf remain unexploited by either party. Territorial sea and airspace have become weak points to be defended rather than strong points in the common defense. The Athens Flight Information Region loses operational effectiveness as an air traffic control center to the extent that Greece invests it with political authority which Turkey disputes. Aegean command and control lines, which assure interlocking defenses when they are compatible, have produced military gridlock ever since they became disputed in 1974. Neither side benefits from a situation in which all of their longer-term economic and military interests are subordinated to inconclusive tests of national sovereignty.

On balance the reasons for Greece and Turkey to resolve their differences are stronger than those not to. The same can be said of the reasons for NATO to run the admitted risk of helping them.

Balancing Aegean Interests

The most complicated and fundamental of the Aegean issues is the shelf. It also has the greatest number of legal ramifications. In January, 1979, responding to a Greek appeal with which Turkey refused to associate itself, the International Court of Justice ruled that it lacked jurisdiction in the case. Should Greece and Turkey in the future reach agreement on the terms of a joint appeal, the case could be resubmitted. The disadvantage of such a procedure is that, like all judicial appeals, it is time-consuming, and, in addition, the Turkish side insists that it will associate itself with the case only after bilateral negotiations have been tried and found unable to resolve it.

Keeping in mind that the shelf benefits neither party in present circumstances, NATO might approach the matter in one

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of two ways. It could either offer to facilitate bilateral talks aimed at framing the terms of reference for a new submission to the ICJ. Or it could propose some form of non-judicial arbitration, perhaps by a panel of Wise Men acceptable to Greece and Turkey and drawn from the ranks of elder statesmen in NATO countries. It ought not to be impossible to come up with a panel of three arbiters whose eminence and impartiality enabled Athens and Ankara to accept them without appearing to give anything away in advance. In both procedures Greece would be able to point out that the case was being submitted to arbitration, and Turkey that arbitration would be preceded by direct talks.

If there were agreed procedures for arbitration of the shelf issue, airspace and territorial sea problems would be easier to handle. While the latter also have economic and legal implications, they are essentially military in nature. Still operating on the assumption that Greece and Turkey do not really want hostilities, there are trade-offs which would seem logical and equitable. The first would be demilitarization of the Dodecanese by the Greeks (stipulated, in any case, by the 1947 Treaty of Paris) in exchange for demobilization of the Turkish Fourth Army, the so-called "Army of the Aegean". Both moves would benefit the alliance as much as Greece and Turkey, since present Aegean deployments bear no relation to NATO missions and priorities.

A second trade-off would be Turkish acceptance of the Greek claim that its airspace extends to ten miles (something that Turkey lived with before 1974) in exchange for a Greek undertaking not to extend its territorial sea to twelve miles (something that the Greeks say they have the right to do but not the intention). If accomplished, this would simultaneously eliminate the threat of a Greek action which Ankara considers a casus belli and Turkish actions which Athens views as highly provocative.

Success in these undertakings would greatly simplify the drawing of Aegean command and control lines, creation of the 7th ATAF headquarters in Larissa, and the solution of other problems left over from Greece's still incomplete reintegration into the military structure of NATO. The trade-offs themselves should be politically defensible in both countries, especially if they were preceded by the conclusion of a NATO-guaranteed non-aggression pact, as outlined earlier. Individual NATO members, notably the United States, could add immeasurably to the attractiveness of the package by offering bilateral inducements.

In a climate of improving relations other mutual concessions would look less forbidding. Greece, for example, could drop its opposition to Turkish association with the FEC, a Greek policy which actually runs counter to Greece's long-term interests; and Turkey could drop its objections to the militarization of Limnos, a Turkish position which increases the

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vulnerability of an island vital to the defense of the Turkish Straits.

Restoring NATO's Political Consensus

Because national pride is often a poor guide to national interest, the undoing of much that has been done by Greece and Turkey in the name of national defense would actually strengthen the security of both countries. It would unquestionably also strengthen NATO, which is the best reason for NATO to take the problem seriously. There will always be arguments for letting time take its course, for trying to keep NATO out of a family quarrel, for continuing to treat military consequences as though they had no political causes. None of these arguments addresses the need to restore the southeastern flank.

Alliances languish in two ways. Either their military strength ebbs away or their political will to use it. Ironically, except for the U.S., Greece and Turkey are the only two members of the alliance which are meeting NATO force and defense expenditure goals. They are doing so not because they have a better appreciation of the Soviet threat than their allies, but because as the Soviet threat appears to recede they feel freer to confront each other. In this sense the Greek-Turkish problem, emerging as it does from altered perceptions of the Soviet threat, is not much different from problems afflicting the alliance in other areas. The resoluteness and skill with which NATO seeks to restore the shattered political consensus between Greece and Turkey will say much about its ability to restore the political consensus of the alliance itself.